

Overview: New Hampshire Advisory Commission (HB 1665)

HB 1665 would create a statutory 15-member advisory commission and establish redistricting criteria for congressional, state legislative, executive council, and county commission districts.

Key Features

Type of Commission

Advisory

What Maps the Commission Draws

Congressional, state legislature, executive council, and county commissions

Commission Size

15 members

How Commissioners are Selected

The secretary of state creates and advertises an application process. Out of the applications received, the majority party leadership in the legislature nominates a pool of ten qualified applicants, and the minority party leadership in the legislature nominates a pool of ten qualified applicants.

15 commissioners are then selected through the following process:

- ***Five*** majority party commissioners are appointed by minority party legislative leadership.
- ***Five*** minority party commissioners are appointed by majority party legislative leadership.
- The ***five*** remaining commissioners unaffiliated with either party are selected by the ten appointed commissioners.

Who is Eligible to Be a Commissioner

Commissioners must be eligible to vote in New Hampshire and may not be current officeholders at the federal, state, executive council, or county level.

How a Map Gets Approved

A plan must receive support from at least nine out of the 15 commissioners. The plan may then be submitted to the state legislature for approval. If the legislature rejects a plan, the commission will redraw the map after reviewing the legislature's concerns. If the legislature continues to deadlock on passage of a map, any registered voter may petition the state supreme court to appoint a special master to draw the map in question.

Rules That Must Be Followed in Drawing a Map

Unranked or ranked criteria: ranked

Criteria	HB1665
Protections for communities of color	Yes
Preservation of communities of interest	Yes
Ban on partisan gerrymandering	Yes
Respect political subdivisions	Yes
Compactness requirement	Yes
Contiguity requirement	Yes

Public Input and Transparency

The commissioner application must obtain information from applicants on whether they have been registered lobbyists or held elective office in the preceding 10 years and on which, if any, state or presidential primary elections they have voted in during the preceding six years.

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. Commissioners and staff may not communicate with outside persons about the redistricting process outside of public meetings.

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

Timing

Selection Process Deadlines

- February 1, 2021: Application period ends
- July 1, 2021: Commission convenes

Plan Approval Deadlines

- December 20, 2021: Commission submits final maps to the legislature which will hold a vote on whether to approve them
- 45 days after adoption of a final map: Registered voters may challenge a plan under federal or state law by filing a petition in state court

Prepared January 28, 2020. This overview is for informational purposes only.