Ryan Scala

Special Master Testimony

Good afternoon Professor Persily –

My name is Ryan Scala. I live in Avon, CT and I am a public policy graduate student at UConn. I am also a member of the Princeton Gerrymandering Project (PGP), which works with state partners and performs nonpartisan analysis to try and eliminate gerrymandering nationwide. I am testifying (as a resident, not on behalf of the PGP) regarding the decennial redrawing of the state's congressional districts.

One of the metrics states and organizations use to gauge if a map is gerrymandered or not is if "communities of interest" (COIs) are split. COIs are groups that could be similar racially, economically, geographically, etc. Many other "fair map" advocates and I believe that because of these similarities, these communities should have the opportunity to vote as a bloc for someone that represents them.

The current congressional map does not preserve regional COIs. It splits the Naugatuck Valley, Farmington Valley, and Litchfield Hills, diluting the influence voters in these regions should have. I have submitted two maps as part of my testimony today. Map A preserves regional COIs, and is what I would personally like to see implemented. This map also improves on the compactness, splitting, minority representation, and competitiveness scores from the Dave's Redistricting website. President Biden won the most competitive seat by around 6 percentage points.

I understand that the court order you have to follow might not allow you to draw a map that is as different from the current one as Map A is. The second map I submitted (Map B) is a "least change" map that also tries to unite some of the split COIs. Map B unites Colebrook and Winchester with the rest of the Litchfield Hills in the 5th district, and pairs Oxford with Beacon Falls, the town of Naugatuck, and the lower Naugatuck Valley in the 3rd district. Obviously, most of the scores and statistics relating to this map are similar to the current one because I have changed as little as possible.

The PDF I sent to the chief clerk along with my spoken testimony includes both maps, as well as statistical breakdowns and analyses for each. I hope that you use these maps as guides when making your deliberations. Thank you for your time, and I am willing to answer any questions you may have.