

Minnesota Senate



Minnesota Senate Building
95 West University Avenue
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Senator Mark Johnson
3111 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Senator Johnson

I am writing you to express my deep disappointment in the process and maps drafted by the Senate Republican caucus. At the Redistricting Committee hearing on May 11th, you stated: "We want to make sure this is open and fair as possible." Unfortunately, the process that your committee has undertaken has not been as open or as fair as Minnesotans should expect.

First, none of the members of the Redistricting Committee – DFL, Republican, or Independent – were able to vote on or amend the redistricting principles used to create your proposed maps. It is not consistent with your own words, nor is it in the spirit of transparency in the Redistricting process to withhold redistricting principles without allowing members of the committee to vote or offer amendments.

Next, the committee has not heard testimony from people hailing from a broad swath of Minnesota. As a committee, we heard just over two hours of testimony from individuals representing only three regions of the state. This pales in comparison to the numerous hours of testimony provided to the House over the course of eleven hearings. To have an open, transparent, and fair process, we should have heard testimony from more Minnesotans representing different areas of the state prior to drafting new maps.

Finally, it is clear that the wishes of those who *did* testify were not taken into consideration during the Republican map drafting process. What testimony did we hear in support of dividing Mankato or Northfield into two districts? What testimony did we hear in support of splitting Rochester or St. Cloud into three districts? It is inevitable that we will need to make difficult decisions to divide a single community into multiple legislative districts but proposing to split communities without sufficient testimony in support of those proposals is harmful.

The DFL members of the Senate Redistricting Committee have been willing and able to meet to discuss the principles that guide our redistricting process and to consider more testimony from the public to ensure that we have the information necessary to draft fair maps. We are committed to empowering Minnesotans to choose their legislators, not the other way around. The flawed process followed by the Senate Republicans will only further erode the public's trust that our redistricting process is open and fair.

Sincerely,