

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
LEGISLATIVE REAPPORTIONMENT COMMISSION

In re: Public Meeting of the Legislative
Reapportionment Commission

VOLUME XXI - Pages 1285-1370

Stenographic report of hearing held
in Hearing Room No. 1, North Office
Building, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Friday
January 7, 2022
1:00 p.m.

MEMBERS OF LEGISLATIVE REAPPORTIONMENT COMMISSION

Sen. Kim Ward	Rep. Kerry Benninghoff
Sen. Jay Costa	Rep. Matthew Bradford, (Deputy Commissioner for Rep. Joanna McClinton)

Also Present:

Robert L. Byer, Esq., Chief Counsel
G. Reynolds Clark, Executive Director
Dr. Jonathan Cervas, Redistricting Consultant
Leah Mintz, Assistant Counsel
G. Carlton Logue, Esq. Deputy Counsel, Senate Majority Leader
Chad Davis, Research Analyst, Senate Republican Policy Office
C.J. Hafner, Esq., Chief Counsel, Senate Democratic Leader
Ronald N. Jumper, Esq. Deputy Chief Counsel, Senate Democratic
Leader
Lora S. Schoenberg, Director, Senate Democratic Legislative
Services
Rod Corey, Esq., Chief Counsel, House Republican Caucus
James Mann, Esq., Senior Deputy Chief Counsel, House
Republican Caucus
Katherine Testa, Esq., Senior Legal Counsel, House
Republican Caucus
William R. Schaller, Director, House Republican District
Operations
Michael Schwoyer, Esq., Special Counsel, Deputy Chief of
Staff for Legislation and Policy, House Democratic Caucus

Reported by:
Ann-Marie P. Sweeney
Official Reporter

1 Also Present:

2 Justin Klos, Director, House Democratic Office of
Demographic Analysis

3 David Brogan, Esq., Director, House Democratic Legislation
and Policy

4 Andrew McGinley, Esq., General Counsel, House Democratic
Government Oversight Committee

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1 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Good afternoon, everyone. My
2 name is Mark Nordenberg. As Chair of the Legislative
3 Reapportionment Commission, it is my pleasure to invite all of
4 you, those here in the hearing room and those who are joining
5 us by the livestream, to this afternoon's hearing. I am
6 joined in this hearing by other Members of the Commission,
7 including Senator Kim Ward, the Majority Leader of the Senate,
8 who has joined us by Zoom; by Senator Jay Costa, the
9 Democratic Leader of the Senate; Kerry Benninghoff, the
10 Majority Leader of the House will be here momentarily; and
11 Representative Matt Bradford is sitting in for Democratic
12 Leader Joanna McClinton as her Deputy today.

13 And we start with a very special guest, Senator
14 Lisa Boscola. Senator, it's nice to see you again. It's nice
15 to have you here. The floor is yours.

16 SENATOR BOSCOLA: Aw, that was so warming. Thank
17 you. You make me feel at ease right away.

18 So thank you for your service. You are the voice
19 of the ordinary Pennsylvanian on this Commission.
20 Pennsylvania is counting on you, they are, to hold the elected
21 Leaders on this Commission accountable for what's really at
22 stake here. These Leaders are going to do what they want to
23 do. They manipulate maps to benefit the Caucus. That's what
24 their role is. I don't know you, Mr. Chairman, very well, but
25 I've read a lot, and I have faith that you want maps that

1 fairly represent our communities.

2 The proposed Senate maps in the Lehigh Valley are
3 not reflective of what's in the Valley's best interest. The
4 new 14th is plopped in the heart of the Lehigh Valley, carving
5 up our two largest cities and school districts to suit
6 Harrisburg's needs, not the needs of these communities.
7 Today, the Lehigh Valley enjoys representation of three
8 Senators - the 16th, the 18th, and the 40th. These seats are
9 competitive and swing, and are far more reflective of
10 communities of interest that make up the Lehigh Valley.
11 Politically speaking, the end result of the preliminary plan
12 superpacks Democrats into one seat and superpacks Republicans
13 in two other seats, and that's not reflective of the Lehigh
14 Valley.

15 When it comes to redistricting, history shows that
16 Northampton County is butchered, carved up, and patched
17 together every cycle for decades, and this one is proving to
18 be no different. This is the second time I've had to appear
19 at these hearings to express frustration and fight for better
20 maps, and I'm the only Senator that's had to do this. This is
21 why I've worked so hard at the forefront of real redistricting
22 reform with Fair Districts, the Committee of Seventy, the
23 League of Women Voters. I wanted to create an independent
24 commission to do this, to take the politics out of it, worked
25 on it for decades. And for the record, in 2018, the Senate

1 did pass Senate Bill No. 22, which I was the prime sponsor of,
2 that would have created an independent commission, but it
3 failed to go anywhere in the House.

4 Northampton County has a population of 305,000
5 people, and by its own right should have its own senatorial
6 district. Even with the steady growth in population, which
7 should result in a more compact district, the 18th District
8 changes once again by 40 percent. In over 20 years as a State
9 Senator, I have represented 44 different municipalities, 5
10 only remained constant. And I submit these maps as evidence
11 of the 18th being routinely gerrymandered. Slide 1, you will
12 see. And if you just look at it without even going into
13 detail, I can probably put it this way: Parts of Monroe
14 County in, parts of Monroe County out. Northern Northampton
15 County, locally known as the Slate Belt, Slate Belt in, then
16 Slate Belt back out, Slate Belt back in again. Nazareth in,
17 Nazareth out. Easton, the county seat, in, Easton out, Easton
18 back in again. And then you have portions of Bethlehem out,
19 all of Bethlehem in, portions of Bethlehem in, out. Whitehall
20 out, Whitehall in, Whitehall out. So you get my point. I
21 just named the larger areas, but this scenario plays out in 44
22 municipalities. I would name them all, but it's going to take
23 up too much time.

24 Why is the 18th significantly altered every single
25 redistricting cycle? Perhaps it's because Northampton is a

1 bellwether county when it comes to national and statewide
2 elections that make it ripe for gerrymandering. Maybe it's
3 because both counties have a higher percentage of Independents
4 and not-affiliated voters than any other areas of the State,
5 but whatever the political reason is, it has to stop. In
6 2000, I actually sued because the final plan removed
7 Northampton's county seat, the city of Easton, from the 18th
8 District and dropped it into the 24th Senatorial District with
9 towns in Bucks County for purely political purposes. And that
10 was solely to remove an unpopular Senator, and some on the
11 Commission know that story.

12 Here I am, again, fighting against another
13 politically motivated shredding of the 18th Senatorial
14 District. And the reason I fight so hard is because I see
15 firsthand what happens when communities are left behind, when
16 this process unnecessarily separates them from where they
17 belong. Easton suffered for a decade, and I don't want that
18 same fate to happen to Bethlehem or any other community I
19 represent.

20 Mr. Chairman, one of my biggest objections to the
21 preliminary plan is how it treats the city of Bethlehem, where
22 I was born and raised. The separation of the neighborhood of
23 west Bethlehem and merging it with a large portion of
24 Allentown in the newly created 14th seat needs to change.
25 It's unnecessary. It's unconstitutional. West Bethlehem is a

1 neighborhood in the city of Bethlehem, a city with just under
2 80,000 residents. West Bethlehem, like other neighborhoods in
3 Bethlehem - downtown, northeast, south side - all vote for
4 Bethlehem's mayor, city council, school board. That's why my
5 office sits in the heart of the city, two blocks from west
6 Bethlehem, six block from south Bethlehem. One hundred years
7 ago, west Bethlehem merged with the city of Bethlehem because
8 the residents wanted to be united and saw the benefit of one
9 city, not unlike when Allegheny County, now the north side of
10 Pittsburgh, merged with the city of Pittsburgh.
11 Coincidentally, it happened around the same time.

12 Bethlehem is the seventh largest city in this
13 Commonwealth. All comparable sized cities in Pennsylvania sit
14 in their on own senatorial district. So why are we breaking
15 up this city? It must be politically motivated, because
16 there's no other reason to splinter Bethlehem into two
17 senatorial seats. Bethlehem is the largest municipality in
18 Northampton County. It is the anchor and urban core of that
19 county. The city owns and operates a regional water and sewer
20 system serving municipalities in Northampton. 911 services
21 are provided by Northampton County to the city of Bethlehem,
22 that includes west Bethlehem. Moreover, Bethlehem is the
23 largest municipality that makes up the Bethlehem Area School
24 District, the sixth largest in the State, located in
25 Northampton County. Its intermediate unit is in Northampton

1 County.

2 The cities of Allentown and Bethlehem have no
3 overlapping municipal services. Allentown has its own school
4 district, which is part of a separate intermediate unit in
5 Lehigh County. Merging these cities doesn't serve either
6 community. The school districts and cities are vastly
7 different. They have unique needs that demand separate
8 representation in the Senate, like they enjoy today. They are
9 too large to be competing for the attention of one Senator for
10 limited resources. One of these cities and school districts
11 will lose out under this plan, and that's just wrong.

12 Mr. Chairman, the plan for the 18th Northampton
13 based district needs to mirror its growth. It hasn't, with
14 what I've shown you for the last, well, four decades. A more
15 compact district, taking the opportunity to better unify
16 school districts and shedding communities that have more in
17 common with Lehigh County. Mr. Chairman, I'm all for creating
18 new opportunities for people, whether it's minorities, people
19 of color, women, LGBTQ. When I first ran for the Senate, I
20 was only one of seven women in the Chamber, so I understand
21 that need for opportunity. That being said, packing Democrats
22 or cracking Republicans to artificially create a
23 minority-influence seat at the expense of true communities of
24 interest here in the Lehigh Valley is not the answer. News
25 articles that I've been reading report that there are far

1 better areas in the State where a minority-influence seat can
2 actually have the desired result you're looking for. What is
3 proposed in the Lehigh Valley does not accomplish that goal.
4 But what you do do is splinter cities and school districts,
5 big ones.

6 One last point, Mr. Chairman. The Supreme Court
7 frowns upon localized challenges to State maps, regardless of
8 how egregious, as a reason to throw out any final map. I know
9 this firsthand, because some of the members of the Supreme
10 Court in the Easton suit that I filed 20 years ago clearly
11 thought that what happened to Easton in the 18th was wrong.
12 But alone, it was not enough to require a complete redraw of
13 the State map. And that is probably what some of the
14 Commissioners are counting on. So what happens here now,
15 before the final maps are voted on, is so critical for areas
16 like the Lehigh Valley. That's why it's so important.

17 You, Mr. Chairman, need to insure that
18 municipalities like Bethlehem are not split up unless
19 absolutely necessary. These words were written into our State
20 Constitution for a reason, and they should mean something.
21 And you have that profound influence on the application. Make
22 no mistake, the decisions you make today will set precedent
23 for the next maps and have real impacts on communities for a
24 decade and beyond. Better maps in the Lehigh Valley start
25 with a unified city of Bethlehem, in a district with

1 communities with which it shares municipal services and a
2 school district, one that reflects real communities of
3 interest, not ones artificially created to support a
4 Harrisburg political narrative.

5 Mr. Chairman, you can stop these unnecessary
6 municipal splits. You can stop one more butchering of the
7 18th Senatorial District. And as you see through public
8 comment, our community is standing up and saying enough is
9 enough. Mr. Chairman, I'm putting my faith in you to create
10 maps that keep the city of Bethlehem whole in a more compact
11 18th Senatorial District. You're our voice. We're counting
12 on you.

13 Thank you for allowing me to speak my mind today.
14 Senator Costa is used to it.

15 (Laughter.)

16 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Well, I was going to say in
17 thanking you for your comments that I think you're known for
18 speaking your mind, and I say that in a positive way. So
19 thank you for taking the time to be here in person and to do
20 that today. And thank you for the maps. Thank you for your
21 written testimony, and we have heard from a number of people
22 in your home region.

23 Are there questions or comments?

24 Senator Costa.

25 SENATOR COSTA: Just a comment. I think,

1 certainly, my longtime friend and colleague has spoken her
2 mind, but I will tell you, it's always in a positive way. I
3 don't think there's ever been a time where Senator Boscola has
4 raised issues that have not come from the heart, particularly
5 when it relates to issues she's very passionate about. And
6 she's passionate about her community, as evidenced by her
7 testimony today, and I just want to thank you for being here.
8 Also your historical perspective in relating back to the city
9 of Pittsburgh in terms of the Allegheny city merging into
10 Pittsburgh, we are going through something like that right
11 now, the community of Wilkinsburg looking to merge into the
12 city of Pittsburgh as well, largely because of the things that
13 you talked about, communities of interest and wanting to be a
14 part of something along those lines. So I appreciate your
15 testimony today.

16 The maps you provided I think will give us further
17 guidance as we go forward, and thank you again for your
18 passion.

19 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Senator Ward.

20 SENATOR K. WARD: Am I unmuted? You're probably
21 going to mute me on purpose, Chancellor. Probably are.

22 So thank you so much, Senator Boscola. I remember
23 your passion 10 years ago when we were doing maps and how you
24 spoke on the floor and held up the maps. I remember that
25 vividly. The district that you serve, the 18th, in the new

1 map, you're all within one county now, correct?

2 SENATOR BOSCOLA: Correct.

3 SENATOR K. WARD: Okay. So this is the most
4 compact map that you have seen, in that it only puts you in
5 one county?

6 SENATOR BOSCOLA: Right.

7 SENATOR K. WARD: Okay.

8 SENATOR BOSCOLA: What's your point?

9 SENATOR K. WARD: So when you're talking about two
10 districts, so when we created this seat, it was for a Latino
11 district, and we would do better if we had all of Bethlehem
12 city instead of just part of Bethlehem city. Your school
13 district wouldn't be split, and we would change the Latino
14 voting population from 27.9 to 33.5 percent. That would also
15 solve the problem while also helping us to achieve the goal of
16 creating a more Latino district, as that continues to grow
17 with the Latino population, as it has over the past 10 years.
18 You know, more and more Latinos are moving into that area.
19 But your district that you serve, the way the map is written
20 right now, that changes the makeup of the district from--I
21 don't know what your makeup is now, but it makes it a plus-2
22 Republican district, correct? A plus-2 swing, the way the map
23 is right now.

24 SENATOR BOSCOLA: That's how Commissioners look at
25 it, I guess, because I never looked at it like .2. I've

1 always represented a swing district, and this one's going to
2 be swing again, and I don't fear it.

3 SENATOR K. WARD: Your district isn't really
4 swing, maybe because you're in it and you do such a great job
5 and your constituents love you.

6 And I just want to address the school district.
7 So we don't like to split school districts, but the city of
8 Pittsburgh school district, I believe, is split three ways.
9 You know, it's not that it's a bad thing to have more than one
10 Representative, and House seats are always split, which cracks
11 me up, because they're so small and they're always split.
12 They have service. They get service from two instead of one
13 Representative.

14 That's really all I wanted to say. I appreciate,
15 Lisa -- Senator Boscola, I always appreciate you. I always
16 appreciate your comments, and I always appreciate the way you
17 dress. You know that, so.

18 SENATOR BOSCOLA: That's something we do have in
19 common--

20 SENATOR K. WARD: Lisa and I have a lot of the
21 same clothes.

22 SENATOR BOSCOLA: --the dress compliment.

23 SENATOR K. WARD: Lisa and I share a lot of the
24 same clothes, so.

25 SENATOR BOSCOLA: But let me just point out, when

1 you look at the maps that I put up, see how in 2012, that's
2 what I call my transformer map.

3 SENATOR K. WARD: They have to put it back up. I
4 can't see it from here.

5 Yeah, that's crazy looking.

6 SENATOR BOSCOLA: Anyway, for the last probably
7 two cycles before that, there has been a concerted effort to
8 move what I'd say the 18th into Lehigh County to surround
9 Allentown, right. So you see how Allentown, it's right in
10 between the boot there. All right, these two legs
11 (indicating). And the whole point that was told to me 20
12 years ago, it was there was a concerted effort to put
13 Allentown and Bethlehem together to create a super-Democratic
14 seat. It wasn't about a Latino seat, it was about a
15 super-Democratic seat, so that all around it would go
16 Republican. And it's kind of what's happening here, it's
17 playing out today, because if you do take Allentown and
18 Bethlehem and put them together, you will have three swing
19 seats that turned into super-Republican 16th, and then the
20 18th, and then the Monroe County seat, which you put up into
21 Pike and Monroe. So I think it plays well for the Democratic
22 Caucus, and I guess, you know, the narrative you're talking
23 about by creating a minority-influence seat, it does, but at
24 the expense of splitting up these two communities that have
25 nothing in common.

1 In fact, I say this routinely, and why you're
2 going to hear from my school districts and cities in the next
3 few weeks, is because they recognize if one Senator represents
4 Allentown and Bethlehem, the limited resources that that
5 Senator has, whether it's RCAP, line-item funding, whatever it
6 is, it's mostly going to be centered toward Allentown, because
7 that's the neediest community. I mean, they're the third
8 largest school district, Bethlehem is like the sixth largest.
9 Our cities, mine's the seventh and that's the third. The
10 communities of interest don't make any sense. That's why I
11 talked about it in my testimony, they're so different, have so
12 many different needs.

13 But I also have to tell you, because I've always
14 spoken my mind, this was a plan from the Republican Caucus
15 from day one, and that was 30 years ago, was to surround the
16 18th around Allentown, so one day they come before this
17 Commission and say, look, it makes sense to combine them.
18 Now, maybe you found a way by saying, well, it's a minority-
19 influence district, but the truth of the matter is, that's the
20 plan, because if you make it a super-Democratic seat, all
21 around it will go Republican. You'll never have any swing
22 seats in the Lehigh Valley ever again. We have three now. I
23 think that's perfect.

24 SENATOR K. WARD: Well, actually, we did not want
25 to actually hand over a seat, but there was so much testimony

1 about a Latino seat, so much testimony in the earlier
2 hearings, and they were talking about Allentown, that's what
3 they talked about.

4 SENATOR BOSCOLA: Well, Allentown has a minority
5 seat as it is now. The 16th is a minority seat, as it is now.
6 And there's other areas.

7 SENATOR K. WARD: But it's not--

8 SENATOR BOSCOLA: You know, Senator Ward, there
9 are areas around this State, there is Lancaster, Philadelphia,
10 Reading, Norristown, Hazleton, where there's a lot more
11 concentrated minorities. What you're trying to do here is
12 trying to capture them in the Lehigh Valley somehow and then
13 tear up communities to do it.

14 SENATOR K. WARD: So they keep talking about
15 Lancaster. Lancaster has a 13-percent Latino district, 13.
16 This sitting here right now, this is not the map, the one that
17 was proposed and that we voted on is not the map that we put
18 forward, because it doesn't capture as many Latinos as we had
19 hoped to capture. We didn't want to say, here, take this
20 seat, since you brought up Republican and Democrat, sitting in
21 the Republican Caucus and make it a Democrat seat. That isn't
22 something that we were looking to do at all, but it's what we
23 ended up doing and, you know, it's done, and hopefully, we can
24 make it stronger in some way. And, you know, we put -- we are
25 going to--

1 SENATOR BOSCOLA: Well, then--

2 SENATOR K. WARD: --wait, that's okay. We are
3 going to print out what the numbers are, because if you do put
4 Senator Browne in that district, is what they kept talking
5 about, it actually dilutes the Latino vote, because he has a
6 part of the district that is not very Latino but is, in other
7 words, you know, Caucasian. It actually dilutes it a little
8 bit, and there's no incumbent. If we're going to try to
9 create a Latino seat, and I know Senator Tartaglione has a
10 very high Latino population in her district, is it important
11 to not have an incumbent in that seat? Do you think that's
12 important to not have an incumbent, to actually--because that
13 33.5 percent is a big block of primary voters. So is it
14 important to not have an incumbent in a seat that we try to
15 create like that?

16 SENATOR BOSCOLA: I know what you're trying to do.

17 SENATOR K. WARD: I'm trying to ask a question.

18 SENATOR BOSCOLA: Yeah, but you can take portions
19 of South Whitehall Township without breaking up the seventh
20 largest city and accomplish your goal, too. There's ways of
21 achieving it. I just know that over time what politically was
22 supposed to happen to the 18th and then the 16th. And you can
23 justify it any way you want. I'm not that naive. This was a
24 plan that was in place for 30 years.

25 SENATOR K. WARD: I have no idea what the was plan

1 30 years ago.

2 SENATOR BOSCOLA: I do.

3 SENATOR K. WARD: I don't have any idea what was
4 in place 10 years ago. This is my first run at it.

5 SENATOR BOSCOLA: I know. When I sued 20 years
6 ago, that's what I was told too by people that came before
7 you, what the real plan was.

8 SENATOR K. WARD: Okay.

9 Senator BOSCOLA. But anyway, there's places where
10 you can do it. You just can't split these two cities.
11 They're totally separate when it comes to their needs. I know
12 what you're trying to do. All I can say to you is you're not
13 supposed to split cities unless absolutely necessary, and
14 you're splitting up these two cities, the two largest cities
15 in this Commonwealth, and it's absolutely unnecessary. And
16 that's the constitutional issue of it all.

17 SENATOR K. WARD: We do split cities. We split
18 Pittsburgh three ways, we split Philly--

19 SENATOR BOSCOLA: You do not -- Pittsburgh has so
20 much population, one Senator can't capture it, right? And the
21 same with Philadelphia. The thing is, Allentown has enough
22 population to have one Senator and other areas around it, same
23 with the city of Bethlehem. One Senator and other things
24 around it.

25 SENATOR K. WARD: Same with Pittsburgh.

1 SENATOR COSTA: Mr. Chairman.

2 SENATOR K. WARD: Well, that's all. Thank you,
3 Senator Boscola.

4 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Let me suggest that we've taken
5 almost a half-hour, and we've got other people waiting in the
6 wings. So thank you very much for being here and for
7 participating in such a lively discussion.

8 SENATOR BOSCOLA: You knew it was going to happen,
9 right?

10 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Our next speaker will be coming
11 in by Zoom. He is Representative Chris Rabb, who is from
12 Philadelphia and is going to discuss northwest Philadelphia.

13 REPRESENTATIVE RABB: Hello.

14 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Welcome, sir. The floor is
15 yours.

16 REPRESENTATIVE RABB: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and
17 Members of the Legislative Reapportionment Commission. It's
18 an honor to testify before you today. I'm State
19 Representative Chris Rabb, and I'm in my third term in office.
20 My current legislative district covers upper northwest
21 Philadelphia. Here I emphasize the word "current," because
22 should the preliminary maps you voted on last month be
23 implemented and should I choose to run for reelection this
24 May, I will no longer be able to run in the 200th Legislative
25 District. Instead, based on where my home is, where I've

1 lived for 20 years, I'll be eligible to run in the 194th
2 Legislative District, long represented by my colleague
3 Representative Pam DeLissio. I hasten to add that, despite
4 this preface, I'm not testifying to bemoan the distinct
5 misfortune of running against a fellow Democratic incumbent.
6 In fact, I'm here to raise two interrelated points for this
7 Commission's consideration.

8 First, that despite the anomalous and unenviable
9 situation in which I find myself at present, I'm here to
10 publicly affirm the process led by the Chairman in drafting
11 these legislative maps. As a rank-and-file member on the
12 outside of the reapportionment process, I found it to be
13 inclusive, rigorous, and transparent. Over my five years in
14 elective office, I've heard many stories about the bad old
15 days, with horse trading in smoke-filled rooms, where there
16 were Caucus Leaders drawing up maps for themselves and their
17 allies, where incumbents could request carving the homes of
18 their nemeses out of their districts, where constituents and
19 community stakeholders who sought information and a voice
20 around the redistricting process were sidelined, ignored, or
21 worse. This has not been my experience as an observer of the
22 methods of this Commission, and I am heartened by the openness
23 and inventiveness of both the process and the resources made
24 available to average Pennsylvanians regardless of social
25 status.

1 As a self-proclaimed map nerd, the online tools
2 the average netizen can use to build their own maps has been
3 inspiring and a little bit addicting. However, despite this
4 professed cartographic addiction, I have refrained from
5 redrawing or promoting a legislative map for my own current
6 district, because, frankly, I trust the people in the process.
7 Admittedly, over the years I have thought to myself, ooh, I
8 would love to represent that historic site or that park or rec
9 center, but the simple fact is the 200th Legislative District
10 isn't mine. I'm just a public servant who every two years has
11 to re-earn the privilege of representing whatever district in
12 which I may live. Irrespective of my own opinions and desires
13 as an incumbent deeply committed to my constituents, the
14 people should choose their public servants, not the other way
15 around.

16 Which leads me to my second, and final, point.
17 The people whose voices should be the loudest and most
18 affirmed in this process are not incumbents like me,
19 politicians, lobbyists, other self-interested parties, but
20 engaged members of communities of interest. The neighborhood
21 that I call home is Mount Airy, in the center of the district.
22 It is a rare gem, being one of only a handful of longstanding
23 racially integrated communities in the entire nation. The
24 preliminary House maps for northwest Philly divide this
25 community along political ward lines that few residents know

1 or care about. While I don't oppose an outcome where I'm
2 forced to run against another incumbent, I do, however,
3 strongly urge this Commission to keep Mount Airy intact. The
4 proposed redistricting combines only a portion of Mount Airy
5 with communities located on the other side of an actual gorge,
6 the Wissahickon Creek.

7 I also firmly believe that Mount Airy should
8 maintain its longstanding connection to the adjacent community
9 of Chestnut Hill in the final map. This readjustment would
10 honor the historical and cultural ties between these two
11 neighborhoods. As seen, the proposed reconfigurations of this
12 part of northwest Philadelphia that respect the bulk of the
13 work this Commission has already done in that area, yet also
14 maintains the aforementioned cohesion.

15 Alas, we must not make the excellent the enemy of
16 the good, and I acknowledge that perfection is not an option
17 in your arduous mission. Nevertheless, I implore you to find
18 not the perfect solution, just a better way to create maps in
19 this area to insure they are culturally congruous.

20 I thank you all for your time and consideration.

21 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Thank you for your thought-
22 provoking and selfless comments.

23 Are there questions from the panel?

24 Representative Bradford.

25 REPRESENTATIVE BRADFORD: Thank you, Chris,

1 Representative Rabb.

2 I just want to thank you so much for coming
3 forward. I realize it is an unenviable position but one that
4 you, as always, have presented with a thoughtful, articulate,
5 and classy way for your community and for the position you
6 find yourself in. I just want you to know how much a lot of
7 us appreciate your sincere words about your district and just
8 appreciate you coming here today and saying what you did, the
9 way you did. You're a good guy.

10 Thank you.

11 REPRESENTATIVE RABB: Thank you.

12 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Anything else?

13 (There was no response.)

14 Thank you very much, Representative Rabb. Happy
15 New Year, and have a good weekend.

16 REPRESENTATIVE RABB: Thank you, Chairman.

17 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Our third speaker is a
18 returning guest. He is Khalif Ali from the Common Cause
19 organization, and he is on the screen. Welcome back.

20 MR. ALI: Thank you for having me.

21 Well, good afternoon. As Chairman Nordenberg
22 said, my name is Khalif Ali. I'm the Executive Director of
23 Common Cause PA. Thank you for the opportunity to provide
24 testimony today on the draft House and Senate maps. Well,
25 really primarily on the House map. I want to start today by

1 acknowledging the immense amount of work that you, as a Member
2 of LRC, have put in over the last several months drawing maps
3 that truly take into account public testimony, racial equity
4 considerations, along with the redistricting criteria mandated
5 by the Pennsylvania Constitution. It's not an easy task. We
6 have been heartened by how you, under the leadership of Chair
7 Nordenberg, have been able to produce a preliminary map that
8 could be the basis for a truly historic moment in Pennsylvania
9 of redistricting.

10 Based on our analysis, these maps are generally
11 more compact and have fewer municipal splits than in the 2011
12 maps. However, as you have heard from us before, the true
13 measure of a map is how it serves the people of Pennsylvania.
14 Redistricting is not simply about following a discreet set of
15 rules towards a single inevitable outcome. Instead, it is
16 about drawing districts where every Pennsylvanian, regardless
17 of race, political affiliation, or ZIP Code, has an equal
18 opportunity to have their voice heard in the Pennsylvania
19 legislature. Of course, this does not mean that political
20 geography or the need to comply with constitutional
21 redistricting criteria are unimportant. Rather, redistricting
22 should be a transparent balancing act where the end result is
23 representative maps that protect the voices of Pennsylvanians,
24 particularly Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian Pacific
25 Islander, and other communities of color who have historically

1 been excluded or harmed by the redistricting process.

2 I'd like to move now to some specific concerns
3 about the proposed maps. These concerns are based on our
4 analysis, as well as extensive conversations with partners and
5 allies who represent impacted communities. Given the time
6 constraints, I'm going to only focus on the House map and move
7 relatively quickly through this list, but will also submit
8 written testimony that provides additional information. Our
9 analysis focuses on six regions - Philadelphia, Reading,
10 Lancaster, Harrisburg, Lehigh, and Pittsburgh. While there
11 may be other areas of concern, we believe these six
12 geographies have the greatest impact on communities of color,
13 and as such have decided to prioritize them.

14 As a general matter, our critiques in each of
15 these areas boils down to one or both of two things. First,
16 that the municipality is split more times than was necessary
17 to achieve population equality, and in doing so, this has made
18 it more difficult for voters in that municipality to elect
19 someone who can address their unique concerns. And second,
20 that there are alternative configurations that provide greater
21 voting power to BIPOC communities who have historically been
22 disenfranchised.

23 In Philadelphia, with regard to just the House
24 map, we believe that the House districts are a good start, but
25 encourage the LRC to adjust the lines so that there is a third

1 majority Latinx district rather than the current configuration
2 which combines Latinx and Black populations into a coalition
3 district that then becomes effective for either a Black or a
4 Latinx candidate.

5 Reading, as you know, Reading is divided into
6 three separate districts. However, our analysis, along with
7 any number of publicly submitted maps, including the
8 Pennsylvania People's Map, has shown that the people of
9 Reading are better served by dividing the municipality into
10 only two districts. Additionally, we believe that an
11 additional Latinx-influence district could be drawn in the
12 Reading area and recommend that the LRC take that path.

13 In Lancaster, our concern is not the number of
14 splits but rather where the splits are placed. We recommend,
15 in accordance with the Unity Map submitted by PA Voice, that
16 Lancaster be split to put Franklin and Marshall in a separate
17 district from the rest of the municipality. This
18 configuration keeps the BIPOC population more whole, which in
19 turn provides greater electoral influence for communities who
20 have been left out of the process.

21 With regard to Harrisburg, the draft LRC map would
22 divide Harrisburg at a similar north/south dividing line to
23 the map proposed by Fair Districts PA. However, the LRC draft
24 map would place central and northern Harrisburg with Lemoyne,
25 Camp Hill, and East Pennsboro across the river in Cumberland,

1 rather than with adjacent municipalities in Dauphin. While
2 this arrangement produces three safe Democratic districts in
3 and surrounding Harrisburg, it does so by potentially diluting
4 representation of communities of color. We would encourage
5 the LRC to revisit this configuration and consider keeping
6 Harrisburg with surrounding parts of Dauphin County that have
7 similar BIPOC populations.

8 For Lehigh, the draft LRC map divides Allentown
9 into three districts. The division is not mandated either by
10 equal population concerns or by protecting communities of
11 interest in the municipality. In fact, in the current 2011
12 map, Allentown is split into two districts, both of which have
13 a Latinx majority. However, only one of the districts have
14 been able to elect a Latino Representative to the Pennsylvania
15 House. While we understand that determining effectiveness
16 from a legal standpoint requires additional analysis, we are
17 concerned that the proposed maps reduce the Latinx population
18 in all three districts, which will likely make it more
19 difficult for these communities to elect a candidate of their
20 choice. We would ask that the LRC share their racially
21 polarized voting analysis, specifically as it relates to the
22 Lehigh Valley, so we can determine whether the proposed
23 configuration of districts will likely result in an equal
24 opportunity for Latinx voters to elect a candidate of their
25 choice.

1 Finally, in my hometown of Pittsburgh, we
2 appreciate the approach that the LRC draft map has taken in
3 the Allegheny County/Pittsburgh area. While we may quibble on
4 the exact placement of some of the district lines, we commend
5 the LRC for incorporating public comment, particularly from
6 Pennsylvania Voice, in the region.

7 Thank you. Thank you, again, for all the work you
8 have put into creating these maps, as well as the attention to
9 public testimony, including today.

10 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Thank you for all the help that
11 you have provided us from the beginning to this point.

12 Are there any questions or comments for Mr. Ali?
13 Majority Leader Benninghoff.

14 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Good afternoon, Mr.
15 Ali. Thank you for being here. I appreciate your testimony.

16 I just wanted a clarification. You went down
17 Philly, Reading, Lancaster, Harrisburg, I missed one of the
18 others, Pittsburgh pretty well. I was trying to take some
19 notes. But one thing you said regarding Harrisburg, I think
20 you said the north split of the Fair Districts Maps was more
21 desirable to you than what the LRC map does. Did I hear that
22 correctly?

23 MR. ALI: Yes, sir.

24 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: The second part of
25 that you said, while the LRC map creates three safe Democratic

1 districts, my question to that would be, is that comfortable
2 if we are trying to have competitive seats, to have three
3 seats that are created pretty much safe for one party?

4 MR. ALI: Well, I think, you know, one of the
5 primary concerns is to insure that there is adequate
6 representation, in this case with the Latinx population. So
7 we believe that in this case with the safe Democratic
8 districts, there's going to be some dilution of representation
9 for communities of color.

10 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Well, I understand
11 that part of it, but unfortunately, we have to look at the map
12 in its entirety, and so I'm trying to look at a map that is
13 supposed to be competitive statewide.

14 MR. ALI: Yes.

15 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: And whether or not we
16 want to have communities like that that have guaranteed safe
17 seats in certain areas seems counterintuitive to that. I'm
18 just curious what your thought was.

19 MR. ALI: Well, I don't know that they would be
20 necessarily safe seats, but I think that one of the things
21 that we want to be able to do is to be able to make sure that
22 they're heard. So I don't know, you know, in terms of whether
23 it's a Democratic seat or a Republican seat. I think the main
24 point is to insure that those voices are heard, that they have
25 an adequate opportunity to be able to elect a representative

1 of their choice.

2 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: I appreciate your
3 clarification.

4 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Anything else for Mr. Ali?
6 Representative Bradford.

7 REPRESENTATIVE BRADFORD: Thank you, sir.

8 One of the issues that I know we've talked about
9 in generality, and I think there is a recognition that the
10 preliminary map moves the ball tremendously forward. I think
11 we're looking at 23 traditional over 50-percent VRA districts
12 and another 17 opportunity districts, typically involving
13 coalitions that give that opportunity to elect a candidate of
14 choice. Any concern that a movement towards overpacking,
15 where you've got, you know, these 90-, 95-percent districts
16 that have often prevented, frankly, minorities' vote power
17 from cascading out and to help affect the impact in
18 neighboring districts and give full vote power to minority
19 communities, any concern about repacking or overpacking these
20 districts? That has often been cited as one of the biggest
21 problems with past maps.

22 MR. ALI: You know, I think there's an
23 underestimation in terms of the willingness of BIPOC
24 communities to be able to get out and actually elect
25 candidates of choice. And so, you know, I think there is a

1 concern with the overpacking that there wouldn't be an
2 opportunity for that to occur. But, you know, we're very
3 interested in insuring that even in the configuration where
4 there is, you know, in the 30- to 40-percent range, that it's
5 configured in a way that allows -- that isn't a forced
6 district. You know, it's a district that allows for the
7 Latinx population or any other BIPOC community to be able to
8 express themselves and elect a candidate of choice.

9 REPRESENTATIVE BRADFORD: And I appreciate that.
10 And I think one of the issues, obviously, is making sure that
11 we've got a bloc of votes in these representative districts
12 that will affect primaries, and I think that's where that vote
13 power needs to be the strongest, and so when you have a
14 cohesive vote bloc, obviously that is best ascertained and
15 best doable for those communities.

16 So with that, thank you, sir. I appreciate the
17 time.

18 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Thank you, again, for being
19 with us. It's good to see you again.

20 MR. ALI: Thank you.

21 CHAIR NORDENBERG: We are going to stay out west
22 for our next guest, who is Kyle Hynes from Pittsburgh. He,
23 too, is a past witness.

24 MR. HYNES: Can you hear me now?

25 CHAIR NORDENBERG: We can hear you fine. How is

1 life at Carnegie Mellon?

2 MR. HYNES: Thank you so much. It's excellent. I
3 appreciate that.

4 CHAIR NORDENBERG: The floor is yours.

5 MR. HYNES: Thank you very much, sir. I'll try to
6 keep this brief.

7 Good afternoon, Members of the Commission, and
8 thank you for the chance to testify before you today. When
9 this panel released its draft map to the public last month, I
10 wasn't sure what to expect, but on the whole, I was thrilled
11 by what I saw. The proposed maps do a far better job than
12 most of the submissions to the Commission, and indeed, than
13 most of the maps currently in place at providing for a
14 proportional legislature while also paying heed to the
15 political realities on the ground. It's highly likely that
16 under this map, the winner of the popular vote will win
17 legislative control, a test that ought to be a fairness in any
18 democracy, but which Pennsylvania has failed repeatedly in the
19 past.

20 That said, one aspect in which the proposed maps
21 fail, in my view, is competitive districts, which I think is
22 critical for a democracy. Maps which give more voters a
23 chance to swing their elections are better, in my view, and
24 here the map falls short. Both maps, the House and the Senate
25 map, could easily have more close seats than they have at

1 present, and I've repeatedly argued that competitive districts
2 are good for democracy all around.

3 Starting with the House maps and the northwest
4 with Erie, one safe Republican seat, one safe Democratic seat,
5 and two Democratic-leaning seats surround the city at present.
6 Without removing incumbents from their home seats, this could
7 be turned into a region with three toss-ups and one safe blue
8 seat, which, in my view, is a better result for democracy.

9 Moving south to the Pittsburgh area, I saw one of
10 the regions that I think the mapmakers did a really good job
11 drawing competitive seats. Certain tweaks could be made to
12 both new seats, like District 40, but overall, I think it's
13 done very well. Pittsburgh suburbs, in my view, are exactly
14 the purple web right now that the rest of the State should
15 aspire to be.

16 In the center of the State, State College, my home
17 turf, is improved from the past map, but could go from being
18 served by a light blue and a dark blue seat to being served by
19 three that are purple. And in my view, this would be an
20 improvement.

21 In Dauphin County, the three safe Democratic seats
22 and two safe red ones could be replaced by one red one, one
23 blue one, and three toss-up seats in the suburbs, which, in my
24 view, would again be a benefit.

25 We see the same trend repeated over and over.

1 York's one safe Democratic seat could become two competitive
2 seats. And Lancaster could get as many as four competitive
3 districts, as could Reading. Similar mapmaking could add a
4 close seat or two around Scranton, three or four in the Lehigh
5 Valley, and a lot of competitive districts in the suburbs of
6 Philadelphia, too many to count.

7 In my view, drawing these extra competitive
8 districts could be nothing if not good for democracy, as they
9 enable more people to have their voices heard and fewer
10 Representatives to sit back on the laurels. We'd also reduce
11 a worrying bias present in the current House map. Under the
12 present proposal, competitive districts are packed into
13 Allegheny and Bucks Counties and the areas between Scranton
14 and Wilkes-Barre, without having more elsewhere. Indeed, the
15 bias is so that almost 40 percent of the competitive seats in
16 the map are in the Pittsburgh area. Winning that toss-up rich
17 area in a map devoid of purple seats then would set a party
18 well on their way to control the State legislature, even when
19 that party isn't the most popular statewide. Adding more
20 competitive districts also around the State is a good way to
21 even that geographic bias out.

22 A similar trend manifests itself in the Senate
23 map. Of the few competitive districts, nearly all are in the
24 corridor bordering the northeast extension of the turnpike
25 between Bucks County and Scranton, from District 6 in the

1 south to 40 in the north. This lack of geographic diversity
2 means that, like Pittsburgh's outskirts in the House map, a
3 party can appeal to very narrow spots of the State in order to
4 take full advantage.

5 While I do believe that the lack of competitive
6 districts in this map is a problem which can be addressed to
7 better the maps, I want to thank the Commission for your hard
8 work in putting these preliminary plans together. While I see
9 potential improvements that can make the map better and more
10 representative for all the people in our State, if these plans
11 were to be approved as they are right now, we should all sleep
12 well at night knowing that Pennsylvania's decades-long scourge
13 of gerrymandering has come to an end.

14 Thank you, again, for your time, and thank you for
15 your work and letting me testify today.

16 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Thank you very much. And can I
17 ask you, Kyle, I should know this, have you submitted maps
18 yourself?

19 MR. HYNES: I submitted, I think, a map in Dauphin
20 County when I testified a little bit about it last time in
21 September, I think. And then mostly I focused on
22 congressional maps.

23 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Okay. Okay.

24 Are there questions for Mr. Hynes?

25 (There was no response.)

1 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Well, it's nice to have you
2 back again. Thanks very much for your testimony.

3 MR. HYNES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate
4 it.

5 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Our next speaker is here in
6 person, Dean Browning from Allentown.

7 Welcome, sir.

8 MR. BROWNING: Thank you. I have copies of my
9 remarks as well as the maps that I'll be referring to. With
10 that, I will go ahead and proceed.

11 I will make what I think is really a fundamental
12 statement, which is the primary guidance for this Commission
13 should be the Pennsylvania Constitution, which states that:
14 "Unless absolutely necessary, no county, city, incorporated
15 town, borough, township or ward shall not be divided in
16 forming either a senatorial or representative district." The
17 citizens of the Commonwealth should fully expect, and
18 adamantly demand, that any redistricting map reflect that
19 unambiguous and straightforward direction.

20 The fact the Republican- and Democrat-elected
21 officials on the Commission are split 2-2 on the legislative
22 map, which is all I'm speaking about, not the Senatorial map,
23 the fact that they are split 2-2 on the map indicates to me
24 that there might be something else in play besides following
25 strictly the Constitution, and unfortunately, Chairman

1 Nordenberg cast the deciding vote on the proposed maps.

2 In interviews after the release of the map, the
3 Chairman stated that he would be willing to listen to
4 testimony, and he professed that he didn't have a detailed
5 knowledge of the entire State, which is fair enough. I don't
6 think many of us do, and that he would look for a better
7 understanding. That is one of the reasons why I'm here. I've
8 been a resident of Lehigh County for over 40 years and have
9 served as Lehigh County Commissioner. My purpose in
10 testifying today is to try to provide you with the knowledge
11 that I think would be necessary to develop legislative
12 districts in Lehigh County that meet the requirements stated
13 in our Constitution.

14 As an overview, in my opinion, Lehigh County can
15 be looked at as a microcosm of the Commonwealth of
16 Pennsylvania. Lehigh County has a dense urban area, it has
17 older towns that are no longer in their heyday. It has
18 commercial areas. It has suburbs, exurbs, rural areas, and
19 farmlands. Again, much like the Commonwealth. While Lehigh
20 County is relatively compact, it also has quite different and
21 diverse demographics, as you would expect with the criteria
22 that I just outlined before. In my opinion, the legislative
23 districts in Lehigh County should reflect that, while also
24 following the Constitution.

25 I believe that the districts as proposed in the

1 current map fail on both of those counts, and I'll just go
2 through and give you some examples based on looking at the
3 legislative districts.

4 For example, the 133rd takes one of six precincts
5 in North Whitehall Township, which is an exurb, rural area,
6 and combines it with precincts that are in an urban area,
7 specifically the city of Bethlehem. And you heard previously
8 Senator Boscola commenting about the uniqueness of Bethlehem,
9 yet you're combining a legislative district that has west
10 Bethlehem and North Whitehall, apples and oranges.

11 The 131st District in the southern part of Lehigh
12 County also goes into not only Northampton County but it goes
13 into Montgomery County and includes all or part of five
14 different school districts.

15 The 132nd District takes three of the eight
16 precincts in Upper Macungie Township, which is a suburban
17 area, and combines them with the city of Allentown. The 132nd
18 also takes part of the two largest school districts in the
19 county, Parkland and Allentown, doesn't give that
20 Representative all of one district, gives them part of
21 Parkland, part of Allentown, and it also takes the idea of
22 increasing minority representation, and in my opinion, turns
23 it on its head as it reduces the minority component of the
24 current district, which is 39-percent Latino, and reduces to
25 18-percent Latino. This cuts the Latino population and

1 opportunity in half.

2 The 187th, which is another district in Lehigh
3 County, combines Lynn Township, which is a rural farmland
4 community, with Lower Macungie, which is a commercial and
5 suburban community. That would be analogous to taking Pike
6 County and somehow drawing a senatorial district that goes
7 from Pike County down to Chester County. It is, again, apples
8 and oranges. And to top it off, the 187th represents all or
9 part of three different school districts.

10 It's the same if you go through and look at
11 townships, and I had a number of them listed, but in trying to
12 keep with my 5-minute limit, which I think I'm going to run
13 over, I'll just give you one example, Salisbury Township,
14 which is a small township in Lehigh County. It has five
15 precincts and less than 10,000 voters, yet it is split between
16 three different districts. One of the precincts goes to the
17 131st, one precinct goes to the 134th, and three precincts to
18 the 22nd. This, in my opinion, greatly diminishes the chances
19 that residents of Salisbury Township will receive focused
20 representation. And, again, we come back, "unless absolutely
21 necessary." I'm hard-pressed to find why it is necessary to
22 split Salisbury Township three different ways.

23 In my opinion, the new districts for Lehigh County
24 are incompatible with the Constitution and were drawn
25 specifically with incumbent protection and partisan advantage

1 in mind. And specifically, I'll go through and give my
2 reasons for stating that. The 22nd Legislative District was
3 originally created as a minority-majority district. However,
4 since its inception, it has not been represented by a
5 minority, even though it is 55-percent Latino. The Democrat
6 incumbent nearly lost the primary to a minority challenger in
7 2020 and would have a contested rematch in 2022. As a result,
8 the incumbent was moved to a newly drawn 134th District, which
9 has a reduced minority component, as that district is now only
10 39-percent Latino.

11 There's a cascading effect from all of this. It
12 falls into the 132nd, which is currently an Allentown-centric
13 district but has moved into part of Upper Macungie Township,
14 not all of it, but part of it, and into South Whitehall
15 Township. Again, this is due to the shift in the 134th
16 District. But it also conveniently provides a safe seat for
17 the Democratic incumbent who moved from Allentown to South
18 Whitehall in the fall of 2020. So again, in my opinion, this
19 is drawn primarily for incumbent protection.

20 Meanwhile, on the other side of the coin, the
21 187th District combines Lower Macungie and part of Upper
22 Macungie, two of the faster growing townships in Lehigh
23 County, it combinations them together, thereby forcing two
24 Republican incumbents to run against each other. One of the
25 arguments that I had heard before about why incumbents were

1 forced to run against each other was due to declining
2 population. That is absolutely not the case in the 187th.
3 Again, I mentioned we have Upper Macungie and Lower Macungie,
4 two of the fastest growing townships in Lehigh County that are
5 now mushed together, part of one township and a full other
6 township, so that two Republican incumbents, each of whom have
7 served at least four terms in the House, now are forced to run
8 against each other.

9 Again, in my opinion, the new districts are
10 incompatible with the Constitution's direction against
11 dividing counties, municipalities, and townships unless
12 absolutely necessary. In my opinion, without question, the
13 districts in Lehigh County have been drawn, number one, for
14 partisan advantage, as I mentioned, forcing two Republican
15 incumbents to run for the same district; and to protect
16 incumbents, I mentioned the Democrat incumbents in the 132nd
17 and the 134th. Anyone who claims otherwise is, in my opinion,
18 not being honest and is perpetuating the public's distrust and
19 disillusionment with our government in Harrisburg. We have a
20 Constitution that specifies how the maps are to be drawn, and
21 I think you have ignored that.

22 Chairman Nordenberg, I urge you not to let this
23 stand, and I respectfully request that you follow the
24 Constitution. If you're looking for a map other than the one
25 that has been presented for Lehigh County, that would follow

1 the Constitution and would provide for minority opportunity, I
2 would recommend the one that was originally submitted by
3 Amanda Holt, which is also included in your packet.

4 And, again, I thank you all very much for all the
5 time and effort that you have put into this. I appreciate it,
6 but I would ask that you reconsider your final product,
7 particularly as it relates to Lehigh County. Thank you.

8 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Thank you for your presentation
9 and for the supplementary materials.

10 Are there questions or comments from Members of
11 the panel?

12 Leader Benninghoff.

13 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: I just want to say
14 thank you for taking the time to come here. I know you're
15 busy in your own obligations, but, again, as other testifiers,
16 it's really good to have input from those at the local level.
17 Sometimes what looks good on a map may not necessarily be as
18 functional back home, and I will take a look at the other map
19 that you made when I can see projected up a little bit larger
20 than it is here, but I--

21 MR. BROWNING: Right.

22 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: --can't thank you
23 enough for the input.

24 MR. BROWNING: Well, I thank you. I appreciate
25 that. And, again, I want to go back to, and you're absolutely

1 correct, it is hard looking at just a map to understand the
2 lay of the land, but we'll go back to the example I raised
3 about the one precinct from North Whitehall being dumped in
4 with west Bethlehem. I failed to mention that there's also a
5 river that separates those. Again, you wouldn't necessarily
6 see that on the map, but if you're looking for a district that
7 has a commonality and the same demographics and the same
8 focus, separating them by a river doesn't, in my estimation,
9 get you there.

10 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: You had talked about
11 the growth in those districts. Just per chance, do you have
12 any percentages or numbers?

13 MR. BROWNING: No, sir, I don't.

14 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Okay. We can look
15 that up.

16 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Thank you, again, very much.

17 MR. BROWNING: All right. Thank you.

18 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Our next witness is Joshua
19 Nagy, from Camp Hill, who also is here in person.

20 Welcome.

21 MR. NAGY: Good afternoon.

22 Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Commission Members,
23 for taking comments on the redistricting of PA State House
24 88th District in Cumberland County. I do want to state that I
25 am here as a resident of Lower Allen and not in any official

1 capacity for Lower Allen Township. I can appreciate the
2 enormous and difficult task of creating these maps based upon
3 data, rules, fairness, and other factors that you take into
4 account, but I am here to share local and community knowledge
5 that should also be considered, to Representative
6 Benninghoff's point.

7 Currently, the 88th District has a combination of
8 my township, Lower Allen, as well as Upper Allen,
9 Mechanicsburg, and several other municipalities. This current
10 district keeps municipalities of similar interests and needs
11 grouped together for accurate representation. Unfortunately,
12 the removal of Upper Allen to add Hampden Township destroys
13 this community grouping without any clear benefits for the
14 constituents for the 88th, or for the 87th, for that matter.
15 The 88th was already a well-designed district meeting
16 guidelines for the geographic compactness by being a logical
17 grouping of municipalities in the southeast corner of the
18 county. Now it stretches from the southern border of the
19 county to the far northern edge of the county line. More
20 importantly, it now violates Article II, Section 16, of the
21 Pennsylvania Constitution for redistricting, splitting a
22 municipality. The new 88th divides Mechanicsburg Borough down
23 the middle into two separate legislative districts.

24 Geographic grouping also ties directly into the
25 next guideline, the communities that live there. Geography

1 affects community interests and community integrity. Upper
2 Allen and Lower Allen share more than just a similar name.
3 They share a similar culture, population, and needs. The
4 current 88th has shared interests of its citizens, as Upper
5 and Lower Allen flow seamlessly into one another with citizens
6 living, working, commuting and using resources of both on a
7 regular basis. Having a State Representative that can speak
8 for this bloc of citizens allows them to have better
9 representation and strength.

10 Also of shared interest in this geographic
11 district is school districts. The current legislative
12 district almost fully encompasses two school districts, for
13 which these communities and the elected leaders have
14 established strong connections. The preliminary map now adds
15 a third school district from Hampden Township. The new school
16 district, Cumberland Valley, is one of the largest population
17 school districts in the State. It is hard to imagine that an
18 elected Representative would be able to give an appropriate
19 and equal amount of time to each of the three school
20 districts. It also does not make sense for the current school
21 districts to lose their community representation as well.

22 Also using the guidelines for redistricting, the
23 88th was already appropriate for population totals. The
24 unfortunate decision to change prison inmate population
25 adversely affects the townships and the prisons that reside

1 within them. Changing the inmates' districts to their
2 previous home location ignores the resources and time that
3 State prisons use of our communities and our local State
4 officials. The current population of SCI Camp Hill is over
5 2,000 individuals. Our State officials work on behalf of
6 these inmates with prison issues for their family members and
7 other matters that needed addressed. Removing their
8 population from the calculation means we will have a large
9 population that requires representation of resources but does
10 not logically count them as part of our districts.

11 I hope you will strongly consider maintaining the
12 88th District as is by keeping Lower Allen and Upper Allen
13 together, as well as maintaining school district integrity and
14 boundaries for the benefit of the residents who reside there.

15 Thank you.

16 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Thank you.

17 Questions for Mr. Nagy?

18 (There was no response.)

19 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Do we have written
20 comments?

21 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Have you submitted written
22 comments?

23 MR. NAGY: I have, sir.

24 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Okay. Yes, we do.

25 MR. NAGY: Thank you.

1 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Thank you, Mr.
2 Chairman.

3 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Thank you very much.

4 Our next witness is Don Hossler. He will be back
5 on Zoom, and we have seen him on Zoom before.

6 Welcome, sir.

7 MR. HOSSLER: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and
8 Members of the Commission. If you have a copy of my
9 testimony, I can summarize it. If you do. I have viewed most
10 of the livestream sessions and appreciate the work of each
11 Member of the Legislative Redistricting Committee, and also
12 the leadership of Chairman Nordenberg.

13 The preliminary LRC Senate map for Dauphin County,
14 I don't have any further comment on, but I would like to
15 comment on the preliminary Legislative Redistricting
16 Commission House map for Dauphin County. I'd like to ask you
17 to please consider utilizing the Fair Districts Pennsylvania
18 People's Map for all of the Dauphin County House districts,
19 and that would be Districts 105, 106, 107, and 108 in the Fair
20 Districts Map. The Fair Districts Pennsylvania House map
21 creates the Susquehanna River/Route 230/Amtrak corridor State
22 Representative District 107, and that brings Londonderry
23 Township back to Dauphin County from Lancaster County
24 representation, focuses on the commercial, industrial, and
25 residential community mix adjacent to the Susquehanna River,

1 and does not dilute the racial or ethnic diversity of that
2 area. The Fair Districts Pennsylvania 107 map also talks
3 about a transportation hub. Right now in Londonderry Township
4 there are two trucking warehouses that are being built, huge
5 ones, that are right beside Route 230, and also there is one
6 also being built right now in Lower Swatara Township.

7 Route 230 originates in Lancaster and concludes in
8 Harrisburg. Route 230 in Dauphin County covers the entire
9 District 107 all the way to Harrisburg. The Capital Area
10 Transit bus No. 7 begins on Route 230 on the eastern part of
11 Middletown, where I live. The six of us could meet at our
12 house and we could walk one block and go the bus stop and take
13 the bus, and you'd travel through Middletown, you'd travel
14 through Penn State Harrisburg, Harrisburg International
15 Airport, Lower Swatara Township, Highspire, Steelton, and
16 Harrisburg. And when one rides bus No. 7 from Middletown to
17 Harrisburg, you can see the connectedness that each
18 municipality has from each other in a very clear manner.

19 Now, when we take bus No. 7 and reach Harrisburg,
20 we get to Market Square, and that's basically where there's a
21 boundary line for the district, and there we can transfer and
22 take a break, we can take the West Shore CAT bus to Lemoyne
23 and Camp Hill, stop at the Pennsylvania Bakery, and then we
24 can just walk three blocks to the north to the West Shore
25 Farmer's Market, stop at Harner's Bakery to some get really

1 good mini-sticky buns and mini-danish, then walk up a slight
2 hill to the Capital Area bus stop, take the bus back to
3 Harrisburg, back to Market Square, and then begin our ride
4 again back to Middletown. And as you ride back to Middletown,
5 you can see that all of these areas have businesses, downtown
6 businesses, common transportation, infrastructure needs,
7 proximity to Harrisburg International Airport, Amtrak,
8 Three-Mile Island nuclear facility, employment and cultural
9 activities in Harrisburg, Penn State Harrisburg, and the
10 Susquehanna River.

11 To summarize my comments, I'd like to say that I
12 like the Fair Districts Pennsylvania People's Map District 107
13 House map. It's compact, it's contiguous, and has connected
14 communities of interest that creates an opportunity for a
15 State Representative to help maximize the quality of life for
16 all constituents. And so I'm asking the Legislative
17 Redistricting Commission to consolidate and replace the
18 current LRC Dauphin County map with the Fair Districts
19 Pennsylvania map of Dauphin County.

20 Additionally, I'd like to let you know that I do
21 realize the LRC is responsible for formulating the State
22 Senate and Representative Districts, however, Pennsylvania
23 would have lost more than one congressional seat had it not
24 been for the rapidly growing Black, Latino, and Asian American
25 populations. So I ask the LRC to continue to demonstrate a

1 commitment to insuring that Pennsylvanians have an opportunity
2 to elect Senate and House representative candidates that truly
3 represent all the citizens of Pennsylvania over the next 10
4 years. And, for example, splintering Allentown, Bethlehem,
5 Easton, and Reading relating to a racial or ethnicity should
6 be scrutinized.

7 So thank you very much.

8 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Thank you, sir.

9 Any questions for Mr. Hossler?

10 Leader Benninghoff.

11 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Thank you, sir.

12 Did you say you were a member of Fair Districts,
13 or you just wanted us to look at their map?

14 MR. HOSSLER: I would like you to look at the Fair
15 Districts map, and I would like to see you replace the
16 preliminary Legislative Redistricting Committee map with the
17 Fair Districts' Dauphin County People's Map.

18 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: That was my second
19 question. Are you advocating to replace just the Dauphin
20 County portion or the entire map with the Fair Districts Maps?
21 Because, obviously, if we do a portion of it, it has an impact
22 systemically out to any other districts once that geography
23 changes.

24 MR. HOSSLER: Yes, I would ask you to replace the
25 Dauphin County, specifically.

1 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Okay, just the
2 Dauphin County portion. All right.

3 MR. HOSSLER: Yes, sir.

4 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Thank you, sir.
5 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 MR. HOSSLER: You're welcome.

7 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Any other questions or
8 comments?

9 (There was no response.)

10 CHAIR NORDENBERG: I was pleased that you
11 mentioned sticky buns, because there seems to be a direct link
12 between redistricting interest and interest in bakeries, and
13 you've maintained that this afternoon.

14 (Laughter.)

15 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Thank you, again, for being
16 back.

17 MR. HOSSLER: You're welcome.

18 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Our next witness is Christopher
19 Fromme, from Pittsburgh. He is a serious mapper and a regular
20 correspondent with the Commission.

21 MR. FROMME: Can you hear me now?

22 CHAIR NORDENBERG: We can hear you very well.

23 MR. FROMME: Okay. Thank you.

24 I'll start with my Senate map. First, of all,
25 I've been long involved with redistricting and close contact

1 with Amanda Holt on various things going back to 2011. That
2 said, I posted a map, WPA Senate fix, which basically is my
3 version of an Allegheny County-only Senate map, which
4 basically takes the 38th District and makes it into a northern
5 Allegheny County district, the 37th District into a southern
6 Allegheny County district. And there is one caveat, if people
7 look at the map, because of the colors on the maps I used in
8 Dave's Redistricting, I ended up using the 49th District in
9 place of the 45th just because otherwise you couldn't really
10 tell where the district lines were, because actually if I used
11 the 45th District, the 45th District and the 37th District
12 colors were exactly the same. So since I was only doing five
13 districts, I didn't see any reason to try to confuse people
14 looking at my map.

15 So I'm just going to leave it at that. That's my
16 vision on the way Allegheny County should be split up. I will
17 say that, for compactness, the 45th District does have the
18 31st ward of Allegheny County in it. And that's just because
19 of the strange way that Allegheny County is and Baldwin
20 Township is, rather than having a weird spike coming out
21 someplace. And basically so that all the districts came out
22 pretty much even, that was my goal, so that when you split up
23 Allegheny County, you didn't come up with any district that
24 was extremely high in population compared to the other ones.

25 Moving on to the House, I did use some of Chairman

1 Nordenberg's districts, but for the most part I used the
2 districts that I had originally posted in my original plan,
3 basically because several people I know in Allegheny County
4 are not running for reelection. Ed Gainey is the new mayor of
5 Pittsburgh. Summer Lee is running for Congress. One that I
6 had not anticipated, but still his district, someone will run
7 for it, Jake Wheatley is going to be working for Ed Gainey.
8 So I had proposed to take the 34th District and move it so
9 that the only open district in Allegheny County at the time
10 would be a new district for Ross Township, which would be
11 comprised of Ross Township, West View, Bellvue, I believe
12 Kilbuck Township, Ohio Township, and four wards of Franklin
13 Park.

14 As it is right now in general, in the western
15 Pennsylvania area, I believe there are 10 open seats, which
16 basically has created chaos in Allegheny County. And at a
17 meeting several days ago, a Democrat commented that for the
18 current 33rd District, where there is no incumbent, which
19 includes Fox Chapel, his comment was is that there will be two
20 millionaires that will run against each other and really won't
21 care about the needs of the constituents. That's his take,
22 and I believe this man. He's a union guy, and I'll just
23 believe him on that fact.

24 Really need to rethink, there are a lot of other
25 issues, but really need to rethink the way that Allegheny

1 County is made up, because it's not really serving the needs
2 of the people of Allegheny County. Oh yeah, one last thing.
3 A school board member for North Allegheny, who can actually
4 benefit from the way the plan is, but basically said that
5 North Allegheny School District, which is split up between two
6 districts, said that even one of the schools in the school
7 district where she's a school board member, said that a school
8 is split up between two districts. I'll leave it at that,
9 and, hopefully, some changes can be made to fix Allegheny
10 County.

11 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Thank you very much for your
12 views and for your submissions.

13 Our next witness is Ricardo Almodovar. I may have
14 mispronounced that. If I did, I apologize. He is from
15 Lancaster, and he is associated with the Campus Vote Project.

16 Welcome, sir.

17 MR. ALMODOVAR: Hi. Good Afternoon. My name is
18 Ricardo Almodovar. You were close. I am a lifelong
19 Pennsylvanian, born and raised in Lancaster. I am the
20 Pennsylvania State Coordinator for the Campus Vote Project, a
21 project of the Fair Elections Center. We are a national,
22 nonpartisan organization that works with colleges and
23 universities across the country to institutionalize efforts to
24 help students register to vote, cast their ballots, and be
25 civically engaged in their communities. In Pennsylvania, we

1 currently work with over 32 campuses. Students are getting
2 involved and are paying attention to the redistricting process
3 now more than ever.

4 And I am here today to advocate for new
5 legislative maps that treat Pennsylvania's college students as
6 communities of interest. As my colleague at Common Cause,
7 Khalif, mentioned, in my backyard, Franklin and Marshall
8 College is a community of interest, and its demographic is
9 significantly different from the city districts. Campus
10 communities are composed of people with many shared interests
11 and concerns.

12 Another problem often impacting these institutions
13 is splitting campuses. Drawing district lines through these
14 communities would hinder college age voters' abilities to
15 advocate for those shared interests. That is why we do not
16 want to split campuses in Pennsylvania. Unfortunately, these
17 proposed maps split many campus areas into multiple State
18 House or State Senate districts, impacting student communities
19 across the Commonwealth including Bucknell, Drexel, Penn
20 State, Temple, University of Pennsylvania, University of
21 Pittsburgh, and York College of Pennsylvania.

22 For example, the border of proposed House
23 Districts 181 and 195 cuts right through the heart of Temple.
24 State College is also divided between proposed House Districts
25 77 and 82. These maps should be drawn with the interests of

1 all Pennsylvanians in mind, guided by commitment to racial
2 equity and full representation for all. College age voters,
3 particularly persons of color, deserve the opportunity to
4 elect Representatives that will be responsive to the interests
5 and concerns of their communities.

6 No one can proudly proclaim they support democracy
7 when their goal in drawing the district lines is to maintain
8 power by diluting votes. No one can claim to support equality
9 while they work tirelessly to dilute and minimize Black and
10 brown votes. However, we do applaud the Commission for
11 proposing maps that are drastically better and that more
12 accurately reflect population shifts and growth patterns.
13 These maps are a huge improvement. However, splitting
14 campuses makes things unnecessarily confusing for first-time
15 voters and decreases representation. If we want fair
16 representation for communities of interest, like college
17 students, we need fair maps and fair districts. That is why
18 we ask that these new maps keep each campus community in
19 Pennsylvania together.

20 Thank you for your time.

21 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Thank you very much for your
22 testimony.

23 Are there questions from any Members of the
24 Commission?

25 Yes, Senator Ward.

1 SENATOR K. WARD: Thank you. Thank you so much
2 for your testimony.

3 So when we are splitting campuses, that means we
4 are splitting right down the middle of municipalities,
5 correct?

6 MR. ALMODOVAR: Can you hear me?

7 SENATOR K. WARD: Yes, now I can.

8 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Yes, we can hear you now.

9 MR. ALMODOVAR: Okay. Great.

10 That is a good question, and I would have to get
11 back to you on that.

12 SENATOR K. WARD: It makes sense that that would
13 be why we would split a campus, because we split a
14 municipality and the campus is sprawling. It's an interesting
15 concept to treat universities as communities of interest. So,
16 thank you for your testimony.

17 MR. ALMODOVAR: Great. Take care.

18 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Leader Benninghoff.

19 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Thank you, Mr.
20 Chairman.

21 I think those are probably unique and different
22 areas. University Park in Penn State is actually considered
23 its own municipality and has its own ZIP Code. My question to
24 you, Ricardo, thank you very much for your energetic
25 testimony. I can tell that you really do care and you're

1 excited about it. It would be interesting, I'd be curious to
2 know what your definition is of college communities by
3 geography.

4 MR. ALMODOVAR: Well, it depends on the campus.
5 And campuses across the State, we've been working with them to
6 create unity maps, and so we've been working with Pennsylvania
7 Voice and several other nonprofit, nonpartisan organizations.
8 And so each campus determines their own community of interest,
9 so it just varies and it's on a case-by-case basis.

10 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Do you have an
11 example of one that you could use? I mean, I'm thinking about
12 the campus of Lock Haven, a State-owned school. I've been
13 there, my daughter is a graduate of there, and obviously the
14 town itself somewhat thrives on that. The campus is kind of
15 in one region of that, and then there's the rest of the town
16 around that. I'm just curious as to how far you were looking
17 at considering the community, I guess we could call it a
18 collegiate community?

19 MR. ALMODOVAR: That's a good question, and right
20 now I don't have an answer, but I can look into it and I can
21 reach out to my colleagues and get back to you.

22 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Not a problem. I
23 appreciate your candor. Hope you have a great day.

24 MR. ALMODOVAR: Thank you.

25 CHAIR NORDENBERG: And we'll look forward to

1 hearing more from you when you've got the chance to consult.

2 MR. ALMODOVAR: Great. Thank you, sir.

3 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Thank you, again, for being
4 with us.

5 Arlene Edmunds, from Philadelphia, will be
6 appearing on Zoom and is our next witness.

7 MS. EDMUNDS: Okay. I am here.

8 CHAIR NORDENBERG: We can't see you yet, so just
9 wait for a moment, please.

10 MS. EDMONDS: Okay.

11 CHAIR NORDENBERG: We've got, right now, a black
12 screen where you're supposed to be.

13 MS. EDMONDS: Okay.

14 CHAIR NORDENBERG: There we go. We've got you
15 now.

16 MS. EDMONDS: Okay. Great. Can you see me
17 clearly?

18 CHAIR NORDENBERG: We can see you, and we can hear
19 you. So all is well.

20 MS. EDMONDS: Okay. As an active member of my
21 community, I have recently been bombarded with questions and
22 concerns about the redistricting, and I must add, even to
23 this, that one of the concerns is that people in my immediate
24 area is that we're losing our State Representative, which is
25 Chris Rabb, which came up earlier. I am in contact with

1 citizens of all walks of life. I have owned my home in
2 northwest Philadelphia for more than 30 years, basically my
3 whole adult life, and I've been an active member of the
4 community.

5 As a news correspondent, I have written more than
6 10,000 articles for community papers in Philadelphia for over
7 30 years. I have also participated in Philadelphia school
8 council, registered voters and oversaw volunteers during the
9 Presidential race, taught thousands of college students as a
10 university adjunct, taught piano and dance at community
11 centers, and have been volunteering with the redistricting
12 focus committee for the past two years. As a mother of two
13 voting daughters, a grandmother of four, and a neighborhood
14 activist, I am speaking for my family and my community,
15 including those who are concerned about the recent
16 redistricting for our area.

17 I want to note that the new House maps are an
18 overall significant improvement over the existing ones.
19 However, I still have concern about the proposed House and
20 Senate maps that will impact my neighborhood district. Since
21 Philadelphia is a city of neighborhoods, redistricting should
22 avoid splitting wards to the greatest possible extent.
23 Communities of color, particularly the African American and
24 Latino ones, must not be cracked or packed into legislative
25 districts that disempower our votes. This means, when

1 legislative lines are drawn, they should stay in municipal
2 lines when possible.

3 I know this firsthand. I live a couple of blocks
4 from Philadelphia's northern city line. Even though I often
5 cross the city line to get to the nearest supermarket or bank,
6 most of my life is impacted by what happens on the
7 Philadelphia side of the line. If I call 911, the Cheltenham
8 Police picks up because their tower is the closest to my
9 house, but I am immediately transferred to the Philadelphia
10 Police Department. Although Cheltenham High is within walking
11 distance of my house, that is not the designated public school
12 for the children on my block.

13 Consequently, our voting districts should always
14 stay within the municipal lines. Districts should be compact
15 so that all citizens get their issues addressed and resolved.
16 The cracking of voters across urban and suburban lines in
17 Philadelphia should be reduced as much as possible, and I will
18 also add that reorganizing our district, the 200th Legislative
19 District, is also going to cross socioeconomic lines as well
20 and I know is going to cause a stir in my community.

21 Okay. The division of voters across county lines
22 is even more evident in the far northeast section of
23 Philadelphia, as well as west and southwest Philadelphia. The
24 far northeast is adjacent to Bucks County, and while that area
25 is urban, nearby Bucks County is largely farmlands. Those in

1 the densely populated areas in west and southwest Philadelphia
2 have similar issues with those at the adjacent Delaware County
3 line, as well as the Main Line of Montgomery County. So these
4 Philadelphia residents would have their issues better met if
5 they were in the same district within the city. The new maps
6 make some improvement, but still provide too much care for
7 incumbents which disadvantages growing populations elsewhere.

8 Lastly, consideration should be given to the
9 cultural demographic of communities. If, for instance, there
10 are citizens who are more comfortable communicating in
11 Spanish, French, or other languages, they might live across
12 city lines or current district lines, and some accommodation
13 should be made for that. This is the case in neighborhoods
14 east of where I reside, where some of these populations live
15 across the city line along East Cheltenham Avenue. This is
16 also the case in other parts of the city and region. These
17 neighborhoods have Asians, Africans, and Caribbean, South
18 Americans, who speak many languages and live across the city
19 and suburban line. This would insure that their unique
20 concerns are addressed.

21 Consequently, I would hope that this Commission
22 would carefully take all of these points into consideration.
23 Redistricting should be done fairly. The diversity of
24 Pennsylvania must be treated justly. This will ensure that
25 all citizens, including voters of color, are represented. In

1 fact, I would hope Pennsylvania, with all its diversity, would
2 be leading the nation in this regard.

3 Thank you. That's my statement.

4 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Thank you very much.

5 Any questions for Ms. Edmonds?

6 SENATOR K. WARD: Yes.

7 MS. EDMONDS: Okay.

8 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Leader Ward has a question.

9 MS. EDMONDS: Okay.

10 SENATOR K. WARD: Thank you, Ms. Edmonds, for your
11 testimony.

12 MS. EDMONDS: Yes.

13 SENATOR K. WARD: Are you referring to a
14 particular Senate district, or just numerous Senate districts?

15 MS. EDMONDS: Well, I was doing numerous, but if I
16 want to get specific, not particularly the Senate district,
17 because sometimes we have things that go on on both sides of
18 the city line, you know. So a lot of people have concerns
19 about that, that they're not being adequately represented,
20 because, you know, they're on both sides of the city line.
21 Although, sometimes we have issues that go across city lines,
22 I'm going to say.

23 SENATOR K. WARD: Yeah, I just want to be clear--

24 MS. EDMONDS: Yes.

25 SENATOR K. WARD: --are you advocating for, I

1 think there are three Senate districts that reach outside of
2 the city?

3 MS. EDMONDS: Yes.

4 SENATOR K. WARD: So are you advocating for them
5 to be condensed into less than three, just have maybe one
6 reach out of the city and put the other ones within the city?
7 Am I hearing you correctly?

8 MS. EDMONDS: To put the other ones within the
9 city?

10 SENATOR K. WARD: Yeah.

11 MS. EDMONDS: Well, from what I understand, I know
12 the people who share with Delaware County, they're
13 particularly interested in having it separated, and they have
14 different issues. Now where I live, it kind of goes back and
15 forth, because there are some people who, because we live so
16 close, and like I told you, go across the line to go to the
17 supermarket and things like that, they're so close, it's a
18 little different. But I must add, with some of the
19 redistricting the way it's being done, we're kind of getting
20 -- certain people are getting lumped together. I know it's
21 going to cause -- I know the community is not aware of all of
22 this yet, I know it's going to cause controversy.

23 SENATOR K. WARD: Thank you.

24 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Thank you.

25 Any other questions?

1 (There was no response.)

2 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Thank you very much for your
3 testimony, Ms. Edmonds.

4 MS. EDMONDS: Okay. You're welcome.

5 CHAIR NORDENBERG: And have a good weekend.

6 MS. EDMONDS: Thank you.

7 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Our next witness is our second
8 witness of the day from Abbottstown. He is Kevin Moul, and
9 he's here to talk about Adams County.

10 Welcome, sir. We've got you on the screen now,
11 and the floor is yours.

12 MR. MOUL: Okay. Good afternoon, folks. My name
13 is Kevin Moul, and I am reaching out to you folks today on
14 behalf of the fire and EMS community here in northeast Adams
15 County. I'm representing the United Hook and Ladder Company
16 No. 33, where I am the Treasurer. I am testifying today over
17 strong concerns with parts of northeast Adams County being
18 separated in the current reapportionment proposal presented by
19 your Commission. In your plan, the municipalities of Oxford
20 Township, New Oxford Borough, Berwick Township, and
21 Abbottstown Borough are listed in the 91st Legislative
22 District, while the municipalities of Hamilton and Reading
23 Township are listed in the 193rd Legislative District. All
24 six of these municipalities fall under the coverage of the
25 United Hook and Ladder Fire Company No. 33, which we have a

1 station, our main station located in the borough of New
2 Oxford. We are the largest service provider for fire and
3 rescue services in the north and northeastern part of Adams
4 County. We also maintain a station within Reading Township,
5 along with a station in Abbottstown Borough. We also provide
6 mutual aide services to other municipalities throughout
7 northern Adams County, including Butler, Tyrone, Huntingdon,
8 and Latimore Townships, all of which are located in the
9 currently proposed 193rd District.

10 The northeast Adams County communities rely
11 heavily on our State officials for answers to our questions,
12 assistance with government forms, and programs and
13 representation of our community in Harrisburg. Keeping our
14 entire community represented in just one House district and
15 one Senate district, as it currently is, would provide
16 continuity and fair representation that we rely on very much.
17 It is for that reason I respectfully request that the
18 municipalities of Oxford, New Oxford Borough, Berwick
19 Township, and Abbottstown Borough be put back in the 193rd
20 District where they are currently represented. I understand
21 that making this exception would require other changes to be
22 made to surrounding Pennsylvania House districts. In this
23 circumstance, it would be possible to do this by only changing
24 one or two other districts, at most.

25 In your preliminary plan, the municipalities of

1 Hamiltonban, Fairfield Borough, Franklin Township, and
2 Straband Township are all represented in the 193rd District.
3 Moving these four municipalities back into the 91st District
4 would allow them to rejoin the rest of Fairfield Area School
5 District and Gettysburg Area School District. Doing this
6 would better combine communities of interest by nearly every
7 aspect of the definition. If it is needed to further increase
8 the population of the 193rd District closer to your average
9 deviation, you could also make a small change in Cumberland
10 County by swapping Penn Township, located in the 199th
11 District in the preliminary plan, back to the 193rd District
12 in return for Upper Mifflin, located in the 193rd District in
13 the preliminary plan. This would return Penn Township to the
14 same district as North Newton, South Newton, and Cooke
15 Townships in western Cumberland County, who they provide a
16 great deal of fire services to, while maintaining the goals
17 and requirements as set out by your Commission.

18 Thank you for the opportunity to express my views
19 regarding the preliminary House map.

20 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Thank you very much for taking
21 the time to develop your presentation and to share it with us.

22 Are there any questions for our witness?

23 Leader Benninghoff.

24 LEADER BENNINGHOFF: I actually had a question
25 earlier and forgot exactly what I wanted to ask him about.

1 You know, you're one of the first emergency
2 preparedness individuals to testify before us, and I think
3 they're an intricate part of our communities. In addition
4 just to help out with grants and things like this, I think
5 it's important for people to understand the relationships and
6 trying to develop that. I know all of our fire company people
7 are volunteers, so what you folks do, it obviously is on your
8 own time, and generally it's at the most undesirable time -
9 evenings, when it's cold and raining. I used to be a county
10 coroner, so I'm very well aware of that. I just think if
11 there's anything else that you wanted to share as far as the
12 importance of that relationship, in knowing these people.

13 One of the things that we may see is these
14 districts turning over more often. While some people like
15 seeing that kind of change, I worry about the inconsistency in
16 those relationships. A lot of our local municipal officials
17 are around for a while, and it takes them a while to figure
18 out how to get through the different grant programs, whether
19 it's DEP, whether it's Labor and Industry, or whether it's
20 DCED. So if you just have a minute to expand on maybe some of
21 your experiences in trying to have assistance through us.

22 MR. MOUL: Yes. Representative Ecker, who
23 represents our main part of our district, has helped us
24 several times with a lot of State issues, but one of the ones
25 that comes to the top of my head was quite recently with the

1 Pennsylvania Fire Act Grants. He was able to assist us with
2 -- we're a merged department, so we merged three or four times
3 now with other local departments, but we had some issues with
4 the Office of State Fire Commissioner to get some of the
5 paperwork correct so that we could get the proper funding that
6 was to be allowed to us, and he helped us get through several
7 difficult meetings that we had to have to get that
8 accomplished, and he did.

9 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: I appreciate that,
10 and, again, we don't underestimate, even now, that you are
11 doing this on your personal time, and we are well-served as a
12 State. A lot of States don't have a volunteer system like we
13 do in the fire companies, and trying to go through the maze
14 that government creates in order to try to get a little
15 assistance is very tough, especially at a time right now
16 where, what's the average firefighter, 50 years old, and
17 trying to get people to be able to run, get away from their
18 work, and it's not very easy. So first of all, thank you very
19 much for your service; and second, thank you for expounding on
20 that.

21 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Thank you, and thanks to our
23 witness for everything that Leader Benninghoff just said.

24 MR. MOUL: Thank you.

25 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Glad to have you here.

1 I've got to check now, we had a possible addition
2 to the list of witnesses in a cancellation slot. We were
3 trying to accommodate the Mayor of Hummelstown.

4 (There was no response.)

5 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Not here and not online, I
6 don't believe.

7 So our next witness then is William Madway, who is
8 from Bryn Mawr, and who is going to talk about the Unity Maps.
9 Welcome.

10 MR. MADWAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 Good afternoon. Longtime hearings watcher, first-
12 time speaker. I appreciate this opportunity to speak to the
13 Members of the Legislative Reapportionment Commission. My
14 name is Bill Madway. I'm a lifelong Pennsylvania resident. I
15 spent most of my life in Montgomery County. I also spent a
16 number of years living, going to college and grad school, and
17 working in Philadelphia. My professional experience includes
18 marketing research, communication, entrepreneurship, teaching
19 college, and advocacy.

20 I'm speaking on behalf of one of the organizations
21 I volunteer with, the nonpartisan Pennsylvania Religious
22 Action Center of Reform Judaism, or RAC PA. We are the social
23 justice arm of the 40 Reform Jewish congregations in
24 Pennsylvania, which can be found in over half the counties
25 across the State. We seek a world in which the core values

1 embraced by the Reform Jewish Movement are reflected in
2 society and public policy. Through education, advocacy and
3 activism, RAC PA harnesses the passion, skills, and collective
4 power of Pennsylvania's 40,000-plus Reform Jews in pursuit of
5 racial justice. To advance our mission, we build coalitions
6 with live communities and organizations at the forefront of
7 driving social change.

8 In concert with two coalition partners,
9 Pennsylvania Voice and Fair Districts PA, we are working on
10 the redistricting process, specifically the redistricting of
11 the PA House and Senate. Our goals are to see an end to
12 partisan gerrymandering and create more opportunities for
13 people of color to have their voices represented in the
14 General Assembly. Independent analysis shows that
15 Pennsylvania's current House and Senate districts rate poorly
16 with respect to partisan bias and fair representation of
17 people of color. These inequities pose a major obstacle to
18 solving the problems plaguing the people of Pennsylvania.

19 So let me turn now to our views on the maps
20 proposed by the LRC last month. The proposed map for the PA
21 House performs far better than the current House map by almost
22 every measure. It opens the door for more minority
23 representation, levels the playing field between the two
24 parties, and provides districts that make much more sense for
25 the people who live in them by increasing the compactness of

1 districts and reducing the number of county and other
2 jurisdictional splits. Looking specifically at representation
3 for and by people of color, we commend the LRC for creating
4 seven minority-opportunity districts and implore the LRC to
5 retain these districts in the final version of its maps, and
6 consider other ways to improve minority representation.

7 We urge the LRC to make specific changes in
8 accordance with the testimony provided by our partners at PA
9 Voice as they relate to their Unity Maps that the organization
10 created with the input of communities of color in their target
11 counties. Specifically, we request that you reexamine the
12 minority representation in Allegheny and Lancaster Counties.
13 Regarding the proposed Senate map, while it makes some
14 improvements in compactness and splitting, it does little to
15 expand minority representation. With respect to this
16 priority, our discussion with our partners leads us to
17 strongly recommend that the LRC keep Allentown intact in a
18 district drawn to maximize Latino participation in the body
19 politic and create a majority-minority district in southeast
20 Pennsylvania.

21 There is another problem with the proposed Senate
22 map that we urge the LRC to address. According to analysis by
23 our partners, many of the districts with State prisons, as
24 well as districts in central Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, and
25 other portions of southwestern PA, are well below the ideal

1 population. In contrast, districts in Pennsylvania and
2 southeast PA counties are far above that number. In effect,
3 the map as drawn dilutes the voting power of our fastest
4 growing, most diverse regions and maintains voting power in
5 regions that have lost population. It is essential that the
6 LRC correct what we and our partners see as this inequitable
7 distribution of the population.

8 We commend the LRC for strides it has made with
9 respect to correcting decades of partisan gerrymandering,
10 creating opportunities for greater representation of people of
11 color, and including citizen mappers and other members of the
12 public, as well as community groups like ours, in your work.
13 We also want to thank you for your dedicated service to the
14 people of Pennsylvania. Redistricting is a challenging
15 process and requires you to weigh and balance many priorities.
16 When I face difficult decisions like the ones you are now
17 facing, I often think of the words of Rabbi Hillel, one of the
18 most influential religious leaders and scholars of my faith.
19 In particular, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me?
20 If I'm only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?"
21 You are on the right path. You have demonstrated courage and
22 vision, but more change is needed. Now is the time.

23 That concludes my testimony. I will upload my
24 remarks to the LRC website for the record. Thank you, again,
25 for the opportunity to share our positions with you, and I

1 would be happy to take any questions you might have.

2 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Thank you very much, Mr.
3 Madway.

4 Are there any questions for the witness?

5 (There was no response.)

6 CHAIR NORDENBERG: We'll look forward to receiving
7 your written testimony and appreciate you being with us, and
8 for all the work you've done.

9 MR. MADWAY: Thank you very much.

10 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Our next witness, who is here
11 in person, is Michael Goffredo, of the Bangor School District,
12 which I think we heard about once already today.

13 Welcome, sir.

14 MR. GOFFREDO: Chairman Nordenberg, esteemed
15 Senate and House Leaders, thanks for this opportunity. Good
16 afternoon. Happy New Year, and again, I thank you for
17 allowing me to present testimony before the LRC.

18 My name is Michael Goffredo. I am the President
19 of the Bangor School Board, and I reside in the borough of
20 Roseto, Northampton County, which is part of the 88 square
21 miles that are the Bangor Area School District, currently,
22 wholly within District 137. Before presenting my comments,
23 I'd like to take a moment to share a partial bio that you may
24 find relevant to my testimony. I've had the honor of serving
25 as an elected official for over 42 years, previously as a

1 member of borough council, and I'm currently in my 15th year
2 as a school director. I'm a proud member of the volunteer
3 fire service, approaching 50 years of active duty with
4 Northampton County Station 34, where I have been Fire Chief
5 for 45 years. In my business life, I'm the owner of a general
6 contracting firm building schools, public buildings, public
7 housing, retail, industrial and other commercial projects
8 throughout Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, and Delaware.
9 One additional item that just popped into my head is I
10 currently chair our local municipal authority that I have
11 served for 46 years. Again, I thank you for this chance to
12 testify.

13 I'm here to share the concerns of our school board
14 and administration, along with those expressed to me by other
15 elected municipal officials of the Bangor Area School District
16 and residents throughout the Slate Belt. You may have heard
17 previously from our Superintendent, Dr. William Haws, who is a
18 real advocate for education and for the Slate Belt. Having
19 watched some of yesterday's session and hearing the opening
20 statements of Chairman Nordenberg, the comments of other
21 presenters, and being captivated by the metrics and the maps,
22 it's obvious that the Commission has undertaken a monumental
23 task. I must commend you for your efforts and your diligence.
24 It also causes me to recognize that the issues I bring to the
25 table pale in comparison to the scale of those you hope to

1 address throughout the Commonwealth. However, the Slate Belt
2 and the Bangor Area School District are quite important to all
3 of us.

4 As I mentioned, the Bangor Area School District is
5 currently part of District 137. The proposed plan and mapping
6 result in the following: It removes the school district
7 entirely from District 137. The map attaches a portion of the
8 district, Washington Township along with the boroughs of
9 Bangor, Roseto, and East Bangor, to District 138, and the plan
10 shifts the borough of Portland and Upper Mount Bethel
11 Township, which together comprise 43 square miles of our
12 district, almost 50 percent, moves it to District 176 in
13 western Monroe County. This is our primary concern and the
14 reason I'm here before you.

15 The splitting of the Bangor Area School District
16 raises the primary issue for our constituents, the fracturing
17 of the Slate Belt. Pennsylvania's Slate Belt, which you may
18 have heard a tad about from Dr. Haws, now essentially the
19 Bangor and Penn Argyl School Districts, is rich in culture.
20 There is a unique history going back to 1848 that is well
21 preserved by the curators of the Slate Belt Heritage Museum.
22 The school districts of Bangor and Penn Argyl are vital to the
23 Slate Belt. Professional, financial, and social interactions
24 have been nurtured for generations. One example, in 2018, the
25 Bangor Slaters and the Penn Argyl Green Knights met for the

1 100th time in the rivalry known as the Battle of the Slate
2 Belt. There are not many districts that can make a similar
3 claim. The traditions continue, and there are many more that
4 I would love to share with you, but I don't have enough time
5 with five minutes to do that. You'd have to give me a few
6 days. It would take a long time to explain the uniqueness of
7 the Slate Belt.

8 Another important consideration for us at home,
9 the spirit of volunteerism is alive in the Slate Belt. The 10
10 Slate Belt fire departments, including Station 33 in Portland
11 and Station 39 in Upper Mount Bethel Township, are all part of
12 Northampton County Sector 3 Fire Protection District. We
13 share resources and efficiencies to protect the lives and
14 properties of our residents and businesses. These dedicated
15 volunteers deserve to be represented by one State
16 Representative for many clear reasons. The entire Slate Belt
17 area, from Wind Gap to the Delaware River, clearly fits the
18 definition of a community of interest. All of Pennsylvania
19 deserves a statewide map that respects and preserves
20 communities of interest.

21 A couple of additional points. Mr. Chairman, it's
22 my understanding that the Constitution requires compactness as
23 much as possible. In this instance, we think there could be
24 an important geographical question relating to the
25 connectivity with Upper Mount Bethel Township, as that linkage

1 occurs along the very small border with Hamilton Township,
2 Monroe County, essentially along land known as the Appalachian
3 Trail at the top of a mountain. I'm wondering, we might
4 suggest that the mapping and the proposed area might not be
5 deemed compact. I would further suggest that connecting a
6 vital part of our district to an adjacent western portion of
7 Monroe County, at the top of the mountain again, where
8 communities share no common interest, is not beneficial to
9 either community.

10 In closing, I would ask, on behalf of all Slate
11 Belt communities and the Bangor Area School District
12 residents, that the Commission find a way to keep this
13 important community of interest together. Please do not
14 disenfranchise the residents of Portland Borough and Upper
15 Mount Bethel Township. Keep the Bangor Area School District
16 intact and within one State House district. I'm also
17 attaching resolutions that we enter into evidence. And just a
18 closing thought: While we recognize that you have a very
19 difficult job, and I don't have any sense for how you'll ever
20 get through this, we were hoping that the simplistic approach,
21 perhaps some tweaking of Districts 137 and 138, as they
22 currently exist, would allow for a continuity in government
23 and would allow for the compactness and achieve most of your
24 other goals. So I thank you, again, for your time and
25 patience, and God bless you, and good luck.

1 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Well, thank you very much. And
2 listening to what you described as your partial bio, it would
3 seem as if you have been juggling about six important jobs
4 throughout all of your life. We should have you back sometime
5 to give us lessons on how you do all these things.

6 MR. GOFFREDO: I'd have to thank my wife for all
7 of that, and my family.

8 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Are there questions?
9 Senator Costa.

10 SENATOR COSTA: No questions, just a comment, Mr.
11 Chairman.

12 Thank you for your testimony. And to amplify what
13 Leader Benninghoff talked about earlier, the role of emergency
14 services in this conversation I think is one that's very
15 important. We've heard from a couple of folks today, the
16 previous speaker, or two speakers ago, I think. I believe my
17 colleague, Senator Boscola, I think raised the issue with
18 respect to emergency services in your area as well. I think
19 that's an important thing that we need to consider as we look
20 at communities of interest in terms of how we describe that.
21 Somebody asked the question at some point, or I read it
22 somewhere, you know, communities of interest is in the eye of
23 the beholder. And I do think that this is one of those
24 factors, along with the traditions that you talked about, that
25 need to be considered in this manner as well. So I thank you

1 for bringing that to our attention and really building upon
2 it. And thank you for your volunteer service over the years
3 as well, by the way. But I thought that's an important point
4 that we need to not lose sight of. Thank you.

5 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 MR. GOFFREDO: Thank you. Emergency services
7 really depend on our legislators to help us through,
8 especially when we're doing joint projects, joint projects
9 between municipalities. It takes a lot of interaction between
10 the legislative side and the money side.

11 SENATOR COSTA: And if I could add, I think, Mr.
12 Chairman, you know from the Institute of Politics work with
13 regard to how municipalities work together in terms of
14 responding to different things, the contracts that they have
15 with one another, how they're built upon in the communities
16 that are there, I think those are very, very important issues
17 that we can't lose sight of. And I think that's a great point
18 that you make. As I think about some of the volunteer
19 companies in my area, how many of them run together, and the
20 agreements that they have between one another, how important
21 they were and how we did legislation here in Harrisburg to
22 help facilitate that happening and to be able to protect
23 communities and fire companies, for example. But nowadays,
24 that seems to be expanding. As we lose volunteers, as was
25 mentioned, there's more reliance upon this consolidation or

1 merger and working together, and to have inconsistencies with
2 respect to communities being in different areas may not make
3 perfect sense, and that's why I think it's a factor that we
4 should consider.

5 Thank you.

6 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Well, I made a positive but two
7 general statements earlier. I was looking again at your
8 partial bio, elected official for 42 years--

9 MR. GOFFREDO: Yes, sir.

10 CHAIR NORDENBERG: --15th year as a school
11 director, 50 years with the volunteer fire department, 45 of
12 those years as chief--

13 MR. GOFFREDO: Yes, sir.

14 CHAIR NORDENBERG: --and 40 years as the owner of
15 a contracting business that does work in Pennsylvania, New
16 Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland.

17 MR. GOFFREDO: Third generation.

18 CHAIR NORDENBERG: How'd you find time to come and
19 see us?

20 MR. GOFFREDO: Got out of the office.

21 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Well, clearly, your community
22 is very fortunate to have had you, and we're very fortunate to
23 have had you here with us this afternoon. Thank you very
24 much.

25 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: One more question,

1 Mr. Chairman.

2 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Oh, one more question.

3 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: I deeply apologize,
4 but I think the gentleman raises something that we didn't hear
5 from any of the other testifiers. And you were talking about
6 obviously not wanting the school district removed out of the
7 182nd, but to me it was the latter part of your testimony,
8 where you talked about the Bangor Area Industrial Development
9 Authority comprising six municipalities within the school
10 district, et cetera, and the momentum of the growth there. At
11 the end of the day that these efforts, I think you're
12 concerned about the impact on that, because these efforts,
13 obviously, have some economic positive impact on the future of
14 that community and the school taxes. I don't know if there's
15 anything you want to add to that, but I think, again, we're
16 looking at lines and geography. When I talk about areas of
17 community of interest, these are the kind of things that pop
18 up in my mind. What is the systemic impact, positive or
19 negative, by some of these changes? If you have just a minute
20 to expand upon that, because I think that economic impact is
21 an important piece.

22 MR. GOFFREDO: I purposely skipped over that item
23 in my narrative--

24 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: I wanted you to know
25 I was paying attention.

1 MR. GOFFREDO: --only because I couldn't get it in
2 my five minutes when I ran the clock.

3 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Well, we're clearly giving you
4 more time.

5 MR. GOFFREDO: Thank you.

6 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

7 MR. GOFFREDO: The work of the Bangor Area
8 Industrial Development Authority has been vital to not only
9 the localities where the developments are occurring, but our
10 school district at whole. Our tax base is slanted so heavily
11 on residential properties, and the migration of business from
12 our locale over many years is now requiring some new things to
13 happen, and they are. Thanks to this industrial development
14 authority and their ability to attract developers to
15 undeveloped portions of the school district, where the
16 transportation corridors are ideal given the proximity to the
17 Route 80 corridor in New Jersey, they have projects that
18 include the reclamation of a former power plant. The
19 developers are going to spend hundreds of millions of dollars
20 in our school district. The consequences, again, go back to
21 every one of our district residents in the form of reduced
22 school taxes. Their liaison here in Harrisburg is very
23 important, and they are, fortunately, with all of you, your
24 help, getting things done.

25 REPRESENTATIVE BENNINGHOFF: Well, thank you for

1 your information again. I think that was just a good,
2 important additional thing that we haven't heard a lot, but a
3 good way to end out the day.

4 Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for that time.

5 CHAIR NORDENBERG: We were already moving in the
6 direction of becoming honorary Slaters in our hearts this
7 morning, and I think you've sealed the deal.

8 MR. GOFFREDO: I'll double down on that offer.

9 CHAIR NORDENBERG: Thank you very much.

10 Thanks to everyone for making the two hearings
11 today a success, and we are now adjourned.

12 (Whereupon, the proceedings were concluded at 3:05
13 p.m.)

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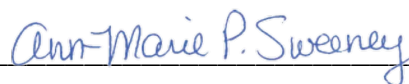
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1 I hereby certify that the proceedings and evidence
2 are contained fully and accurately in the notes taken by me
3 during the hearing of the within cause, and that this is a
4 true and correct transcript of the same.

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10 ANN-MARIE P. SWEENEY
11 Official Reporter
12 Legislative Reapportionment
13 Commission

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20 ANN-MARIE P. SWEENEY
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24 Harrisburg, PA 17120
25

EXHIBITS

Agenda

Hearing #13

Pennsylvania Legislative Reapportionment Commission

January 7, 2022

1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

North Office Building, Hearing Room 1

Comments on Preliminary Plan

1. Call to Order and Opening Remarks
2. Comments from Interested Citizens
3. Closing Remarks and Adjournment

Chairman: Thank you for your service. You are the voice for the ordinary Pennsylvanian on the commission. Pennsylvanians are counting on you to hold the elected leaders on the Commission accountable for what is really at stake in this process. These leaders are going to do what they always do: manipulate maps to benefit their caucus.

I don't know you Mr. Chairman, but I have faith that you want maps that fairly represent our communities.

The proposed senate maps in the Lehigh Valley are not reflective of what is in the Valley's best interest. The new 14th is plopped in the

heart of the Lehigh Valley carving up our largest cities and school districts to suit Harrisburg's needs, not the needs of these communities.

Today, the Lehigh Valley enjoys representation of three senators (16th, 18th and 40th), these seats are competitive/swing and far more reflective of communities of interests that make up the Lehigh Valley.

Politically speaking, the end result of the preliminary plan super packs Democrats into one seat and super packs Republicans in two other seats. This doesn't reflect the reality of the Lehigh Valley.

When it comes to redistricting, history shows that Northampton County is butchered, carved up and patched together every cycle for

decades and this one is proving to be no different. This is second time I have appeared at these hearings to express frustration and to fight for better maps. – I'm the only Senator that has had to do so.

This is why I have worked at the forefront of real re-districting reform with Fair Districts, the Committee of Seventy and League of Women Voters to create an Independent Commission to do this – to take the politics out of it. For the record in 2018, the Senate did pass Senate Bill 22 which I was the prime sponsor of that would have created an Independent Commission – but failed to go anywhere in the house

Northampton County has population of 305,000 and by its own right should have its own senatorial district.

Even with a steady growth in population, which should result in a more compact district, the 18th district changes once again by 40%. In over 20 years as a Senator, I have represented 44 different municipalities, only 5 have remained constant.

I submit these maps as evidence of the 18th district being routinely gerrymandered (**slide 1**)... Parts of Monroe County in, Parts of Monroe County out, Northern Northampton County (locally known as the Slate belt), in Slate belt, out, slate belt back in, Nazareth in, Nazareth out, Easton (the County seat) in, Easton out, Easton back in,

portion of Bethlehem out, all of Bethlehem in, portion of Bethlehem out; Whitehall out, Whitehall in – Whitehall out – you get my drift. I just named the larger areas, but this scenario plays out in all 44 municipalities. I could name all of them but that would take up too much of your time.

Why is the 18th district significantly altered every single redistricting cycle?

Perhaps it is because Northampton is a bell weather county when it comes to national and statewide elections that makes it ripe for gerrymandering.

Maybe it is because both counties have a higher percentage of Independents and Non-affiliated voters than other areas of the state.

Whatever the political reason, it needs to stop.

In 2000 – I actually sued because the final plan removed Northampton's **COUNTY SEAT**, the City of Easton, from the 18th Senate district, and dropped it in the 24th Senatorial district with towns in Bucks county, for purely political purposes (solely to remove a certain senator. Some on the Commission know that story).

Here I am again – fighting against another politically motivated shredding of the 18th Senatorial district. The reason I fight hard is I have seen firsthand what happens to the communities left behind

when this process unnecessarily separates them from where they belong.

Easton suffered for a decade and I don't want the same fate for

Bethlehem or any of the communities I represent.

Mr. Chairman, one of my biggest objections to the preliminary plan is how it treats the City of Bethlehem where I was born and raised.

The separation of the neighborhood of West Bethlehem and merging it with a large portion of Allentown in the newly created 14th seat needs to change. **It is UNNECESSARY and UNCONSTITUTIONAL.**

West Bethlehem is a neighborhood in the City of Bethlehem, a City with just under 80,000 residents.

West Bethlehem, like other neighborhoods in Bethlehem: downtown, northeast and southside all vote for Bethlehem's Mayor, City Council and school board.

That's why my office sits in the heart of the City, two blocks from "West Bethlehem" and six blocks from South Bethlehem.

100 plus years ago West Bethlehem merged with the City of Bethlehem because the residents wanted to be united and saw the benefit of being one City.

Not unlike when Allegheny City (now the Northside of Pittsburgh) merged with the City of Pittsburgh. Coincidentally, it happened around the same time.

Bethlehem is the seventh largest city in the Commonwealth. All comparable sized cities in Pennsylvania sit in their own senatorial district.

So why break up this City? It must be politically motivated because there is no other reason to splinter Bethlehem into 2 senate districts. Bethlehem is the largest municipality in Northampton County. It is the anchor of the urban core of the County.

The City owns and operates a regional water and sewer system serving municipalities in Northampton county. 911 services are provided by Northampton County to the City of Bethlehem, that includes West Bethlehem.

Moreover, Bethlehem is the largest municipality that makes up the Bethlehem area school district, the 6th largest in the state located in Northampton County. Its intermediate unit is in Northampton County.

The cities of Allentown and Bethlehem have no overlapping municipal services. Allentown has its own school district which is part of a separate Intermediate Unit in Lehigh County. Merging these cities doesn't serve either community.

The school districts and cities are vastly different. They have unique needs that demand separate representation in the Senate like they enjoy today.

They are too large to be competing for the attention of one Senator for limited resources. One of these cities and school districts will lose out under this plan--- and that is just wrong.

Mr. Chairman, the plan for the 18th Northampton based district needs to mirror its growth. A more compact district taking the opportunity to better unify school districts and shedding communities that have more in common with Lehigh County. I am all for creating new opportunities for people whether it is minorities, people of color, women, lgbtq.

When I first ran for Senate I was one of only 7 women in the chamber, so I understand the need for opportunity.

That said, packing democrats or cracking republicans to artificially create a “minority” influenced seat at the expense of true communities of interest here in the Lehigh Valley is **not the answer**.

News articles report that there are far better areas in the state where a minority influenced seat can actually have the desired result you are looking for. What is proposed in the Lehigh Valley doesn't accomplish that goal.

One last point, Mr. Chairman. The Supreme Court frowns upon localized challenges to state maps, regardless of how egregious, as a reason to throw out any final map. I know this firsthand because some members of the Pa Supreme Court in the Easton suit I filed 20 years ago

clearly thought that what happened to Easton and the 18th district was wrong, but alone was not enough to require a complete re-draw of the state map. And that is what some of these Commissioners are counting on.

That is why what happens **now**, before the final maps are voted on, is so critical for areas like the Lehigh Valley. You, Mr. Chairman need to ensure that municipalities like Bethlehem are not split up “unless absolutely necessary”. Those words were written into our State Constitution for a reason, **they should mean something**, and you have a profound influence on their application.

Make no mistake, the decisions you make today will set precedent for the next maps and have real impacts on communities for a decade and beyond. Better maps in the Lehigh Valley start with a unified City of Bethlehem in a district with the communities with which it shares municipal services and a school district. One that reflects real communities of interests, not ones artificially created to support a Harrisburg political narrative.

Mr. Chairman you can stop these unnecessary municipal splits.

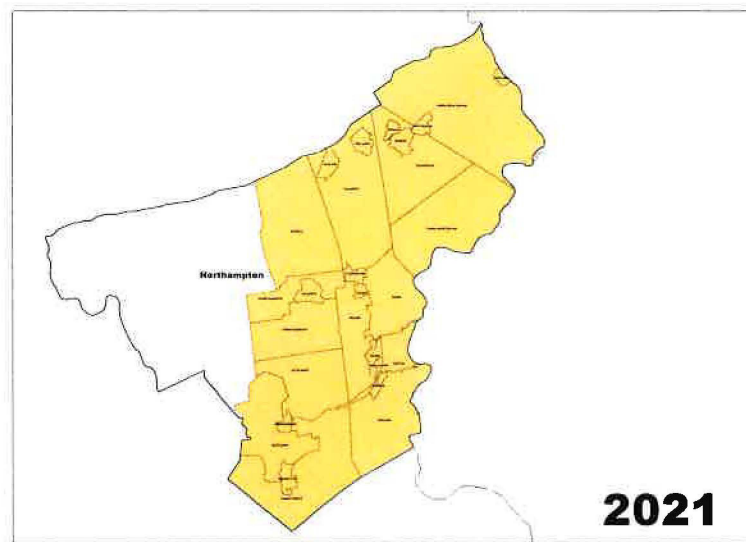
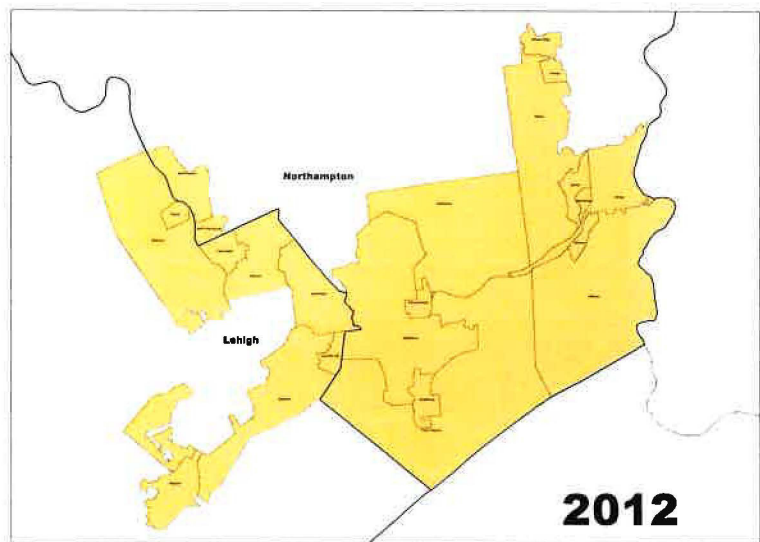
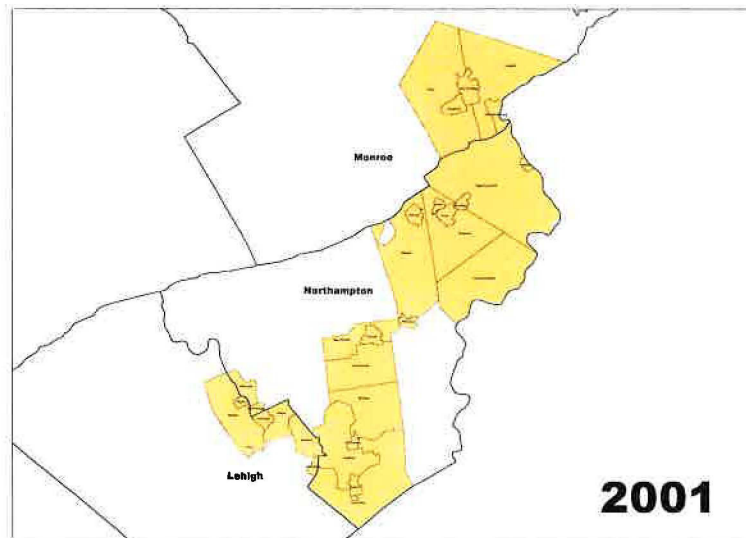
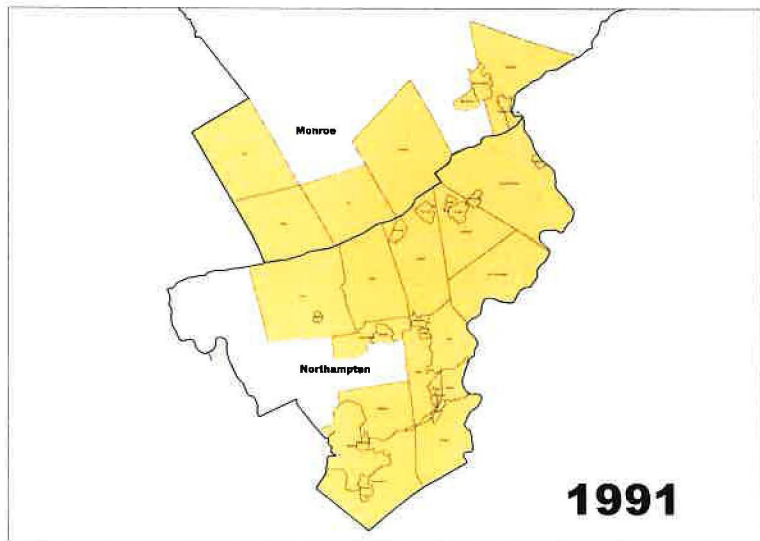
You can stop one more butchering of the 18th Senatorial district. As you see through public comment, our community is standing up and saying enough is enough.

Mr. Chairman, I am putting my faith in you to create a map that keeps the City of Bethlehem whole in a more compact 18th Senatorial district.

You are the people's voice and we are counting on you.

Thank you for allowing me to speak my mind.

EIGHTEENTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT



The primary guidance for this Commission should be the PA Constitution which states that:

“Unless absolutely necessary county, city, incorporated town, borough, township or ward shall not be divided in forming either a senatorial or representative district.”

The citizens of the Commonwealth should fully expect and adamantly demand that any redistricting map reflect that unambiguous and straightforward direction.

The fact that Democrat and Republican elected officials on the Commission are split 2-2 on the legislative map indicates that it ignores this Constitutional requirement and, instead, is drawn for political advantage. Unfortunately, Chairman Nordenberg cast the deciding vote for the proposed map.

In interviews after the release of the map, Chairman Nordenberg was quoted as saying that he did not have complete knowledge of all areas of the state and that he would listen to testimony that would give him a better understanding.

I have been a resident of Lehigh County for over 40 years and have served as a Lehigh County Commissioner. My purpose in testifying today is to provide Chairman Nordenberg with the knowledge needed to develop legislative districts in Lehigh County that meet the requirements stated in our Constitution.

As an overview, Lehigh County can be looked at as a microcosm of the Commonwealth. Lehigh County has a dense urban area, older towns that are no longer in their heyday, commercial areas, suburbs, exurbs, rural areas, and farmland - much like the Commonwealth. While Lehigh County is relatively compact it has quite different and diverse demographics. The legislative districts should reflect that while following the Constitution. However, the districts proposed for Lehigh County fail on both counts.

For example – looking at the new legislative districts:

- The 133rd takes one of the six precincts in North Whitehall - an exurb/rural area and combines it with precincts that are urban including the City of Bethlehem – which, by the way, is on the other side of a river from North Whitehall. In addition, as constructed the 133rd includes all or part of four different school districts.

- The 131st is in the southern part of Lehigh County but also goes into Northampton County and into Montgomery County and includes all or part of five different school districts.
- The 132nd takes three of the eight precincts in Upper Macungie - a suburban area and combines them with the City of Allentown. The 132nd also has part of two large and hugely different school districts – Parkland and Allentown. And it takes the idea of increasing minority representation and turns that on its head as it reduces the minority component from 39% Hispanic to 18% Hispanic. This cuts the Hispanic population and opportunity in half.
- The 187th combines Lynn Township - a rural and farmland area with Lower Macungie – a commercial and suburban area all while splitting Upper Macungie. And contains all are part of three different school districts.

In looking at some of the townships in Lehigh County there are other examples:

- Salisbury – which has five precincts, and less than 10,000 voters - is split between three different districts with one precinct in the 131st, one precinct in the 134th and three in the 22nd. The greatly diminishes the chances that residents of Salisbury Township will receive focus representation.

Clearly , the new districts for Lehigh County are incompatible with the Constitutional and were drawn for incumbent protection and partisan advantage.

Specifically:

- The 22nd was originally created as a minority-majority district. However, since its inception has not been represented by a minority even though it is 55% Hispanic. The Democrat incumbent nearly lost a primary to a minority challenger in 2020 and would have a contested rematch in 2022. As a result, the incumbent was “moved” to the newly drawn 134th which has a reduced minority component as it is only 39% Hispanic.
- The 132nd is currently an Allentown centric district but has been moved into Upper Macungie and South Whitehall partly due the shift in the 134th but also to provide a safe seat for the Democrat incumbent who moved from Allentown to South Whitehall in the fall of 2020.
- Meanwhile, the 187th combines Lower Macungie and part of Upper Macungie – two of the fastest growing townships in Lehigh County - thereby forcing two Republican incumbents into to run against each other.

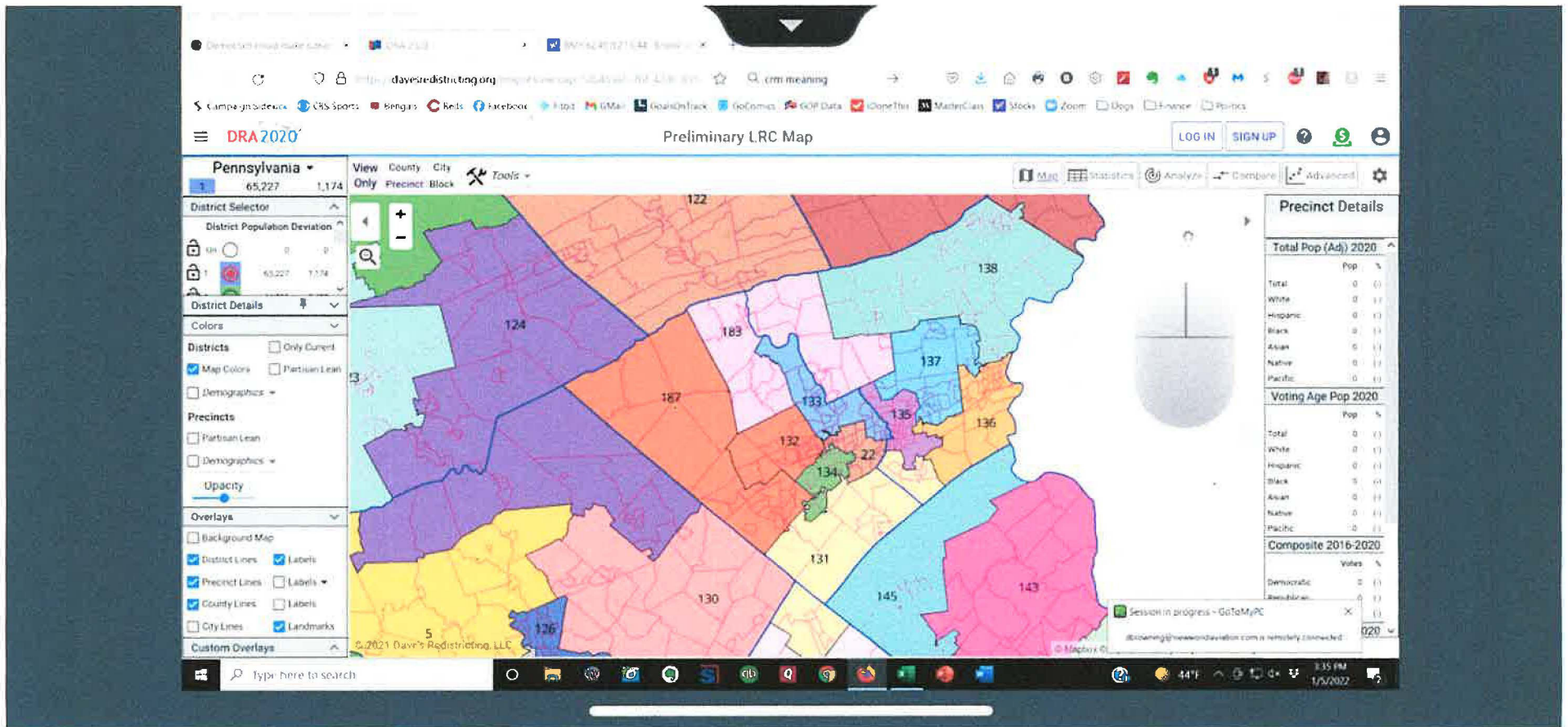
Again, the new districts are incompatible with the Constitutional direction against dividing counties, municipalities, and townships unless absolutely necessary.

Without question the districts in Lehigh County have been drawn:

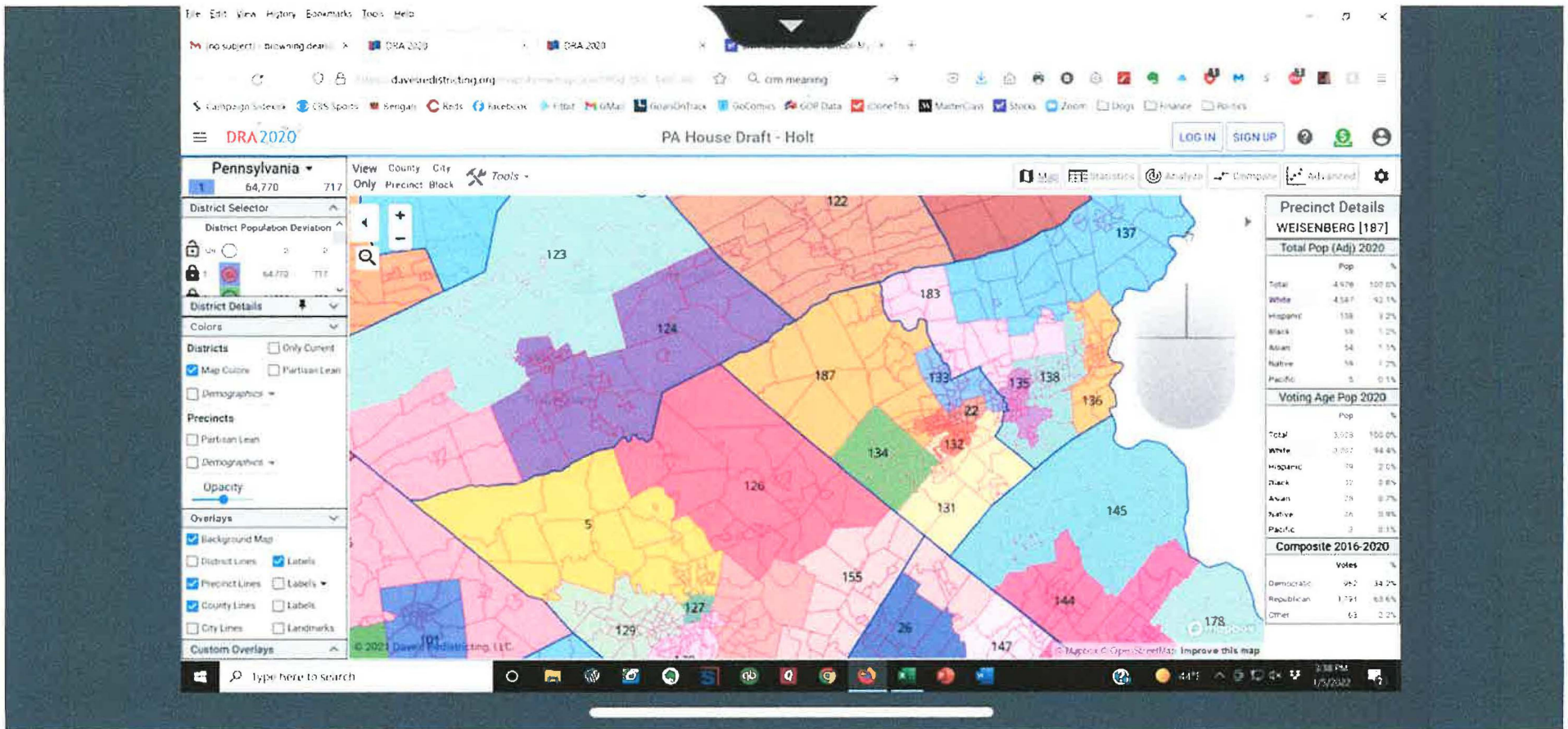
- for partisan advantage by forcing two Republican incumbents to run in the same district, and
- to protect the Democrat incumbents in the 132nd and 134th districts.

Anyone who claims otherwise is not being honest and is perpetuating the public's distrust of and disillusionment with our government in Harrisburg.

Chairman Nordenberg - I urge you to not let this stand. I respectfully request that you follow the Constitution. If you are looking for a map that would do that for Lehigh County and provide for minority opportunity, I would recommend the one submitted by Amanda Holt.



Proposed Map



Holt Map

925 Shetter Ln
Camp Hill, PA 17011
nagyjoshua@gmail.com

Legislative Reapportionment Commission
c/o Legislative Data Processing Center
Senate Box 64, Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Commission Members:

Thank you for taking comments on the redistricting of PA State House Legislative District 88, Cumberland County. Currently this district has a combination of our township, Lower Allen, as well as Upper Allen and Mechanicsburg. This current district keeps municipalities of similar interests and needs grouped together for accurate representation.

Unfortunately, the removal of Upper Allen to add Hampden Township destroys this community grouping without any clear benefits for the constituents of the 88th or 87th.

The 88th already was a well-designed district, meeting the guidelines for the geographic compactness by being a logical grouping of municipalities in the southeast corner of the Cumberland County. Now it stretches from the southern border of the county to the far northern edge of the county line. It also now violates Article II, Section 16 of the Pennsylvania Constitution for redistricting; splitting a municipality. The new 88th divides Mechanicsburg Borough down the middle into two different legislative districts.

Geographic grouping also ties directly into the next guideline; the communities that live there. Geography effects community interests and community integrity. Upper Allen and Lower Allen share more than just a similar name; they share a similar culture, population, and needs. The current 88th has shared interests of its citizens as Upper and Lower Allen flow seamlessly into one another with citizens living, working, commuting, and using resources of both on a regular basis. Having a state representative that can speak for this bloc of citizens allows them to have better representation and strength. Also of shared interest in this geography is school district. The current district almost fully encompasses two school districts for which these communities and the elected leaders have established strong connections. The preliminary map now adds a 3rd school district from Hampden. This new school district is one of the largest populations in the state. It is hard to imagine that the elected representative would be able to give an appropriate and equal amount of time to the 3 school districts. It is also does not make sense for the current school districts to lose their community representation.

Using the guidelines for redistricting, the 88th was already appropriate for population equality. The unfortunate decision to change prison inmate population adversely affects the townships they reside within. Changing the inmates' district to their previous home location ignores the resources and time that the state prisons use of our communities and local state officials. The current population of SCI Camp Hill is over 2000 individuals. State officials also still work on behalf of these inmates with prison issues, family members, etc. Removing their population from the calculation means we will have a large population that requires representation and resources but does not logically count them as part of our district.

We hope that you strongly consider maintaining the 88th district as-is by keeping Lower Allen and Upper Allen together as well as maintaining school district boundaries for the benefit of the residents who reside here.

Sincerely,

Joshua and Amber Nagy

ZOOM Testimony of Don Hossler for Legislative Re-Districting Committee 1-7-22

Good morning, Chairman Nordenberg, Leaders McClinton, Ward, Benninghoff, and Costa. I have lived in the same voting precinct for 48 years in Dauphin County. My current state Senatorial District is District 48 and District 106 for state Rep. Evidence of my concern about redistricting is my testimony to the House and Senate State Gov. Committees in June of 2011 and a desire to follow the PA State Constitution when drawing lines of legislative districts.

I have viewed most of the 2021-22 LRC sessions and appreciate the work of each member of the LRC and the leadership of Chair Nordenberg.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my view today.

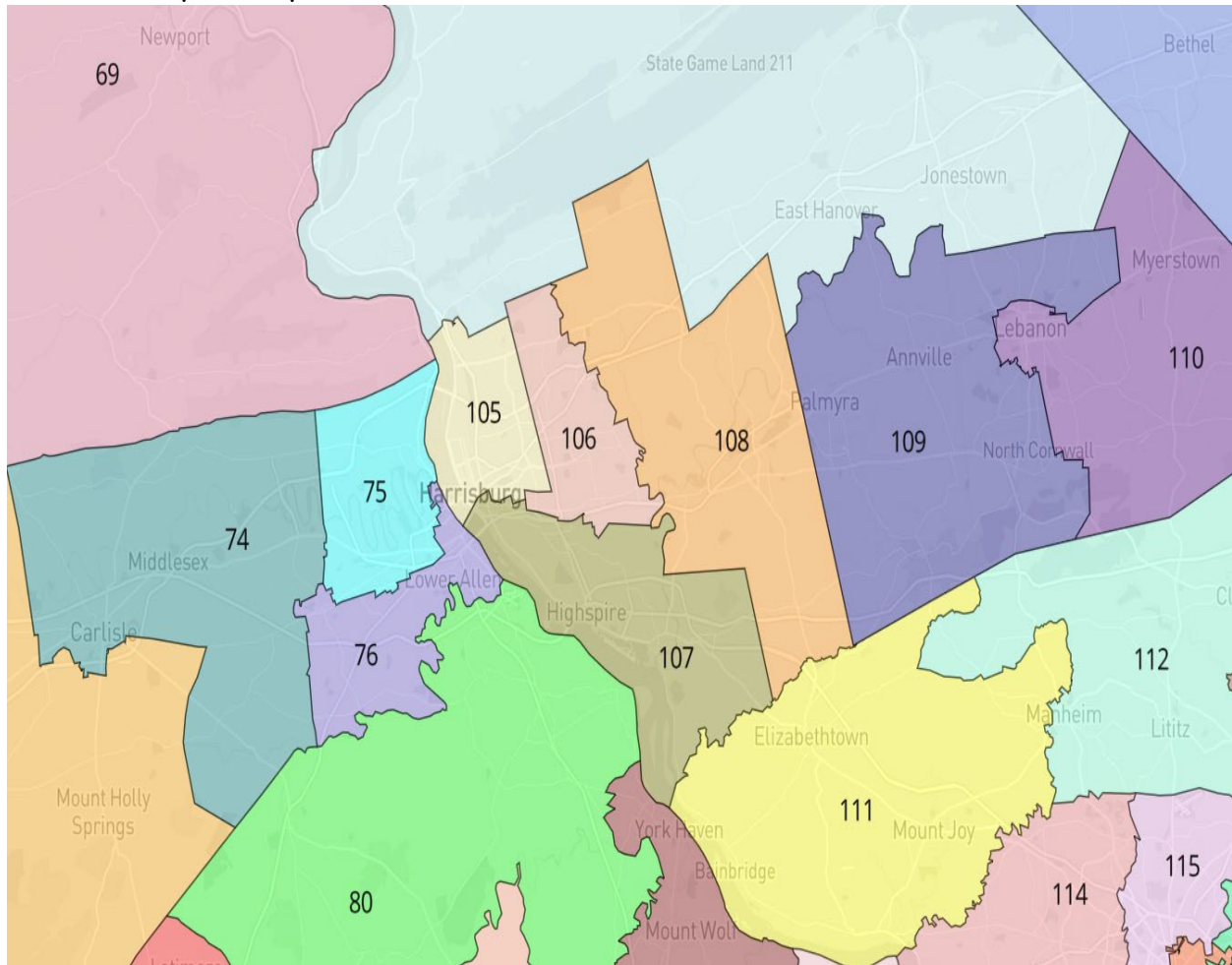
LRC SENATE MAP-Dauphin county-no further comment.

LRC HOUSE MAP-Dauphin County

Please consider utilizing the Fair Districts Pa. People s Map for all the dauphin county house districts which consists of districts 105, 106, 107 and 108.

https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1uw6ZPXmmJNzWGYVdSNPw4A_sJ_6Byxd&ll=40.552463750538635%2C-76.65100004813371&z=10

Click box "proposed peoples house map" on link above. FAIR DISTRICTS PA HOUSE Peoples map submitted to the LRC.



FAIR DISTRICTS PA. HOUSE MAP (FDPAHM) creates the Susquehanna River/Amtrak/Route 230 corridor state rep. district (107) that brings Londonderry Twp. back to Dauphin County from Lancaster County representation, focuses on the commercial, industrial and residential community mix adjacent to the Susquehanna River and does not dilute the racial/ethnic diversity of that area.

FDPAHM district 107 is a major transportation hub to/from Harrisburg, has common interests in recreational, environmental, river/tributaries, commercial, industrial and residential mix of infrastructure and a diverse racial / ethnic mix of persons residing in the area.

Route 230 originates in Lancaster and concludes in Harrisburg. Route 230 in dauphin county traverses FDPAHM district 107 to Harrisburg. Capital area transit bus #7 begins on route 230 on the eastern part of Middletown, travels through Penn state hbg, Harrisburg international airport, lower Swatara township, highspire, steelton and Harrisburg. When one rides bus #7 from Middletown to Harrisburg the connectedness that each municipality has to each other is very clear. On display is a tremendous mix of industrial, commercial, residential areas, the diverse racial and ethnic composition of the residents as each municipality directly adjoins the next in FDPAHM district 107.

These adjoining communities have similar issues: downtown business areas, common transportation, infrastructure needs, proximity to Harrisburg international airport, Amtrak, three-mile island nuclear facility, employment and cultural activities in Harrisburg, Penn state Harrisburg and the Susquehanna River. Over the last 2 decades conversations have occurred about combining some of the FDPAHM district 107 law enforcement agencies.

One state Representative would create greater opportunity for focused collaboration on ALL local issues of the connected communities. I believe FDPAHM district 107 aligns with Article 2, Section 16 of the PA State Constitution.

To Summarize: FDPAHM district 107 is compact, contiguous and has connected communities of interest that creates an opportunity for a state representative to help maximize the quality of life for all constituents.

Additionally: I realize the LRC is formulating state senate and rep. districts however Pennsylvania would have lost more than one congressional seat had it not been for the rapidly growing Black, Latino, and Asian-American populations. I ask the LRC to continue to demonstrate a commitment to ensuring that Pennsylvanian's have an opportunity to elect senate and representative candidates that truly represent all the citizens of Pa. over the next ten years. Splintering Allentown, Bethlehem, Easton and Reading related to a race/ethnicity should be scrutinized.

Thank you for this opportunity to discuss my observations for consideration, in this most difficult task that each of you are diligently working through.

Thank you.

Testimony of Arlene V. Edmonds
Legislative Reapportionment Hearing
Friday, January 7, 2022

As an active member of my community, I have recently been bombarded with questions and concerns about what redistricting is and how it will affect individual Pennsylvania voters. I am in contact with citizens from all walks of life. I have owned my home in Northwest Philadelphia for more than 30 years—basically my whole adult life—and I have been an active member of community.

As a news correspondent I wrote more than 10,000 articles for virtually all the community newspapers in the Philadelphia region for 30 years. I have also participated in the Philadelphia School Council, registered voters and oversaw volunteers during a presidential race, taught thousands of college students as a university adjunct for 12 years, taught piano and dance at community centers, and have been a volunteer for redistricting focused groups for the past two years. As a mother of two voting daughters, grandmother of four, and a neighborhood activist I am here to speak for my family and many other community voices.

I want to note that the new House maps are overall a significant improvement over the existing ones. However, I still have concerns about how the proposed House and Senate maps will impact my neighborhood district.

Since Philadelphia is a city of neighborhoods, redistricting should avoid splitting wards to the greatest extent possible. Communities of color, particularly the African American and Latino ones, must not be cracked or packed into legislative districts that disempower our vote. This means when legislative lines are drawn, they should stay in municipal lines when possible.

I know this first-hand since I live a couple of blocks from Philadelphia's northern city line. Even though I often cross the city line to get to the nearest supermarket or bank, most of my life is impacted by what happens on the Philadelphia side of the line. If I call 911 the Cheltenham police picks up, because their tower is closest to my house, but I am immediately transferred to the Philadelphia Police Department. Though Cheltenham High is in walking distance of my house that is the not designated public school for the children on my block. Consequently, our voting district should also stay within municipal lines. Districts should be compact so that all citizens get their issues addressed and resolved. The cracking of voters across urban and suburban lines in Philadelphia should be reduced as much as possible. I worry that these new maps do a poor job of appropriately representing the socioeconomic diversity of my neighborhood.

The division of voters across county lines is even more evident in the Far Northeast section of Philadelphia as well as West and Southwest Philadelphia. The Far Northeast is adjacent to Bucks County. While that area is urban, nearby Bucks County is largely farmlands.

Those in the densely populated areas in West and Southwest Philadelphia have more similar issues than those who reside in the adjacent Delaware County or Philadelphia Main Line in western Montgomery County. So, these Philadelphia residents would have their issues better met if they were in the same district within the city. The new maps make some improvement, but still provide too much care for incumbents, which disadvantages growing populations elsewhere.

Lastly, considerations should be given to the cultural demographics of communities. If, for instance, there are citizens who are more comfortable communicating in Spanish, French, or other languages but they live across a city line or current district line, then some accommodations could be made so that they are in the same district. This is the case for neighborhoods east of where I reside where some of these populations live across the city line along East Cheltenham Avenue. This also is the case in other parts of the city and region. These neighborhoods have Asians, Africans, and Caribbean and South Americans who speak many languages and live across a city/suburban line. This would ensure that their unique concerns are addressed.

Consequently, I would hope that this commission would carefully take all these points in consideration. Redistricting should be done fairly. The diversity of Pennsylvania must be treated justly. This will ensure that all citizens, including voters of colors, are represented. In fact, I would hope Pennsylvania, with all its diversity, would be leading the nation in this regard.

Exception Request – Adams County: Moving Oxford Township, New Oxford Borough, Berwick Township, and Abbottstown Borough from the PA House 91st District in the preliminary map and rejoining them with Reading Township and Hamilton Township in the PA House 193rd District as communities of interest.

My name is Kevin Moul and I am reaching out on behalf of Fire and EMS providers in Northeast Adams County. I am issuing an exception request on behalf of United Hook and Ladder Company 33 and The Fire Store, a local provider of fire, EMS, and Law Enforcement equipment.

I am reaching out over our strong concerns with parts of Northeastern Adams County being separated in the current Reapportionment proposal presented by your commission. In your plan, the municipalities of Oxford, New Oxford, Berwick, and Abbottstown are listed in the 91st Legislative District, while the municipalities of Hamilton and Reading are listed in the 193rd Legislative District.

The focus of our Exception request is to recommend all 6 of these municipalities be rejoined together within the 193rd District as communities of interest. While there may be other reasons these 6 communities should be joined together, I am specifically requesting this exception on the grounds of the Emergency Response they provide to the greater Northeast Adams County area.

All 6 of these municipalities fall under the coverage area of United Hook and Ladder Company 33 (located in New Oxford Township), the largest emergency service provider in Northern Adams County. Company 33 maintains a station within Reading Township, our largest geographic service area, along with Abbottstown Borough. Company 33 also provides mutual service aid to other municipalities throughout Northern Adams County, including Butler, Tyrone, Huntington, and Latimore Townships, all of which are located in the currently proposed 193rd District.

Northeast Adams County is a close-knit community that United Hook and Ladder is happy to be a part of. Not only do we provide emergency response to this area, we are also active in the community and the 2 school districts that represent Northeast Adams, Conewago Valley School District and Bermudian Springs School District. Each of the municipalities listed above have strong ties and are communities of interest, sharing the same schools, businesses, churches, and emergency and public services. Currently, this area all resides within the 193rd Legislative District and I respectfully request that an exception with your preliminary map be made to allow them to continue to do so.

The Northeast Adams County community relies heavily on our state officials for answers to questions, assistance with government forms and programs, and representation of

our community in Harrisburg. Keeping our entire community represented in just one House District and one Senate District, as it currently is, would provide continuity and fair representation that we rely on so much.

I understand that making this exception would require other changes to be made to surrounding PA House Districts. In this circumstance, it would be possible to do this by only changing 1 or 2 other districts at most. In your preliminary plan, the municipalities of Hamiltonban, Fairfield, Franklin, and Straban are all represented in the 193rd District. Moving these 4 municipalities back to the 199th District, would allow them to rejoin the rest of Fairfield Area School District and Gettysburg Area School District. Doing this would better combine communities of interest by nearly every aspect of the definition.

If it is needed to further increase the population of the 193rd District closer to your average deviation, you could also make a small change in Cumberland County, by swapping Penn Township (located in the 199th District in the preliminary plan) back to the 193rd District in return for Upper Mifflin (located in the 193rd District in the preliminary plan). Thank you for the opportunity to express my views regarding your preliminary PA House map. For a summary and breakdown of the numbers, please see the following:

193rd District: Population of 64,369 after changes

Adams Co –

Receives Oxford Township, New Oxford Borough, Berwick Township, Abbottstown Borough

Cumberland Co –

Receives Penn Township

199th District: Population of 63,969 after changes

Cumberland Co –

Receives Upper Mifflin

91st District: Population of 65,612 after changes

Adams Co –

Receives Hamiltonban Township, Fairfield Borough, Franklin Township, Straban Township

Good afternoon. Longtime hearings watcher; first-time speaker. I appreciate this opportunity to speak to the members of the Legislative Reapportionment Commission. My name is William Madway. I'm a lifelong Pennsylvania resident. I've spent most of my life in Montgomery County; I also spent a number of years living, going to college and grad school, and working in Philadelphia. My professional experience includes marketing research, communication, entrepreneurship, teaching college, and advocacy.

I'm speaking on behalf of one of the organizations I volunteer with, the nonpartisan Pennsylvania Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism or RAC-PA. We are the social justice arm of the 40 Reform Jewish congregations in Pennsylvania, which can be found in over half the counties across the state.

We seek a world in which the core values embraced by the Reform Jewish Movement are reflected in society and public policy. Through education, advocacy, and activism, RAC-PA harnesses the passion, skills, and collective power of Pennsylvania's 40,000+ Reform Jews in pursuit of racial justice. To advance our vision, we build coalitions with allied communities and organizations at the forefront of driving societal change.

In concert with two coalition partners, Pennsylvania Voice and Fair Districts PA, we are working on the redistricting process, specifically, the redistricting of the PA House and Senate. Our goals are to end partisan gerrymandering, and create more opportunities for People of Color to have their voices represented in the General Assembly. Independent analysis shows that Pennsylvania's current House and Senate district maps rate poorly with respect to partisan bias and fair representation of People of Color. These inequities pose a major obstacle to solving the problems plaguing the people of Pennsylvania.

So let me turn now to our views on the maps proposed by the LRC last month. The proposed map for the PA House performs far better than the current House map by almost every measure. It opens the door for more minority representation, levels the playing field between the two parties, and provides districts that make much more sense for the people who live in them, by increasing the compactness of districts and reducing the number of county and other jurisdictional splits.

Looking specifically at representation for and by People of Color, we commend the LRC for creating 7 minority opportunity districts, and implore the LRC to retain these districts in the final version of its maps and consider other ways to improve minority representation. We urge the LRC to make specific changes in accordance with the testimony provided by our partners at PA Voice as they relate to the Unity Maps the organization created with the input of communities of color in their target counties.

Specifically, we request that you re-examine the minority representation in Allegheny and Lancaster counties.

Regarding the proposed Senate map, while it makes some improvements in compactness and splitting, it does little to expand minority representation. Our discussions with our partners lead us to strongly recommend that the LRC keep Allentown intact in a district drawn to maximize Latino participation in the body politic, and create a majority minority district in Southeast PA.

There is another problem with the proposed Senate map that we urge the LRC to address. According to analysis by our partners, many of the districts with state prisons, as well as districts in Central PA, Pittsburgh, and other portions of Southwest PA are well below the ideal population. In contrast, districts in Philadelphia and other Southeast PA counties are far above that number. In effect, the map as drawn dilutes the voting power of our fastest growing, most diverse regions, and maintains voting power in regions that have lost population. It is essential that the LRC correct what we and our partners see as the inequitable distribution of the population.

We commend the LRC for the strides it has made with respect to correcting decades of partisan gerrymandering, creating opportunities for greater representation of People of Color in the General Assembly, and including citizen mappers and other members of the public, as well as community groups like ours, in your work. We also want to thank you for your dedicated service to the people of Pennsylvania.

Redistricting is a challenging process that requires you to weigh and balance many priorities. When I face difficult decisions like those you are now facing, I often think of the words of Rabbi Hillel, one of most influential religious leaders and scholars of my faith, in particular:

"If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?"

You are on the right path; you have demonstrated courage and vision. But more change is needed. Now is the time.

That concludes my testimony. I will upload my remarks to the LRC website for the record. Thank you again for the opportunity to share our positions with you. I'll be happy to take any questions you might have.

Testimony of
Michael Goffredo
Bangor Area School District, Board President
to the
2021 Legislative Reapportionment Commission
January 7,2022

Chairman Nordenberg, Esteemed Senate and House Leaders;

Good afternoon. Happy New Year and thank you for this opportunity.

My name is Michael Goffredo. I reside in the Borough of Roseto, Northampton County which is part of the 88 square miles that are the Bangor Area School District, currently wholly within District 137.

Before presenting my comments related to the proposed State House District reapportionment I would like to take a moment to share a partial bio that you may find relevant to my testimony:

- I have had the honor of serving as an elected official for over 42 years, previously as a member of Borough Council and currently in my 15th year as a School Director.
- I am a proud member of the Volunteer Fire Service, approaching 50 years of active duty with Northampton County Station 34, where I have been Fire Chief for 45 years.
- In my business life I am the Owner of a General Contracting firm building Schools, public buildings, public housing, retail, industrial, and other commercial projects in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland for over 40 years.

Again, I thank the Commission for this chance to testify. I'm here to share the concerns of our School Board and Administration, along with those expressed to me by other elected municipal officials of the Bangor Area School District and residents throughout the Slate Belt.

Having watched the first segment of yesterday's session, hearing the opening statement of Chairman Nordenberg, the comments of other presenters, and being captivated by the metrics and maps, it is obvious that the Commission has undertaken a monumental task. I must commend you all for your efforts and diligence.

It also causes me to recognize that issues that I bring to the table pale when compared to the scale of those that you hope to address throughout the Commonwealth.

As I mentioned, the Bangor Area School District is currently part of District 137. The proposed plan and mapping result in the following:

1. It Removes the School District from District 137.
2. The map attaches a portion of the District – Washington Township along with the Boroughs of Bangor, Roseto, and East Bangor - to District 138, and
3. The plan shifts the Borough of Portland and Upper Mount Bethel Township – which together comprise approximately 43 square miles (almost 50%) of the School District – to District 176 in western Monroe County. This is our primary concern.

The splitting of the Bangor Area School District raises the primary issue for our constituents; the fracturing of the SLATE BELT.

Pennsylvania's Slate Belt - now essentially the Bangor and Pen Argyl School Districts - is rich in culture. There is a unique history going back to 1848 that is well preserved by the curators of the Slate Belt Heritage Museum.

The School Districts of Bangor and Pen Argyl are vital to the Slate Belt. Professional, financial, and social interactions have been nurtured for generations. One example; In 2018 the Bangor Slaters and the Pen Argyl Green Knight football teams met for the 100th time in the rivalry known as "The Battle of the Slate Belt". There are not many districts that can make a similar claim.

The traditions continue and there are many more that I would love to share with you, but I don't have enough time today to expand on the "uniqueness" that is the Slate Belt.

Another important consideration for us at home; The spirit of Volunteerism is alive in the Slate Belt. The ten (10) Slate Belt Fire Departments – including Station 31 in Portland and Station 39 in Upper Mt. Bethel Township – are all part of Northampton County Sector 3 Fire Protection District. We share resources and efficiencies to protect the lives and properties of our residents and businesses. These dedicated volunteers deserve to be represented by ONE (1) State Representative for many clear reasons.

Also; The Bangor Area Industrial Development Authority, comprised of all six (6) municipalities in the School District, is currently gaining momentum with hundreds of millions of dollars of commercial development now becoming a reality. Most of that is slated to occur in Upper Mount Bethel Township with its unique access to the Route 80 traffic corridor in adjacent New Jersey. Those efforts and future tax revenues will benefit all School District property owners by reducing the ratio of property taxes on residential real estate. It is imperative that they succeed. The Authority needs and deserves undivided legislative support.

The ENTIRE Slate Belt area – from the Wind Gap to the Delaware River - clearly fits the definition of a Community of Interest. All of Pennsylvania deserves a statewide map that respects and preserves communities of interest.

A couple of additional points:

Mr. Chairman, It is my understanding that the Constitution requires compactness, as much as possible. In this instance there could be important geographic questions related to the connectivity with Upper Mount Bethel Township, as that linkage occurs at a small border with Hamilton Township, Monroe County – essentially along land known as the Appalachian Trail – at the top of a mountain. I would suggest that the newly redesigned map might not be truly deemed “compact”?

I would further suggest that connecting a vital part of our District to an adjacent western portion of Monroe County, at the top of a mountain, where the communities share NO COMMON INTEREST, is not beneficial to either community.

In closing, I would ask, on behalf of ALL Slate Belt Communities and Bangor Area School District residents, that the Commission find a way to keep this important Community of Interest together. Please do not disenfranchise the residents of Portland Borough and Upper Mount Bethel Township. Keep the Bangor Area School District intact and within ONE State House District.

I am also attaching Resolutions adopted by the Bangor Area School Board, the Borough of Bangor, and Upper Mount Bethel Township for your records. There are more expected.

Wishing you continued success as you work towards a final solution. I thank you for your time and consideration.

BANGOR AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
123 Five Points Richmond Road
Bangor, Pennsylvania

Resolution to Condemn Preliminary 2021 Pennsylvania State House Map

WHEREAS, the new preliminary State House Map splits the Bangor Area School District unnecessarily by removing Upper Mount Bethel Township and Portland Borough and placing them in a second State House District; and

WHEREAS, the new preliminary map significantly decreases the compactness of the Bangor Area School District as is required by the Pennsylvania Constitution; and

WHEREAS, Upper Mount Bethel Township and Portland Borough would be represented by a district that is largely based in Monroe County as opposed to their County of residence, Northampton County; and

WHEREAS, the Bangor Area School District is one of only two school districts in the "Slate Belt." The "Slate Belt" is a clear and distinct community of interest with a rich cultural heritage, a deep sense of community, and a dedication to public service as evidenced by commitment to education, including the arts, sports, and volunteerism. "The Slate Belt" should be kept within a single legislative district; and

WHEREAS, the new preliminary State House Map would reduce the ability of the school district community to act as one voice on adverse matters; and

WHEREAS, from a school district perspective, based on the population and location of its community, the makeup and drawing of the preliminary State House Map appears gerrymandered;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that this resolution be spread upon the minutes of the meeting of January 5, 2022.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be submitted to the 2021 Legislative Reapportionment Commission of Pennsylvania.

Adopted this 5th day of January 2022.




Superintendent



President of the Board



Secretary to the Board



Date

BOROUGH OF BANGOR
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA
RESOLUTION 2022-

**A RESOLUTION TO CONDEMN PRELIMINARY 2021 PENNSYLVANIA
HOUSE AND SENATE MAPS**

WHEREAS, the “Slate Belt,” of which Bangor Borough is a part, is a clear and distinct community of interest with a rich cultural heritage, a deep sense of community, and a dedication to public service as evidenced by commitment to governance, inter-municipal cooperation, legislative support, and volunteerism. “The Slate Belt” should be kept within a single House and Senate legislative district; and

WHEREAS, the new Preliminary State House and Senate Maps split the Slate Belt region unnecessarily by removing Bangor Borough and its neighbors from their current district and placing them in a second district; and

WHEREAS, the new preliminary maps significantly decrease the compactness of the Slate Belt region as is required by the Constitution; and

WHEREAS, large portions of the region will be represented with districts that have no affiliation with or understanding of Bangor or the Slate Belt area; and

WHEREAS, the new preliminary State House and Senate Maps would reduce the ability of Bangor and the Slate Belt community to act as one voice on adverse matters; and

WHEREAS, the Legislative Reapportionment Commission should have held a public Hearing and made available for full public review preliminary maps prior to a formal vote; and

WHEREAS, from a Borough perspective, based on the population and location of its community, the makeup and drawing of the Preliminary State House and Senate Maps appears gerrymandered;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the BOROUGH COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF BANGOR adopts this resolution the 4th day of January, 2022.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be submitted to the 2021 Legislative Reapportionment Commission of Pennsylvania.

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF THE
BOROUGH OF BANGOR

BY: James W. Kresge
James W. Kresge, President

ATTEST:

Tracy Palmer
Tracy Palmer, Secretary