

Good morning. Chairman Nordenberg, Caucus Leaders and members of the Legislative Reapportionment Commission and staff. I am State Representative Robert Freeman of the 136<sup>th</sup> House District. I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today to offer my perspective on the preliminary plan for reapportionment and to request a change in the plan before its final adoption that would restore the Borough of Hellertown to the 136<sup>th</sup> District. I am submitting copies of my testimony as well as copies of the letter that I mailed to Chairman Nordenberg last week regarding my request, and a copy of a Resolution passed by Hellertown

However, even the best of plans can miss important “Community of Interest” nuances as they pertain to small communities. “Community of Interest” considerations are as significant to a good reapportionment plan as are compact and contiguous districts. As such, I am here today to request a change to the reapportionment map that would restore the Borough of Hellertown to the 136<sup>th</sup> House District in the final plan. In the preliminary plan Hellertown was placed in the 131<sup>st</sup> House District. Hellertown belongs in the 136<sup>th</sup> House District where it has been a component part of the district for fifty years. Hellertown, along with the Boroughs of Freemansburg, Wilson, West Easton, Glendon, and the city of Easton, as well as several other municipalities, have been a part of the 136<sup>th</sup> District since the changes established by the 1968 state Constitutional Convention that created single member House

requests that Hellertown be restored to the 136<sup>th</sup> District in the final plan. In their resolution they note that “the 136<sup>th</sup> District includes other Northampton County communities with similar resources and compatible concerns,” such as the City of Easton, Wilson, and Freemansburg. It further notes that Hellertown “shares a regional history, culture, and present-day circumstances and opportunities with the 136<sup>th</sup> District communities” and “has minimal relationships and involvement with other communities in the 131<sup>st</sup> District, which are primarily based in Lehigh and Montgomery counties.” It affirms that “the current 136<sup>th</sup> District communities have spent years embracing a common identity and shared pride that has evolved under the guidance of a shared legislative district and the resources and knowledge it provides.”

community interest in the Commonwealth” because of my  
“understanding of shared regional community needs.”

I ask the members of the Commission to heed the request  
of the elected officials representing the people of Hellertown.  
For all of the reasons that I have cited, and the clear desire  
expressed in Hellertown’s unanimously adopted resolution, I  
respectfully request that Hellertown be restored to the 136<sup>th</sup>  
District in the final plan to resume its long Community of  
Interest association with the municipalities of Freemansburg,  
Easton, Wilson, and the other municipalities that have been  
component parts of the district for fifty years.

Thank you.

ROBERT L. FREEMAN  
136TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

215 NORTHAMPTON STREET  
EASTON, PENNSYLVANIA 18042  
PHONE: (610) 253-5543  
FAX: (610) 250-2645

207 IRVIS OFFICE BUILDING  
P.O. BOX 202136  
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120-2136  
PHONE: (717) 783-3815  
FAX: (717) 783-2152



House of Representatives  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

DEMOCRATIC CHAIRMAN,  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
DEMOCRATIC POLICY

December 29, 2021

Chairman Mark Nordenberg  
Legislative Reapportionment Commission  
209 Irvis Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

RE: Borough of Hellertown

Dear Chairman Nordenberg,

First, I would like to commend you on your service as Chairman of the Legislative Reapportionment Commission and the work that you have done. The reapportionment process is a daunting and arduous task to take on and you have conducted yourself admirably. You and your team have endeavored to provide a process that has been open, fair, and transparent to the public. Indeed, in my many years of service as a House member this has been the most professional and open reapportionment process that I have witnessed.

However, even the best of plans can miss important "Community of Interest" nuances as they pertain to small communities. As such, today I write to respectfully request a change to the reapportionment map that would restore the Borough of Hellertown to the 136<sup>th</sup> House District. In the preliminary plan Hellertown was allocated to the 131<sup>st</sup> House District. Hellertown belongs in the 136<sup>th</sup> House District. It has been a component part of the 136<sup>th</sup> District for fifty years. Hellertown, along with the Boroughs of Freemansburg, Wilson, West Easton, Glendon, and the City of Easton, as well as several other municipalities, have been a part of the 136<sup>th</sup> District since the changes established by the 1968 Constitutional Convention created single member districts. Hellertown, Freemansburg, Easton and the other mentioned municipalities share a "Community of Interest" as a result of their long association as component parts of the 136<sup>th</sup> District for fifty years. Placing Hellertown in the 131<sup>st</sup> District would place it in a district which is a Lehigh County and Montgomery County based district which Hellertown would have little association with and make it the eastern most extremity of a district that stretches across Montgomery and Lehigh Counties, barely penetrating into Northampton County.

As the State Representative for the 136<sup>th</sup> District for over thirty-five years I have established a long association with Hellertown, coming to know and work with their elected and community leaders, assisting them in securing funding for important community projects, holding monthly office hours in Hellertown Borough Hall to make myself even more available to meet with constituents, and regularly participating in Hellertown's community events. From Hellertown's Memorial Day ceremony, to participating in their Community Days, Halloween parade, the annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony,

RESOLUTION 22-02

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF HELLERTOWN, NORTHAMPTON COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA IN SUPPORT OF KEEPING HELLERTOWN BOROUGH IN THE 136<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT.

WHEREAS, Hellertown Borough has been a small community that is part of the 136<sup>th</sup> District for over 50 years; and

WHEREAS, the preliminary plans for state redistricting has put Hellertown Borough in the 131<sup>st</sup> District; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor, Council, staff and citizens of the Borough of Hellertown do not support the proposed redistricting ; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Borough of Hellertown resolutely supports keeping Hellertown Borough in the 136<sup>th</sup> District for the following purposes:

1. The 136<sup>th</sup> District includes other Northampton County communities with similar resources and concerns compatible with those of Hellertown – municipalities such as the City of Easton, Wilson, Freemansburg; the Borough shares a regional history, culture, and present-day circumstances and opportunities with the 136<sup>th</sup> District communities – and not those of the 131<sup>st</sup> District – which defines a fairer foundation for legislative service with a common constituency base
2. Hellertown Borough has minimal relationships and involvement with other communities in the 131<sup>st</sup> District, which are primarily based in Lehigh and Montgomery counties; the current 136<sup>th</sup> District communities have spent years embracing a common identity and shared pride that has evolved under the guidance of a shared legislative district and the resources and knowledge it provides
3. Representative Robert Freeman has a long and productive relationship with this community – working with community leaders, supporting community initiatives, attending community events, securing grant funding for worthy projects and holding monthly office hours in the Borough where citizens know they can visit to discuss state issues; these personal connections with the residential, business, and government community are representative of a majority constituency that has decided to retain Rep. Freeman for decades to represent their community interest within the Commonwealth because of his understanding of shared regional community needs

We believe on a local level that this redistricting takes the choice away from us, the voters, in choosing our representative interests and we request that our voice as an affected community be recognized to ensure our civil right to fair representation by resorting Hellertown to the 136<sup>th</sup> District in the final plan.