

Having urban peoples of the state packed into just one or two congressional districts, or aggressively slammed into tiny state house and senate districts is another way of reducing the effectiveness of urban-minded Oregonians. Urbanists that live in core downtowns within the state are underrepresented ideologically within congress and the state legislature when core districts are packed into the tightest districts possible - while not as malicious this compaction is the same strategy that states up until the last decade were blocked from using in Southern states to pack minority voters into minimal districts. In order to protect the interests of cities, it is important that their residents have fair representation in the legislature and congress.

I will add that I do not envy your job - there is no fair or good way to draw single-member districts. If your priority is to maximize competitive districts then massive swings in the legislature or congress can occur from minor shifts in public opinion - and meanwhile, if you make them non-competitive then you are just picking winners and losers. It is a no-win situation.

I encourage all of you to seek out potential reforms to Oregon's constitution to allow multi-member districts elected through a single transferable vote election system (many other options exist as well). With four elected leaders from each state house district you would:

1. Increase media market size of districts to make state politics more coverable by struggling local media.
2. Through a Single Transferable vote ensure that more voters have someone they voted for representing them (even if it was a second or third choice).
3. Most importantly - unlike instant runoff voting or other systems multi-member districts ensures that urban republicans and rural democrats will be represented in the legislature - providing voices to people that currently feel choked out of the system and allowing more opportunities for cross-party collaboration.

I need to get back to work but wish you all luck!

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Clay Peterson
(503)351-0779
ClayPete@gmail.com