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To Senate Election Law committee

From Liz Tentarelli, president, League of Women Voters NH
contact email: LWVnewhampshire@gmail.com

re: SB 241 and SB 254 Executive Council redistricting plans

The League of Women Voters NH, committed to fair maps and competitive districts, questions why the Republicans are proposing an Executive Council district map that is just as obviously gerrymandered now as it was when proposed and adopted in 2011.

The sprawling district 2, “packed” to Democrat advantage, has been the focus of criticism from NH voters for 10 years. The public has said repeatedly that the only reason they can see for such a district is to secure more Republican voters in the remaining four districts.

Governor Sununu, when asked about gerrymandering in the first part of 2021, acknowledged that “we have that funky Executive Council District 2, and I hope they fix that.” [1]

The Governor has also said he won’t sign a map that “doesn’t pass the smell test” of gerrymandering. [2]

On Jan. 7, just last week, the Governor tweeted: “We are a very independent state, so you shouldn’t have a district that is all Democratic or all Republican.” [3] He was referring to the Congressional districts map that was passed by the NH House, but that comment must logically be applied to the proposed SB 241 map of the Executive Council.

I therefore appeal to this committee to reject SB 241 and instead consider the compact and more competitive map for Executive Council proposed in SB254.

Citations:

[1] Adam Sexton of WMUR, on June 29, 2021, reported Sununu spoke about partisan gerrymander. That “...on CloseUP when he was asked whether he would sign a dramatically redrawn map of New Hampshire.

‘No. I mean, the answer is I don't suspect we're going to have a radically redrawn map,’ Sununu said. ‘We don't have massive gerrymandering. I know we have that funky Executive Council District 2, and I hope they fix that. That's the only real example I can think of.’

[2] On July 9, 2021 Adam Sexton said of WMUR’s CloseUp interview with Governor Sununu: “He said he would reject a map that is clearly gerrymandered. ‘Absolutely, absolutely I'd veto,’ he said. ‘If it doesn't pass the smell test and it looks like gerrymandering districts, of course, I'm going to veto that.’”

[3] @GovChrisSununu Jan. 7, 2022