

March 10, 2025

Common Cause MN is a nonpartisan grassroots organization working to create an open, transparent, and accountable government. Although we do have a C4 arm, it is limited to lobbying activities. We do not endorse political parties or candidates. Our national base consists of over 1.5M members, and we have 28 state offices nationwide. I lead our Minnesota work with just over 26,000 members. Despite belonging to various party affiliations, or not being affiliated, the one thing our members have come together to do is support our work ensuring our Republic's democracy is safeguarded, and everyone's vote counts.

We are grateful to Rep. Torkelson and Rep. Niska for creating space for this discussion on the need for redistricting reforms. We remain committed to working with Rep. Torkelson, Senator Rest, and others on moving a bipartisan common-sense bill centering Minnesotans in the model, process, and criteria. As many sitting on this committee recall, we've led the work on moving these reforms in partnership with constituents, impacted communities, and stakeholders since 2018. We are focused on homegrown solutions that directly involve all stakeholders.

**We are asking members of this committee to stand boldly in partnership with our collective efforts to move bipartisan redistricting reforms that reflect the contribution of many ideas looking to meaningfully center Minnesotans. In its current form, HF550 unfortunately does not.**

**As of this morning approximately 246 written emails regarding HF550 have been sent by our statewide members to Rep. Niska and Rep. Long. In the past we've had thousands of members reaching out to electeds asking for common sense people-centered reforms like those found in the With Us, For Us Constitutional Amendment creating a citizen-led Independent Redistricting Commission. That proposed reform maximizes transparency on partisan dynamics and provides necessary checks and balances.**

This committee usually meets on Wednesdays. However, today's Rules Committee hearing was scheduled at a different date/time, which the public, who are not familiar with legislative dynamics, might not have known about. With such short notice, our own attempts to inform our members and partners so they too could be heard were also affected. This situation shows just how the public can miss out on participating in the redistricting process and voicing their concerns when the redistricting process is underway. The legislative process is aimed at including direct input from the public, not raising barriers.

We have concerns with the model, process, and criteria laid out in HF550. The most concerning goes to the heart of the problem – elected officials' inability to center Minnesotans and move bipartisan maps for the past six decades. If a commission consisting of only partisan proxies worked, our current process of having elected officials should be working, however, for the past 6 decades the Courts have had to step in. The Court's role is very limited – they do not draw maps from scratch, they merely tweak district boundaries to account for numbers. We are much more than numbers.

HF550 allows caucus leadership to handpick their "proxies". It lacks meaningful transparency and critical checks-and balances and only exempts current electeds and their families from selection – under HF550 electeds can pick lobbyists and actual party chairs to sit on the commission. In MN, partisans have been unable to move bipartisan maps to date.

Some of the key factors we consider when taking a position on legislation include:

- Where bill language came from
- Whether the proposed policies allowed for direct and meaningful participation from impacted Minnesotans
- And whether the final bill includes that input
- Whether there is parity in power among the decision makers represented at the table when creating proposed policy.

To our knowledge, these factors have not been weighed in within the model, process and criteria contained in HF550.

**We respectfully ask members of this committee, and Representative Torkelson to stand boldly with constituents and stakeholders and work with us in co-creating a people centered redistricting reform.**

**At this time, we do not support HF550.**

Thank you for centering all Minnesotans in the work and process of this committee.

*Anastacia Belladonna-Carrera*  
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Executive Director.

