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I wish to focus on three points. I do so as a Pennsylvanian interested in politics, maps, and puzzles, and as a person who has drawn many redistricting maps, a few of which have won awards in contests put on by Draw The Lines PA. Point 1: Looks matter. Despite the existence of quantitative metrics for the core goals that any redistricting plan is supposed to strive for, public reception of the plan will be primarily visual: people looking at a map. How the map looks will be both their first and most lasting impression. The map does not show any metrics. It does not show how even or uneven district population may be. It does not show distribution of party affiliation or how competitive the districts are. What a map shows are splits, how compact the districts are, whether there are clearly gerrymandered shapes, and how "clean" boundary lines are. For good or bad, it is these qualities which most influence how the general public judges a map: Does it pass the "eye test"? Point 2: Good maps have strong regionality. Beyond compactness, clean lines, and splits, another thing people perceive from a map is whether the districts make sense. Districts with regionality make sense. Regionality is similar to the idea of a "community of interest", but instead of being multiple small groups within a district, regionality is the whole district as one natural community with shared interests. Natural communities exist where there are shared institutions: shared economies, shared linguistic and cultural practices, shared media markets, shared membership in the same political units, etc. It is marked most of all by a sense of shared regional identity; a sense that the people belong together as a unit. Regionality is how well the map reflects our sense of these regional identities. These things in turn are shaped by shared geography – land features, waterways, highways, etc – and by geographic boundary features, e.g. mountain ridge lines, large rivers, etc, that create natural break lines in population distribution. To make maps with strong regionality, I often consult a detailed population density map to find these natural breaks in population. Point 3: Use crowdsourcing. In past decades, a redistricting plan might be second-guessed by a few pundits and media, but there were few competing maps – because making a map was labor-intensive. Those days are gone. Today anyone can make a map, in a few hours, using online software, and use those same apps to quickly compare and analyze maps. Thus, the redistricting map this year, and future decades, is likely to face competition from hundreds or even thousands of other maps. It is crucial that the chosen map both look good and be quantifiably excellent. It would be an embarrassment, to the committee and to Pennsylvania – and a basis for legal challenges – if other maps exist with scores that were better than the chosen map on all, or nearly all, the metrics. The Committee should take steps to ensure that their map is among the best of all possible maps. One strategy to do so is to internalize the competition by crowdsourcing the process. Public comment is a first step. Soliciting maps is a better step. I see your comments website will soon have a button by which anyone can submit a statewide map (https://www.redistricting.state.pa.us/comment/) A further step would be to hold a contest among the submitted maps, similar to those held by Draw The Lines PA. Filter out any map for which any other map exists that is superior to it in each of the core metrics. That will leave perhaps a few dozen maps, each superlative in some combination of criteria. Choose your map from that set and it will be at least "in the conversation" for the best of possible maps. Not only does this process almost guarantee a quantifiably excellent map, it also cannot be beat in terms of transparency and democratic process.

 Notes: Regarding natural political communities, see Benedict Anderson's (1983) book _Imagined Communities_. Regarding geographic districts: Implicit in the moral justification of districting is the idea that people within a district have certain commonalities that give them shared political interests. If this were not so we should replace them with a system that frees people from being bound to geographic interests and allows them choose what interests matter to them in choosing political representation. That would have been difficult with 18th century technology, but is feasible in the 21st century. Of course, this is beyond the scope of the mission of the Redistricting Committee.