

Redistricting testimony

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Terri Tauber and I live in CD7. I lived in Summit for 33 years before moving west along Springfield Ave to Berkeley Heights. I want to talk briefly about the communities along that Springfield Ave/County Road 512 corridor. They share not only the County Road, but also the Passaic River and the Morris-Essex train line, in particular the Gladstone Branch.

The Springfield Ave corridor includes many towns in CD7. It begins at an intersection with CR 513 in Califon in Hunterdon County, goes through Tewksbury Township, then crosses the Lamington River into Bedminster Township in Somerset County, through Peapack-Gladstone (passing the Gladstone Station, the Western terminus of the Gladstone Train Line). Rt 512 crosses the Raritan into Far Hills and continues on into Bernards Township. After intersecting with CR651, it crosses the Passaic River into Long Hill Township, meanders over the Gladstone Branch and the Passaic River again into Berkeley Heights in Union County where it becomes Springfield Ave and runs through New Providence and Summit before hitting its Eastern terminus at Route 24. Springfield Avenue is actually the Main Street for those three downtowns.

As you can see, there is a lot of overlap between County Road 512, the Passaic River and the Morris-Essex Line. These neighborhoods have a lot of commonality and benefit from sharing a Representative in Congress who understands their issues.

The Passaic River has a strong environmental impact on the CD7 area as well. There are many hiking trails and recreational areas along the river and, of course, the area serves as a habitat for a wide variety of wildlife.

CD7 has benefitted from having Tom Malinowski represent us. He certainly recognizes the importance of the train line and has worked to secure funding for the Gateway Tunnel. And he has been a hands-on Congressman, listening to the concerns of our communities and working to fairly represent us in DC.

Additionally, CD7 is clearly a fairly drawn district now, as evidenced by the close race last year. It seems counter-productive to the objective of this commission to make it a less fair district going forward. And an added benefit of a fair district is that the representative has to take the time to get to know his/her constituents and communities and that is better for all of us.

Thank you.

Joyce Leftly: Testimony to the NJ Redistricting Commission (Nov 20, 2021)

Good morning, Judge Wallace and Committee Members. My name is Joyce Leftly and I've lived Lebanon Twp, which is part of Hunterdon County, for over 30 years.

As you likely know, ALL of the municipalities in Hunterdon County are included in Congressional District 7 and I urge you to KEEP all of our towns there in the new maps you'll be drawing. I'd like to tell you why.

Hunterdon County is an interesting place to live – we have many large, semi-rural townships, interspersed with charming towns (like Clinton) where we congregate to shop, sip coffee, dine and enjoy recreation together with folks from other towns.

We have many shared values across our large County, with a special focus on environmental concerns. Our county fought the PennEast pipeline from being built thru the Delaware River and won, we do river & stream clean ups with watershed organizations each spring and we have 2 major reservoirs for recreation and to supply water to other areas of the state. We also have numerous farms and farmstands, selling local produce, often organically grown.

Our County also places a high priority on Education and we share resources across municipalities to provide excellent quality. Although we have 26 municipalities, they are all served by only 5 Regional High School Districts, so the families are linked across the District.

For higher education, we are served by Raritan Valley Community College, which is located in Branchburg Twp in Somerset County, also a part of CD7.

Other areas where we our communities are melded together are with Hunterdon Medical Center (our only hospital) and in transportation resources and issues across the county.

These are just a FEW examples of how our large County is a tight-knit community.

Since CD7 needs to ADD 14K residents to its map, it makes NO sense to separate any part of Hunterdon County to another CD, which could confuse voters, suppress votes and would be detrimental to services we need from the federal govt. Our current Congressman has an indepth understanding of our County and redistricting should not force us to lose the oppty to continue getting that expertise in our County.

Many thanks for your time and attention and best wishes in your important work to ensure that our elections are fair and our democracy is preserved.

November 20, 2021

TO: NJ Congressional Redistricting Commission
From: Gerald M. Pomper

Justice Wallace and Members of the Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on your important work.

My name is Gerald Pomper. I am retired from Rutgers, where I was Board of Governors Professor of Political Science. During my 60 years there, I also chaired the redistricting commission for Hudson County, and learned much about redistricting from Alan Rosenthal, my colleague at the Eagleton Institute, who twice chaired the state commissions. I am a resident of Highland Park in Middlesex County, and campaigned in the neighboring 7th Congressional District for Tom Malinowski.

Your work is very complicated, often contentious. I would like to suggest some guidelines.

Wherever possible, districts should be compact in shape, facilitating contact between officials and citizens, easing campaigning, and preserving communities' identities. The 7th District is a rambling district, comprising nearly 600 square miles – twice the size of New York City. It extends almost sixty miles through six counties across most of the state from the Pennsylvania border to New York suburbs – making it very tough, I can tell you, for walking canvassers.

As I'm sure you'll notice, the 7th has an odd shape, something like a bird with a very elaborate neck and the short stub of a right wing. That neck and wing, strikingly and probably not accidentally, are packed with Republican voters separated from their neighbors in Morris and Warren counties.

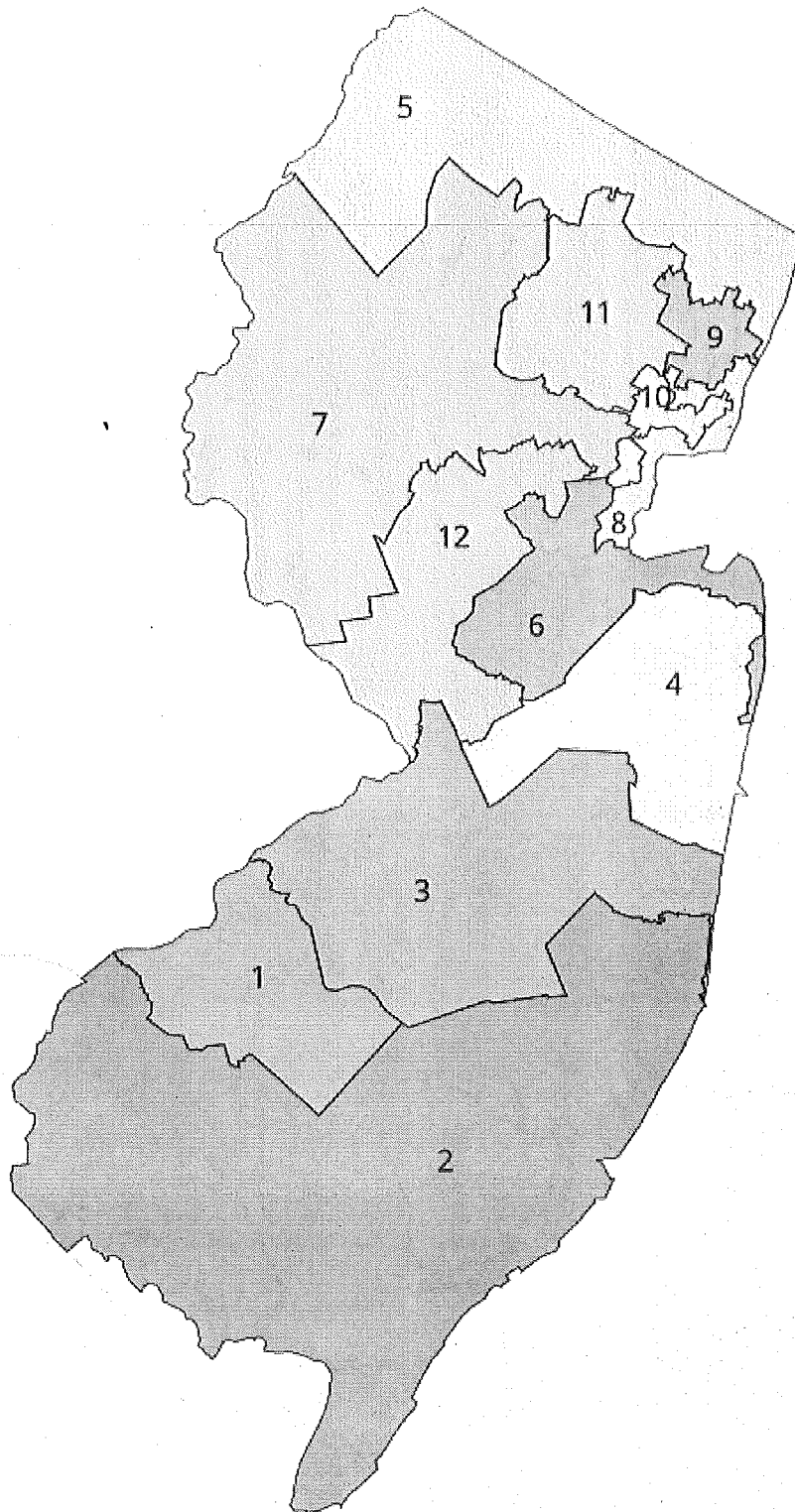
Partisan fairness is another important goal in redistricting. While Malinowski has twice won the District, he did so under the handicap of a district gerrymandered to benefit the former – and admittedly competent - Republican incumbent or the party's current candidate, a favored "Young Gun." In a state where Democrats comprise 58% of the voters, Malinowski had to overcome a biased mapping that reduced his party's ranks to bare majorities at the ballot box.

Third, Professor Rosenthal taught me to give the benefit of the doubt to incumbents, who bring experience to resolving the difficult decisions of politics. Perhaps those who drew the maps in the last decade followed this principle when they gerrymandered extra Republicans into the district. If so, it might now be time to return the favor by adding Democrats to Representative Tom Malinowski's side.

I know how hard this redistricting will be. Although I do not know all of the problems, I would offer a direction for the new district map. I would urge that you consolidate the 7th CD and eliminate the awkward gerrymander, by moving the portions now in Warren and some Morris towns (such as Roxbury, Washington, and Mt. Olive) to other districts. The new 7th district could then be made still more compact by adding towns in the heart of the district, Union county (such as Scotch Plains, Fanwood and Rahway). These changes would both make the partisan division fairer and the total district more cohesive.

I appreciate this opportunity, wishing you patience and success in this vital duty.

New Jersey Congressional Redistricting Proposal
By Brad Van Arnum
November 20th, 2021



Introduction:

- I am a resident of West Windsor, and have lived in central New Jersey for almost my entire life
- I plan to testify virtually on November 20th, but wished to submit this document beforehand, so as to provide more context about the congressional map that I will be presenting to the commission
- For months, I have experimented with different map configurations, thinking about how to best represent the unique regions of New Jersey while preserving the essence of the current map
- My congressional map can be accessed in Dave's Redistricting at this link:
<https://davesredistricting.org/join/d006ec45-f6a9-4bfa-8a24-76e8713daf9e>
- Upon request, I would be happy to provide the data for my map in any other format or program

Key Facts About My Map:

- The population deviation between districts is a single person, the lowest possible
- Only 18 towns are split (see last page), and when dividing, I usually placed towns mostly in one district
- Above all, I prioritized minority representation and communities of interest, as well as competition
- My map has four main competitive seats: the 2nd, 3rd, 5th, and 7th. The 11th is slightly competitive.
- My 2nd and 7th are more Republican than their current versions, while my 3rd and 5th are more Democratic. Most likely, all four of these districts would remain competitive for the entire decade.
- Partisan fairness also guided my thinking: this map would generally elect at least three Republicans, helping to prevent a repeat of when NJ's House delegation became 11-1 after the 2018 midterms.
- One Republican incumbent, Chris Smith, would need to relocate to Monmouth County, while a Democratic incumbent, Tom Malinowski, would be in a significantly more Republican district
- The Jersey Shore would be less divided in my map, primarily being in two districts, the 2nd and 4th
- The rural, northwestern part of NJ is no longer divided between three districts, and is mostly in my 7th
- Having the 8th gain Perth Amboy is a foundation of this map, allowing the 9th to become more Hispanic
- This change with the 8th also enables the 6th to include more of Middlesex County, allowing the district to unify the Asian-American community of central New Jersey (my 6th is almost 28% Asian-American)

Summary of Districts**District 1:**

- This is the district I changed the least; my NJ-1 contains all of Camden County and a slightly different mix of towns in Gloucester County
- Also, the few towns that the 1st currently has in Burlington County would be moved to my 3rd district
- With these new boundaries, Clinton would have won NJ-1 by 22% in 2016 and Murphy by 29% in 2017

District 2:

- My NJ-2 aims to be a district representing the southern shore, while still including most of southwest NJ
- Towns in south Ocean County such as Barnegat and Lacey have more in common with NJ-2 than NJ-3
- This version gains multiple shore towns in Ocean County from the 3rd, but this 2nd stops at Berkeley Township (which is split, and mostly in the 3rd district)
- Trump won this new version of the 2nd by 8.4% in 2016, making it somewhat more Republican

District 3:

- The current 3rd is barely contiguous, and combines two parts of the state that have little in common
- My new 3rd is primarily a suburban/exurban district that loses most of its shore towns to the 2nd or 4th
- Hamilton, a large suburban town, has much more in common with Burlington County than the shore
- The Joint Base is entirely located in my 3rd, which keeps the rural interior of south-central NJ intact
- By gaining Jackson, Plumsted, and Manchester, this 3rd also keeps the northern Pine Barrens together

- My new 3rd would be the state's most competitive district, with both Trump in 2016 and Guadagno in 2017 having won it by around 2.5%

District 4:

- My 4th becomes a true shore district that contains most of Monmouth County's population (over 80%)
- It would better represent the Jewish population of western Monmouth County, which is currently split
- This NJ-4 gains Marlboro, Brick, Matawan, part of Aberdeen, most of Hazlet, and more of Middletown (which is still split with the 6th), along with a few other small shore towns in Monmouth County
- Alternatively, if Hamilton must remain in the 4th, the 3rd can reclaim Brick, which pushes the 4th back into Hamilton (however, western Hamilton, which has ties to Trenton, should be in the 12th regardless)

District 5:

- The current 5th is too geographically expansive and needlessly splits Warren County; it also divides the Asian-American and Hispanic communities of Bergen County with the 9th district
- My NJ-5 is nearly 18% Asian-American (the current 5th is only 12%), and my version better unifies the Korean-American community by gaining Cresskill, Tenafly, Fort Lee, Palisades Park, and Leonia (a couple of these changes also help to better unify the Jewish community of Bergen County)
- Clinton won this new 5th district by just 3.3% in 2016, making it the state's most competitive House district along with the 3rd (keeping the 5th district in Sussex County and moving Hackensack to the 9th are both essential to keeping NJ-5 competitive)

District 6:

- My NJ-6 becomes a more suburban, Middlesex-based district that has most of the county's population
- This 6th loses northeastern Middlesex County and parts of Monmouth County, but still includes Long Branch and Asbury Park, neither of which has much in common with the 4th district
- By gaining southwestern Middlesex from the 12th, my 6th keeps the Asian-American community of central New Jersey more unified while making sure to avoid splitting the Route 1 corridor
- This version of the 6th is slightly more Democratic; Clinton would have won this new 6th by about 18%

District 7:

- My new NJ-7 would retain its present character as a wealthy, suburban/exurban competitive district
- This version would lose several towns in central Somerset County and gain the rest of Warren County, plus the towns surrounding Lake Hopatcong in southeastern Sussex County
- More of western Morris County is in my NJ-7, including Jefferson, Randolph, and the Mendhams
- This NJ-7 would become more Republican, shifting from being Clinton +1% in 2016 to Trump +6%
- Possible alternative: have NJ-7 take back Branchburg and Warren Township in Somerset County, pushing NJ-12 into southern Hunterdon County (the 12th becomes more compact this way)

District 8:

- This new 8th resembles the old 13th that existed during the 2000s; I added Perth Amboy, Carteret, and eastern Woodbridge while moving Belleville and parts of Kearny/North Bergen into the 9th
- Still complies with the VRA: the current 8th is 52.8% Hispanic by total population, while mine is 53.3%
- Having the 8th take northeastern Middlesex is crucial for NJ-6 and NJ-9, but is also logical for NJ-8 itself, as Perth Amboy is 80% Hispanic and has little in common with the suburban towns of Middlesex

District 9:

- To make NJ-9 closer to being majority Hispanic, I added Belleville and traded multiple towns with the 5th (such as Hackensack, Lodi, and Bogota). This 9th is about 47% Hispanic by total population.
- Also, my 9th gains Fairview from the 8th district (which is no longer in Bergen County at all)

District 10:

- My 10th is more urban than the current NJ-10, gaining more of Jersey City while losing suburban towns such as Montclair, West Orange, South Orange, and Maplewood (these towns are fully in my 11th)
- This version remains compliant with the Voting Rights Act, and is about 53% Black by total population
- Contains about 2/3 of the population of both Newark and Jersey City (the former is still split similarly)

District 11:

- This NJ-11 is still based in north-central New Jersey, but is more centered in the NYC metro than the current 11th, gaining diverse towns in Essex County that NJ-10 had to shed due to population growth
- This new version is much more Democratic than the current 11th, but could be competitive in rare cases
- Unlike the current 11th, which has multiple split towns, only a single, small town in my 11th is divided

District 12:

- For my home district, I had NJ-12 lose southwestern Middlesex County in exchange for more of Mercer County and most of Somerset County, creating a central NJ district based around the Route 206 area
- Route 78 serves as the approximate boundary between my 7th and 12th in northern Somerset County
- North Plainfield is perhaps the most important addition to my NJ-12; this town is currently in the 7th, but should arguably be in the same district as Plainfield, which is an important city in the 12th
- This 12th is highly diverse, and ends up being slightly more Hispanic/Black than the current version
- Alternatively, if the commission wishes to have something closer to the current map, then the 12th could take back North Brunswick, pushing the 6th back into South Plainfield and more of Woodbridge

Split Towns:

Aberdeen - divided between the 4th and 6th, roughly half in each (the Parkway serves as the primary boundary)

Bayonne - divided between the 8th and 10th, with most of the city's population in the 10th

Berkeley - divided between the 2nd and 3rd, with most of the town's population in the 3rd

Clayton - divided between the 1st and 2nd, mostly in the 2nd

Haledon - divided between the 9th and 11th, with roughly half of the population in each district

Hamilton - divided between the 3rd and 12th, with about half of the population in each district (Route 295 acts as the main boundary)

Hazlet - divided between the 4th and 6th, almost entirely in the 4th

Jersey City - divided between the 8th and 10th, about two-thirds of the city's population is in the 10th

Kearny - divided between the 8th and 9th, mostly in the 9th

Linden - divided between the 8th and 10th, almost entirely in the 10th

Middletown - divided between the 4th and 6th, primarily in the 4th (Route 36 generally serves as the boundary)

Newark - divided between the 8th and 10th, about two-thirds of the city's population is in the 10th (the 8th has the Ironbound neighborhood and the area north of Bloomfield Avenue)

North Bergen - divided between the 8th and 9th, a little more than half the population is in the 8th

Piscataway - divided between the 6th and 12th, almost entirely in the 6th

Scotch Plains - divided between the 7th and 12th, almost entirely in the 12th (similar split to the current map)

Teaneck - divided between the 5th and 9th, mostly in the 5th

Union - divided between the 7th and 10th, primarily in the 7th (Vauxhall and southeast Union are in the 10th)

Woodbridge - divided between the 6th and 8th, slightly more than half in the 8th (Route 1 is the main boundary)

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or for the map data!

E-mail:

Congressional Redistricting Commission

Statement for Meeting on 11/20/21

By Brad Van Arnum

Thank you Chairman Wallace, and members of the commission, for this chance to testify. My name is Brad Van Arnum, and I have been a resident of West Windsor in the 12th district for nearly a decade, and lived in Montgomery and Westfield for about a decade each prior to that. I truly appreciate having your time this morning, and I am really proud of our state for having such an open redistricting process, with the opportunity for meaningful public input. For the last two years, I have been deeply engaged with redistricting, and have spent many hours thinking about the strengths and weaknesses of our current map, as well as possible alternatives.

A few days ago, I submitted a specific proposal for how New Jersey's congressional lines could be modified. Along with my map, I included a written document that outlined my thought process and provided details about how and why I drew each district the way I did. Since members of the commission already have that document available to them, I will use this statement to quickly highlight several broader points about my map.

The map I submitted to the commission reflects months of thinking about how our congressional districts could better represent the different regions of our state, while staying close to the spirit of the current map. My proposal, which adheres to the Voting Rights Act and has districts of exactly equal population, stresses minority representation, competition, and above all, communities of interest.

To that last point, my map gives greater voice to distinct areas of the state, including the Jersey Shore, which I now have two dedicated districts for, the rural northwest, which is less divided in my proposal than in the current map, and even the Pine Barrens, which I aimed to keep more fully intact in my 2nd and 3rd district. In these cases and others, I strove to keep groups of people with shared interests and similar challenges in the same district, while still having multiple competitive districts that either party

could win. This was not always easy, as there is often a tension between having competitive districts and respecting communities of interest, but I am proud to say that my map still has four highly competitive districts that would remain closely contested throughout the next decade. Given how many other states have eliminated their competitive House districts so far this redistricting cycle, it is crucial that New Jersey not follow that same path. Overall, I tried not to dwell too much on partisanship in my map, and the final product ended up as something of a compromise, with features that both parties might support.

In my remaining time, I would like to briefly discuss several of my districts, and will start by looking at my new version of the 6th, which in many ways was the district that shaped the rest of my map. In my view, the single most important decision facing the commission is how it plans to create a congressional district that gives more influence to the Asian-American community of central New Jersey. For months, I have experimented in a mapping program with the 6th, trying to figure out a reasonable way to make this district more representative of the growing Asian-American community. What I ended up with is a new 6th based primarily in Middlesex County that is nearly 28% Asian-American.

My 6th district still extends into Monmouth County to include Long Branch and Asbury Park, but otherwise, it aims both to keep Middlesex County as whole as possible and to provide the Asian-American community a stronger voice in one district. I say that because in the current map, this community is split between the 6th and 12th district. But with modest changes, the 6th can easily become a district that gives real influence to this community, whether to make their concerns heard in Congress, or even to someday elect a member of their own choosing. Given how concentrated the Asian-American population is in the Middlesex area, and in particular, the Indian-American community, it would truly be a missed opportunity to keep the district lines as they currently are, which divide both a distinct racial group and Middlesex County itself.

And I should note, my version of the 12th would still have a substantial Asian-American community of its own, and at the same time, my new 5th up in Bergen County could serve as yet another influence district for the Asian-American community in that part of the state.

My new configuration of the 6th is made possible by having the 8th district extend into Perth Amboy, a change that also benefits the 9th district, which I will briefly discuss in just a moment. My 8th actually ended up being quite similar to the old 13th district that existed during the 2000s. It is a majority Hispanic district centered primarily in Hudson County, but also with part of Newark and the northeastern portion of Middlesex County that I just referenced.

Having the 8th come down into Perth Amboy not only enables the 6th to become an Asian-American influence district, but it also allows the 9th to then take parts of the current 8th, bringing the 9th much closer to being majority Hispanic. In my map, the 9th is about 47% Hispanic by total population, whereas the present-day 9th is just 39% Hispanic. That increase could one day make all the difference in allowing the Hispanic population of northeastern New Jersey to elect a member of its own community and more generally, to have an even stronger voice within the district. All this is accomplished by switching just a handful of towns, and my 9th is still quite similar to the current version, being based mostly in Bergen and Passaic County.

In closing, although the commission has a multitude of decisions to make about district lines throughout the state, I have highlighted the 6th, 8th, and 9th districts in particular because I feel they are arguably among the easier changes to implement in our next map. The changes I am proposing with these three districts would not force any current member of Congress to move, and the representatives of these districts would still have a group of towns and cities similar to what they currently know. Yet, with these modest changes, our congressional map will recognize the growth of both the Asian and Hispanic communities in New Jersey over the last decade, providing real opportunities for greater representation in Congress. And with that, let me say again how thankful I am to have had this chance to testify, and how much I am looking forward to seeing the map that the commission eventually produces. Thank you again for your time.

Good Morning,

Thank you for this opportunity to talk about an issue that is so critically important to our state and to our nation at this time. For anyone paying attention to the actions of state legislatures across our country right now, the implications for holding on to our democracy are indeed grave. States such as Arizona, Georgia, Florida and Texas are doing all that they can to restrict voting and are even going so far as to take vote counting away from non-partisan boards of elections and instead hand this critical function to decidedly partisan state legislatures. Therefore, as one of a handful of states where, it seems, democracy still matters, **it's more important than ever that NJ maintains its independent commission to avoid partisan gerrymandering** and preserves the democratic principles of free and fair elections.

My statement today is plain and simple: **let's keep elections across all districts in our state fair**. This would include my district, NJ07. In fact, **the principle of fairness pertains especially to NJ07** because we have a history here. For nearly forty years, from 1981 to 2018, NJ07 sent Republicans to Congress. During the previous redistricting, the commission went so far as to draw this district to be safe for then incumbent Leonard Lance. But the voters changed all that in 2018. That year, Democrat Tom Malinowski defeated Republican Leonard Lance by five percentage points. In 2020, Representative Malinowski held his seat with a razor thin margin of 1.2 percent. Our district is already one of the most competitive districts in the nation - it's time for this Commission to make sure that it is fair.

We know that political bodies are renowned for making deals, and we have heard that there is talk about "sacrificing NJ07" to Republicans so that the remainder of New Jersey's Districts remain safe for Democrats. Making our district "safe" for the scion of any political dynasty would be completely unacceptable to the citizens of NJ07. We cannot allow this to happen.

So as I wrap this testimony, I **reiterate the plea to make NJ07 fair**. Do not sacrifice us.

Thank you for your time.

Miriam A. Kohler

Miriam A. Kohler

Millington, NJ 07946
Citizen of NJ-07

Hi

My name is Ralph Zimak. I have been a resident of Scotch Plains for the past two and a half months. Prior to that I was a resident of Westfield for 43 years and therefore was a constituent of Congressional District 7.

I raised my children in Westfield and made many wonderful friends in that town. I truly enjoyed living there. However, I am currently 71 years old and have had a hip and a knee replacement. My wife and I realized that the time had come to leave our split level home with its 4 staircases in favor of a home with all necessary rooms on the first floor. Given that my son and his family live in Albuquerque I needed a home big enough to accommodate them when they come visit. Therefore, an apartment in Westfield would not work for us. And Westfield does not have 55 plus homes for seniors to move into when they reach our stage of life. That said my wife and I love the town and did not really want to leave it. So to stay in the community we moved to Scotch Plains just a few blocks away from Westfield. We were surprised to learn that our new home was not part of Congressional District 7 but that part of Scotch Plains is.

In the short time we have lived here we have made friends with 7 families originally from Westfield. We have been told that about half the residents of this 55 plus community are former Westfield residents. I therefore want to know why seniors must leave their Congressional District in order to move into safer and more suitable housing. It doesn't seem fair to me especially since we live so close to Westfield and part of Scotch Plains is part of that Congressional District which we have been members of for so long.

Thank you,

Ralph Zimak

hi

Presentation to the NJ Redistricting Commission

November 20, 2021

Good morning; my name is Deborah Halpern and I am a resident of Summit, NJ, located in the 7th Congressional District. I have lived here for 39 years and have been an active member in the community, both as a professional and as a local volunteer. I deeply appreciate this opportunity for public input.

As a Summit resident, my husband & I raised our daughters here, and participated in many of their activities as well as serving as volunteers in the Summit schools. As members of a Summit synagogue, we participated actively as congregants and volunteers on the Board of Trustees. We have connected and supported many local candidates for different offices both in Summit, the state and in Washington. We have also participated in a number of Summit based organizations, including Summit Marches On, the Summit Democrats and Summit Indivisible to help people in need as well as to encourage their participation in the Democratic process. It is very important to me to be active on behalf of my community in a positive and productive way.

I am a social worker who has worked with patients and family members, adults & children, whose lives have been impacted by a cancer diagnosis for over 20 years. Advocacy is a big part of what I do, in addition to counseling & support, and I have always connected with the Representative from District 7th for information and help for constituents with whom I work. Our current Representative, Tom Malinowski, has made sure that he and his staff are available for responding to any and all questions and concerns and have connected in a positive & impactful way with families I have referred. I truly believe in our Democracy and the importance of having a Representative who is there to help his/her constituents.

I am deeply concerned about the pending planning for the 7th District; when our District was redistricted in 2000, we lost a number of our local communities whose boundaries neighbor many of our towns in the 7th District. Parts of Union Township & Plainfield were moved to other districts. As noted this morning by others who gave testimony, Scotch Plains & Fanwood, both near to Westfield & Watchung were moved out of our District & Hunterdon County was added in. The end result is a geographic spread of numerous "non-neighbors" with little history or connection on one end to the other. One of today's presenters noted that District 7 gerrymandered in 2000 and became a "safe" district for reelection by the incumbent of one party and remained the status quo for 18 years!

I bring this concern to your attention as communities who share neighboring borders often share and participate in Houses of Worship in towns nearby but not necessarily in their home community. As you consider any redistricting, especially when considering "communities of interest", please remember that residents of neighboring towns shop, visit & support each other in a multitude of ways that adds to the vibrancy of their many

communities. They learn about the members of their neighboring communities and it brings understanding & caring and this benefits all of us.

I am urging you all to maintain the cohesiveness of the 7th District. We need to have this in order to best address planning for our communities, including but not limited to, the environment, infrastructure and meeting people's needs. Splitting up neighboring communities into multiple districts will not accomplish this; what happens when one Representative for half of a township has one plan and the Representative for the other half of the township does not share this vision?

Lastly, I am asking for a commitment to fairness in considering the needs of NJ residents as the decisions are considered for all of the districts. Our country's constitution and our Democracy is based on this, not on a guarantee of making a district " safe" for one group to be the winners of all future elections.

Thank you for your time.

Deborah Halpern

Testimony Before the Redistricting Commission

Good morning. I'm Claire Toth, from Summit. In my professional life, I'm a Managing Principal and the Senior Wealth Strategist at a New Jersey-based financial services company. My employer is in a highly regulated industry. It has multiple locations, ranging from Summit in the east to Clinton in the west. My employer prides itself on maintaining a unified culture across its presence in the state. When there are issues with regulators and other government agencies, it's important to have a single voice and response. Having a business centered in a single Congressional district greatly simplifies that process. It allows us—and similarly situated businesses—a single point of contact when issues arise.

In my volunteer life, I'm part of several charities that either operate up and down the I-78 corridor or that partner with other organizations along that route. This includes SAGE Eldercare, Family Promise, and Impact 100 Garden State. These disparate organizations have each built coherent communities, again concentrated in a single Congressional district. Dividing these communities in redistricting would be akin to Robert Moses, running highways through defined neighborhoods.

Finally, and personally, I moved to New Jersey many years ago after spending more than a decade living in Washington D.C. My first New Jersey election featured a few tight races. It was both empowering and exciting to cast a vote that mattered, in an election where the outcomes were not all foregone conclusions. Every New Jersey voter deserves that experience. Drawing fair electoral districts will make that possible.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Testimony of Michael Laser

I live in Montclair, in the 10th District. It's my understanding that the Redistricting Commission is considering redrawing the lines so that all of Montclair would become part of NJ11.

That might seem to make sense – it's all one town, after all – but the change would move a Black community (the South End and Fourth Ward of Montclair) out of the 10th district, which is majority Black, and put it in the majority white 11th district.

I understand the need to shift voters in order to equalize the population of the state's districts. But moving Montclair's southern half into NJ11 would dilute our local Black community's power—and there are other ways to accomplish the required population shifts. There are parts of NJ10 that are majority white, and moving these into other, less populous districts—instead of half of Montclair—would be a fairer way to redraw the map.

Please keep Montclair's South End and 4th Ward in the 10th district.

Thank you for listening.

P.S. I would add that a reasonable compromise might be to move Montclair's 3rd Ward, which is majority white, to a different congressional district.

The Honorable Justice John E. Wallace, Jr.
New Jersey Congressional Redistricting Commission
c/o Office of Legislative Services
P.O. Box 068
Trenton, NJ 08625-0068

**THIS LETTER IS AN APPROXIMATE TRANSCRIPT OF MY VERBAL TESTIMONY
AT THE VIRTUAL HEARING ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2021**

November 20, 2021

Justice Wallace and the Entire Commission:

I am a resident of Readington, New Jersey, so I am in Congressional District 7.

I have two main concerns that I wish to raise today, one more specific and one more general.

Keeping Hunterdon County together, in District 7

The specific concern is that I believe it is important that Hunterdon County be kept all together, in Congressional District 7, because I believe that the entire county is a community of interest. We are tied together in many ways.

Common economic interests

We have common economic interests that tie the county together. These are most visible in our larger towns like Flemington, the county seat, which has shopping, restaurants, and many services; Clinton, where there is shopping, restaurants, and the excellent Hunterdon Art Museum; and Lambertville, which is a tourist destination.

Lambertville of course is also one of our popular river towns, like Milford, and Frenchtown, which has a new art center called Art Yard. There is even a magazine for our river towns. These river towns have important roles in terms of economic development, but also common concerns like flooding.

Environmental concerns

Indeed, common environmental concerns also unite the county. Many people in the county banded together to fight the PennEast pipeline, and many share concerns about preserving open space and the environment more generally.

Open space

Indeed, in our county we also have a common love of our natural space. I personally am a cyclist and involved in a cycling group, The Western Jersey Wheelmen, and so many people cycle out here. Many of us, like me, also hike throughout the county, in places like Ken Lockwood Gorge and Round Valley in the north and the Sourlands in the south.

Transportation

Common transportation routes and needs also tie us together, both within our county and with the rest of the congressional district, through the Route 202 corridor, then going East along Routes 22 and 287. Many people commute from my area, and west of me, into New York. (I commute along this same route, although not all the way to New York, as I work in Iselin). Others commute by train on the Raritan Valley Line or by bus using the Trans Bridge Bus line; these routes also tie us to New York for recreation.

Connection between county government and congressional representation

Keeping Hunterdon County together, and in Congressional District 7, is also important and valuable for maintaining the connection between our county government and our congressional representative in Washington.

We saw this in recent crisis situations like Covid where there was good coordination of information between the county and our representative, Tom Malinowski. I personally volunteered to help in an effort led by Rep. Malinowski early in the pandemic to make phone calls to check on local seniors.

Such coordination is also valuable for situations like the recent terrible flash flooding caused by tropical storm Ida where seven people in Hunterdon County died and for which we needed the FEMA disaster declaration and when many needed information about how to apply for that FEMA assistance once it was available.

Continuity of representation

Situations like these also raise the need for continuity of representation so that voters in the district continue to know to whom to turn for help. Significant changes to a district like ours lead to confusion about voter services. It also leads to voter suppression, which is antithetical to the principles of our democracy.

We of course need to add people to our district as part of this redistricting process; for the purposes of ensuring continuity of representation, I urge you to keep the current shape of the district and simply add to it.

Fairness

The more general concern I wish to raise is about fairness. I strongly encourage the commission to adopt an anti-gerrymandering standard. Now, more than ever, with nationwide partisanship at seemingly record levels and nationwide efforts to suppress voting rampant, fairness is more important than ever.

I am glad that New Jersey has always had an independent commission for redistricting, but as we know, that has not always protected us from gerrymandering. It is well known that the previous 13th commissioner (John Farmer) was influenced by his relationships and tried to protect the 7th district for Leonard Lance, a Republican. In spite of the fact that NJ CD7 was gerrymandered against the Democrats, Democrats flipped the district in 2018, electing Tom Malinowski. That was a result of a strong Democratic candidate who addressed issues of concern in the district; his popularity as a candidate and his positions; and an enormous

grassroots effort. The public should not be punished because they elected a Democrat even in a district designed to favor a Republican candidate. The map should reflect the will of the electorate. Therefore, again, I respectfully ask that the Commission adopt an anti-gerrymandering principle.

Closing with a personal note

My father, who passed away some years ago, was a U.S. history teacher. He was passionate about U.S. history and about the U.S. constitution in particular. He was always so proud of our country and our constitution, and of the ability of our constitution to stand the test of time. He often noted the very low number of amendments that have been made to it over more than 200 years, particularly when you consider that the first 10 amendments were made together, right at the beginning, as the Bill of Rights, and that two amendments, about prohibition, cancel each other out.

He instilled that pride in me as well.

But when I see so many things being done in recent years to suppress voting and suppress democracy, including attempts to overturn the results of fair elections and to interfere with the peaceful transfer of power, I not only wonder what my father would think, but I personally have great fear for the future of our country and the future of our democracy.

This commission cannot solve all the grave political challenges facing our country. But you, as commissioners, have an incredibly important role in doing your part to ensure that our constitution and the values of our democracy are respected and maintained.

Because respect for democracy starts at the local level, and comes down to the local level.

For this reason, I again ask that you adopt an anti-gerrymandering standard in your work on this commission.

And again, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify before you.

Respectfully,

Laura Bush
Resident, New Jersey Congressional District 7

Redistricting comments (2021)

My name is Judy Warmingham and I am a resident of NJ 7th Congressional district (Lebanon Township). I have lived here for over thirty years.

I have been canvassing for various candidates since 2017. One of the things that resonates with people that I meet or speak to is when I say that the vote will be close and that their vote will potentially make a difference. I therefore urge this redistricting committee to keep NJ CD7 district a fair race. This will keep our voters engaged, our elected representatives in tune with and responsive to the needs of our district and our democracy healthy. I have heard that states all over the country are drawing maps with various degrees of gerrymandering which in my mind is antithetical to the foundations of democracy. I firmly believe that the voters need to pick their representative(s) rather than the reverse and that by making NJ congressional district 'safe' for any politician is a slap in the face to the thousands of volunteer hours and door knocks that has helped motivate and engage the voters in NJ 7th congressional district.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Keep NJ CD7 fair!

Thank you Chairman Wallace, Chairs Fuller and Steinhardt and members of the Commission for your commitment to this daunting challenge — the fair redistricting of our state. I thank you for taking the time to hear our testimonies and urge you all to maintain our district's makeup so it is as close as possible to how it is currently drawn. For me specifically, CD-7 residents deserve a fair map to ensure all our voices are heard.

My name is Amanda Greenblatt and I've lived in Summit for 25 years. I have lived and worked in Union County since my job offer in 1997 brought me back home to NJ after I finished my MBA.

Like many here today, in addition to my professional life, I have been a volunteer over the past 25 years, really getting to know my community. I am a past president of the Junior League of Summit and am currently serving as the Chair of the Junior League's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Task Force. I currently serve as a Trustee on the board of Temple Sinai in Summit. I am a Court Appointed Special Advocate (that is, a CASA) working with children in the foster care system, in Union county. Most of my advocacy has been on behalf of children in foster care in Plainfield, although my current case is advocating for a child living in care in Cranford.

My volunteer work has widened my awareness of issues important to our community and because of that, I have become more involved in our local politics — in fact, I am also one of the four leaders of *Summit Marches On*, a local, grassroots organization with more than 800 members, which was formed after the Women's March On Washington in 2017. Summit Marches On works to empower voters and hold our elected officials accountable, *in addition* to doing charitable work in our community.

When I think of the organizations I am a part of, each serves several communities. My temple draws its membership from multiple towns (Summit, New Providence, Berkeley Heights, Chatham, Millburn, Warren,

Watchung) — most of which are part of CD-7. So when we have an issue that we want to address with our member of Congress (and sadly, with the rise of antisemitism, this is not an infrequent occurrence), it makes sense that our Congressperson addresses his or her actual constituents.

Similarly, the Junior League of Summit serves several communities: Summit, Chatham, Berkeley Heights and New Providence — again, we tackle significant issues. Most recently we have focused on food insecurity by launching GRACE which has become one of the fastest-growing weekly community food distribution centers. Having the ear of our member of Congress - one who serves all of us — just makes sense.

Finally, overall, I think about where we live and what impacts our every day work day. Within the current CD7 we share many of the same issues - those mentioned earlier, plus the train line, the Gateway Tunnel etc. This is a significant issue that impacts our day to day lives - anyone who works in NYC knows that while “midtown direct” may be an asset, getting in and out of NYC is a challenge on any given day. We should have the ongoing benefit of working with one member of Congress who understands these issues and the impact on their constituency.

I have raised several topics, but each of these situations speak to why it is important for our districts to remain intact - specifically CD7. We need the continuity of having a member of Congress who knows us and our issues.

I want to thank you all again and hope that your Commission will work to maintain a fair map, not only for CD-7 but for our entire state.

Good morning to you Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen of the Commission.

My name is Vincent Kearney. I am a resident and Councilman in the Borough of Garwood, Union County's "small town with a big heart", which I think of as the heart of the 7th Congressional District. Before moving to Garwood in 2009, I grew up in the Township of Union, which I'll get to in a moment.

Thank you to the Commission for meeting in a variety of locations and formats, making this a very accessible process. I am here today to speak about a topic of vital importance to my community: The setting of FAIR districts in the State of New Jersey by this Commission.

As a former resident of Union, the history of how the current 7th District came to exist illustrates exactly why we all must demand better redistricting in 2021. Because the creation of so-called "safe" districts was entertained by previous Commissions, it is possible to cross a street in my old hometown and have a different Representative in Congress. Prior to moving to Garwood, despite living in Union, I was somehow in the 10th Congressional District. I know this odd experience also applies in nearby Scotch Plains.

Ladies and gentlemen, having a municipality in a state as densely populated as New Jersey represented by two members of Congress is frankly ridiculous, and certainly disruptive to residents and local elected officials like me when something is needed at the Federal level as many others have noted. We are facing issues as unique as a global pandemic to severe flooding, affecting entire regions, yet in many parts of our state communities are chopped up into gerrymanders which negatively affect everyone's representation in Congress. Representation which we desperately need to be our advocates for resources and support, both when disaster strikes and for the long term investments our communities require to thrive.

We need our municipalities to have consistent advocacy in Washington. We need our districts drawn fairly so that the voice of the people is heard. We do not need to create new "safe seats". The current 7th district was drawn to be a "safe seat". The election of 2018 proved no seat is "safe" forever and that VOTERS should have the ultimate say on who represents them based upon the issues most important to them.

I am asking this Commission, please do not punish the people of the 7th District for choosing to make a change in 2018. We need a Representative who will advocate for this District on issues as varied as the SALT deduction to transit to flood control. That will not happen if this Commission slices and dices the 7th up, turning my neighboring town of Westfield into the eastern border of yet another "safe" district designed to serve the narrow interests of a legacy politician rather than the people of New Jersey. I urge this Commission to make Union and Scotch Plains whole as parts of the 7th District, and to consider the importance of what I've said here today when addressing the need to balance both population and fair local representation throughout our state.

Thank you.



11/20/2021

Congressional Redistricting Commission Public Hearing

RE: NY/NJ Baykeeper CD6 Testimony

Thank you, Judge Wallace, Chair Fuller, Chair Steinhardt and members of the NJ Congressional Redistricting Commission, for allowing me to speak today.

My name is Greg Remaud and I am the Baykeeper and Chief Executive Officer for the NY/NJ Baykeeper. Our organization's mission is to protect, preserve and restore the waters and communities around the NY/NJ Harbor Region that includes coastal Monmouth, Middlesex, Union, Hudson, Essex and Bergen Counties and the five boroughs of NYC.

NY/NJ Baykeeper's begins with clean water for our coastal communities and safe public access to these waterways.

Today, I testify on the importance of keeping Congressional District 6 a coastal waterway district. Almost all of the towns currently in CD6 share a major commonality, which is that they either reside along the Atlantic Coast, Raritan Bay, the Raritan River or Arthur Kill major waterways that are closely connected ecologically and economically.

In addition, many of the towns also have multiple waterway borders that include the Shrewsbury River and Navesink River. This is true for both Middlesex and Monmouth County towns currently in the district.

Specifically, Asbury Park, Loch Arbor, Allenhurst, Deal, Long Branch, Monmouth Beach, and Sea Bright (including Sandy Hook National Recreation Area) border the Atlantic Ocean.

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Highlands, Atlantic Highlands, Middletown, Keansburg, Union Beach and Keyport border the Sandy Hook Bay. Aberdeen, Old Bridge, South Amboy, Sayreville, and Perth Amboy are all located along the Raritan Bayshore.

Perth Amboy, and Woodbridge, and Carteret border the Arthur Kill River.

Along the Raritan River there is also Sayreville, Woodbridge, Edison, Highland Park, New Brunswick, and Piscataway.

In addition, Oceanport resides along the Shrewsbury River near where it enters Raritan Bay. So, 26 of the 32 towns currently in the district that reside along a major body of water and the remaining six are just one town off the water but still impacted by those waterbodies.

The Raritan, Shrewsbury, Navesink, Arthur Kill and Raritan Rivers and their estuaries flow into either Raritan Bay or the Atlantic Ocean. All of those waterways are directly connected and share twice daily tides from the Atlantic Ocean that bring in nutrients and flush out waste.

Along w/physical connections there are ecologically the same fish and marine life share these waters as noted by natural resource agencies, including NOAA and NMFS. These communities are linked socially and recreationally through fishing, sailing and other water recreation activities.

Therefore, they also share many policy issues and programmatic administration. That is why is it important to keep these unique areas together!

These towns all face many water-related concerns. With sea level rising and stronger storms bringing more rain and higher storm surges as a result of climate change flooding is of major concern to these communities with flood mitigation and resiliency being a top priority. When dealing with these issues local leaders created a (Raritan) Bayshore Mayors council specifically because of these shared concerns.

In addition, there are multiple sites along these waterways that have been designated as superfund sites leftover from industrial waste with ongoing cleanup.

For example, the Old Bridge Superfund site along the Bayshore directly impacts municipalities along the Bayshore on either side in both Middlesex and Monmouth Counties and the cleanup requires resources and coordination between all these coastal entities.

All of the communities in CD 6 also share the following issues:

Public waterfront access issues

Connections to NY/NJ Harbor Estuary Program

USACE studies: Harbor and Tributaries Storm Surge (HATS) study with many billions of dollars on the line

Ferries & Waterborne traffic

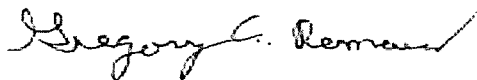
NY/NJ PA shipping and environmental impact issues.

All these issues require a massive amount of federal support. It is imperative that we have a single voice that can represent these critical issues for this unique community of interest.

As an organization that for thirty years has dealt directly with water issues, legislation, policies and practices every day, we know how important it is to have a federal representative who can singularly understand and advocate for these issues is and request that this coastal district remain intact so that these communities have a united, sensible and organized representation.

Thank you all very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Gregory A. Remaud".

Gregory A. Remaud
Baykeeper & CEO
NY/NJ Baykeeper

Good morning. Thank you, Justice Wallace and Commissioners for your time and your hard work during this important process. My name is Tracy Keegan, and I have been a resident of CD-7 for most of my life—nearly 43 years—having been born and raised in New Providence and now raising my own family in Summit. I am an avid community volunteer, especially with our senior citizens.

There are many reasons why I feel passionately that CD-7 should stay intact, with a fair map and not one gerrymandered to favor any particular party, but today I come to you as a mother who has been advocating for the past 19 years on behalf of one of my children, a college student who was born with Phenylketonuria (or PKU), an inborn error of metabolism diagnosed at birth. In order to avoid devastating neurological and physical damage, PKU patients must maintain a strict, lifelong medical diet and consume a special medical formula multiple times per day. It's because of this that for our family, continuity of Congressional representation is critical. I'll explain why.

As you can probably imagine, insurance coverage is absolutely crucial when dealing with a serious, lifelong issue like PKU. PKU families who are lucky enough to have health insurance are constantly wrangling for coverage with insurance companies. And it's no surprise that these companies give us such a hard time, as the costs are exorbitant. My daughter's formula costs \$8,000 per month.

When you first have a child with a disorder like PKU, the importance of your Congressional representation is not the first (or even the 100th) thing that comes to your mind, but as we have found out over the years, who represents us is extremely important. As my daughter got older, I worried about her future ability to obtain her own health insurance, and that worry was only exacerbated by our former Congressman Lance, who showed no interest in fighting on behalf of the many constituents who asked him to act to ensure that health care is treated as a right, not a privilege. Given the devastating effects this inaction would have on my daughter's future when it comes to her ability to afford to stay healthy, I joined with thousands of others in our district to flip the seat in favor of a representative who listens and acts on behalf of their constituents, not their party.

After we flipped the seat, I attended a constituent roundtable with our new representative, Congressman Malinowski. I told him how insurance companies are not compelled to cover her life saving formula and foods, and how I have had to fight to renew coverage for it every six months of her life—continually having to prove that she does, indeed, have the genetic condition she was born with. I shared with him how I worried what would happen to her as she enters adulthood and has to rely on the luck of the draw when it comes to her own health insurance. Given I had been working with

other PKU families for years to implore Congress to pass the Medical Nutrition Equity Act (MNEA) which would mandate across-the-board insurance coverage for medical foods and formula, I asked our new Congressman if he would help us fight for it. I was hopeful, but realistic about the outcome of my request, given our years-long odyssey to get someone to care. Less than two weeks later, I received an email from his office letting me know that he was becoming a co-sponsor of the MNEA and would work with us to ensure that our child, and others like her, would have a secure future when it comes to their health care. The bill is still in the House and Congressman Malinowski continues to advocate for us.

This is why for our family, continuity of representation is critical—it could literally have life-altering consequences for us. My family implores you to ensure that CD-7 remains intact and fair and that our fight to ensure our daughter has the ability to live a healthy life as she embarks out on her own is assured of a good outcome.

Thank you.

Tracy Keegan

Summit, NJ

Testimony before State Redistricting Committee

Date: November 20, 2021

By: Judy Augustino

My name is Judy Augustino. After living in Westfield for 26 years, my family moved to Scotch Plains 15 months ago. I am here this morning to give you reasons why I believe our town of Scotch Plains should NOT be split into two congressional districts, as it is now.

Our old Westfield home was two blocks from a Scotch Plains golf course and was closer to downtown Scotch Plains than to downtown Westfield. Our move was a natural and comfortable transition for us because, although we lived in Westfield, our library, our post office, our CVS and several of our favorite shops and restaurants are in Scotch Plains. It feels as though we moved from one neighborhood to another without changing much of our daily routine. We still attend church in Westfield; in fact, several of my Scotch Plains neighbors attend the same church in Westfield. Despite being involved in local elections, I was quite surprised to learn that my new Scotch Plains home is in a totally separate congressional district than my Westfield home was in CD7.

Objectively, Scotch Plains should not be split between two congressional districts for the following reasons:

- 1) School Districts. ALL public school students in Scotch Plains attend the schools of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Regional School District, which serves ALL students in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade from the Borough of Fanwood and the Township of Scotch Plains. There is one high school, the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Regional High School, that serves both communities.
- 2) Transportation. Before we retired, my husband and I both commuted to New York from Westfield. We know firsthand the frustration of that commute – especially for those of us along the Raritan Valley Train Line. As commuters in a train town, we have similar interests to other communities along the Raritan Valley Line including Westfield, Cranford and the towns that extend all the way out to Hunterdon County. When advocating for issues like a one-seat ride to Manhattan, it's important that our voices are

unified. I encourage the Commission to consider these train towns to be communities of interest and to keep them together in as few Congressional districts as possible.

- 3) Media market. Our Scotch Plains weekly newspaper is the *Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*, which is also the publisher of Westfield's newspaper, *The Westfield Leader*. When reading the newspapers, readers have a sense of a broader community among the three towns.
- 4) Senior Issues. Many people from Westfield choose to retire in Scotch Plains – the style of housing and the availability of 55+ communities make it a natural and easy move, knowing our daily routines wouldn't change very much.

Entire communities are better served by a single representative. Prior to the 2010 Census, the entire township of Scotch Plains had been part of the 7th Congressional District. By having one Member of Congress representing us, residents of our entire community will have an easier time connecting with that representative for requests and clarification of federal services.

One additional point. **The entire township of Scotch Plains is located within a single State Assembly district.**

For the all of these reasons, **I ask you to return the entire township of Scotch Plains to the 7th Congressional District.**

Thank you, Commissioners, for your time and your consideration this morning.

First and foremost I want to thank Justice Wallace and the commission for your time and commitment to this hugely important job.

Thank you for holding several hearings on this very impactful decision and holding these hearings via zoom. During the current state of the world I appreciate you allowing for as many voices as possible. My name is Erica Dubois I've spent nearly my entire life living in CD7. Growing up in Union, living briefly in Cranford and currently residing in Springfield, where I lived with my parents as a teenager and returned 13 years ago. I recently purchased my first home here with my husband and two daughters, after living for 13 years as a renter. I am a mother, a teacher and a government representative on a local level. I say all of this to demonstrate my deep-rooted connection with CD7.

I have worked closely with many grassroots organizations that spent numerous hours leading up to the 2018 election to elect our current congressman. With this experience I know that we are very much a purple district. I believe that voters, not maps, should choose their representation. Competitive races are what's best for all community members. There is no reason to significantly change the boundaries of our district. Maintaining the cohesion of the current district is part of your job. You must establish districts with equal populations. Based on the 2020 census, several thousand residents must be added, and there are many ways to do that. Adding all of Scotch Plains Fanwood is one way to do it. I have a very personal connection there, my oldest daughter attends Union County Votech half-day and I've worked my summers at the JCC in Scotch Plains. I know that Westfield, Scotch Plains, and Fanwood residents are already a community, but they are in different districts. I also know that Springfield, Cranford and Garwood, along with the aforementioned towns, are very much interconnected whether by schools, or by religious institutions. Many residents of these towns share a commute to New York City via the Raritan Valley line for example. They have worked across municipality lines to band together to voice their concerns and advocate for changes in regards to their commutes. They are all connected via several highways route 22 being most notable. Perhaps the biggest connection between these communities that reared its ugly head this fall with hurricane Ida is the ongoing flooding. I share these examples as current issues that connect these communities and demonstrate the importance of consistency in representation.

Municipalities and communities should not be divided among congressional districts. Enclosing lack of competitiveness is a form of voter suppression. "Safe districts" should not exist on paper. Candidates should have to work for their votes, no matter their party affiliation.

As a government representative myself who once lost a race by two votes, I know firsthand that voter apathy is real, and voter engagement is of the utmost importance. Voters must feel their vote matters! Fair district lines are paramount to democracy."

I am Mara Novak, Co-Executive Director of NJ 11th for Change. We are a grassroots group with 8000 members, dedicated to advocating for all people of New Jersey's 11th Congressional District. We foster an engaged and informed community with the power to shape our political representation so that it is transparent, responsive and accountable—and so that it reflects the values of fairness, compassion, inclusivity and a decent quality of life.

I thank the commission for having public sessions both virtual and in person. My comments are directed at making this process even more open and accessible.

I want to request that you both release your proposed maps for public review and comment, and that you schedule additional in person sessions in North, South and Central Jersey after that release so that the public can share their thoughts on the maps before final review and approval.

I thank you for your time today.

Good morning members of the Commission, Justice Wallace and everyone here. My name is Steve Barcan. My wife Bettye and I have lived in CD 7 for over 50 years. We moved to Westfield in 1970 and raised our family there. In 2017, 47 years later, we downsized to a 55 and over community in neighboring Garwood. And other than the size and location of our home, not much has changed. We still belong to Temple Emanu-El in Westfield, we travel to NYC via the Raritan Valley Line, we use doctors in Fanwood, dine in Cranford and grocery shop in Garwood.

As way of background, I grew up at the Jersey Shore in the 1950s in the small town of Bradley Beach; my parents and everyone they knew were Democrats. There was still conversation of the Depression, WWII and FDR. I went to college in New York, a Democratic city. And then we moved to Westfield whose decades-long leadership by Republicans was well known and considered to be invincible.

That all changed in 2017, when Democrats swept our local elections, built on that majority in 2019, and swept again this month. I'm not sharing this to brag, but to point out that there is a Democratic shift taking place in communities like Westfield. Our representative in Congress was a Republican from 1970, when we moved to Westfield, until 2018 when Tom Malinowski won— 48 years of Republican representation.

But we've seen things change not just in Westfield, but in the entirety of CD7. Regular citizens, like myself, decided that we had enough of ineffective Republican representation in Congress and we became engaged in the political process. We phone banked, knocked doors, and distributed literature. I'm proud to have been part of this army of volunteers. Hard work matters, as it should, and having excellent candidates doesn't hurt. I learned a lot knocking doors: shockingly many households have split party affiliations! This makes canvassing even more important, sometimes as I say even taking care to speak to the Democrat in the household! We, the voters, should not be penalized for the hard work we did to flip CD7.

As I have become more politically active, and as others have said in their remarks, I have learned that CD7 was drawn to be a safe district for our then Congressman, Leonard Lance. Had that Commission adhered to NJ's long-standing anti-gerrymandering principle in 2010 our current map would be very different from the 7-5 map drawn in 2010. Not coincidentally, Thursday's New York Times had an article (front page) describing how politics and therefore gerrymandering can impair even independent redistricting panels.

Despite the gerrymandered 2010 map, voters in NJ have chosen to elect Democrats to 10 seats. I implore the Commission to return to using a partisan fairness analysis when drawing our new map. As I said before, the voters have spoken and they should not be punished. Furthermore, as states across this country redraw their maps to disenfranchise voters, it is more important than ever that NJ retain its independent commissions as truly independent. This Commission should focus on fairness as you decide what map will dictate our representation for the next 10 years.

The Commission should not be considering a dramatic change to CD7. There is no need for it. The Commission should keep Westfield, Garwood and Cranford together. It would also make sense to make Scotch Plains whole and bring it and Fanwood into CD7 since our communities share train lines, churches, synagogues, shops, groceries, professional services, restaurants, the JCC, and the Westfield Area Y. These separate municipalities are a "community of interest." As the Commission draws this map, keeping these communities of interest in one Congressional district should be a defining factor. Thank you.

Stephen Barcan
November 20, 2021

New Jersey Redistricting Commission
Saturday, November 20, 2021 - 10:00:00 AM

Testimony of Mark Eisenberg, Westfield New Jersey

Chairman Wallace, Delegation Chairs Fuller and Steinhardt, and Commission Members:

I want to thank you for the opportunity to address the Commission in an open forum on this very important task of congressional redistricting in the State of New Jersey.

My name is Mark Eisenberg. I am a licensed attorney, a longtime business executive in the music technology arena, and a 29 year resident of the Town of Westfield, in Union County.

The impetus behind my providing testimony today is to ensure fair and democratic processes in respect of voting, and the meaningful representation of our communities in Washington, DC. My wife and I have raised 2 wonderful children, who attended K-12 in Westfield and recently earned college degrees from institutions of higher education located in St. Louis, MO and Upstate NY.

As a parent, I have (or least hope that have) consistently instilled in my children the importance of regularly casting a vote in public elections – as a means of representing both individual and community values. As we grow to learn over our years as adults, parents and members of society, our community values derive from shared perspectives – comprised of what we learn from civic leaders, education, good fortune and misfortune. Voting is both a right – and a duty. And we must ensure that when we vote, it has maximum, meaningful impact. When we vote for our congressional candidate, it is a thoughtful exercise – not an ephemeral, pro forma event which has no intended effect on our daily lives. Voting for our congressional representative is not -- and should not -- be tantamount to voting for the starting line-up of the MLB All Star team, or to liking an Instagram Story. Voting signifies a bi-lateral contract between us and our chosen representative. As voters, we have an obligation to select a congressional candidate who best represents our interests – and the winning candidate has a commensurate obligation to fight for – and represent our interests.

I have referenced civic engagement generally in my remarks, because we're living in some very trying times these days. There is a cancerous cynicism, skepticism and oft-times repulsion attendant to the very idea of voting in our country. There are myriad factors which contribute to this -- the unabated influence of money in politics, new protocols necessitated by the pandemic, antiquated voting machines, calculated efforts to achieve voter suppression, and the amplification of falsehoods and conspiracies about certified election results, aimed at delegitimizing the election process overall.

Which is why the re-districting process is so important – so critical to implement in a just and fair manner to dispel notions of inequity, unfairness and disenfranchisement. Much has been written in recent weeks about the specter of “backroom deals” amongst existing political parties to safeguard seats or “divide up” the map. Creating a “safe” capital-R-Republican district, or a “safe” capital-D Democratic district. That is antithetical to free and fair elections. Trades and barter exchanges do not represent the will of the voter. They defy principles of fairness, and they are just plain wrong. And it fuels the cynicism we feel about the electoral process – and contributes to the loss of faith we have in our governmental institutions.

So with that as a backdrop, I’d like to bring some focus specifically to my current Congressional District – District 7. The 7th Congressional District was drawn as a result of the redistricting previously undertaken. Created from a Republican-party proposed map, it was presumed at the time that the 7th District would be a safe Republican District. That presumption held true, until the 2018 contest, when a large grassroots movement flipped the seat to Democrat. The succeeding contest in 2020 proved to be similarly competitive, as is the anticipated contest scheduled for 2022. That is a healthy, vibrant, and trusted democracy at work.

Given population shifts in our State reflected in the recent census, the 7th Congressional District will need to add to its constituency. And certain urban centers in NJ, which increased in population, will need to be reconstituted. Principles of fairness would dictate that changes made to NJ districts be effectuated to achieve:

Continuity of Representation; and
Communities of Interest

Districts should not be drawn capriciously or with the injurious intent to dilute the vote of communities of interest or otherwise to disenfranchise persons of similar interest, background and experience. Contiguity of location is also important – as it reflects such commonality -- as contrasted with maps that resemble Swiss cheese or amoeba on a microscope slide.

The current make-up of Congressional District 7 embodies these principles of fairness and communities of interest. As a resident of Westfield, I am actively involved in my synagogue Temple Emanu-El, which attracts congregants from Westfield, Scotch Plains, Cranford, Mountainside, Berkeley Heights, New Providence, Springfield and Summit – who participate in community initiatives together, like feeding the hungry, housing the homeless, and providing for immigrants and refugees.

I have also been involved for many years in educational and recreational activities at the JCC in Scotch Plains, which similarly casts on a net across these communities of interest in Congressional District 7. My children spent their formative ‘tween and teen years immersed in local athletics, where they donned the same soccer and basketball jersey with teammates from our nearby towns in the 7th District – and in some instances, where they competed intensely against their neighboring-town rivals – the Westfield Blue Devils vs. the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Raiders.

My experience in CD-7 similarly links communities of interest in my work as an appointed member of the Westfield Green Team, a Mayoral Advisory council which provides expertise, guidance and human resources to make our community more sustainable. The Westfield Green Team routinely shares a commonality of interest with the CD-7 towns of Berkely Heights, Summit and Scotch Plains to develop best practices for our greater community.

My volunteer work also extends to human rights advocacy for the New Jersey Chapter of J Street, which similarly draws from shared circles of interest across our CD-7. Members of our group regularly meet with our congressional representative and district staffers to advise them of our community's desire for the cessation of global hostilities, and a peaceful resolution to internecine conflicts.

Our CD-7 shares so many other critical communities of interest – for example, daily commuting on NJ Transit's Raritan Valley trainline – which brings residents of Westfield, Scotch Plains and Garwood to NYC – sometimes in 50 minutes, and often closer to 1 hour, 15 minutes. This is a plaguing issue that our congressional representative has been addressing and is studiously working to resolve after countless meetings with our community of interest.

And of course, CD-7 shares other serious issues such as critical infrastructure and climate resiliency – which are similarly being addressed after an intense investment of time and learned study by the representative of our congressional district.

Continuity of representation is critically important!!! Our representative knows our district. He understands our commonality of interest.

Dismantling, severing or dividing CD-7 would harm our communities. The principles of fairness can best be accomplished by extending the existing community of interest across those parts of Scotch-Plains Fanwood which are not currently in CD-7, or perhaps across the Raritan Valley line train corridor to Roselle/Roselle Park.

We need to restore faith in our governmental institutions -- as representing the will of the voter, and the needs of the constituents. The goal of re-districting should be to achieve fairness. We should resist any efforts – by any political or partisan group -- to usurp our small-d democratic values. That is the message I would like to share with this Commission, and which I continually impart to my young-adult children, when they ask about the future they will inherit.

Thank you.

Good morning, Commissioners and Justice Wallace and fellow speakers. My name is Andy Meissner and I am a resident of Mt. Olive, a fast-growing town that is increasingly diverse, suburban, somewhat younger town in Morris County. Although I am retired, I worked for thirty-five years commuting from my home in Mount Olive to locations throughout Somerset County like many other residents of Mount Olive.

I applaud the Commission for conducting these hearings and ensuring an honest, open and transparent process. It is essential everyone has the opportunity to be heard, feel they have an equal voice in the process and that the process is not favorable to any one person or group.

I have learned that the last time these districts were drawn, the Commission broke with tradition and created a gerrymandered map to favor sitting Members of Congress. This included Representative Leonard Lance in the 7th Congressional District. This year the Commission has the opportunity to return to an anti-gerrymandering principle of map/district creation. NJ07 should not be subjected to a map that once again favors a well-connected, legacy politician.

Voters in CD7, despite a gerrymandered map that favored the Republican, voted for the Democratic candidate in both 2018 and 2020. These voters should not now be penalized for how they voted. The same goes for the other 3 districts (3, 5, and 11) that elected Democrats despite a map that made these wins nothing short of amazing.

The residents of CD7 have benefited from the service of a congressman focused on the specific environmental, transit and taxpayer issues of most concern to local residents. This was quite evident across CD7 during Tropical Storm Ida - as homes and businesses flooded, constituents knew who to turn to during their most difficult days. Continuity of representation in Mount Olive is important so that constituents continue to know who to call for help.

Furthermore, on a topic I feel very strongly about, to continue to attract active concerned citizens into the process, the political process needs to be viewed as fair. Political parties and candidates need to be confident that those who have the best ideas and work hardest to promote them have a fair chance of winning and do not start off with built-in disadvantages.

Voters also need to feel their voices will be heard. Democracy works when people from all backgrounds are engaged and participate. Any perceived unfairness leads to lack of participation and sense of being disenfranchised. Redistricting should promote inclusion and engagement and not discourage or marginalize voters. Fairness is giving people what they deserve and what Democracy needs.

I urge the Commission to continue with an open and fair process, to protect communities of interest, keep residents from all backgrounds in mind and preserve continuity of representation.

Thank you for allowing me to participate today.

NEW JERSEY POLICY PERSPECTIVE

TESTIMONY OF PETER CHEN, SENIOR POLICY ANALYST, NEW JERSEY POLICY PERSPECTIVE (NJPP), BEFORE NEW JERSEY REDISTRICTING COMMISSION, NOVEMBER 20, 2021

Good morning. I'm Peter Chen and am a Senior Policy Analyst at New Jersey Policy Perspective (NJPP). New Jersey Policy Perspective (NJPP) is a nonpartisan think tank that drives policy change to advance economic, social, and racial justice through evidence-based, independent research, analysis, and strategic communication.

As former coordinator of the 2020 Census non-profit outreach campaign for New Jersey, I am keenly aware of the importance of the redistricting process and have contacted a wide range of communities across the state. Each of these communities sought to ensure that their voices are heard by their elected representatives.

I testify today to raise three points for the Commission to consider as you deliberate on how to conduct redistricting in an equitable way.

1. **Permit public testimony after draft maps are completed and presented to the public.** Describing the various principles guiding redistricting or specific communities of interest in the abstract is often confusing and opaque. Only after a draft map is completed can anyone understand whether it is just and appropriately represents their communities. Although NJPP commends the Commission for its extensive hearings and opportunities for testimony, there must also be an opportunity for comment after draft maps exist in order to describe the public input as meaningful.
2. **Embrace all fair redistricting principles, not just competitiveness.** Redistricting is not merely an exercise in promoting highly competitive elections. The function of elected representatives is in the name – representation. Districts must represent coherent communities, not merely political subdivisions or partisan leanings. If it intends to create fair districts that represent New Jersey's diversity, the Commission must consider factors such as:
 - Preserving communities of interest, even those that cross political boundaries
 - Recognizing that electorates should reflect New Jersey's racial and ethnic diversity, and avoid packing and cracking minority populations, which dilutes voting power;
 - Reflecting basic principles of compactness and contiguity.
3. **Design districts that appropriately reflect New Jersey's diversity.** Under the current configuration, 7 of New Jersey's 12 congressional districts have white non-Hispanic population percentages above the state average of 52 percent, based on 2020 Census figures. This means that people of color have a disproportionately limited voice in selecting the state's congressional delegation. NJPP urges the Commission to create congressional districts that accurately reflect New Jersey's status as one of the nation's most diverse states.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify today.

The principles of drawing a fair, non-gerrymandered congressional district are four:

1. Contiguity
2. Compactness
3. Community of Interest
4. Municipal Boundaries

Of these four, "community of interest" is the least clear. At the forum, such communities mentioned were defined by race, ethnicity, age, language, religion, profession, and others. None of these "communities of interest" are relevant to the political task of drawing a congressional district. Which "community" does one choose to include? Each such community, it must be assumed, has a particular "interest," but how is that interest to be determined? Making such decisions can only be subjective and arbitrary.

To eliminate such arbitrariness, I suggest dropping the "community of interest" principle altogether and focusing instead on municipal boundaries. That is, insofar as possible, no township or borough should be divided but rather be included whole within a district. Those who live in a particular town do so BY CHOICE. They choose to live in a town for their own particular reasons; therefore, their choice reflects their own personal interest!

For example, I choose to live in heavily Republican Washington Township (Morris County) despite being a Democrat because of its proximity to my workplace and because of its natural beauty. I imagine most of my neighbors value the natural beauty as well. We choose to live here because . . . it is in our interest to do so! We share a common interest by our choice of where to live.

This principle has the great advantage of satisfying the Republican emphasis on individual liberty and the Democratic emphasis on community solidarity. We ALL value our good public schools and public parks, and we ALL grouse about failing infrastructure. We are a "community of interest" by our choice of where we live.

In line with the above argument, I would urge the redistricting task force to include all of Scotch Plains and Fanwood in CD 7.

John R. Holt

Long Valley, NJ 07853
CD 7

November 20th, 2021

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE NJ CONGRESSIONAL
REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

Thank you Judge Wallace and members of the NJ Congressional Redistricting Commission for holding this public hearing and allowing me to speak here today. My name is Kathy Horgan and I am a councilwoman from Red Bank. Today, I wanted to speak about the special relationship between three towns in Monmouth County, Red Bank Borough, Long Branch City, and the City of Asbury Park.

For many years, these three municipalities were always a part of the same congressional district until after the 2010 redistricting where Red Bank was placed in the 4th Congressional District and Asbury Park and Long Branch remained in the 6th. I am asking the commission to once again join these three towns into the 6th Congressional district.

Often referred to as the Tri-Cities, these three towns share many commonalities. In fact, there is even a local publication called the triCityNews that focuses on arts, culture, and politics in these three towns. Among many

interests that these communities share, Red Bank, Long Branch, and Asbury Park are considered to be the urban centers of Monmouth County with large walkable downtowns, multiple modes of public transportation, and large populations of ethnic and racial diversity. These three towns also share many of the same challenges, from density and affordable housing to educating first generation children. Long Branch and Red Bank are also home to two major hospitals, Monmouth Medical and Riverview Medical Center respectively which serve the larger eastern Monmouth area.

All three municipalities have large populations of minorities. According to the 2020 census data 46 percent of Red Bank's residents, 43 percent of Long Branch residents, and 61 percent of Asbury Park residents are Black, Hispanic or Latino. Undoubtedly, race and ethnicity should be considered communities of interest and I urge the commission to not deny these towns and their residents a collective voice to choose a member of Congress that represents them.

In addition, arts and culture are among the many connections. Historically and still true today, these three towns are the epicenter of arts and culture in Monmouth County and New Jersey. With Count Basie and Two River

Theaters in Red Bank, West End Arts Center and the New Jersey Repertory Theater in Long Branch, and Convention Hall and Stone Pony in Asbury Park. Some of the biggest names in music and theater pass through these towns on a yearly basis. All three municipalities have vibrant downtowns with dozens of art galleries, nationally recognized eateries, and boutique shopping stores. More and more, arts and humanities rely on federal support. It is imperative to its survival and so important to our communities

Having these towns share a congressional district will help ensure that we have a common voice in our representative who can advocate for our collective needs. When drawing your map please consider joining Asbury Park, Long Branch, and Red Bank into the 6th Congressional District.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Horgan
Red Bank Borough Councilwoman

Written Testimony - NJ Redistricting Commission Public Hearings on New Redistricting Map

To Whom it May Concern:

We are residents of Lambertville, NJ in Hunterdon County, where we have lived since 1998. Prior to that, Caroline spent three years in Lambertville in the late 1980's to early 1990s, and three years in Stockton, NJ during the mid-1990s. We are sending this email as written testimony to the New Jersey Redistricting Commission as it relates to CD-7 in which we reside and the Commission's determination of a new Congressional District Map.

Our understanding is that NJ's 7th Congressional District (CD-7) was drawn to favor a Republican candidate. However, as a result of demographic shifts along with a very active and engaged grassroots movement, a district that had been Republican for many years, saw a Democratic candidate win in 2018.

With this background in mind, we believe it is imperative that the redistricting map be a fair map – to that end, it needs to reflect the State and the fact that districts need to be more in line with statewide margins. The present map was gerrymandered against Democrats yet despite that, here in CD-7, a Democrat won in 2018, thanks to a candidate (now Congressman) who ran on issues that clearly resonated with voters in the district, coupled with tremendous volunteer efforts. The outcome was fair and square.

In sum, the map should reflect the will of the voters. That constitutes a fair map. Voters should not be penalized because of how they voted.

Thank you for your consideration.

Caroline & Andrew Armstrong

Lambertville, NJ 08530

Redistricting CD07

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In sum, the map should be drawn so that it makes sense from the legislative issues for folks within the map and that it's a cross section of the folks that live there. That constitutes a fair map. Voters should not be penalized because of how they voted or to create on the back end to control who gets elected.

Thank you for your consideration.

best,
Elycia & Anita Lerman

Lambertville, NJ 08530

RE: About Redistricting NJ's 12 Congressional Districts, especially mine, the CD7
Date: November 20, 2021

I recently learned that right now you 13 men and women are deciding what our 12 NJ Congressional districts will look like for the next 10 years, and will be issuing the new map in about five weeks! You are a powerful group, and can redraw the map in such a way that I might actually lose my Congressional district and Congressperson. I live in the CD7, a long and winding district that stretches from Short Hills in the East to Rocky Hill in the West - 74 municipalities within six counties - represented since 2018 by Tom Malinowski. Congressman Malinowski has done an incredible job of knitting this collection of towns into a noteworthy district that has benefitted from his hard work in ways large and small. From the approval of the desperately needed Gateway Tunnel project to the just-passed Infrastructure bill, providing essential rail, highway and bridge upgrades, to his service on the bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus, our representative has shown that the CD7 works for all its people. My request to you, the Commissioners, is about considering FAIRNESS in doing your important work. Where a district like the CD7, comprised of almost equal numbers of Democrats, Republicans and Independents, works - please don't mess it up! I hope one or more of you will actually read my comments - and all the comments and testimony coming into you. I might not be around in 10 years when I have the opportunity to speak up again!

Respectfully, Phyllis Sank

Sincerely,

Phyllis G. Sank

Summit, NJ 07901

I am Jacob Smullyan, a current Montclair resident at 115 Claremont Avenue, in what is now the 10th Congressional District. I offer this testimony to voice my opposition to current proposals to push all of Montclair into the 11th Congressional District.

New Jersey is a state of enormous diversity that also suffers from enormous division along racial, ethnic and class lines. This gives rise to a local political struggle that tends to lead to the disenfranchisement of the least powerful: especially people of color, but in highlighting that racial theme, let's not overlook that, however deep its roots, the immediate cause of this disenfranchisement is the lack of money, because money talks, and unfortunately it seems like that's the only kind of talk power listens to.

Tossing a significantly black and working class neighborhood into a purple political race helps the Democrat contender, to be sure. But it doesn't help elect someone who truly represents the constituency of that neighborhood. They'll vote Democratic, it is presumed, because the alternative is unthinkable; but their representative will fundamentally be answerable to the most influential voices in their constituency — the polished, upper-middle class residents of Upper Montclair who don't need to know what they pay for their organic produce at Whole Foods. Meanwhile, the perspective of those who will perforce end up going without genuine representation remains deeply meaningful and essential, not just for their own future, but for everyone else's. They see what my lovely friends uptown don't need to see, and indeed would rather not. We need their voices, and we need them represented in Congress — in full measure.

There are other ways to put out any potential fire in the 11th Congressional District, such as by moving Glen Ridge or parts of Maplewood from the 10th into the 11th. Using the South End and environs of Montclair this way, to bolster the chances of a middle-of-the-road Democrat with essentially different interests, would be a betrayal of our community and of ourselves.

I urge the commission to keep southern Montclair in the 10th district and to remain dedicated to accurate representation for all New Jersey residents.

Thank you,

Jacob Smullyan