

BRATTLEBORO TOWN CLERK

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January 27, 2022

To the members of the House Committee on Government Operations:

Good morning. My name is Hilary Francis and I am the Brattleboro Town Clerk. I am pleased to have been invited to be here today.

As many of you might know, Brattleboro has a unique governing structure with Representative Town Meeting playing a key role in our decision making process. The district lines between our 3 districts can significantly impact our ability to run our Representative Town Meeting and have elected Town Meeting Members.

On Tuesday, I submitted a number of documents for your review. Included in those are our Board of Civil Authority meeting minutes, a proposed map with new district lines, proposed metes and bounds, and supporting information. As you will see in these documents, our Board of Civil Authority considered both of the LAB's proposals – the majority proposal which we called Proposal A, and the minority proposal which was adopted into H.589 as draft language, which we have been calling proposal B. We found Proposal B an improvement over Proposal A in that fewer people (484) changed districts in B than in A (709). However, we found both proposals to have negative impacts on a number of our currently elected Town Meeting Members, significantly impacting District 1's representation in our Representative Town Meeting process.

Therefore, our BCA worked to propose some new district lines that were submitted to you, and we are calling that Proposal C. This proposal moves only 348 residents between districts while still having the same impact on percent deviation. Additionally, it only impacts one of our currently elected Town Meeting Members, moving that person from District 1 to District 3. Proposal B moves nine of our currently elected Town Meeting Members out of District 1 into both Districts 2 and 3.

On behalf of the Brattleboro Board of Civil Authority, I value the time and attention that you are giving to this, and I appreciate that you are inviting members of the various Towns' BCA's to provide documents and testimony. I encourage you to continue to listen to all testimony, as the members of the BCA and the town staff know best the intricacies of their towns, the boundaries, and how they govern themselves.

I am happy to answer questions and I will submit my statement in writing to your Committee Assistant.

Thank you!