

Overview: New Hampshire Advisory Commission (HB706)

HB706 is a bill that would create a fifteen-member advisory commission and establish redistricting criteria for congressional, state legislative, and executive council districts.

The proposal has bipartisan sponsorship.

Overview of Key Features

Type of Commission

Advisory

What Maps the Commission Will Draw

Congressional, state legislature, executive council, and county commission

Commission Size

Fifteen members (5 Republican, 5 Democrats, 5 unaffiliated)

How Commissioners are Selected

Nine members are randomly appointed by the secretary of state through the following process:

- The secretary of state chooses 45 eligible applicants, 15 of whom are affiliated with the majority party, 15 with the second largest party, and 15 unaffiliated with either of the two largest parties. The secretary must also take into consideration racial, ethnic, gender, and geographic diversity of the applicants.
- The secretary of state then conducts interviews, narrowing down each selection pool to ten applicants who show the ability to compromise, be impartial, and have an appreciation for New Hampshire's diversity.
- The four state legislative leaders then may each strike up to two applicants.
- The secretary of state then randomly appoints three members from the remaining applicants in each pool.

Six members are appointed by the nine randomly selected commissioners, with two members from each selection pool.

Who is Eligible to Be a Commissioner

Registered voters of New Hampshire who have been affiliated with one political party or with no party since the previous statewide election and who have voted in at least two of the past three statewide general elections.

For four years prior to being appointed, commissioners may not have served as – or have been immediate family members to – elected officials, candidates, or staffers at the federal, state, or county level. They also may not have been registered lobbyists or have contributed 75 percent or more of the individual campaign contribution limit to a federal candidate.

How a Map Gets Approved

A plan must receive support from at least nine out of the fifteen commissioners, including two members from each of the three categories of partisan affiliation. The plan may then be submitted to the state legislature for approval.

The Rules That Must Be Followed in Drawing a Map

Unranked or ranked criteria: *ranked*

Criteria	Yes	No
Protections for communities of color	✓	
Preservation of communities of interest	✓	
Ban on partisan gerrymandering	✓	
Respect political subdivisions	✓	
Compactness requirement		✗
Contiguity requirement	✓	

Public Input and Transparency

The commission must hold at least one public hearing in each county before and after proposing a map.

The commission must create a website to provide notice of public hearings, a forum for public comment and map submissions, as well as proposed maps and accompanying data.

All commission meetings are open to the public, and all commission communications and documents are public record.

Along with a proposed map, the commission must release a report that measures the maps against external metrics, including the established redistricting criteria.

Timing

- February 1 of each year ending in one: Deadline to submit commissioner applications
- March 14 of each year ending in one: Deadline for the secretary of state to choose the initial 45 applications
- May 1 of each year ending in one: Deadline for the secretary of state to reduce each selection pool to ten candidates
- Three weeks after receiving the reduced selection pools: Deadline for the state legislative leaders to strike up to two applications each
- May 22 of each year ending in one: Deadline for the secretary of state to appoint the first nine members of the commission
- July 1 of each year ending in one: Deadline for the commission to convene
- January 15 of each year ending in two: Deadline for the commission to approve final plans
- Seven days after a plan is received by the legislature: Deadline for the legislature to conduct a roll-call vote on the plan
- By March 1 of each even year following the decennial census: If the commission fails to adopt a plan, or if the legislature fails to adopt a plan by February 15 of the even year following the decennial census, the state supreme court must appoint a special master
- April 1 of each even year following the decennial census: Deadline for the state supreme court to adopt the special master's plan
- 45 days after adoption of a final map: Deadline for any registered voter to challenge a plan under federal or state law