



## HF314 - Districting principles for legislative and congressional plans established

The manner in which congressional/legislative district lines are drawn can keep a community together or split it apart essentially changing whether that given community has representatives who feel responsible for their concerns.

Common Cause Minnesota supports HF314's delineated redistricting principles. However, by limiting the participants to only members of the legislature, HF314 does little to address the core basis requiring Minnesota's redistricting process to go through the State's Supreme Court. Furthermore, there is no room in HF314 for cost effective measures in MN's redistricting. It leaves the door open to continued court intervention, and hours of work by legislators likely to be lost. How does HF314 safeguard Minnesota's redistricting from the self-interests of legislators in the most cost effective way?

The growing polarization of Minnesota's legislature decreases cooperation across the aisles and has resulted in a deadlock over various budget and policy matters the last couple of legislative biennium. Fixing the redistricting process cannot completely solve this issue, but a fair, non-partisan approach to drawing districts can make a significant change and is more cost effective.

### **The Facts:**

- Minnesota's Supreme Court have set congressional and legislative district lines EVERY DECADE except for once in 1970s.
- Minnesota's legislative body has not been able to work to set congressional/legislative district lines without the State's Supreme Court taking over the process.
- In 2011 it cost Minnesota tax payers \$345,000 when the State defended proposed redistricting maps. Note: this does not include costs assumed by the State outside of payment of plaintiff's legal fees/costs. It also doesn't include the cost of legislators lost time in drawing maps that ultimately were not used.
- In 2002, it cost Minnesota tax payers \$368,000. Note: this does not include costs assumed by the state outside of payment of plaintiff's legal fees and costs. It also doesn't increase the cost of legislators lost time in drawing maps that ultimately were not used.
- WI just paid \$2M to defend legislative maps that a panel of federal court judges ruled was unconstitutional. They face mounting legal costs/fees in taking it to the Supreme Court.
- Legal fees/costs in the \$2M range for Minnesota tax payers is not out of the realm of possibility. The last two redistricting cycles the Court unilaterally capped legal fees/costs. It is not guaranteed that a new Court would cap legal fees/costs.
- SF86 does not address that core problem that lead to constitutional challenge of the maps; political gerrymandering.

### **Vote No on HF314 - the need for improvement:**

- Minnesota's Supreme Court have set congressional and legislative district lines EVERY DECADE except for once in 1970s. HF314 does little to address the causes leading to the last two redistricting cycles going through the Minnesota Supreme Court.

- Minnesota tax payers are flipping the bill but getting no solution to the problems that historically led to litigation in MN.

### **Ways to Improve HF314 and minimizing risk for partisan gerrymandering:**

- Work collaboratively in a bipartisan manner to come up with a hybrid of HF314 and HF246. Doing so will yield a model for redistricting in Minnesota that will likely result in lessening risk of political gerrymandering of either side and is a more cost effective model given that an informational fiscal note indicated the likely cost of implementing HF246 on state is less than \$100,000.
- This would also allow legislators to use their time more efficiently and reduce cost of drafting maps that ultimately are not defensible.

Placing the power to draw district lines in an independent commission eliminates or reduces problems such as deadlock in drawing district lines that then requires Court intervention.

Statistically, maps crafted by nonpartisan/bipartisan commissions also result in freeing up court dockets and saving taxpayers' money in court operation.

Respectfully Submitted,

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