

Dear Mr. Sembach,

Thanks to Sen. Argall for scheduling a hearing on November 10 for the Senate State Government Committee to learn more about the congressional maps that Draw the Lines and Amanda Holt have offered.

I understand one of the things the State Government Committee feels it lacks is a clear definition for responsiveness and communities of interest. Fear not! The Senate has on its table a bill that in its pre-amended form contains excellent definitions of both:

"Responsive." In reference to a district, that the voting blocs are substantially and similarly able to translate their popular support into representation in an elected body and that such representation is substantially and similarly reflective of shifts in the electorate's preferences.

As I'm sure the committee would agree, this is a tremendously important part of the election process generally and of redistricting specifically. What is REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY if it fails to reflect shifts in the electorate's preferences?

"Community of interest." A neighborhood or geographically confined area of persons who share similar social, cultural and economic interests or other shared interests that may be subject to legislative action. A community's shared interest does not include a shared relationship with a political party, incumbent or political candidate.

Communities of interest are a more controversial subject, but fortunately this definition states clearly that party affiliation does not make a community of interest.

The simple way to incorporate these definitions into the Senate's work would be to revert to the original SB222, amend it in ways that enhance responsiveness rather than combat it, pass it in committee and on the floor, and send it over to the House. There's still time! But even apart from legislation, the Senate (and the House too!) could *choose* to adopt either or both of these as standards by which they will judge all maps. Obviously the Assembly will have some kind of criteria by which it judges maps; this is a good time to make those criteria explicit and publicize them to citizens. Then we'll all be able to see where you're coming from when you unveil your preliminary maps for public comment.

Thank you for your work as a public servant!

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