

My name is Tamara Gureghian. I have lived in Pennsylvania for 52 years, 42 of those years have been spent in Bucks County. I'd like you to keep two goals to keep in mind when drawing legislative district lines: restoring our faith in government and creating fair districts. There are four main ways to reach these goals:

- 1) First, start with a clean slate. Do not worry about incumbents. Drawing district lines is challenging. There are many competing considerations: school districts, natural boundaries, community interests. Incumbent retention should not be one of them. If an incumbent excels, they will have a list of reasons why they should be elected in whatever district they find themselves in **after** a map is drawn from scratch. If they find they no longer comfortably live in a district in which they once served, then they can feel free to move into that district. Politicians should move to serve the people. District lines should not move to serve politicians. So wipe the slate clean and start fresh.
- 2) Second, establish your values. Drawing lines requires tough choices. There are many competing ways to draw maps. After wiping the slate clean, you must establish your top priorities in drawing a new one. While adhering to legal requirements, prioritizes competitive districts.

We are a purple state. Our districts should reflect that purpleness. Yes, some areas will always lean more blue or red, but those naturally occurring "safe" districts should be equalized. There should be enough competitive districts so we have more compromise, more give and take between the two major political parties, and more voice for independents and moderates, which will lead to tangible results for the people of Pennsylvania.

For those of you concerned about wiping the slate clean and establishing competitive districts, I direct your attention to my senate district, 6. Our registered voters' party affiliation is split 54 to 45 to 1. Our senator's party affiliation? It's with the 45%.

How can that be? Competitive districts encourage legislators to serve **all** the people and **all** the people to vote. You know your ballot can make the difference between a win and a loss. Every vote counts in a competitive district. As we saw with Resolutions 4A and 5A, you may not always get what you want, but you get some of what you want. You feel represented. You feel you have a chance to influence a decision. And so you vote for the person who makes you feel heard, **regardless of party affiliation**.

Both of my districts, senate district 6 and house district 29, are competitive. Both of my legislators are responsive to my calls and requests for meetings. Both support fair redistricting practices. Both win because they listen to their constituents. They have a better understanding of the issues facing a greater variety of people and more compassion for their plight. They have an ear on the people to hear which way they are leaning on issues and they are able to respond accordingly.

Competitive districts allow the will of the people to influence decision making. When the will of the people changes, we see a shift in decision making. This shift is crucial in a healthy democracy. Competitiveness equals compromise which equals a healthy Commonwealth.

Therefore, I ask that you create maps with enough competitive districts to statistically impact decision making. Aim to balance the number of naturally occurring “safe” districts found in the heart of our urban and rural communities. Make them equal. Then, have enough competitive districts to allow legislator from those districts to work together on varying issues and be able to effectively negotiate and move Pennsylvania forward. If you have a significant amount of competitive districts, you will have legislators looking for support from each other, rather than their party heads. This will give the legislators themselves more power and control to meet the needs of their constituents.

Examples of maps with competitive districts can be seen on Dave’s redistricting website under PA Notable maps.

Most competitive senate map: <https://davesredistricting.org/maps#viewmap::7bd0098f-0218-4ffd-ab5e-65da71b12115>

Most competitive house map: <https://davesredistricting.org/maps#viewmap::b7f70ed3-b312-4c57-bdda-12351ddc7815>

- 3) Third, be transparent. We understand that no matter what lines you draw, some people will be unhappy. Nonetheless, more people will be content if you establish that your tough decisions were based on ethical values. Public satisfaction is one of the many reasons why my second request, establish your values, is so important. Establishing your values will facilitate your ability to communicate your reasoning to the people. Thoughts that are outlined and revealed to the public will go a long way in restoring faith in our government.

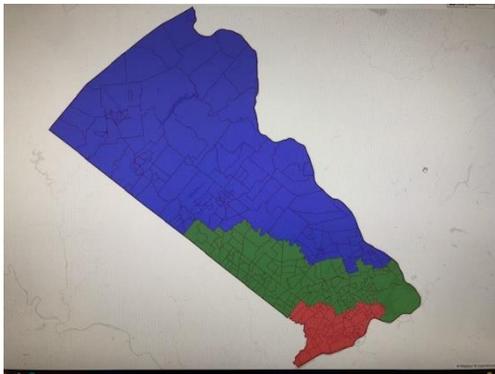
If you split a small community, explain. Clarify why a line may not be good for a particular community, but is good for the state as a whole. Let every Pennsylvanian feel like their community was considered. If a tough choice had to be made, so be it, but tell us **why**, explain, so we know it is not to keep one person or one party in power at the expense of a community. Restore our faith in our government by being transparent with your values and reasoning.

- 4) Fourth, consider citizen drawn maps. The citizens of Pennsylvania have been working long and hard on trying to provide you with the best guidance possible in preserving our Commonwealth. Citizen made maps are available on [Draw the Lines PA](https://drawthelinespa.org/contests-page/2021-contest-winners) (<https://drawthelinespa.org/contests-page/2021-contest-winners>). You can see that the [map by Nicholas Booth](https://drawthelinespa.org/about-us/nicholas-booth-1st-place-statewide-youth) (<https://drawthelinespa.org/about-us/nicholas-booth-1st-place-statewide-youth>) prides itself on ensuring that districts are very compact and competitive. He outlines his reasoning for splitting counties. [Corey Cohen](https://drawthelinespa.org/about-us/corey-cohen-2nd-place-statewide-adult) (<https://drawthelinespa.org/about-us/corey-cohen-2nd-place-statewide-adult>) does the same with his map which also considers minority representation. The maps on Draw the Lines PA, and their explanations, can serve as models of how to be transparent with map drawing.
- 5) As you move forward, I ask for the following:

- a. Continue to allow public feedback. Present maps to the public and allow and invite public comment and guidance. This task is daunting and we are all here and willing to help. We can let you know if a community or geographic boundary or economic tie was inadvertently overlooked.
 - b. Allow sufficient time for feedback on maps to be given—explicitly, at least a week.
- 6) Now, to be specific. Even though my legislators are responsive, this is not to say that I want my districts to remain exactly as drawn. I'm willing to risk my current legislators being in another district, in order for you to wipe the slate clean and draw competitive districts, not just for me, but for as many Pennsylvanians as possible.

Population wise, Bucks County should have 2.5 Senators. We have three main areas in Bucks: Upper, Central and Lower. I agree that these are communities of interest. Some have suggested Bucks be divided horizontally out of respect for these communities. That would create two opposing safe districts and one competitive district. Nevertheless, prioritizing competitiveness would allow you to create two competitive districts.

Balance community interests with competitiveness by drawing lines **diagonally** through Bucks County to create at least two competitive senate districts, rather than just one. If you do that, our representatives will have a better understanding of the needs and interests of more members of the entire Bucks County community. When it comes to voting, our legislators will be able to work with their similarly situated colleagues to come up with creative solutions that will satisfy the needs of both districts and more of Bucks County as a whole.



One way to get two very competitive senate districts out of Bucks County is to go from the top of the county down to and including: New Britain, Doylestown, Buckingham, Wrightstown, Newtown and Lower Makefield. The next district would exclude those and include Lower Southampton, Middletown, Bristol and Falls Ward.

When forming the house districts, make them competitive. Keep in mind Warwick Township should stay intact. We have issues that affect us as a whole. In particular, our water supply. Our township is very small. We don't even have our own post office. Our township leaders do a great job representing us, forcing them to do double time by coordinating with multiple representatives would make it more challenging for them to represent us and secure the resources we need.

- 7) Finally, I will end where I began. Start with a clean slate. If you do, you will send a much needed message to the Commonwealth that the people of Pennsylvania come first. I strongly believe a good map will come from starting fresh and disregarding where incumbents live. Many map

makers have shown this to be possible. Set as your goal competitive districts. Use that as a starting point. Be transparent with the process and with your values and let the people give input on the maps you create before they are finalized.

Through a transparent collaborative process, Pennsylvania will be a model for redistricting. After years of gerrymandering, our map can showcase how redistricting can be done fairly, responsibly and responsively. You have the power to produce a map that will be the paradigm for fair districts. When citizens of the United States are reminded over and over again that Pennsylvania, a once gerrymandered state is now the epitome of excellence in map drawing, the state where the legislature listens to the people, where things get done, where districts are fair, our population will grow. Then, in ten years, we will redraw the lines, not adjusting for a loss, but a gain.

Thank you for your service and the opportunity to submit testimony.

Some sources:

<https://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/OtherServicesEvents/VotingElectionStatistics/Documents/2021%20Primary%20VR%20Stats.pdf> (Voter registration record for May 2021 showing registered voter proportions: Democrats 46%, Republicans 39%, and other 14%)

<https://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/OtherServicesEvents/VotingElectionStatistics/Documents/2020%20Election%20VR%20Stats%20%20FINAL%20REVIEWED.pdf> (Voter registration record for Nov. 2020 showing registered voter proportions: Democrats 46.5%, Republicans 39%, and other 14.5%)

<https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/analysis/a-citizens-guide-to-redistricting.pdf>
(competitive districts)

“Plenty of incumbents have run for office in competitive districts – or in districts where voters otherwise favor the opposing party – and have won in landslides.212” Bruce E. Cain et al., Competition and Redistricting in California: Lessons for Reform 4 (2006)

John D. Griffin, Electoral Competition and Democratic Responsiveness, 68 J. Pol. 911 (2006) (finding that competitive districts produce legislators who are more responsive to slight changes in the ideological leanings of the district).

<https://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/OtherServicesEvents/VotingElectionStatistics/Documents/current%20VoterRegStatsBySenatorialDistricts.xlsx> (PA senate district voter registration statistics)

<https://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/OtherServicesEvents/VotingElectionStatistics/Documents/current%20VoterRegStatsByLegislativeDistricts.xlsx> (PA house district voter registration statistics)