

Jessi Tracy

From: Paul White <pwhite@barretown.org>
Sent: Friday, February 4, 2022 3:32 PM
To: Redistricting2022
Subject: [External] Barre Town feedback to 2022 House redistricting plan (H.589)

[External]

To the Members of the House Government Operations Committee:

I would like to thank the Chair and Members of the Committee for the opportunity to speak to you today and I wanted to just follow-up with you to provide some brief take-aways.

- The Town of Barre is currently in District Washington-2, which is comprised only of Barre Town and it is a two-member district.
- The Town of Orange is currently in District Orange-1, which is comprised of the towns of Chelsea, Corinth, Orange, Vershire, Washington, and Williamstown, and it is also a two-member district.
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- The redistricting plan currently in discussion (H.589) would create a new District of Washington-Orange which would be comprised of the towns of Barre and Orange, and a new District Orange-1 which is identical to the current Orange-1 with the exception of the Town of Orange being removed.
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- As proposed, the new District Washington-Orange would have a population of 8,971 and a deviation from the ideal district size of +4.63%, while the new District Orange-1 would have a population of 7,907 and a deviation of -7.78%.
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- If both towns were left as they currently are (the Town of Barre in Washington-2 and the Town of Orange in Orange-1), this would result in Washington-2 having a population of 7,923 (a deviation of -7.59%), and Orange-1 having a population of 8,955 (a deviation of +4.44%).
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- The proposal to remove the Town of Orange from its current placement in Orange-1 and combine it with the Town of Barre, moves both districts further away from the ideal population size, not closer.
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- The population of the Town of Barre (7,923) is 7.5 times the population of the Town of Orange (1,048); whereas in the existing District Orange-1 where the town of Orange currently sits, the six towns in that district range in population from 672 to 3,515 with Orange being only slightly smaller than the average. If Orange is combined with Barre it is hard to argue that the people of Orange would not suffer in terms of their equal representation.
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- The Town of Orange is in Orange County, as are all of the towns in District Orange-1. The Town of Barre is in Washington County. While I cannot speak on behalf of the people of Orange, it appears to me that the Town of Orange is better suited to District Orange-1 where it currently sits.
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- The Town of Barre is now the 3rd most populous municipality in Washington County, having been just surpassed once again by the City of Montpelier by a mere 151 people. Each of these top three

municipalities (Barre City, Barre Town, and Montpelier) made requests to the LAB that they be allowed to remain as stand-alone, two-member-at-large districts. It is interesting to note that the Cities of Barre and Montpelier both had their requests granted, but Barre Town's request to remain a stand-alone district is being denied in the current redistricting plan.

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- In summary, the people of the Town of Barre wish to remain in a stand-alone, two-member-at-large House district, as we have been since 1980. This has been the opinion of every town resident that I have spoken with on this issue.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul White, Chair
Barre Town Selectboard

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