

MINUTES

House Legislative Redistricting Committee



Representative Spencer Gosch, Chair
Representative Kent Peterson, Vice Chair

Fifth Meeting, 2021 Interim
Thursday, October 7, 2021

Virtual/Room 362 – State Capitol
Pierre, South Dakota

The fifth interim meeting of the House Legislative Redistricting Committee was called to order by Representative Spencer Gosch at 8:00 a.m. (CST). The committee met via teleconference.

A quorum was determined with the following members answering roll call: Representatives Ryan Cwach, Drew Dennert, Mike Derby, Spencer Gosch (Chair), Jon Hansen, Liz May, Kent Peterson (Vice Chair), and Bethany Soye.

Staff members present included Matt Frame, Legislative Attorney, and Rachael Person, Administrative Specialist.

NOTE: *For the purpose of continuity, the following minutes are not necessarily in chronological order. Also, all referenced documents distributed at the meeting are attached to the original minutes on file in the Legislative Research Council office. This meeting was webcast live. The archived webcast is available on the LRC website at sdlegislature.gov.*

Approval of Minutes

Representative Peterson moved, seconded by Representative Dennert, to approve the minutes of the September 30, 2021, House Legislative Redistricting Committee meeting. The motion prevailed unanimously on a roll call vote.

Conurbation Areas

Representative Gosch reminded the committee, and those listening, that all of the maps covered by the committee in the meeting were proposals to generate discussion and provide a starting point to work from and were not final maps. He asked that anyone from the public or the legislature who had map proposals they wanted to share, reach out to a member on the committee with those proposals, and that any map proposals be brought forward by a committee member.

Representative Dennert presented his proposal for the districts inside the Rapid City conurbation area ([Document 1](#)). The committee adopted the Rapid City conurbation area at the September 9, 2021 Redistricting meeting held with the Senate Legislative Redistricting committee. In his proposal, Representative Dennert said Districts 32 and 34 would be entirely within the city limits of Rapid City, while Districts 33 and 35 would have area inside and outside of Rapid City. District 35 would include Box Elder and Ellsworth Air Force base which were added to the Rapid City conurbation area, District 33 would encompass the northern side of Pennington County and the Meade County precincts the committees voted to include within the Rapid City conurbation area. Representative Dennert said Districts 32 and 34 would change slightly in an effort to preserve compactness of the districts.

Representative Derby said that while the proposal preserves compactness, and respects political and geographical boundaries and communities of interest, he was in opposition of the map due to the Red Rocks community being removed from the current District 34.

The committee then discussed the Sioux Falls conurbation area. At the September 30, 2021 meeting, the House committee adopted the Dennert Sioux Falls Proposal #3.

Representative Dennert gave an overview of his proposal for the Sioux Falls conurbation area ([Document 1](#)). Representative Dennert pointed out that District 9 would be to the north and west of Sioux Falls, District 25 would be to the east and would stretch to the north, and District 6 would be to the south of Sioux Falls. Districts 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 17 would fall within the Sioux Falls city limits. Representative Dennert said that due to population growth, the Sioux Falls metro area had to add one legislative district, but his proposal preserves as many of the existing district boundaries as possible.

Representative Soye highlighted that District 17, being the new district, would be made up of the area that is currently in District 9, as District 9 would become entirely rural in Representative Dennert's proposal.

Representative Hansen said the proposal was a good starting point as it was fairly drawn, compact, and satisfied some of the public concern about the urban and rural divide.

Northwest South Dakota

Representative Dennert spoke on the northwest corner which consists of the Districts 28, 29, and 31. Representative Dennert said the committee, along with the Senate Legislative Redistricting Committee, took action on these three districts previously, voting that District 28 will consist of the counties of Butte, Harding, Perkins, Ziebach, Dewey, and Corson, District 29 will encompass the entirety of Meade County outside of the Rapid City conurbation area, and Lawrence County, in its entirety, will make up District 31.

Northeast South Dakota

Representative Dennert said his proposal made some changes to the Northeast corner of South Dakota, but he tried to preserve the existing districts as much as possible. Representative Dennert said his proposal would keep Roberts, Day, and Marshall County together in District 1, Aberdeen and Brown County would be split into Districts 2 and 3 which would give the two districts a significant portion of both urban and rural populations, and District 23 would stay entirely rural without running into either Aberdeen or Huron.

Representative Gosch commented on the importance of maintaining the urban/rural divide in District 23 and keeping the rural representation in the district.

Representative Dennert said that District 5 is the most compact in the entire state, encompasses the city of Watertown, meets the requirements for population deviation, and, in his proposal, would be one district that would not change from the existing district.

Southeast South Dakota

Representative Dennert covered the Southeast portion of South Dakota on his proposed map ([Document 1](#)). Representative Dennert said District 18, which encompasses Yankton, does cause some concern as it is too small to remain its own district.

Representative Cwach said he was not in favor of Representative Dennert's proposal for the districts in Yankton and Vermillion and that it would be in the best interest for those communities to remain separate from one another. Representative Cwach suggested keeping Yankton County whole and joining it with Tabor and more area in Bon Homme County.

Southwest South Dakota

In his proposal for Southwest South Dakota, Representative Dennert kept Fall River and Custer County together with rural Pennington County. Representative Dennert pointed out that District 27 does provide a challenge when it comes to population deviation and the Census data received, but the district should retain its current configuration as much as possible. To combat the lower population numbers, Representative Dennert proposed adding the communities of Wall, Wasta, and New Underwood to District 27, which would still allow for a 65% minority vote. Representative Dennert proposed adding rural portions of Tripp County to District 26, but otherwise keeping the current boundaries to preserve the three reservations that are within the district.

Representative Gosch highlighted the concerns brought forth regarding the population accuracy of the Census data and reminded everyone that the Redistricting committees are required by the Constitution to use the Census data to draw the districts.

Full Map Proposals

Representative Dennert provided a statewide map proposal and discussed his ideas for Districts 24 and 22 which would both pick up some different territory due to lower populations. Representative Dennert emphasized that his goals while drawing the maps were respecting the urban/rural divide, and, with the exception of the Southeast portion of the state, following the existing district boundaries as much as possible.

Adjournment

Representative Hansen moved, seconded by Representative Gosch, that the House Redistricting Committee be adjourned. The motion prevailed on a voice vote.

The committee adjourned at 9:53 a.m.