

Testimony of Mark Lafer, LRC 09/21/2021

Testimony of Mark Lafer, for the September 21, 2021 Meeting on the Pennsylvania Legislative Reapportionment Committee To the honorable members of the commission: I have lived in the 77th legislative district of the Commonwealth for more than 33 years. Subsequent to the U.S. Census of 1990, 2000, and 2010, the legislature redrew the district lines with gerrymandering in mind. We now are awaiting the next 77th district gerrymander, purportedly based on the 2020 Census. For part of my career, I did health and human services planning for the Commonwealth. A core consideration was coherence. I needed to justify both inclusions and exclusions from service areas. Looking only at school districts, the structure of the 77th legislative district neglects this basic consideration. If I am reading this map correctly, the 77th includes all of the Philipsburg/Osceola Mills School District. The Bald Eagle Area School District serves Huston Township, which is fully in the 77th. Then there is State College Area. It covers all of six minor civil divisions (MCD). However, none of three – College, Halfmoon, and Harris Townships – are part of the 77th. Patton Township is in the 77th and 81st. Fergusson Township has a three-way split: the 77th, 81st, and 171st. Only State College Borough is an intact component of the district. The split goes beyond geography. It also reflects a split between political parties. The growth of the Centre region justifies splitting the current legislative district that includes State College into two. This should happen . When it does, I urge the General Assembly to keep school district and MCD boundary lines contiguous.