

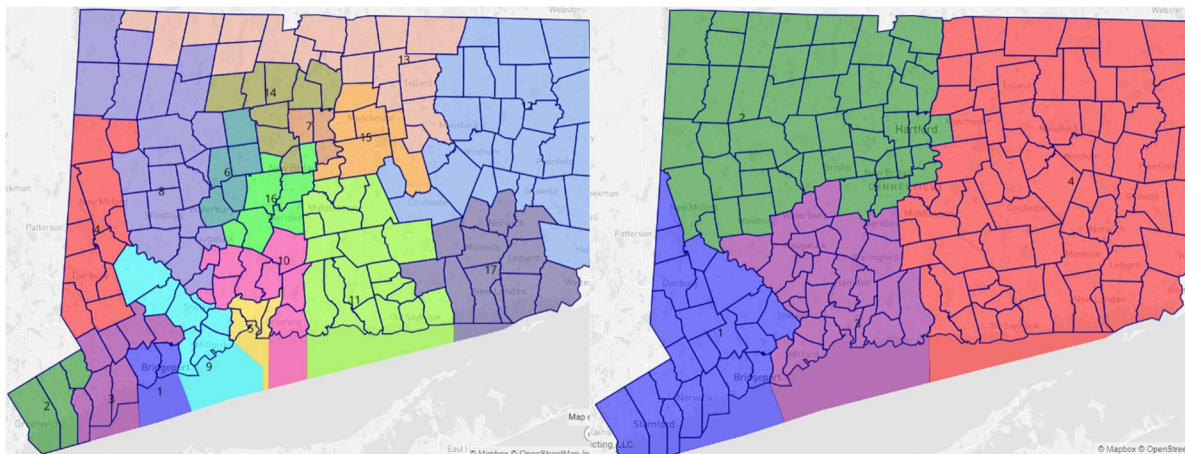
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**To the members of the Reapportionment Committee and The Committee on Government Administration and Elections,**

With redistricting upon us and in crunch time, I want to give my testimony not just on redistricting in general, but on the way our districts and system of voting fundamentally alter the outcome of our elections. Under our current system, no matter how the districts are drawn, a winner-take-all voting system will result in either uncompetitive races, or a sizeable minority of voters bereft of representation in the General Assembly. With corrupt redistricting, which thankfully the State of Connecticut is not prone to, these issues are part of the design.

With trust in our elections at an all-time low, and with the push on one side for more democratic measures and on the other for better security, now is the time to come together and adopt a system of elections that produces the most fair and democratic results and is more secure and trustworthy. The system to which I refer is not novel; it has been used in the Parliamentary elections in Ireland for nearly a century.

Two major changes would be implemented. The first is in how districts are formed. Instead of one representative serving from one smaller district, several representatives would serve from a single, larger district. For example, a district made up of the entirety of the Cities of Bridgeport and Fairfield would elect nine members to the House of Representatives. With 36 senators in the Connecticut State Senate, four districts of equal population could be drawn to each elect nine senators. With a slight increase in the State House to 153 members, 17 districts of equal population could be drawn to each elect nine representatives. See the maps below for an example.



Potential Multi-member districts: Left: House of Representatives; Right: Senate. Each district elects nine Representatives and Senators.

The second major change would be the way we vote. Using the same Plurality system that we currently use would result in the same majoritarian rule over the minority we see in single-member districts. To prevent that, we must change to a Proportional voting method. The Republic of Ireland uses the Single Transferable Vote, which is a ranked system. The voters would rank the candidates in their preferred order, no differently from Ranked Choice Voting in Maine.

The way the votes are counted is different, however. The math involved isn't too difficult, but the result would be proportional to the voters' preferences. If one of the districts above votes 55% Democrat and 45% Republican, the results would be that five of the elected Representatives or Senators would be Democrats and four would be Republicans. The voters would be voting for candidates and not parties, so the voters themselves would determine which five Democrats and four Republicans are elected. This also means that the small minority of Republican or conservative voters in Bridgeport could help elect a member to the State House that they can point to as representing them. Currently, those voters are being "represented" by members of the House of Representatives that share very little political ideology with them. It is a stretch to say they are represented at all. My own town of Trumbull is very competitive and is evenly split between reliable Democrat and Republican voters. But since the entire town is in Senate 22 with the western part of Bridgeport, the Senate race is not competitive. It is a foregone conclusion that the Democrat nominee will win. This would not be so with the change to the Single Transferable Vote.

Finally, this change would make it more difficult to fraudulently sway an election, discourages strategic voting and allows voters to vote their preferences honestly, and it is proven to reliably elect minorities to office since the results are proportional to the voters' preferences and not influenced by districting.

The Democrat party rightly champions voter's rights and democracy. The Republican Party is rightly concerned that election integrity is under threat. Minor parties just want a voting system that gives them a fair shake. By making the change to Multi-Member Districts and Proportional Representation by the Single Transferable Vote, the State of Connecticut can be the first in the Union to take its elections out of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup>.

For a look into the Republic of Ireland's system of Proportional Representation, listen to this podcast from Radiolab: [Tweak the Vote](#)

Thank you for your consideration.

Steve Dincher.