

Grant Pilkington

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To: Grant Pilkington
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Hello,

My name is Nate Levin-Aspenson, and I live in Providence.

I am testifying tonight to urge this body to end the practice of prison gerrymandering, wherein people incarcerated in a district, usually white districts, are counted towards the population of that district rather than their home district.

It is essentially a system to steal political power from over-policed black and brown communities and give that power to mostly white communities.

Rhode Island's prison system imprisons black Rhode Islanders at 9x the rate of white Rhode Islanders, and imprisons latinx people at 3x the rate of white Rhode Islanders.

Over 13% of House district 20's population is made up of incarcerated people from outside the district. House district 15 has 6.5% of the counted population made up of incarcerated people from outside the district.

Prison gerrymandering is an ugly descendant of the 3/5ths compromise, and it has no place in 21st century Rhode Island.

No matter the length of the sentence, if you capture someone and imprison them away from their home, and count them towards the population of the place where the prison resides, you are using the justice system to steal political representation from over-policed communities.

People who are incarcerated should be able to vote on their home district and should be counted in their home district. As Mr. Brace said, the ACI has addresses on file for every inmate.

Again, I urge you: count them where they really live. End prison gerrymandering in Rhode Island.

Thank you.

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Nate Levin-Aspenson
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