

**2021 SENATE GOVERNMENT AND VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**SB 2228**

# 2021 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Government and Veterans Affairs Committee  
Room JW216, State Capitol

SB 2228  
1/28/2021

<b>Relating to a nonpartisan advisory redistricting commission; provide a statement of legislative intent.</b>
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**Chair Vedaa** opened the hearing at 3:31 p.m. with Sen Vedaa, Sen Meyer, Sen Elkin, Sen K Roers, Sen Wobbema, Sen Weber, and Sen Marcellais present.

## **Discussion Topics:**

- Fairness in redistricting

**Senator Heckaman** introduced SB 2228 #4157

**Representative Boschee** testified in favor

**Don Morrison** testified via Zoom in favor #4110

**Kevin Hermann** testified in support.

## **Additional written testimony:**

**Whitney Oxendahl – support #3772**

Adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

*Pam Dever, Committee Clerk*

SB 2228

Senator Joan Heckaman

Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am Sen. Joan Heckaman from District 23 and I am here to introduce SB 2228 to you.

The 2020 Census has been completed and the North Dakota Legislature will begin the process of redistricting. Currently, Legislative Council as well as legislative leaders have been apprised of work that has begun through national legislative organizations. Legislative Council has accepted a software vendor for our redistricting process. But current law provides that the redistricting committee will be selected from members of the legislature. To me, that poses the question, does it allow legislators to own their voters?

The bill before you establishes a nonpartisan advisory redistricting commission that would be tasked with using the census data to devise a plan that divides ND into 47 legislative district and complies with the requirements in the US Constitution. After the plan has been developed, the commission will submit the plan and any proposed legislation necessary to implement the plan to legislative management for their consideration, For your information I provided the composition of the last redistricting committee in a hand out. (redistricting handout).

You may have heard the work "Gerrymandering" used in connection with redistricting. Gerrymandering is an unfortunate process that restricts the voices of voters by dividing up communities, towns, and counties into different legislative districts simply to serve a partisan goal. (Handout of current districts)

In analyzing information, I have a handout for you to participate in the redistricting process. (red/blue handout)

As you can see, using the same demographics, there are several ways to divide up citizens into different kinds of districts. Using this exercise as an example, shows exactly why some states already have commissions that takes the politics out of the process.

NCSL has information on states that have commissions with primary responsibility for redistricting, some who serve in an advisory capacity, and some have backup commissions if the legislature is unable to agree.

The methodology in this bill would be transparent, representative, and accountable to the people of North Dakota by ensuring district lines are drawn fairly and in a manner that respects the communities and political subdivisions in our state. This bill also ensures that legislators are truly serving the best interests of the communities they represent.

Legislators should not be able to pick their voters. Voters should pick their legislators.

Redistricting is an important process that impacts representation, either positively or negatively. It is my hope that we can be non-partisan in North Dakota and join other states who recognize the importance of the process.

That concludes my testimony and I would be happy to answer any question you may have.

# North Dakota Legislative Branch

## Legislative Redistricting Committee

### Interim Committee Studies and Assignments

(16 members)

1267 §.1 Develop a legislative redistricting plan to be implemented in time for use in the 2012 primary election

### Legislative Council Staff

- John Bjornson
- Vonette J. Richter

### Chairman



**Senator Ray Holmberg**  
Republican  
District 17

### Vice Chairman



**Representative Bill Devlin**  
Republican  
District 38

### Legislative Members



**Representative Larry Bellew**  
Republican  
District 38



**Representative Rick Holman**  
Democrat  
District 20



**Representative Nancy Johnson**  
Republican  
District 37



**Representative Jim Kasper**  
Republican  
District 46



**Representative Jerry Kelsh**  
Democrat  
District 26



**Representative David Monson**  
Republican  
District 10



**Representative Mike Nathe**  
Republican  
District 30

### Committee Meetings

**October 11, 2011 - 9:00 am to 5:00 pm CDT**

**October 12, 2011 - 9:00 am to 3:00 pm CDT**

#### Committee Documents

- [Notice](#) (8kb)
- [Agenda](#) (9kb)
- [Minutes](#) (53kb)

**September 27, 2011 - 9:00 am CDT**

#### Committee Documents

- [Notice](#) (8kb)
- [Agenda](#) (8kb)
- [Minutes](#) (51kb)

**September 16, 2011 - 9:00 am CDT**

#### Committee Documents

- [Notice](#) (8kb)
- [Agenda](#) (8kb)
- [Minutes](#) (39kb)

**August 23, 2011 - 9:00 am to 5:00 pm CDT**

**August 24, 2011 - 9:00 am to 12:00 pm CDT**

#### Committee Documents

- [Notice](#) (8kb)
- [Agenda](#) (9kb)
- [Minutes](#) (44kb)

**August 4, 2011 - 9:00 am CDT**

#### Committee Documents

- [Notice](#) (8kb)
- [Agenda](#) (8kb)
- [Minutes](#) (26kb)

**July 21, 2011 - 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm CDT**

**July 22, 2011 - 8:30 am to 12:00 pm CDT**

#### Committee Documents

- [Notice](#) (8kb)
- [Agenda](#) (8kb)
- [Minutes](#) (36kb)

#### Committee Memorandums

- [Estimated Cost of a Legislative District](#) (11.0 KB pdf)

**June 16, 2011 - 11:00 am CDT**

#### Committee Documents

- [Notice](#) (8kb)
- [Agenda](#) (9kb)
- [Minutes](#) (30kb)

#### Committee Memorandums

- [Legislative Redistricting - Background Memorandum](#) (71.0 KB pdf)
- [Supplementary Rules of Operation and Procedure of the North Dakota Legislative Management](#) (16.0 KB pdf)



**Senator Randel Christmann**

**Resigned:** November 21, 2012

Republican

District 33



**Senator Dwight Cook**

Republican

District 34



**Senator Tony Grindberg**

Republican

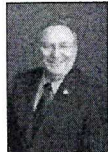
District 41



**Senator Jerry Klein**

Republican

District 14



**Senator Stanley W. Lyson**

Republican

District 1



**Senator Ryan M. Taylor**

Democrat

District 7



**Senator John M. Warner**

Democrat

District 4

**Testimony SB 2228**  
**Senate Government and Veterans Affairs Committee**  
January 28, 2021

Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate Government and Veterans Affairs Committee, good afternoon. My name is Don Morrison. I live in Bismarck and I am here as a volunteer for North Dakota Voters First, which is a non-partisan, grassroots North Dakota group working to strengthen our democracy, help make our elections and public policy more open, ethical, and accountable to the people of our state.

I would like to address two positive sections of SB 2228.

First, this bill provides a redistricting process that would lessen the influence of partisan politics. People in North Dakota would like fewer districts with squiggly borders, obviously drawn to make sure certain candidates or a certain party has greater advantages. Article IV of the North Dakota Constitution and North Dakota law requires districts to be compact. We would also recommend that the new district map respect communities as much as possible, especially city, tribal, and county boundaries. The nonpartisan commission in this bill would provide a great opportunity for drawing legislative district lines fairly.

Second, this bill keeps the redistricting process open and public. That is what we do in a country that is based on citizens participating in government. More often, government functions well when it is open and closer to the people.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony. North Dakota Voters First encourages you to put a Do Pass on SB 2228.

Senate Bill 2228

Thank you for the chance to address the members of the Senate Government and Veteran Affairs Committee. I am writing in support of SB 2228.

I am greatly in support of a nonpartisan redistricting commission creating the redistricting plan for this decade. This would take some of the politics out of drawing district boundaries. Redistricting is about creating equal population districts, so the voters can have full representation in the legislature. It's about the voters.

One thing that could be added to this bill is the opportunity for public comment at some point in the redistricting process. More people are learning about redistricting and want to be a part of the process.

I hope the committee gives this bill a Do Pass report and amends the bill to include public input.

Thank you for your time.

Whitney Oxendahl



# 2021 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Government and Veterans Affairs Committee Room JW216, State Capitol

SB 2228  
1/29/2021

**Relating to a nonpartisan advisory redistricting commission; provide a statement of legislative intent. nonpartisan redistricting commission**

**Chair Vedaa** called to order at 9:27 a.m. with Sen Vedaa, Meyer, Elkin, K Roers, Wobbema, Weber, and Marcellais present.

**Discussion Topics:**

- Committee Work

**Sen K Roers:** I move a **Do Not Pass**.

**Sen Wobbema:** I second.

**Roll Call Vote: 6 -- YES 1 -- NO -0- ab Motion Passed**

Senators	Vote
Senator Shawn Vedaa	Y
Senator Scott Meyer	Y
Senator Jay R. Elkin	Y
Senator Richard Marcellais	N
Senator Kristin Roers	Y
Senator Mark F. Webber	Y
Senator Michael A. Wobbema	Y

**Sen Wobbema will carry the bill.**

Adjourned at 9:35 a.m.

*Pam Dever, Committee Clerk*

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

**SB 2228: Government and Veterans Affairs Committee (Sen. Vedaa, Chairman)**  
recommends **DO NOT PASS** (6 YEAS, 1 NAY, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB  
2228 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.