

The following is my written testimony for HF550, which I understand is being voted on Monday.

It's good to know our Minnesota House supports independent redistricting. However, HF550 is not a good attempt.

First, the direct appointment by politicians with no community involvement is a non-starter. A redistricting commission appointed by politicians and allowing for this degree of packing the commission by other party loyalists has resulted in partisan squabbles, deadlock, and transparency problems within states that use it. See Idaho, Montana, and Washington for examples.

The redistricting principles listed in HF550 place Communities of Interest (one of the most important criteria when drawing maps) towards the bottom. Therefore, the likelihood that it is applied is less than others like contiguous and compactness which works to further minimize attention to keeping communities of interests together.

There is a lack of transparency, allowing for back room deals. It shouldn't even need to be said that no communication with anyone about drawing district boundaries should take place outside of a public meeting.

Finally, no language allows for hearing during evenings or weekends when community members can attend and be heard. Much like what we saw during the last redistricting hearings the Republican-led Senate conducted back in 2021, they only held them during the work week and work hours which meant that those attending were mostly local government folks like mayors, city council members, and local staff and lobbyists for local industries.

For all of the above reasons, I strongly oppose HF550.

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