

Patricia E. Doherty
Research Director
NJ11th For Change

Testimony to the Redistricting Commission

Monday, December 6, 2021

Thank you for this opportunity to share my observations and perspective on redistricting for NJ and for Congressional District 11.

I am Patricia Doherty, Research Director for NJ11th for Change—which is an unaffiliated grass roots group whose mission is to advocate for all the people of New Jersey's 11th Congressional District. Our objectives are to foster an engaged and informed community to shape our elected 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.

We have over a dozen other members who wished to testify tonight; but we know how hard the commission is working and what long hours you are spending in these hearings. We want to be respectful of your time, so we have advised most of those other NJ 11th for Change members to submit written testimony in lieu of speaking in-person here tonight. A few more of our group's leaders will be speaking at the overflow meeting later this week. My remarks this evening are to describe and highlight CD11 as a:

Transportation/Infrastructure/Commuter Community of Interest

I am a 23 year resident of the Township of Nutley in Essex County. As a self-employed theatre designer I currently work, commute, and transport supplies to performance spaces in NJ, NYC, upstate NY and other areas in the Northeast. You could say that not only can I tell you what exit I am off the Garden State Parkway (152 BTW) but also the exits for all the major highways as well as the back shortcuts to avoid traffic all over our state. My perspective comes from knowledge of how my community members interact with space and the environments in which they live, work and understand the world.

CD11 is currently and primarily a suburban community that is part of the NJ/NY Metropolitan area. Our residents are predominantly people who TRAVEL to get to work — often a significant distance, using public transportation, private vehicles, or both. Our common experience and

needs as commuters defines our Morris/Essex core as a community of interest that deserves unified, undiluted representation.

Many of us are families of two working parents, single parents who work two jobs and single professionals, service and blue collar workers. For people like us, here in CD11, efficient, safe, reliable commutes are the critical factor in being able to hold a job and grow with it. Reasonable commutes are also crucial for having a sustainable home life and community involvement — where we can see our spouses, extended families, friends and neighbors more than in passing, raise our children with meaningful quality time or support elder family members, and participate in the heart of our communities.

From western Morris County to Essex County all the way to Nutley on the extreme eastern edge, the biggest contingents of workers have jobs based either in New York City, greater Newark or in the Morristown/Parsippany areas.

We have several major highways that define us. People work and commute along the I 80/280/287 corridors, and the west-to-east highways of west routes 46 and rte. 3 leading to the Lincoln Tunnel and NYC. I mention this and the following details not to be merely descriptive, but to provide insight into the factors that are some of what we CD11 commuters have in common, as a community of interest:

- We're defined by our NJ Transit commuter rail lines such as the Montclair/Boonton lines, the Midtown Direct, and the Morris/Essex lines.
 - Estimates of typical daily ridership on the Midtown Direct Line alone is estimated to be 165,000 commuters, also considered to be (by itself) the nation's 3rd largest transit system with 165 stations—many of which are in CD11.
- We're defined by the East-West NJ Transit commuter buses that follow the 46/3 routes and local routes that pick up passengers within municipalities and integrated park and rides, and by the Morristown bus terminal. The latest data as reported Nov 10, 2021 show that both rail and bus ridership is closely approaching pre-Covid ridership levels as people return to work.
- Although most CD11 residents who work in NYC commute via public transportation, those who do travel by vehicle use the major east-west routes of I 80/280 and routes 46/3. Because of the suburban nature of our district, most intra-municipal and intra-county travel is by vehicle, resulting in substantial traffic issues through volume and time.

The corresponding infrastructure for all personal and business vehicles as well as our NJ transit buses and trains need to have upgrades to the rail beds, bridges/overpasses, and highway maintenance which are so critical to safety and function of the system. I'm sure the Commission members know all too well what the problems of pot-holes, detours to fix crumbling unsafe highways, bridges and overpasses does for your quality of life. Because of our density and location, the residents of CD-11 experience unreasonable delays due to emergency repair, unsafe conditions, and endless re-construction.

The common physical geographic and topographical realities of CD11 impact transportation as well as the security of constituents' homes. Most of CD11 is bounded by the Passaic River watershed and river basin. Its tributaries flow throughout a major part of Morris County all the way to the easternmost part of Essex County where it turns and flows toward Newark.

Over the years affected by climate change, we are seeing the CD11 communities affected every year by 50 and 100-year volume major flooding from weather events such as numerous tropical storms and nor'easters and particularly the Hurricanes Floyd, Irene, Sandy and the most recent district-wide floods of Ida on September 2, 2021. Constituents' homes were inundated by flash floods with tragic deaths, injuries and devastating flooded-out economic and property damage. It was the rare CD11 community that did not see boat rescues, stranded vehicles, and flooded out Main Street businesses.

My own town of Nutley was engulfed by IDA flooding from the Passaic, the Third River and Springer Brook, with some downtown businesses destroyed and homes submerged up to the first floor. Nearby on Route 3, motorists and trucks were stranded for hours in the encompassing flood waters. At the same time, our NJ11th For Change Field Director Stacey Abenstein was swept off her feet and washed down a neighborhood street before being trapped in her car two blocks from home, unable to escape the swirling water in her town of Livingston. Identical stories have been related by family and friends who live in Morristown and the communities surrounding and including Parsippany.

Connecting back to our transportation infrastructure, and it is that combination of GEOGRAPHY of our area with our commuting realities that unify us as a district for this reason. Every instance of flooding disrupts and damages our major rail and bus commuter lines; weakens our roads, bridges and overpasses; prevents constituents from getting to their

jobs; endangers residents' health because emergency vehicles cannot reach people in time; and prevents businesses from delivering critical goods and services.

Considering that past delays in Gateway Project approval affected all of the above, our rail infrastructure has suffered greatly and impacted the lives of so many constituents in CD11. The recent support by our Northern NJ representatives greatly spearheaded the recent approvals and funding for the Gateway project.

CD11 is a community of interest as it pertains to our close connections and common experiences with the intertwined realities of transportation, commuter security and safety, and infrastructure and environmental issues such as flooding. Our representative needs to understand how these complex factors are integrated and affect some of the most critical parts of our everyday lives.

By districting our common communities together, we can elect a representative who really understands the needs of our commuters and businesses who — especially with this Infrastructure bill! — is motivated to fight for Federal dollars for the rails, roads, and local rapid bus lines that serve people who live in this geographical region. Because the stakes in our transportation network are so high, we need a representative dedicated to our geographic region, who is informed about and dedicated to addressing the localized transportation problems — in particular, securing federal funding to help support this powerhouse of New Jersey's economy.

As such, COMMUTING, TRANSPORTATION, and related ENVIRONMENTAL realities of flooding are unifying core issues within our district. While these problems are an issue to some extent everywhere, the repercussions are problematic to an especially intense degree here in CD11 because of our population density and our extremely high number of commuters. Therefore, we consider the people of CD11 to be a community of interest when it comes to our transportation needs. Nearby communities that share these issues would make reasonable additions to this CD11 community of interest in ways that less population-dense, less commuter-intensive areas would not.

And as one last appeal, I call upon the commission to share their draft maps with the public so that constituents and communities of interest have a chance to review them, and to schedule additional public meetings so that communities of interest can express any concerns.

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Subadhra Sridharan

Short Hills , New Jersey 07078

Hello! My name is Subadhra Sridharan and I have been a resident of Millburn Township for close to a decade now. I thank you for giving me this opportunity to testify in support of keeping Millburn Township as part of CD 7.

When NJ was hit by the record rainfall of hurricane Ida, it resulted in the Rahway river flooding devastating homes and businesses in our town and so many of the downstream towns along the Rahway river.

The 2020 Water Resources Development Act, reinstated the Army Corp of Engineers study, of the Rahway river flood mitigation. NJ7 is home to almost a dozen municipalities along the Rahway river. When the flooding happened, it was imperative that Millburn receive federal disaster declaration by FEMA. It did not at first receive it. THANKFULLY, we were part of NJ 7, which was one of the worst hit districts in NJ and that helped our town and our congressman make the case for a quick subsequent review and inclusion of Millburn to be recognized as a disaster zone by FEMA.

With the flooding of the Rahway river becoming more frequent and intense as witnessed twice just in the last decade during Irene and now Ida, it is essential that, communities that are affected by it stay together so the people in those communities receive fair, seamless and uniform advocacy and representation at the federal level. It is important that these communities continue to receive the support that the federal government is currently offering, as we are still recovering from IDA. It is imperative that these communities continue to have one voice speak for all future mitigation efforts. To repeat the word, "continuity" , It is key to the success of Millburn and its neighboring towns along the Rahway river.

So, I strongly urge the commissioners to keep Millburn in NJ 7 and to not redistrict us to any other congressional district. Doing so would break and reverse the progress we are currently making to mitigate future life threatening and economically devastating flooding that is a very real possibility. So while we recover from one flooding and race towards a solution that will help us avoid devastation in future, we cannot afford to stop, go back and pick up the pieces again. Thank you for taking the time to listen to me and I hope you will make the right choice for Millburn and its residents which is keeping us in NJ 7.

5x

Jordana Horn Gordon

Short Hills, New Jersey 07078

Good evening, Commissioners. I'm Jordana Horn Gordon. Thank you to the Commission for hearing my remarks. I'm a lifelong resident of Short Hills, where I live with my husband and six children. My parents still live in the house in Short Hills where I grew up, and I'm very fortunate that my sister and her four children live in town as well. I would say we're lifelong residents of Congressional District 7, except for the fact that as you know, Millburn/Short Hills has been something of a metaphorical pinball. Over the course of my lifetime, we've been shot around from district to district, almost every time the metaphorical pinball plunger of the census is pulled back. This isn't great for our continuity of representation, of course, and while I do believe that that is important, it's not the focal point of my testimony today.

Millburn/Short Hills is the only Essex County town in CD7. I recognize and acknowledge that if, as so many who've testified before this commission have said, congressional districts shouldn't split towns, why can they or should they split a county? While I understand that argument, I want to make what I believe is a much more forceful and crucial point in light of the circumstances on the ground at play here. Millburn/Short Hills is a river community, and that river, the Rahway river, creates a community of interest which should be far more powerful even than county lines in drawing the lines of a congressional district.

In the past two dozen years, we in Millburn/Short Hills have lived through at least 2 dozen "once in a hundred years" storms. I've seen the ample damage from Floyd, from Irene, from Sandy and from Ida, to name only a few of these storms from very recent memory. Each one of these storms, whether they're designated as tropical storms, super storms or hurricanes, devastates towns and businesses, and causes flooding right through the center of our town that impacts homes, stores, schools and all aspects of life as we know it. And with each storm, it becomes more and more evident to me how absolutely critical it is to have federal representation that represents the entire Rahway River community, from Hunterdon all the way to Millburn. Almost half of the 24 municipalities in the Rahway River Watershed and 75% of the towns on the Mayors Council of Rahway River Watershed Flood Control, are currently in CD7. I am very thankful that we are a part of CD7 with others who know the ravages of flooding, and that our collective Rahway River voice is heard and represented. As a lifelong resident, I don't want us to be siphoned off to another district. The immutable characteristic of the Rahway flooding is a threat that will, as we have already seen, come home to roost over and over and over again. As has already been pointed out in testimony, the Federal Emergency Management Agency did not initially include Millburn in its post-Ida disaster declaration. Fortunately our Congressman was very familiar with our needs and their inextricability from those along the very same river in the rest of his district, and so he fought to have us included so that our residents and businesses could receive FEMA funds. The Rahway River community is an immutable and unchangeable community of interest, and I hope that your redistricting plans will reflect that.

Rivers cannot be moved. They can only grow bigger, and the threat posed by them and climate change grows exponentially each year. This problem isn't going away - it's only getting bigger. And I want to underscore that this point that I'm making isn't only true of CD7. While that is my personal experience, I am also making the more macro point that rivers and bodies of water must be a crucial factor in your redistricting decisions, and that's whether we are talking about CD7 or CD6, whether we're talking about the Rahway River or the Passaic or the Raritan Valley or the Bay/Shore communities or the Delaware.

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While your commission does not have the power to redirect rivers or to stop storms, it does have the ability to draw lines that ensure that communities with a coherent and critical issue are able to go to a single legislator and have their voice heard. Thank you for hearing my voice and so many others today and through the duration of this process of public hearings.

7x

December 6, 2021

New Jersey Office of Legislative Services
New Jersey Congressional Redistricting Commission
State House Annex
131-137 W State St
Trenton, NJ 08608

To Members of the New Jersey Congressional Redistricting Commission

My name is Hannah Korn-Heilner and I live in South Orange but was born and raised in Montclair. I testified a month ago in support of keeping the South End of Montclair in the 10th Congressional District but felt compelled to speak on this issue again as I am concerned with the arguments being made to move this historically Black neighborhood into the 11th congressional district with the rest of Montclair.

The main argument being made, that uniting Montclair into a "community of interest" would help address issues such as train service, is deeply flawed. For instance, twenty years ago Montclair accepted a plan to build the new Montclair-Boonton train line that created a direct service into New York City. To build this new line, Montclair agreed to allow thirty homes in the lower end of Montclair to be knocked down. The creation of this new train line, along with the redevelopment of the train station in the South End, further contributed to gentrification that has continued to push out Black residents. In 2000, just a few years before the Montclair-Boonton line opened, about 32 percent of Montclair residents were Black. In the twenty years since the Montclair-Boonton line was built, the Black population of Montclair has dropped to 25 percent. And the old train line that was discontinued when the Montclair-Boonton line was built, is now being turned into the Essex-Hudson Greenway. Meanwhile, the residents of the South End have been without a grocery store for over five years.

A united Montclair is not a community of interest, as the issues impacting the Black residents of the South End are vastly different than the concerns of white and wealthier residents living in the rest of Montclair. And if the history of Montclair is any indication, the interests of white and wealthier residents will constantly be prioritized over the needs of Black residents. Unifying the town into the 11th Congressional District would just continue to further marginalize Black residents. I urge this Commission to keep the South End of Montclair in the 10th Congressional District with its sister communities in East Orange and in Newark who have far more in common, to ensure Montclair's Black residents have fair representation that will reflect their interests in Congress.

Sincerely,

Hannah Korn-Heilner

South Orange, NJ 07079

8x

Testimony by Bruce Esrig, submitted to the New Jersey Congressional Redistricting Commission for presentation in the public hearing scheduled for 12/6/2021 at 6pm.

I'm Bruce Esrig, a resident of Madison, NJ, which is currently in the 11th congressional district. I'm very happy with my current representative, Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill. I find that she listens to her constituents and represents our interests in Congress.

I would like to start by thanking the New Jersey Redistricting Commission for holding these hearings and for giving me and others the opportunity to provide our testimony. I call upon you to provide a choice of maps to the public and allow time for comment before selecting a final map. I also call upon you to propose maps that are fair so that we, the public, can have fair maps to comment on.

My purpose in speaking to you today is to advocate for fair maps.

An unfair map would concentrate constituencies or dilute constituencies so that their opinions are not represented.

Why does it matter that the map of districts be fair?

So that people's opinions are heard and taken into account,
so that we can have faith in democracy.

So that we can talk productively about issues that we all have in common,
so that our society is more successful.

And so that we can look ourselves in the mirror and tell our children that we did the right thing.

If you think that it is OK to disregard or to dilute the power of the votes of people who might disagree with you, you will create a society that no one wants to live in.

If you accept these points about fairness and take them to heart, and act upon them, we will end up with a fair result. If not, we will not end up with a fair result.

Going beyond my written testimony, I would like to say that considering groups that have common interests is preferable to considering groups that have common identities. An issue focus leads to more constructive debates than an identity focus.

Consider infrastructure, for example.

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Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill has been vocal in advocating for infrastructure that enables people in NJ CD-11 to get to work. We need comprehensive attention to infrastructure for long-haul, commuting, and short-distance transportation so that goods can get to customers efficiently and people can get to places where their services are needed. CD-11 is a district that can advocate for this need. Adding precincts with low proportions of commuters to CD-11 would weaken support for transportation solutions. I urge you to plan to keep within CD-11 those who have in common a commitment to advocate for regional transportation solutions.

Thank you for hearing my testimony today.

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Congressional Redistricting Hearing Testimony (12/9/21)
Leslie Bockol, Co-Executive Director, NJ 11th for Change

West Orange NJ 07052

My name is Leslie Bockol. Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with you this evening. I'd like to speak first as Co-Executive Director of the grassroots group NJ 11th for Change, and then in a more personal capacity, as a resident of West Orange for nearly 15 years.

NJ 11th for Change is an unaffiliated CD11-based organization, 8000 members strong, that works towards government that is transparent, responsive, and accountable. These redistricting hearings are an admirable step towards those goals. But we fear that this transparency, responsiveness, and accountability are really for naught unless the maps drafted by this commission are shared publicly; unless constituents and communities of interest are given an opportunity to publicly voice their concerns, and unless the maps can be revised in light of those concerns — before you go to a vote.

NJ 11th for Change strongly urges you to adjust your process to allow these important steps, so that the citizens of New Jersey can have as much faith in the process — and its end results — as possible. In these turbulent times, with so much distrust in government, our voters deserve that.

Next — speaking personally as a West Orange citizen, taxpayer, county-committee member, and public-school parent for nearly 15 years, I have opinions about how CD11's borders are redrawn.

West Orange's public school buildings are, by and large, gracious, charming, and very very old -- early and early-mid 20th century old. Eleanor Roosevelt spoke at the groundbreaking for our Roosevelt Middle School. These are not modern buildings, and that has repercussions for our community. It means a major and sometimes unpredictable tax burden on our households, because maintaining and updating an aging school infrastructure is not cheap. And as we found out during the pandemic, it has huge implications on a public health level, as our buildings' electrical systems and almost non-existent HVAC systems just do not support the kinds of air-quality remediation that were required. That caused lengthy delays and greater expenses in getting children back into school safely.

There are other towns nearby — towns that, like West Orange, were settled and built up early in our area's history — that face the same ongoing school infrastructure problems. Notably, our fellow Essex County towns of Montclair (part of which is already in the 11th District), South Orange, and Maplewood (which are both in CD 10). Speaking from personal experience, West

11x

Orange school taxes are the vast majority of my property tax burden, which has gone up 50% over the past 15 years — unlike our salaries. Families like mine are struggling with this, and as our school buildings age, I don't anticipate these tax increases to slow. Our public schools are going to need major overhauls. We're going to need new buildings. In towns like West Orange, Montclair, South Orange, and Maplewood, the school infrastructure challenges we face will — increasingly — affect our tax burden, our complicated relationship with federal policies such as SALT deductions, and our need for federal funding.

On that basis, I believe it would benefit the taxpayers and parents of these towns to share a congressional representative. South Orange and Maplewood would be reasonable and beneficial additions to Congressional District 11.

Again, my thanks for your time, patience, and consideration, and for the hard work I know you're putting in. Good night.

Congressional Redistricting Testimony
Stacey Abenstein
Field Director
NJ 11th for Change

My name is Stacey Abenstein, a 30-year resident of Livingston and the Field Director for NJ 11th for Change, an unaffiliated grassroots group dedicated to advocating for all people of New Jersey's 11th Congressional District through outreach and education.

I would like to bring to your attention a community of interest not previously mentioned in the testimony I have heard. It is imperative that our historically Jewish communities be considered. Essex County, in particular, has a large Jewish population, stemming from the days they resided in Newark, Irvington, and the Oranges. In fact, I belong to Temple B'nai Abraham, a congregation that started in Newark in 1853, and THRIVED there until not so long ago. The Jewish population began to migrate to the suburbs in the 1960's and the congregation followed suit, relocating to Livingston in 1973. A large number of the relocated Jews now live in Livingston and West Orange, in CD11, Millburn/Short Hills in CD7, and South Orange and Maplewood in CD10. Their children are now raising their families in the area.

Currently these towns are broken up into three congressional districts, watering down the voice of a populace that is plagued by skyrocketing antisemitism. According to the ADL, antisemitic hate crimes are at the highest level since they have been tracking it. The AJC says nearly 1 in 4 Jews experienced antisemitism *just this year!* Sunday night, the last night of Chanukah, a 6th grader in NJ found a sign posted on the door of her synagogue with a swastika and the words "WE ARE EVERYWHERE".

It is imperative you join the geographically adjacent communities of Maplewood, South Orange, and Millburn/Short Hills with other highly concentrated Jewish towns already in the 11th congressional district, including Livingston, West Orange, and Montclair to ensure the Essex County Jewish community, 59,500 strong, have an influential voice in Washington. With my written testimony, I will submit a map of the concentration of Jewish households taken from a recent study completed by The Jewish Federation of Metrowest in conjunction with Brandeis University (Figure 1). Each red dot represents 25 Jewish HOUSEHOLDS, not individuals. Remarkably, 72% of these Jewish households have lived in the area for 20 years or more. An additional 11% moved to the area within the past five years, confirming Essex County continues to be a destination for Jewish families in the Northern NJ/New York Metropolitan area.

I would also like to advocate for the AAPI community, a flourishing group with a booming population in Livingston and surrounding towns. Many years ago, I met the son of the original owners of my house. He told me that his parents were the first in the neighborhood to buy a plot of land but were the last to build, as they were afraid others would not build in the neighborhood if they knew an Asian family would be living there. This was in 1960, demonstrating a more than 60-year history of settlement and community building in this particular section of NJ.

The Asian Population (alone or in combination with other races) in Parsippany and Montville in Eastern Morris County, and Livingston and Millburn/Short Hills in Western Essex County with a few surrounding/connecting towns represents 47% of the total Asian population in all of Essex and Morris Counties combined. I believe this cultural and geographical block of almost 57,000 Asian Americans must be represented in one congressional district. All but Millburn are currently in CD11. I will attach a map (Figure 2) to the written testimony I will submit. This group has also

13x

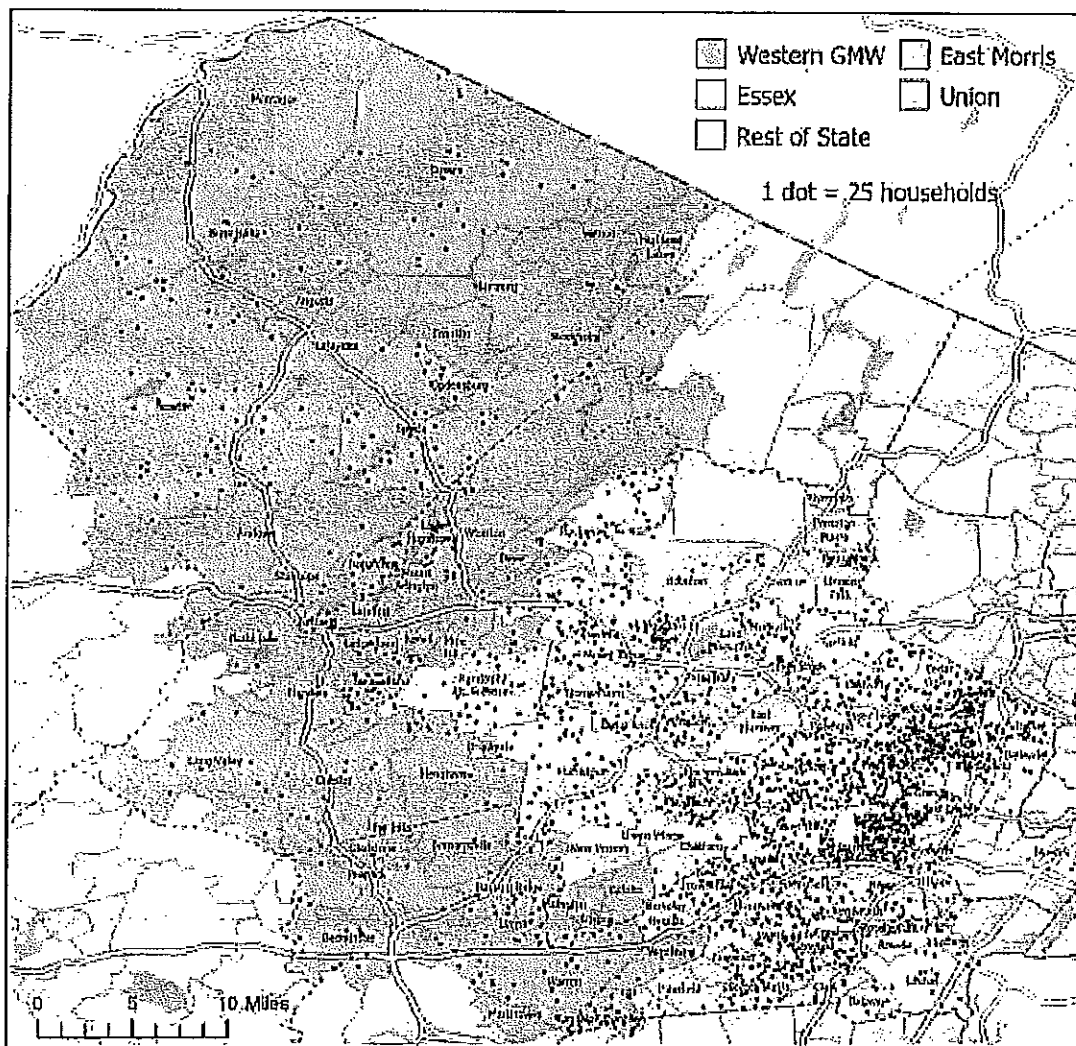
been on the receiving end of horrendous bias and hate crimes. Like the Jews, we must make sure they have a strong presence in one district so their voice and power are not lost.

I would like to point out that neither of these communities of interest are known to vote one way or the other. This is not a political plea, but a true picture of prominent groups that live and vote in this area of the state.

Lastly, I ask that you share drafts of the maps you will be submitting for consideration. It is important that the public be able to give testimony on these maps, not just in abstract.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Figure 1. Map of the Greater MetroWest Jewish community

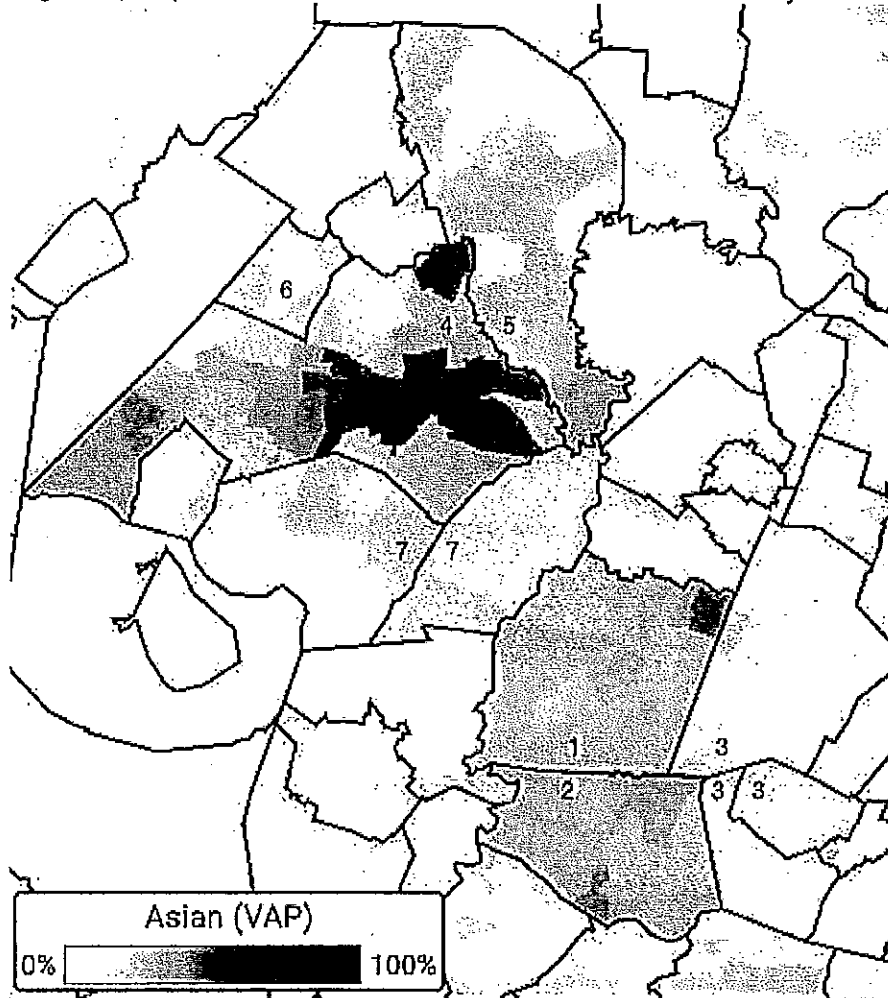


There are currently 56,800 Jewish households made up of 155,000 people on this map. Essex County alone has 21,500 households containing 59,500 people.

14x

The vast majority of Jews in Essex County reside in Montclair in the north through West Orange to South Orange and Maplewood in the south, then west to Livingston and Millburn/Short Hills.

Figure 2, Map of Asian Concentration in Eastern Morris County/Western Essex County.



Heavily Concentrated Towns/Percent to Total Population

Western Essex County 24,567

1 Livingston 9429/30.1%

2 Millburn/Short Hills 7672/35.3%

3 Surrounding Towns of West Orange, South Orange, & Maplewood 7466

15x

Eastern Morris County 32,291

4 Parsippany 22,633/40.3%

5 Montville 5168/23.0%

6 Mountain Lakes 823/18.4%

7 Connecting Towns of Hanover and East Hanover 3667

Total Heavily Asian Concentrated Community of Interest 56,858

16x

Rick Robinson's Voter Redistricting in Newark, NJ Testimony

Chairman-NJSC NAACP/Co-Chair Newark, NJ NAACP

Criminal Justice Committees

Good Day NJ Redistricting Commission/NJ Apportionment Commission,

My name is Rick Robinson and I am a concerned Newark, NJ native, involving the proposed plans of voter redistricting in our beloved city. I serve as the Chairman of the New Jersey State Conference NAACP, as well as one of two Co-Chairs of the Newark, NJ NAACP (NNJNAACP) for our Criminal Justice Committees. The NNJNAACP Branch is a community anchor that looks to address serious matters, where individual's civil-rights have been unlawfully violated, compromised and disgraced. Today, on behalf of the NNJNAACP Branch, I am requesting that the plans for voter redistricting in our city be eliminated and dismissed permanently.

From the days of my youth, our community has been suffering for decades and continues to suffer from other meaningful short comings, involving effective progressive policing, education, housing, employment, alternate juvenile justice and mental-health challenges. Although, we are now moving in the right direction to directly address these matters thanks to the leadership of Newark, NJ Mayor Ras J. Baraka, the notion of redistricting is not at all welcome by the residents of our city. Mainly because voter redistricting will not serve the purpose of the people and the people are the ones that put our elected political and legislative leaders in office. Simply put, resigning our voting landscape is not the answer to solving Newark's problems, it will just make matters worse. In my opinion, those particular elected offices need to enhance their footprint to do what is fair for the people, do what is right for the people and ensure the people have access to their respective good works, but voter redistricting is definitely not part of the solution to serve the people better.

Lastly, I want to take this time to personally thank the New Jersey Redistricting Commission, the New Jersey Apportionment Commission and the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice for inviting the NNJNAACP to testify on this important issue. Please, understand our city is trying to move forward and become the model city in America, but voter redistricting will without question, serve no true purpose of the people, it will hinder our ability to reach our potential and our established accomplishment will merely become forgotten history.

Thank You:

Rick Robinson, Chairman

NJSC NAACP/Newark, NJ NAACP Co-Chair

Criminal Justice Committees

17x

NJ 11 Redistricting Testimony
December 5, 2021

My family has lived in Wayne NJ since 1958. I grew up in Wayne and attended Wayne schools K-12. I graduated college and law school in NJ. Over the years, I and members of my family have commuted from Wayne to other parts of NJ (Plainfield, Newark, Hackensack, Paramus, East Hanover, New Providence, Bridgewater) and to Manhattan and Brooklyn. I am currently the co-owner (with my sister) of our childhood home in Wayne, in which my family has lived since 1961. I'm 70 years old and have been retired since 2019. I mention all this because I wanted you to know that I am intensely invested in the core issues of my fellow NJ District 11 residents and voters: better public transportation and infrastructure, taxes (SALT), and high quality public schools. I have personally experienced many years of frustration, delay and expense of a Northern NJ to Manhattan commute, when a 22 mile trip can take anywhere from 90 minutes to 3 hours by car or over an hour by commuter bus depending on traffic, weather and time of day. I am a homeowner, and even though I can soon take advantage of the "senior freeze" program on property taxes, those and other SALT taxes are harder to manage on retirement income. And who knows if the "senior freeze" program will continue. I have no family members in the local public schools, but my friends and neighbors do. I believe in supporting public schools with my local taxes to better educate our children - but I do not like the SALT cap which penalizes me as a taxpayer.

For years Bill Pascrell was my Congressperson; he accurately represented my interests and shared my opinions. I was outraged when Wayne was redistricted so that Rodney Frelinghuysen became my Congressperson. My Democratic voice was silenced. I was delighted when "NJ 11th for Change" was created and Mikie Sherrill stepped up as a candidate. Members of my household campaigned, canvassed and phone banked for her in 2018 and again in 2020. Moving Wayne to yet a 3rd District since 2000 will destroy all the work that was done in 2018 to free the District of a do-nothing Congressperson, as well as create voter confusion and loss of confidence in the system.

I am against redistricting for more than just local reasons. Mikie Sherrill is a fresh, Democratic voice in Congress who supports the Democratic agenda: tax relief, the Infrastructure Act, the Voting Rights Advancement Act, protecting the environment, protecting Women's Health, combating COVID. She supports the Jan 6 commission. I am outraged by the behaviors and seemingly insane rhetoric of the Trump sycophants in Congress and the obstructionist Republican minority leadership in Congress. We must do everything we can to re-elect and newly elect Democrats in the House. Anything done by way of redistricting that dilutes or silences Mikie Sherrill's support is wrong.

Olga Lewnes

Wayne, NJ 07470

olewnes@optimum.net

18x

Adrian Mapp

Plainfield, New Jersey 07060

City of Plainfield

It is important to note the cultural links between communities of color and what can happen for minority representation and minority engagement when communities of color are linked together.

o For example: Plainfield, Franklin and Trenton are communities that have significant numbers of African Americans, Caribbean Americans, and Americans born in Africa that are members of the same civic organizations, places of worship, Sororities and Fraternities.

As a Commission, you have the important responsibility to stand against racial gerrymandering akin to what we have seen in other parts of the country, and instead, strive for continuity of all cultural components, including the connection of Black communities where possible.

As a member of NJ12, I submit to you that the aforementioned reasons are among the main reasons why this district elected the first African American woman despite being over 60% white.

We must not use Plainfield, in anyway, as a political football to dilute the quality of its representation in Washington or in a way that could reduce Black congressional representation. Diversity and inclusion must not be ignored in the redistricting conversation; Plainfield needs to stay in the NJ12 so as not to disrupt the cultural homogeneity of the district.

19x

Hello. My name is Carol Angle and I live in Summit, in CD-7. I am writing because I feel CD-7, as it was won by the narrowest of margins in the entire country, is as fair and balanced a district as you can get and does not need to be redistricted. Tom Malinowski won because of the hard work of volunteers, including myself, who canvassed, wrote postcards and called voters, trying to get them to the polls.

I respectfully request that CD-7 remain as is, a competitive and fair district. Thank you for your consideration.

Carol Angle

Summit, NJ 07901

20x

To the Redistricting Commission,

I am a proud constituent of NJ11 who is very satisfied with the current configuration of the district. Our district has developed a cohesive identity based on our shared interests across our communities including our common interest in developing better commuter routes, concern with real estate taxes and the SALT deduction, our shared focus on the quality of our schools and our embrace of diversity in the communities that make up NJ11.

There is a well known saying about not fixing something that isn't broken, and I believe that applies very strongly to the current NJ11 configuration.

Our representative, Congresswoman Miki Sherrill has become well-known in the district and in Congress for representing the common values of her NJ11 constituents in the House of Representatives. Congresswoman Sherrill fits in to the fabric of our communities as she easily talks about the issues impacting our lives with all constituents throughout the District when she is in NJ and makes us proud in her interactions with her colleagues to draft and pass legislation and in her media opportunities...she is a true representative of NJ11.

The current configuration of the district has led to the election of one of only two women in the NJ delegation to Congress. This is a point of great pride in NJ11 as Congresswoman Sherrill is able to serve as a role model to women throughout the district considering running for office and is a role model to all girls in the district that are considering careers in the military or in politics. The current district has elected Congresswoman Sherrill to address a broad range of issues on behalf of our communities including enhancing childcare opportunities, developing the workforce, improving employment prospects, and improving access to healthcare. Congresswoman Sherrill is also able to demonstrate the diverse capabilities that a representative of NJ11 should have as a member of the Armed Services Committee, Science, Space and Technology Committee, and the Education and Labor Committee.

Redistricting may result in certain communities within NJ11 being redistricted for the third time since 2000 which would be a disturbing and confusing burden for members of those communities to undertake. NJ11 has formed an identity that is based on the diversity of its population (ethnic, economic, political affiliations) that would be disrupted if certain communities were removed and replaced with others. Continuity would be very valuable as people in the district have collaborated on issues of importance with Congresswoman Sherrill and her staff and the groups would have to re-form to match the districts that interested people live in based on prospective redistricting.

I hope that the redistricting commission will consider natural borders and continuity of municipalities and sections of towns in any potential changes that are made. For example, it is important that communities that share common interests in certain pieces of land (parks, preserved areas, commuter hubs, etc.) be represented by a common Congresswoman to give a cohesive voice to the interest of the local communities.

I thank you for your service on the Commission and hope that you consider my suggestions to keep NJ11 in-tact or nearly in-tact following the redistricting exercise.

Respectfully,

Eric Baltuch
Livingston NJ

21X

To the committee:

We support maintaining the current boundaries of CD11 as much as possible, with additional neighboring communities added to reflect the increase in population. This district is suburban in its population density, with one of the most diverse constituencies in NJ if not the nation. Changing boundaries may result in less representation for many of us in minority communities. Changing boundaries would dilute or change the characteristic of the population center, as we are a community of many commuters, rather than an urban center, or exurban/rural, with other concerns. Rail and bus transport are important here; it would be of less importance to more rural dwellers.

Changing boundaries may result in many of us losing continuity of representation, as it would mean having a third change in congressional district for some of us in 2 decades— without any of us having physically moved. Such changes affect voter turnout, as voters feel less inclined to support a representative they don't know or perhaps voters feel that representative doesn't know their problems, their district.

Changing boundaries would also result in a district split by topography and other physical considerations (mountains, rivers, multi-lane highways), and would violate the principle of keeping districts compact and contiguous. Splitting forested areas, green space, and watershed would lessen the interest any one representative has in preserving them. In these times of climate crisis, we need to think about such impacts to help preserve our environment.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Beverly and Arnold Barton

West Orange, NJ 07052

22x

Patricia Black

New Providence, New Jersey 07974

Various groups have jointly drawn a redistricting map for District. 11 which cuts a very narrow path across the state from east (starting just west of the oranges) to west (past Dover and Morristown.). This new district would make no sense as this long, narrow strip has nothing in common as to the needs and wants of the people living there. The other districts these groups have drawn are each within a close geographic area, such as the NW corner of NJ or the SE corner of NJ and have issues in common. The Racial Equity group and the groups working with them did not use geographic location for district. 11. They drew a long, narrow band across NJ so that Dover and Morristown were included with Madison, Troy Hills, Summit and all the way east, stoping at the oranges. Purposely to make this district 11 one of the 6 minority majority districts with no geographic sense.

23x

Congressional Redistricting Testimony
Roberta Blitz
Livingston Township
Dec. 10, 2021

My name is Roberta Blitz. I am a long time resident of Livingston Township, having lived here for over 30 years. I am providing written testimony to tell you about my community and to urge you to keep this township together as part of the 11th Congressional District when you draw a new map.

Livingston is a suburban neighborhood with many communities of interest. For instance, we have an active fine arts community with studios and classes in the Riker Hill Art Park complex and an Arts Council that has a gallery space in the Town Center. We are also the home of several performing arts organizations including the Livingston Symphony Orchestra, the New Jersey Ballet company and the associated New Jersey School of Ballet.

Religious affiliation forms another community of interest. According to the most recent National Jewish Population Survey, 46% of the population is Jewish, one of the highest percentages in any American municipality. We are home to six houses of worship of various sizes and denominations (Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox) and to the Joseph Kushner Hebrew Academy, a school with over 700 students.

Another area of common interest is transportation. We are a "bedroom" community and many residents commute into Manhattan via public transit (bus or train). It is therefore imperative that we have a representative who truly understands and fights for the needs of our commuters as well as for the Gateway Tunnel project.

Livingston has at times felt like a ping pong ball as we get bounced from one Congressional District to another. We were a part of the 6th CD from 1960 – 1970, the 5th from 1970 – 1980, the 11th from 1980 – 2000, and then split into the 8th and the 11th, and finally in 2010 we once again became part of the 11th. Moving us around in this manner creates a feeling of dislocation and causes some constituents to question whether their representative really understands the needs of our community.

Finally, it is critically important that redistricting decisions are made transparently so that constituents have confidence in this process. I therefore urge the Commission to share the draft maps it will be submitting so that the public can review and comment before the maps are finalized.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

24x

We are writing to express concern about possible changes to the 10th Congressional district as the Commission on Redistricting deliberates on boundaries for districts in our state. The League of Women Voters reminds us of these principles in guiding the redrawing of maps:

“A racial equity provision that reinforces the principles of the Voting Rights Act and ensures that New Jersey’s communities of color have an equal opportunity to participate in the political process.

Preservation of communities of interest to the greatest extent possible, as determined through testimony derived through the public engagement process.

That plans shall not be established for the purpose of favoring or disfavoring any office holder, candidate or political party.”¹

For decades people of color have been denied accurate representation by splitting up their communities of interest among multiple districts. For example, of the 57 Black representatives in the current Congress, only a fourth come from districts with a white majority. Of the seven at-large House districts, only one has a Black representative.² Numerous organizations and studies have documented and analyzed how gerrymandering suppresses minority communities.^{3,4,5}

Some argue that Congressional districts should reflect the geographic demarcation of a town or city’s boundaries in its entirety to preserve its racial diversity and thus promote a community of interest which values diversity⁶. Such seemingly democratic representations, unfortunately, will serve to dilute the voices of minority communities within those borders.

There are other ways to go about ensuring that communities of color have equitable representation, and there is no lack of ideas about how to reconfigure the map. Some examples have recently been shown in the press⁷:

We strongly urge the Commission to use such maps, to ensure that New Jersey’s richly diverse communities are accurately and adequately represented. Do not inadvertently suppress minority communities while seeming to promote diversity.

Maarten Bosland & Marsha Love

Montclair, NJ 07042

1 <https://www.montclairlocal.news/2021/11/13/demand-fair-redistricting-for-communities-of-color-letter-to-the-editor/>

2 <https://www.northjersey.com/story/opinion/2021/10/26/nj-redistricting-shouldnt-disenfranchise-black-brown-voters/6174476001/>

3 <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/partisan-gerrymandering-limits-voting-rights/>

4 <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2021/11/republicans-are-erasing-decades-of-voting-rights-gains-before-our-eyes>

5 <https://www.fairdistrictsnj.org/additional-resources>

6 <https://www.montclairlocal.news/2021/11/29/an-argument-for-putting-montclair-in-just-one-congressional-district-town-square/>

7 <https://www.nj.com/opinion/2021/12/stop-using-redistricting-to-hurt-voters-of-color-opinion.html>

Congressional Redistricting Hearing
Testimony submitted 12/9/21

From: Richard Cammarieri –
Email:

My name is Richard Cammarieri. I am a lifelong resident of Newark N.J. I am employed by New Community Corporation as Director for Community Engagement and I am Chairperson for the Newark Community Development Network.

First, I'd like to thank the Commission for hosting this public hearing, along with the 10 other such public hearings this year. I also think it is warranted that the Commission has chosen to wait to schedule its tenth and final public hearing. I hope this means that the Commission has heeded the calls of many requesting that a final meeting be held after it has produced a draft map or maps, so that people have the opportunity to comment on that map before it is certified.

My main point in testifying is to echo the calls urging the New Jersey Redistricting Commission to draw a racially equitable congressional map. In that regard I fully support the "Racial Equity Map" recently released by the New Jersey Institute of Social Justice and other New Jersey advocacy groups.

The "Racial Equity Map" is civically warranted in that it supports the basic democratic, electoral principles our political system is supposed to value and exercise. It is supported by both a moral imperative for a justice-centered electoral system and common-sense response to the data-informed reality of our New Jersey electorate.

As many have pointed out with the support of census data, New Jersey's communities of color are growing, and the Commission must ensure these communities are receiving equitable representation that reflects and respects this growth in the next congressional map.

Allow me to echo what I'm sure others have said also:

- New districts should be drawn that reflect the fact that New Jersey's population growth has been overwhelmingly concentrated among New Jersey's communities of color.
- In 2010, New Jersey was 40% people of color, but our state's congressional districts were drawn to center white communities – significantly diminishing the voices of people of color. The Commission must not let that happen again.
- Now that we are effectively a state that is half people of color, New Jersey's districts should be drawn so that half of them (six out of 12) to be majority people of color.
- The Commission must maintain New Jersey's majority Black district (CD 10) and majority Hispanic district (CD 8) to comply with the Voting Rights Act

- Given the large and growing Hispanic/Latino population in New Jersey (22% of the state, up 29% in the last 10 years), **the Commission could draw a district that is plurality Hispanic/Latino, in addition to the Hispanic/Latino majority district, to ensure those residents have adequate representation in the next decade.**
- Also, given growing Asian population in New Jersey (10% of the state, up 30% in the last 10 years), the Commission should draw two Asian influence districts where Asian residents make up a significant portion of the population.
- The Commission should also respect the public testimony of people who spoke before this Commission, and try to keep communities of interest together.

As such, the Commission Should Seriously Consider Adopting all or much of "Racial Equity Map" This map succeeds at centering racial equity and fairly representing residents of New Jersey. And it meets fair redistricting principles, such as equal population, contiguity, and partisan fairness.

I appreciate the opportunity to submit these comments for consideration by the Committee and again ask that you please prioritize racial equity in the next round of Congressional Maps and consider adopting some or all of the Racial Equity Map submitted by advocacy groups which does this so successfully.

In closing I would suggest that with the adoption of a "Racial Equity Map" as a 'firewall' against inequitable electoral impact, that designing our Congressional Districts might be less about drawing lines on a map for partisan advantage than about exercising the virtue of 'trust'.

- Trust in developing messages of equity and political service that will connect with voters
- Trust in securing candidates able to convey these messages
- Trust in (and respect) for the intelligence of voters
- Trust in our fundamental democratic electoral system – AND its results.

28x

Kenneth F. Cerullo, Esq.

Mahwah, NJ 07430

December 5, 2021

Dear Members of the New Jersey Redistricting and Apportionment Commissions:

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to address the commissions with this written testimony. I am a concerned citizen interested in government reform in the hope of creating a system of government that works better for the citizens of New Jersey.

Our current system of redistricting and apportionment is embedded in the New Jersey Constitution and is effectively controlled by two parties – the Democrats and Republicans – despite the fact that over a third of New Jersey voters are registered as Unaffiliated.

It is a fallacy to think a split of seats between the Democrats and Republicans is the panacea for the redistricting and apportionment process. After all, it is entirely conceivable that what may be agreed upon by the 2 major parties may not be in the interest of the general public. For example, the 2 parties could together decide to create safe districts for each party and disenfranchise many voters favoring competitive elections. By comparison, some states prohibit the use of political data to favor or disfavor political parties as part of redistricting criteria while other states require that district lines be drawn to encourage competitiveness.

Moreover, there is no way to change this redistricting and apportionment process other than by an amendment to our state constitution which must be proposed by the legislative branch of New Jersey. In short, the Democrats and Republicans control the redistricting and apportionment process, and at the same time, are also the gatekeepers to any proposed change to the system. That does not seem fair to the people of New Jersey. It is no wonder why this current system is in place and will likely never change!

29x

For the above-referenced reasons, we need a limited citizen initiative process in New Jersey. Citizens should be empowered through a limited form of direct democracy to propose government reform initiatives directly to the voters of New Jersey. After all, it is perfectly appropriate and logical for the people to write the rules of the game in the areas of government reform, and bypass a potentially conflicted legislative branch. We have many good state representatives doing good work – but that does not take away from the fact that these same representatives may have a potential conflict of interest when it comes to a government reform measure that may threaten re-election.

Besides redistricting reform, the limited citizen initiative process may be used for other government reform efforts that may be supported by the general public, but not the politicians in control of the system.

That being said, I am a realist and we must deal with the process we currently have in place. The following recommendations will help make this system fairer for the general public and increase transparency:

1. The commission should publicly release preliminary maps in advance of certification and hold public hearings afterward so that the proposed map is subject to scrutiny before a final vote.
2. The commission should solicit the input of a broad sampling of non-partisan experts and researchers to help scientifically identify problematic districting before any maps go into effect. A North Carolina state court used such information, in part, to strike down that state's map. Many experts that have served as expert witnesses in redistricting cases across the country should instead be consulted early in the redistricting process to help identify problems before new maps are approved. Please see Gupta, S. (September 7, 2020), "How next-gen computer generated maps detect partisan gerrymandering (Researchers are ready to expose hidden biases when redistricting begins in 2021)", *ScienceNews*, <https://www.sciencenews.org/article/gerrymandering-elections-next-gen-computer-generated-maps>

30x

3. The commission should publish a written report justifying all map making decisions in response to public and expert/researcher input and scrutiny.

Please note that numbers 1 and 3 are recommendations that were made in previous testimony by Fair Districts NJ. I also support other recommendations by Fair Districts NJ including making public all materials and communications related to the process as well as making recordings and transcripts of each meeting available in a timely manner. I simply propose the addition of scientific scrutiny by the expert/ research community. Scientific scrutiny provides additional objective criteria in drawing and evaluating maps besides other objective redistricting criteria that may not be required, but is good practice such as compactness and contiguity (required in NJ legislative redistricting).

I would like to remind the commissions that each has a special obligation to work in the interest of the general public considering voters cannot directly amend our current redistricting and apportionment system. The commission should always work towards full transparency and opportunity for meaningful public participation during the entire process.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kenneth F. Cerullo, Esq.

Mahwah, NJ 07430

Good Afternoon Commissioners,

Please allow me to express my thanks to you for hosting the public hearings regarding redistricting. I hope that this is a sign that the commission is serious about listening to the concerns of the citizens of New Jersey and will allow the people of our state to comment on the map before it is certified.

I am writing to urge the New Jersey Redistricting Commission to draw a racially equitable congressional map and to lend my support to the "Racial Equity Map" that was recently released by the New Jersey Institute of Social Justice and other New Jersey advocacy groups.

New Jersey's communities of color are growing and the Commission must work to ensure that these growing communities are receiving equitable representation that reflects and respects this growth.

I thank the committee for its work and ask that you please prioritize racial equity in the next round of Congressional Maps and consider adopting some or all of the Racial Equity Map submitted by advocacy groups which does this successfully.

Thank you for your work.

Sincerely,

Rev. Kenneth D. R. Clayton, President
Paterson NAACP

Social Action Chairman,
United Missionary Baptist Convention of NJ

32x

Charles Cocuzza

Union Beach, New Jersey 07735

Dear Members of the New Jersey Congressional Redistricting Commission,

As you prepare for the final phases of the congressional redistricting process, I applaud your efforts to include public opinion on this extremely important matter. I write to you to offer my testimony on a unique area of the state known as the "Raritan Bayshore" or simply "The Bayshore". This subregion of the Jersey Shore is composed of 10 municipalities in Middlesex and Monmouth County. These towns are Perth Amboy, South Amboy, Sayreville, Old Bridge, Aberdeen, Keyport, Union Beach, Keansburg, Middletown, Atlantic Highlands, and Highlands. The most obvious community of interest that these towns share is that they all border the Raritan Bay. With the exception of Old Bridge and Middletown, which are split between two congressional districts, all these towns reside completely within the 6th congressional district. The sprawling geography of both Old Bridge and Middletown creates a separate identity between the Bayshore areas of the towns with the rest. For instance, the Laurence Harbor section in Old Bridge and the Port Monmouth, Belford, and Leonardo sections of Middletown identify with the Bayshore Region while the rest of the town largely does not. In Monmouth County, the Bayshore is largely considered to include the towns and areas north of State Route 36.

I am a lifelong resident of the Bayshore, having grown up in Keansburg and now raising my family in neighboring Union Beach where I currently serve as Mayor. I have a unique understanding of the culture and economic connectedness of these municipalities. I am also a member of the Bayshore Mayors, a collaborative nonpartisan group made up of all the Monmouth County Bayshore mayors to work on the issues are towns similarly face. By and large our towns and areas of the Bayshore are made up of densely populated communities of working middle class families and residents. Many residents identify as blue-collar workers. For instance, the per capita income for Union Beach and Keansburg is about \$30,000. Far below the Monmouth County average of just above \$51,000. You would be hard pressed to find large homes with sprawling lawns. Instead, you will find moderate sized homes closely situated to their neighbors, with many that have been raised on pilings because of the devastation caused to this area by Superstorm Sandy. In the Bayshore, we do not see this as a negative but as a positive sense of community where neighbors have known each other for generations.

Our geographical relationship to the Raritan Bay also causes significant issues that we rely heavily on the federal government for support. Our relationship with our member of Congress is paramount to the wellbeing of our residents. As long as I can remember, coastal flooding has been a major issue for towns and areas of the Bayshore and it continues to get worse. The Bayshore saw the most significant damage from Sandy. Since then, our towns have worked closely with our Congressman and federal government to implement flood mitigation projects that are ongoing in many of our towns.

When drawing your maps, I hope you will take into consideration the special relationship and uniqueness our Bayshore towns and unincorporated areas of Belford, Port Monmouth and Leonardo sections of Middletown have with each other and larger 6th Congressional district towns.

Sincerely,

Charles W. Cocuzza
Mayor, Borough of Union Beach

33x

Good Afternoon,

My name is Mark Comesañas and I am a husband and father raising my children in the city of Newark, where I work, worship, and reside. I also currently serve as the Executive Director of My Brother's Keeper-Newark where I walk alongside young people, and specifically boys & young men of color, advocating for policies that impact them, their families, and our community. I'd like to first thank the commission for lending their time and dedication in hearing from the public over the course of the last several weeks and months.

My intentions are to be very brief and just highlight the need to ensure racial equity in drawing the congressional map for New Jersey. According to US News World Report and the 2020 census, New Jersey currently ranks as the 6th most diverse state in the country. It is this diversity that uniquely equips us to be a model for what equitable representation could look like across the country. It is for this reason that I stand with the New Jersey Institute of Social Justice, NAACP State Conference, Salvation and Social Justice, Fair Share Housing Center, and other groups advocating for the adoption of the Racial Equity Map.

This map serves to reverse the centering of one community over another, as was evident after the 2010 census and redistricting. It does so by:

1. recognizing the large and growing Latino population in New Jersey which is up 29% in the last 10 years;
2. acknowledging the growing Asian population in New Jersey which is up 30% in the last 10 years;
3. and respecting the nearly half of all New Jersey residents who identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color.

In closing, I would also like to thank the commission for having scheduled only 9 of the 10 public hearings on this matter and having the foresight to not schedule the final meeting until the public is able to review and respond to the proposed redistricting map prior to its certification.

34x

Dear Members of the NJ Redistricting Commission:

Continuity of representation is a cornerstone of a stable democracy. Moving some CD-11 municipalities to another district will result in them being in a 3rd district since 2000. This brings about confusion and makes voters lose confidence in how responsive their representation will be — resulting in lower voter turnout and unreliable voting patterns.

Maintaining communities within a district that encompasses only a few (not multiple) counties targets issues more efficiently and doesn't split representative focus. Connected communities have more common concerns and issues. Sprawling districts with broad distances between communities have less motivated connections within constituencies.

Further, the district has a diverse population with AAPI as the fastest growing minority group, LGBTQ+ families, and a significant Hispanic population. Because this is a suburban/commuter district, minority, ethnic, immigrant and communities of interest are not always concentrated in dense central areas as with urban municipalities. These groups are often neighborhood and/or individual census-block oriented within individual smaller townships and municipalities. It's important not to split smaller compact communities/municipalities into separate districts, which dilutes the impact of their votes.

I support retaining the current configuration of CD-11 as much as possible — with additional connected communities to reflect the increases in target communities of interest for balance.

Respectfully submitted,

Emma Cortese

35x

My name is Felipe Davila and I am one of many NJ residents discontent with the proposal to push all of Montclair into the 11th Congressional District.

New Jersey Democratic leaders are well aware that they would be silencing black and brown voices with this move. People of color make up the majority of the 10th district. White democrats with corporate interests want to assure that we do not elect true progressive leaders that will work to improve the lives of impoverished people of color.

This redistricting is racist and a form of voter suppression just like democrats want to make us believe only Republicans are capable of. Please understand that Democrats use these same tactics but then beg the same people they oppressed to vote for them.

New Jersey's white political democratic elites do not work for black & brown people. They are conservatives who play for a different team. Mikie Sherril does not represent the people of color that the party wants to move into her district.

If this proposal is not scratched, I strongly urge all people of color to fight back and do not vote for her or anyone else on the corrupt Democratic ballot line during the general election.

Thank you

Felipe Davila

36x

As a resident of Wayne NJ I strongly object to any major reshuffling of NJ-11. In the last 8 years I believe I have finally been aligned within a coherent district with common interests and problems. In addition since our district is highly competitive politically, we have had the excellent responsive leadership of Mikie Sherrell (one of only two women representing NJ in Washington).

Constant major changes in district alignment result in voter confusion and I believe reduces participation. Safe political districts are the enemy of democracy.

Stephen De Haan

Wayne NJ 07470

37x

Comments on Redistricting – CD 11

A very important factor in districting is to ensure that every vote counts. While geography will naturally create some districts that have a large majority of voters in one party, other districts should be created with balance and a focus on being competitive. Competitiveness ensures all candidates have to work hard to win election, convince voters of their merits and get them to the polls. It will also result in more oversight on incumbents by the losing parties during their term. These are all signs of a healthy democracy.

After a long period of non-competitiveness CD11 has finally achieved this goal. Prior to the election of Mikie Sherrill in 2018, Republican Rodney Frelinghuysen held this seat for nine terms and before him Republican Dean Gallo held it for six terms. Sherrill won the most recent election in 2020 by 29,000 votes out of 441,000, a little over 6% of the total. This is now a competitive district and either party is able to win based on its ability to get its voters to show up at the polls. Neither has a baked in advantage. As we saw in the recent Gubernatorial election, this “get out the vote” capability was a very key factor in the overall results.

The Cook Partisan Voting Index viewed CD11 as Even in 2017 (latest report on CD11).

CD11 also follows the principle of geographic contiguity, with no long thin areas designed to connect populations that favor one party over another. Thus, there do not appear to be any gross geographical issues that need to be corrected.

Continuity for voters is also important. Changing districts and candidates is confusing and should be avoided.

Therefore, I strongly recommend that you leave CD11 as is.

Ken Dolsky

Parsippany, NJ 07054

38X

Megan Dunn

Hamilton, New Jersey 08619

Hello!

Recently I was notified that the NJ congressional Redistricting Commission is going to be redrawing the districts maps. I would just like to express my hopes that you draw a racially equitable map for New Jersey. The New Jersey Institute for Social Justice (NJISJ) has put out amazing work showing that our current maps and previous maps do not favor communities of color, especially Black communities. They do this by over representing white communities over others, and it is especially important to represent people of color since NJ's population is now over 48%. Thank you for listening and please take this into account!

39x

Testimony Submitted by Amy L. Freitag,
District

Montclair, NJ 07043, 11th Congressional

I am grateful to the Commissioner for welcoming testimony on this incredibly part of our democratic process. Your willingness to make this process visible and accessible is extremely commendable.

My name is Amy Freitag. My partner and I have lived in Montclair for over twenty years. We have three children (nearly all teenagers). Both my partner and I have worked fulltime in NYC these past two+ decades, commuting every day prior to COVID. We are now slowly returning to our usual routine of trains, buses and the PATH.

And we aren't alone: hundreds of thousands of our neighbors make the same daily trek.

When you spend an average 15 hours per week commuting to and from New York City, it gives you A LOT of time to ponder the fragility and shortcomings of our public transportation system. I think about the combined lost productivity of my fellow commuters, wasted thanks to outdated switching equipment, antiquated tracks, early 20th century infrastructure that frequently breaks down.

Working families have the added challenge of balancing this unpredictable commute with childcare. My 12-mile commute can take 22 minutes by car or 2.5 hours on a bad night on the bus or train. How do you plan childcare around that kind of variability? It's not possible.

Climate change exacerbates the problems: there are days when the tides are so high that our trains can't pull into Hoboken train station - its surreal and its only going to get worse.

In my professional life, I work with the Regional Plan Association, the premier tristate urban planning organization. Their infrastructure analysis indicates that a failure of the 110 year old tunnels connecting New Jersey to New York would cost the national economy \$16 billion over four years. Our property values could dip by \$22 billion. Federal, state and local governments would lose \$7 billion in tax revenue.

So, we have a serious infrastructure problem on our hands, one we must fix before it radically fails and puts our economy on the rocks. We need elected representatives who understand this problem and will fight for faster trains, better tunnels, smarter transportation technology. But we can't elect the right representative if our voices are diluted. Commuters from Montclair, Morristown, Madison, Chatham, Maplewood/South orange, West Orange, Glenridge and Bloomfield share the same transportation infrastructure burden, we should be afforded the opportunity to work together to elect the representatives who will support our needs. Our voting districts should reflect these shared needs and concerns.

Voting districts should also respond to geography. Montclair is a cohesive, 150+ year old town with a strong identity, commitment to diversity and a history of inclusivity. Dividing our town in half makes zero sense: Our kid's elementary school is less than a mile from our home but it sits in another congressional district. Why shouldn't our elected official be responsible for our entire town? Unified representation is not only efficient and practical, it will better position us to take on the big challenges that lie ahead. The epic flooding that impacted Montclair this past September is, sadly, evidence that climate change is going to require a strong, unified, well-coordinated response. We are one town and

40x

we are stronger together. Please consider compactness, connectedness, fairness and the benefits of community as you are making these critical mapping decisions.

41x

JOAN AND MYRON FRELING

Wayne, NJ 07470

CD-11 REDISTRICTING

Through this written testimony, we are expressing our deep concern about the plans afoot to redistrict CD11.

We are in full support of retaining the current configuration of CD11. This district is a suburban bedroom community of NYC. It is on the commuter rail line, which runs through the heart of the district.

TRANSPORTATION certainly is a core issue of this voter base, which has been advocating for improved public transportation (i.e., the Gateway Program/Project). According to C. DeGraffe, who oversees PATH for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, daily commuters are around 100,000 (August 19, 2021). Improving roads, bridges and tunnels is dinner and coffee klatsch conversation for members of this district who want and significantly need increased public transport to carry them to and from work, enabling them to spend more time with family and/or just having some mental-health down time. Time spent waiting at bus stops and train stations is counter-productive to mental health and efficiency. Moreover, improvement in bridges and tunnels may save lives as this is a project that needed to have been completed years ago for the benefit of CD11 and beyond.

POPULATION DIVERSITY is a key consideration in CD11. Within this district, the Asian and Pacific Islander (AAPI) demographic is the fastest growing minority group along with a significant number of LGBT+ families and a significant Hispanic population. Careful consideration must be paid to the fact that this is a suburban/commuter district (as noted above), immigrant and other groups aren't always concentrated in dense central areas. Rather, they can be found in neighborhoods within individual smaller areas. These groups are integral community members and their needs are components of those that make up CD11.

Currently, Mikie Sherrill represents CD11. She has been striving to make the components for the Gateway Program a reality for her constituents. She has also embraced the needs of the growing numbers of AAPI and others in the community. Moreover, she has been a champion for the reduction of the **SALT** (State and Local Tax Deduction) cap, in a district where taxes have been sky high. In some cases, (we know of) seniors have been forced to move from their homes because they were unable to afford the high taxes. Congresswoman Sherrill is keenly aware of this dilemma and has been a supporter of the reduction of SALT cap, helping the district and beyond.

42x

As far as **women** are concerned, NJ has sent 350 individuals to Congress but only seven have been women. Since 2018, we been proud to have had Mikie Sherrill representing the citizens of our district. It is general knowledge that women in elected office make a difference in the daily lives of the people they serve. They have been known to listen and take appropriate action. Critical areas of concern include *affordable* childcare so that parents can go to work with the knowledge that their children are cared for, workforce development that creates systems for a healthy workforce (including job training to address workplace shortages and creating apprenticeship opportunities to help workers access higher positions in other needed fields) while employment creates opportunities for families to thrive and many to be in a position to give back to the community in different and important ways. Of course, affordable healthcare is critical for individuals and families as well as the overall health of the community.

Congresswoman Sherrill has been a tireless advocate for the above, including holding Town Hall meetings in-person and virtually to keep her district apprised of her efforts in moving forward on the issues that are important to entire families in her district.

Women in elected office have an impact on their constituents and serve as role models for others running for elected office, engaging them along the way. While this is not about drawing maps to favor one gender, women are about 50% of the population. Young women and those of nearly every age and stage have the opportunity to witness and live in a district where their female representative is working every day to make a difference in the lives of every constituent. Town halls and phone contact in Washington and local NJ District offices leave ample opportunity for us to voice our concerns and interests. On occasions when voice message calls are left in the Congresswoman's office, we receive responses when requested. We worked hard to ensure there was a responsive leader in CD11. We strongly urge retaining our municipality in this district.

We are in full support of retaining CD11 as it stands currently. A move to another district will be discouraging for people in municipalities for whom this will be the third move since the year 2000. We are in that position and believe that this could result in confusion and concerns about the responsiveness of new representation. Such a move could lead to the worst possible case of voter frustration. In turn, that can lead to lower voter turnout. Ultimately, that can become a pattern of unreliable voting for others as well as ourselves. That is the antithesis of what we want in our democracy.

Districts that are fanned out with broad distances between communities may well have fewer motivated connections within constituencies. It is NOT sound practice to divide and separate municipalities into separate districts. The aforementioned interests of voters plus current concerns about climate, flooding and pollution, among others, should remain where voters in their district unite to make change and address the scope of the issues within their boundaries.

Congressional Districts should be determined by real issues, dinner table topics, that bind us (such as those already mentioned among others), not merely by theoretical objectives to group and achieve demographic numbers within designated areas without recognizing how

43x

communities of interest (e.g., Black, Hispanic, AAPI, LGBTQ+) are situated and represented within their own counties/municipalities. There is a cohesion within CD11. We have an open dialogue with our congresswoman in working to address issues of importance to all of us.

CD11 needs to remain as it is currently. We cannot be more emphatic. Leave CD11 as it is. It is effective.

Joan and Myron Freling
December 4, 2021

44x

Thomas Giaimo

Middletown, New Jersey 07760

Dear Members of the New Jersey Congressional Redistricting Commission,

My name is Thomas Giaimo and I am a resident of Middletown Township in Monmouth County and an elected member of the Middletown School Board. I am offering my testimony to you, to provide the New Jersey Congressional Redistricting Commission with information relevant to Middletown Township and the two Congressional Districts that represent our municipality and why I feel it is important to continue to have two Members of Congress represent our town.

The current 2020 census population of Middletown is just over 67,000 people making it the 20th most populous municipality in New Jersey and the largest municipality in Monmouth County. However, its geographic and demographic makeup make Middletown a unique place where its neighborhoods and unincorporated areas are vastly different from each other culturally and economically. Middletown has seven census designated unincorporated communities within its borders, Belford, Port Monmouth, Leonardo, Navesink, Lincroft, North Middletown, and Fairview. Other unincorporated communities, localities and place names located partially or completely within the township include Browns Dock, Chapel Hill, East Keansburg, Everett, Fort Hancock, Harmony, Headdons Corner, Hendrickson Corners, Highland Park, Highlands Beach, Highlands of Navesink, Holland, Leonardville, Locust, Locust Point, Monmouth Hills, New Monmouth, Normandie, Oak Hill, Philips Mills, Red Hill, River Plaza, Stone Church, Tiltens Corner, Town Brook, Waterwitch Park and Wilmont Park. Most residents that reside in Middletown identify with their unincorporated communities. A resident that lives in the Belford section when asked where they live, does not say Middletown, they are proudly from Belford. This phenomenon is shown clearly in the breakup of our school district with elementary schools throughout the town bearing the names of their unincorporated community.

Our town also has a large disparity of wealth among its residents largely separated by these unincorporated communities. The Navesink and Locust areas of Middletown has some of the most expensive real estate in the state made up of many residents working in the financial sectors of Wall Street, while the Bayshore sections separated by State Route 36 of Belford, Port Monmouth and Leonardo are mostly working middleclass families living at or below the County's average per capita income.

The communities that make up the southern portions of Middletown include larger suburban residential developments with sprawling lawns more closely related to its neighboring towns of Holmdel, Colts Neck, and Tinton Falls located in the 4th Congressional District. The Northern part of Middletown, specifically the Bayshore areas of Belford, Port Monmouth, and Leonardo are more densely populated with smaller homes closely situated to their neighbors more closely related to their Bayshore neighbors of Atlantic Highlands, Keansburg, and Union Beach located in the 6th Congressional District.

While all these unincorporated communities clearly share a commonality that they are all part of Middletown Township, they have very different issues that their communities face. It would be beneficial to residents to be part of a Congressional District that is more closely aligned with their needs. The areas below State Route 36 share more in common with the sprawling suburban towns of the current 4th Congressional District, while the Bayshore areas of Belford, Port Monmouth, and Leonardo are more closely aligned with the water and coastal towns of the 6th Congressional District.

45x

I hope when drawing your maps, you will take into consideration the unique make up of Middletown Township and why I feel having two members of Congress, one representing the Bayshore areas and one representing the more suburban areas of Middletown would be beneficial to our residents.

Sincerely,
Thomas Giaimo

46x

Justin Goldsman

West orange , New Jersey 07052

To whom it may concern,

Thank you members of this commission, for both your tireless commitment to democracy and for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding redistricting. I am submitting testimony both as a West Orange resident and a member of the democratic committee in town.

We hear a lot about the importance of making sure each community of interest is well represented and that their voices are reflected and valued in the final results of these maps. Representation, as well all know, is critical in a healthy and vibrant democracy. West orange, Livingston, maplewood, south orange, have large Jewish representation, and we deserve a unified congressional district. To further split is into multiple congressional districts is dangerous.

New Jersey has been, and continues to be, a place where members of the Jewish community have historically found home, and continue to do so. The Jewish community makes up over 10% of the state population, a truly strong number considering that only 2% of the US population is Jewish, and 0.2% of the global population is Jewish, making the Jewish community not just a small population, but a small population in need of committed allies and strong communities.

In my short 28 years on this earth, at no point in my life have I felt we were closer to another Holocaust. And I do not say that lightly. There are several foreign governments and militaries around the world chanting for the death of Jews. Here you see the Algerian military chanting "come aim your weapons at the Jews" https://www.instagram.com/p/CXR8s8ZaKg5m/?utm_medium=share_sheet.

In Mt. Laurel last week, a 6th grader found a swastika on a flyer saying "we are everywhere", at her temple, on Hanukkah. There are numbers of countries in Northern Africa and the Middle East where once vibrant Jewish communities totally in the hundreds of thousands are now at 0 due to ethnic cleansing, and where Jews are not safe to visit or to live. In the past few weeks, we have seen:

Nationalists in Poland burn books and chant "Death to Jews"

In Kansas, anti-vaxxers showed up to municipal hearings on vaccines wearing yellow stars saying vaccines regulations are akin to the Holocaust.

Protestors in Texas holding banners against vaccines saying "vaccinate the Jews"

A woman in Brooklyn poured gasoline alongside a Yeshiva high school in an attempt to burn down the Jewish institution.

A synagogue in Austin was set on fire.

A Jewish man on a flight was harassed and filmed while UK soccer supporters blasted him with antisemitic slurs.

At a college campus, a Jewish fraternity house was broken into and the Torah destroyed.

47x

A man attacked a pregnant Jewish woman in Brooklyn.

"Who controls the world?" "Jews do" flyers found all over Arizona State University campus.

Heil Hitler signs were seen at a San Antonio mechanic shop.

69% of Jewish students and alumni report avoiding certain campus events or places because they were Jewish

50% of Jewish students report experiencing antisemitic attacks

Nearly half of current Jewish students report antisemitism is getting worse on their campuses

40% of Jewish students at public universities report being physically threatened because they were Jewish

I say all of this not to create a hyperbolic or inflated narrative of the Jewish diaspora or the importance of support for our community. I say this to highlight the impact of redistricting can have. NJ's vibrant Jewish community deserves to be heard. Not solely for our large population and representation in the state, but for the alarming rates of hate crimes against us. Over 60% of all religious based hate crimes targeted Jews, despite only being 2% of the US population. Think about that. 2% of the population received 60% of attacks.

When drawing these maps, I urge you to think about the impact of diluting the Essex County Jewish voice. We are a close and important and well defined community of interest! We are not more important than any other community. We are not more of a priority than any other community. But we are a community, and a community constantly under threat of mass eradication, and a community that deserves a voice. For that reason, I urge this commission to not separate west orange and it's vibrant Jewish community, and instead, maintain our current representation in CD11 or ideally move the entirety of our town into CD11. Please consider all of Essex County Jews. Congresswoman Sherrill, in the face of skyrocketing antisemitism across the globe, has been a much needed ally and partner in the fight for justice for not just ours, but all communities. Please do not dilute the Jewish vote or voice and white wash us or our needs when redrawing the maps. I truly thank you for your time and your consideration.

48x

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing to express my concern about the possibility of making changes to New Jersey's 11th District, of which I am a resident.

First, I would like to convey a little personal background. I am a lifelong registered Democrat. I reside in Morristown, and for 32 years I commuted via NJ Transit to my job in Manhattan; I am now retired. I feel strongly about issues that affect my life and the lives of family members and therefore I vote for president and representation in the U.S. Congress in every election. When Rodney Frelinghuysen was in the House of Representatives, I voted for the Democratic candidate, no matter who he was (always a "he"). The results of these elections were very frustrating to me, because Frelinghuysen would win with large majorities. These results made me feel as though I were the only Democrat in my district. Then, in 2016, Donald Trump won the presidency (even though, as we know, he lost the country's popular vote). In the depths of despair, I noticed a Facebook group called NJ 11th for Change and joined immediately. I was surprised and delighted to discover that not only were there many other Democrats in my district, but they were as depressed and angry and motivated as I was to do something about what was slipping away in our country: democracy. Something HAD to change—namely, first of all, the defeat of Congressman Frelinghuysen, who was proving to be way out of the mainstream as he voted more and more frequently with Trump and other far-right Republicans. In addition, he refused to be accountable for his voting. He failed as a representative for all of us in the district. When Mikie Sherrill became a strong candidate for Congress, I supported her and worked along with NJ 11th for Change for her election. I continue to support her and am extremely pleased that she is my representative.

But besides the upheaval of those times pre-Sherrill, there are the dispassionate facts about our district that I hope you will keep in mind:

- The 11th is suburban and commuter; the NYC train lines run right through its heart; and its issues and needs are things that Rep. Sherrill is actively pursuing—Gateway (better public transportation), SALT (taxes), and high-quality public schools.
- Further on continuity of representation:
 1. Moving some CD-11 municipalities to another district will result in them being in a 3rd district since 2000. This brings about confusion and makes voters lose confidence in how responsive their representation will be — resulting in lower voter turnout and unreliable voting patterns.
 2. Maintaining communities within a district that encompasses only a few (not multiple) counties targets issues more efficiently and doesn't split representative focus. Connected communities have more common concerns and issues. Sprawling districts with broad distances between communities have less motivated connections within constituencies.
 3. It's important not to split smaller compact communities/municipalities into separate districts, which dilutes the impact of their votes.

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4. Districts should be drawn recognizing actual physical topographical boundaries (rivers, streams, watershed, forests, parks etc) and discernable development lines (roads, highways, commercial/industrial areas, airfields) that create definable delineations among municipalities and communities — this impacts representation concerning climate change and pollution issues such as flooding and brownfields.
 5. District lines should reflect common transportation needs of constituents
 6. Districts should be determined by all the factors above-- not just by theoretical objectives to group and achieve demographic numbers within a certain designated area with no recognition of how communities of interest (Black, Hispanic AAPI, LGBTQ+) are situated and represented within their own municipalities.
- It's important to me to have a woman as a representative. I don't want to lose Rep. Sherrill in Congress after working hard for her election. Many of us know what a difference women in elected office makes with respect to policy and decision making.
 - Childcare
 - Workforce development
 - Employment
 - Health care
 - Finally, WE CURRENTLY HAVE 5 COMPETITIVE DISTRICTS OUT OF 12. THIS IS THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE AMONG DEMOCRATIC STATES WITH MORE THAN 3 DISTRICTS. CREATING MORE COMPETITIVE DISTRICTS BY FURTHER PACKING ALREADY SAFE DEMOCRATIC DISTRICTS WILL ONLY COMPOUND THE HISTORICAL PARTISAN GERRYMANDERING AND REDUCE MINORITY POWER BY WASTING THEIR VOTES.

For these reasons, I support retaining the current configuration of CD-11 as much as possible — with additional connected communities to reflect the increases in target communities of interest for balance. This will maintain the strides we have made in the above areas regarding women, and minority communities.

Thank you for reading.

Sincerely,
Katherine Griggs

50x

Kevin JONES

Newark, New Jersey 07104-2222

I salute NJ League of Women Voters collaborative partnership with Social Justice advocates and community organizations statewide. I write to endorse their proposed congressional redistricting map as it prioritizes racial equity and fair representation for communities with shared interests.

The Racial Equity Congressional Redistricting Map is an apt reflection of New Jersey's increasingly diverse population.

I ask that you adopt this map, based on its extensive census analysis and input from impacted communities. This map fairly reflects that people of color now comprise a near (if not complete) majority of New Jersey's population.

Please ensure that these voices and votes are not marginalized nor underrepresented in your consideration of Congressional districts.

51x

To the Members of the Committee:

I am a resident of West Orange and a constituent in CD-11, represented by Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill. In 2017, I became increasingly concerned with the voting record of our previous representative, who disregarded the best interests of his constituents when he voted for gun lobby-backed legislation that would make NJ communities less safe. When Mike Sherrill decided to run for the seat, I enthusiastically supported and campaigned for her.

In Mikie Sherrill, CD-11 now has a representative who is responsive to the needs of our district and has earned the trust and respect of the community. She's taken considerable time and effort to get to know the district, and is one of only seven women ever to have been elected to US Congress in NJ. The issues Rep. Sherrill has been fighting for on behalf of CD-11 — and the core issues of the voter base — are better public transportation (including Gateway), restoring the SALT deduction, and high-quality public schools.

Following are some concerns regarding redrawing the lines of CD-11 (and other districts):

- By redrawing larger geographic districts merging urban and suburban communities with different needs, it creates the potential to dilute the vote of majority-minority communities and create districts with competing constituent needs.
- Moving some CD-11 municipalities to another district will result in them being in a 3rd district since 2000. This brings about confusion and makes voters lose confidence in how responsive their representation will be — resulting in lower voter turnout and unreliable voting patterns.
- Connected communities have more common concerns and issues. Sprawling districts with broad distances between communities have less motivated connections within constituencies.
- It's important not to split smaller compact communities/municipalities into separate districts, which dilutes the impact of their votes.
- Districts should be drawn recognizing actual physical topographical boundaries (rivers, streams, watershed, forests, parks etc) and discernable development lines (roads, highways, commercial/industrial areas, airfields) that create definable delineations among municipalities and communities — this impacts representation concerning climate change and pollution issues such as flooding and brownfields.
- District lines should reflect common transportation needs of constituents
- Districts should be determined by all the factors above — not just by theoretical objectives to group and achieve demographic numbers within a certain designated area without recognition of how communities of interest (Black, Hispanic, AAPI, LGBTQ) are situated and represented within their own municipalities and counties.

Partisan gerrymandering is a concern in our fractious political climate and voter confidence must be restored. I support retaining the current configuration CD-11 as much as possible, and specifically request that the committee keeps all of West Orange in CD-11. I also request that proposed redistricting maps be released to the public.

Thank you for your time.

Very sincerely,

MaryBeth Joyce-Brown

52x

Testimony to
The New Jersey Congressional Redistricting Commission
December 6, 2021

Chairman Wallace and Members of the Redistricting Commission:

My name is Susan Kaufmann. I am a lifelong Union County resident, having been raised in Union Township and educated in its public school system before moving to Westfield and then settling in Cranford.

I respectfully request that you adopt an anti-gerrymandering standard when drawing the final Congressional District map to reunite municipalities that have been divided between two districts, and to ensure that municipalities that share common concerns and needs are served by the same Representative in Washington DC.

Union Township is a prime example of the need to unify communities, as it is divided between two districts. This condition requires Union Township's mayor and committee members to work with two separate Congressional offices to secure federal assistance and counsel. This need for duplicate effort is especially troubling during emergencies, when time and resources are precious.

It makes little sense to divide Union Township between two Congressional districts when its own municipal system of government does not use a ward or district system to elect a neighborhood representative to serve on township committee. There's no discernible reason why neighbors who send their children to the same public school should be represented by different Members of Congress simply because one lives on the east side of the street and the other is on the west.

Reuniting Union on the Congressional district map would also correct an unfortunate parallel to a troubling aspect of the community's history. A portion of the township that was moved out of the 7th by a previous Commission reflects the long-abandoned redlining boundary that once limited African Americans' home-ownership options to a small part of the township. Ironically, as the redlines have rightfully faded into history and Union's neighborhoods have grown more racially and ethnically diverse, the current Congressional map shadows it. You have the opportunity to fix that.

Thank you for considering these points as you complete the new Congressional District map.

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Thank you for the opportunity to present written testimony to the Commission.

As a resident of CD11, the redistricting process is particularly important to me for a number of reasons. First and foremost, it ensures me that my vote counts. Due to redistricting, the Congressman I had voted for, Bill Pascrell, was "redistricted" in the 2010 redistricting cycle. away from Montclair where I was living at that time. To me, that is the same as having my vote invalidated. Moving some CD-11 municipalities to another district will result in them being in a 3rd district since 2000. This brings about confusion and makes voters lose confidence in how responsive their representation will be — resulting in lower voter turnout and unreliable voting patterns.

The unique characteristics of CD11 must also be considered in the current redistricting cycle.

The proximity of Northern NJ to New York has contributed the region's dense population. CD11 includes several major urban areas (Paterson, Newark, Union City, Jersey City, Orange and Irvington) resulting in a high concentration of communities within a small geographic area with minority populations as the majority of their residents. The redistricting process should not split smaller compact communities/municipalities into separate districts, which dilutes the impact of their votes.

In order to ensure effective representation of constituents, it is important to maintain communities within a district that encompasses only a few (not multiple) counties which may not have common interests. This would allow our representatives to more efficiently target issues of importance to their constituents. Connected communities have more common concerns and issues. Establishing sprawling districts with large distances between communities and disparate concerns does not allow a representative to efficiently address issues for their constituencies.

Thank you,
Claire G. Keyles
West Orange, NJ 07052

54x

Hello.

I support the current configuration of CD-11, plus additional connected communities would reflect the growing diversity of New Jersey and the common concerns of this area.

District lines should reflect both topological boundaries and transportation needs, in order to best address two key concerns, the environment and transportation/infrastructure.

Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill has done an excellent job at representing CD-11.

Regards,
Jessica Lawrence

Denville. NJ 07834

55x

Amy McCampbell

West Orange, New Jersey 07052

n/a

Good morning!

It has come to my attention that the Commission is considering removing my community, West Orange, from the 11th Congressional District, for which Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill represents.

I am writing today to express my concern and dismay over the possibility.

I have been so grateful to have Congresswoman Sherrill represent our concerns in Washington. Not only is she thoughtful on the issues, she is tenacious in her fight for what our region needs, and she is available to her constituents in a way I have never experienced in my life. Over the past few years I have personally met her several times and have been at events where she has championed a cause. This direct access has been wonderful because I truly feel that my voice is being heard. Unlike so many politicians who just do the appearances for the show, Congresswoman Sherrill does the work for her people. Being able to have such a connection to our Congress member has had the added benefit of getting my sixteen-year-old daughter engaged in what is going on in our region and in the country at large. Politics and legislation are not abstract ideas to her because she sees Congresswoman in action - and in person.

Finally, while I suppose some of the impetus in changing the district boundaries has to do with the 11th being very geographically and socially diverse, I would argue that this is a benefit, not a negative. Since 2016, I have gotten to know people in communities that are very different from my more urban, NYC-centric town. What a gift to learn about how their concerns might differ from mine. Were we to be lumped back in with other, more similar communities (Maplewood, the other Oranges), we would just be one in the same. As a country, we are divided into our silos of similarity - geographically, demographically, ideology - and the impact has been detrimental. We don't understand each other because we don't know each other... and then we don't listen to each other. Being a part of this wonderfully diverse district is a way to combat that unfortunate state that we find elsewhere. I hope we are allowed to continue to have that opportunity and stay in the 11th.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments, and especially your hard work for the people of New Jersey. It is appreciated.

- Amy McCampbell

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Good Afternoon,

My name is Molly McKaughan. Although I now live in West Orange, I was a resident of Montclair from 1982 to 2013. As a former resident, I want to voice my opposition to the current proposals to push all of Montclair into the 11th Congressional District represented by Mikie Sherrill, a white woman.

Although New Jersey is a very diverse state, that diversity is not represented in our political leaders. New Jerseyans of color deserve accurate representation. Moving additional parts of Montclair from the 10th District into the 11th district would deprive voters of color of that chance at representation by taking away their electoral power. Currently, Black and Brown voters make up the majority in the 10th and are able to act as a community of interest.

By taking parts of Montclair out of the 10th, this commission would be cracking apart working-class Black communities and attaching them to a vastly different population in Morris County.

The proposed Montclair redistricting will be unrepresentative of the issues communities of color face. Instead, it is rooted in the historically racist attitudes New Jersey politicians have held about Black voters. Simply put, this is New Jersey's political machine acting like it always does — trying to protect incumbents at the expense of communities of color and progressive organizers.

Voters of color are not political pawns. I urge the commission to keep southern Montclair in the 10th district and to remain dedicated to accurate representation for all New Jersey residents.

Molly McKaughan

57x

Mary Jo McShane

Westfield, New Jersey 07090

Commission members, Thank you for the time you have taken to listen to New Jersey residents.

I've lived in my home in CD7 for 27 years. I've raised a family here, made friends here and put down roots.

I'm not going to tell you my age, but I will tell you that I have a lot of friends who have already, or will soon be retiring and starting their next chapters. As they do, they are starting to look for 55+ communities that are near Westfield because this is where their families, friends, churches, synagogues, groceries, gyms, recreation and social lives are located. One good senior friend who downsized this past fall from her home of 30+ years in Westfield to an adult community in Scotch Plains, just over the Westfield border, finds herself in Westfield all the time - meeting friends for lunch, shopping in the downtown, and doing all the things she used to do when she lived here. She assumed that her congressional representative would be the same as before her move, but soon learned that while some part of Scotch Plains is in CD7, the part that she and her husband reside are in CD12. This seems to be a cause for confusion that is quite unnecessary. Scotch Plains should be made whole in one Congressional District. There is a huge overlap between Westfield and Scotch Plains/Fanwood, we are communities of interest.

Ten years ago this district was gerrymandered to ensure a GOP win. The votes have now shifted to change that. Don't penalize the voters of CD7 by radically shifting district boundaries. Create fair boundaries. Make adjacent towns like Scotch Plains and Union whole so they can have strong representation to serve their needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my input to the Redistricting Commission. I'm glad to live in New Jersey where this is possible.

Mary Jo McShane

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**New Jersey Redistricting Commission
Testimony on behalf of Doug O'Malley
December 10, 2021**

First off, let me thank the hard-working members of the Commission who have successfully provided an hybrid approach for in-person and virtual hearings to allow the public to comment on the Congressional redistricting process. I have tried to listen and read summaries of the testimony provided and it is clearly a good-faith effort to allow the public at large to weigh in on a process which is increasingly technocratic.

In terms of process, I will echo what many of you have heard before – the Commission should commit to making proposed maps publicly available prior to certification and hold hearings providing the public the opportunity to weigh in before a final vote on certification is held. That is undoubtably more work – and more taxing – because you will allow the public to throw peanuts from the cheap seats. But it also purely more democratic and I urge the Commission to seriously consider this.

I come to this process with the unique perspective as a leader in the New Jersey environmental community for the last 20 years, first with the New Jersey Public Interest Research Group and now with Environment New Jersey, and as an amateur student on the impacts of redistricting and the importance of maintaining communities of interest. This is the essence of the democratic experiment – and the public has responded with very clear definitions of their concerns for the maintenance or expansion of communities of interest in this redistricting process.

You have heard countless stories already on how the public defines communities of interest, but I was most struck by examples that specifically focused on the importance of environmental preservation, recovery and resilience. This organically came up throughout the process, whether it was Shore residents talking about the importance of water districts or residents of the Rahway River talking about maintaining the communities of interest that are impacted by their watershed or other nearby communities that were impacted by the flooding from Hurricane Ida.

There are numerous examples of natural communities of interest – whether it be based on a watershed, the Shore, the New Jersey Highlands and Sourlands, the Pine Barrens or the Meadowlands to only name a few. But increasingly, we see unnatural communities of interest – communities that are bound together by climate and extreme weather impacts – which are happening with increasingly frequency. Whether it be the sunny day flooding seen all across the Shore as well as within our urban cities, or urban heat islands leading to more cooling centers on the hottest summer days as well as asthma attacks, climate change is still creating more communities of interest. And finally, New Jersey's industrial legacy, which has left us with the nation's highest density and number of toxic Superfund sites, as well as the more recent legacy of PFAS forever chemicals, unfortunately binds communities together as they struggle for years and decades to be able to initiate and then complete full clean-up of pollution.

This is outside of the traditional community of interest definition – which are incredibly vital – which focus on maintaining whole communities and avoiding discrete geographic divisions of cities and towns, as well as more amorphous communities focused on a shared race, ethnicity and faith. This is based on core pro-democracy feature which serves that that dividing communities of interest will impair their ability to advocate for their shared interests. To this definition, we also should add environmental communities of interest. And the same traditional logic also serves for any community that is facing an environmental legacy of pollution or an ongoing climate change impact – they need to be adequately represented.

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It is critical to note that communities of interest do not only apply to the public that they are representing, but also to the quality of the representation that elected officials can serve. Advocating on behalf of shared interests for communities of interest requires a long-term vision and willingness and ability to have a in-depth history in some of these environmental communities of interest.

The current Congressional map clearly shows that New Jersey's map provides a solid mix of districts that vacillate between the two major political parties. And the competitive nature of our Congressional races is testament to this independent system. However, any redistricting process should not only work to provide continuity for communities of interest, but also acknowledge that the multi-year and multi-decade of environmental advocacy for communities of interest is a powerful argument to work to provide continuity of representation to ensure that residents can benefit from both short-term case work and the long-term advocacy from Congressional offices that it takes to provide federal funding and a federal focus on the environmental problems that vex us year after year.

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NJ 11 has been a cohesive district that meets the needs of its diverse population.

It is a district that is easy to make your voice heard and take action. Our representatives are responsive to population that shares common concerns like issues of mass transit, education, quality of life in community. Our park system is a good example of what works well in this district. A place where all its members benefit from beautiful trails, historic sites, community gardens. I could go on and on.

We need to stop politically motivated gerrymandering in both sides.

Christine OMarra

61x

My name is Reid Paul. I have lived in Wayne, NJ for more than 20 years and my wife and her family have been in Wayne for nearly fifty years. While I appreciated many of the benefits that came from our inclusion in the 11th congressional district, I would like to address what was lost when Wayne was separated from Paterson in the 2010 redistricting. The separation of Wayne from Paterson distances this town from its history and puts a divide and distance in our relationships.

As a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), I spend a fair amount of time in Paterson, the Passaic County seat. I currently work with an 18 year old child who lives in Paterson as he transitions into independent living. Encouraging political engagement is just one way I hope to help him make that transition to be a fully engaged citizen, but the district lines serve to emphasize the differences that are already there (age, race, economic class). For many years, Wayne and Paterson shared political engagement on the County and Congressional level but the move of Wayne into the 11th district created a new line that separates us.

That connection is historic. Communities that settled in Paterson in time moved to Wayne and the neighboring suburbs. For many years I looked up at the stained glass windows at Temple Beth Emanuel, built in Paterson and moved in the 1970s to the nearby suburbs until the Jewish congregation settled at its current home on the border between Franklin Lakes and North Haledon. All of these towns are closely connected. Similarly, the Muslim communities that have settled in Paterson are now making the same journey (see for example the Circasian Benevolent Association, which relocated from Paterson to Wayne). When communities make those moves their political voices should not be divided.

In New Jersey rivers and mountains are no longer our geographic boundaries. Instead it is the roads we travel every day. There are two main arteries in Wayne: Paterson Hamburg Turnpike and Route 80, both of which connect the city of Paterson and its suburbs. It is along these roads that communities that settled in Paterson spread out into the neighboring communities of Wayne, Totowa, Haledon, North Haledon, among others.

Finally, despite its importance, few people are involved in this redistricting process. This is unfortunate. Redistricting will have a significant impact on our political voices. That's why it is imperative that this process be open and transparent. This commission must release preliminary maps with enough time for people to review and comment on the proposed district lines. Too many states are redistricting in the dark, New Jersey should provide an example of how this process can be done ethically and correctly.

In conclusion, I have just two requests:

1. Reunite Wayne and Paterson in the same Congressional district
2. Make this process transparent

Reid Paul

Wayne, NJ 07470

62x

To the committee,

This is a brief history of the past several years of congressional representation in the 11th CD. Rodney Frelinghuysen for over 20 years was the rep in the 11th. Rodney won elections without bothering to campaign. He won so easily and by such large margins that the Democrats didn't even bother to support their own candidates. Rodney was a traditional moderate conservative who supported less taxes and less government, though neither of these ever materialized. His preferred method of meeting with his constituents was, wait for it, at a diner. With over 710,000 people in his district, you can see how this might be a problem. It was not a problem for Rodney because noblesse oblige was his mantra for public service. When NJ 11th

63x

For Change was founded soon after Trump's election, our first request to Rodney was that he schedule a town hall. He refused. In January 2017 we began having weekly Friday demonstrations at his office in Morristown. We went upstairs to his office to speak to his staff and for the first several months were not allowed in the office. The demonstrations continued every Friday and the numbers kept growing. There were at least several times when we had more than 300 people outside the building. Since Rodney never came to his own office to meet with us, that spring we sent two busloads of people to his DC office. He agreed to a short meeting with 15 or 20 of us. Sometime that spring and summer he held a few telephone town halls. That format allowed him to screen all questions

64x

ahead of time and respond to nothing but softballs. The weekly demonstrations at Morristown continued. At the end of January 2018, Rodney saw the writing on the wall and announced his retirement. The Republicans, seeing no writing anywhere, nominated a tea party guy to replace Rodney. The Democrats nominated Mikie Sherrill who won by 14 points. She has held more town halls in the past three years, both in-person and virtual due to Covid, than Rodney held in the previous 20 years. Unlike Rodney, she actually believes that it's important that reps speak with their constituents. Also unlike Rodney, she supports the Affordable Care Act, better gun control, public transportation and more. We flipped the district 3 years ago to get better representation. Please don't make it

65x

harder for our Congresswoman to retain
the seat.

Best regards, Jim Price

Montclair NJ
07043

66x

Crystal Pruitt

Somerset, New Jersey 08873

To Whom it May Concern:

I am submitting this written statement to emphasize the importance of recognizing the role that systemic racism plays in redistricting and how it can silence communities of colors. When having this conversation about redistricting, I hope the committee will be cognizant of the historical ways that these communities have been silenced, their voting power completely minimized and erased, and in that recognition seek to design a map that accurately reflects the communities across this state. My Congressional District (CD-12) is a strong example of what it means to NJ12 is a perfect example of what can happen for minority representation and minority engagement when communities of color are able to use their voting power and in turn feel heard and represented.

67x

Good afternoon,

With my apologies for having missed today's hearing regarding potential redistricting of New Jersey's 11th Congressional District, I write to offer perspective why the 11th Congressional District is stronger and better representative of New Jersey and of the people in our area in its current configuration and should continue to include neighborhoods in West Orange, including my own neighborhood in the Gregory section of town.

I live in a neighborhood of commuters who will benefit immensely from the development of the Gateway Tunnell and who benefit immensely from consistent political districting lines. Changing the 11th to exclude West Orange residents would mean that those residents (like me) who were previously in Rep Pascrell's district in 2010, then moved into Rep Frelinghuysen's district in approximately 2012, would be moved into a new district this year. That's unfair to the residents who create relationships with their Congressional representatives (as my family has) and also to the Representatives who work very hard to learn the house-by-house and block-by-block characteristics and values of their districts.

For my daughter and her middle-school-aged friends, having Representative Sherrill come to our house, meet them, take interest in them, take pictures with them, and serve as an example of who they can be in their own community has an irreplaceable impact that as a parent I want to preserve. Having strong, successful, female role models that are as accessible in my own Congressional District as Representative Sherrill is and has been since 2016 is an immense benefit for my daughter, her friends, and for our entire community. Representative Sherrill's presence in my community is important and to be moved out of her district would be a huge loss for me and my neighbors.

Thank you for the work that you do. I hope that you understand the urgency with which I view this issue. Please keep us in the 11th!

Best wishes to all of you this holiday season.
Jonathan Redwine

West Orange, NJ

68x

We in NJ 11th For Change (and I personally) support retaining the current configuration of CD-11 as much as possible, though some additions may make sense. Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill has improved the quality of representation for CD-11 by making strides for women and minority communities to serve the needs of everyone. Major changes will make it less likely that she stays in office.

- Female representation makes a difference in policy and legislation regarding childcare, education, employment, and healthcare. Having women in elected office also provides role models for other women running for office and engaging more women in the process. This is not about drawing maps that favor one gender. We are roughly 50% of the population yet we do not have 50% of the representation.
- Moving parts of CD-11 to another district will put them in a 3rd district since 2000. This will cause confusion and loss of confidence in how responsive their representation will be, resulting in lower voter turnout and unreliable voting patterns.
- Splitting smaller communities/municipalities into separate districts dilutes the impact of their votes and splits representative focus.
- Districts should be drawn recognizing actual physical topographical boundaries (rivers, streams, watershed, forests, parks etc) and discernable development lines (roads, highways, commercial/industrial areas, airfields) to keep representation focused concerning climate change and pollution issues such as flooding and brownfields.
- District lines should reflect common transportation needs of constituents

Districts should be determined by all the factors above-- not by theoretical objectives achieve demographic numbers within a designated area with no regard to how Black, Hispanic AAPI, LGBTQ+ communities are situated and represented within their own municipalities and counties.

We currently have 5 competitive districts out of 12 - the highest among democratic states with more than 3 districts. Creating more competitive districts will only compound the historical partisan gerrymandering and reduce minority power by wasting their votes.

Please keep the changes to a minimum. Thanks.

Liz Reisman
Morristown

69x

Aden Savett

New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901

Judge Wallace, Chair Fuller, Chair Steinhardt, and Commissioners,

Please accept my written testimony regarding New Jersey's Congressional Redistricting. I commend your commitment to an open transparent process in this important exercise of our Democracy. My name is Aden Savett. I am a life-long resident of New Jersey and a Junior at Rutgers University in New Brunswick. I am here today to speak on the importance of keeping New Brunswick and the larger Rutgers community within the 6th Congressional District.

Since the 1992 Congressional reapportionment, the New Brunswick and Piscataway campuses of Rutgers have been a part of the 6th Congressional District and consequently have been represented by its current member, Congressman Frank Pallone. As the Commission undertakes the important job before them, I understand there are many factors that must be taken into consideration like section 2 of the Voting Rights Act and communities of interest. I want to focus my testimony on continuity of representation and with that, the importance of seniority and leadership. As a student of political science and history it is easy to understand why seniority and leadership matter when it comes to Congress. Knowledge and experience count for a lot when it comes to bringing resources home to the district. With New Brunswick and the surrounding area being the center of higher education and healthcare for the state, we benefit greatly from having our representative sit in a position of leadership within the House of Representatives. As Chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, Congressman Pallone has brought home hundreds of millions of dollars that benefits New Brunswick and Rutgers communities. We have a member who has intimate knowledge gained over years of representation that helps our community of students, researchers, and academics seize opportunities and address the challenges we face. Continuity of representation should be considered an important principle during this process. The voters of this community for the last 30 years have time and again made their voices heard by electing their current representative. I hope that this commission will not afford our community the same opportunity again.

While drawing your maps, it's important to remember that what you do will have a real-world impact on residents and the state of New Jersey for the next decade and beyond. It would be detrimental to our community, which provides so much for the state of New Jersey, to be broken up or forced into a different district simply for an academic exercise to create more compact districts. As a student who dedicated an entire semester to registering his Rutgers community to vote, I can attest that the task is already hard enough with the university contained in one district. Splitting up our close-knit school will only make youth voter participation at our university more confusing and more challenging. This clearly stands in the way of bipartisan calls for young people to make their voices heard at the ballot box. By splitting our college community into two different districts, what kind of message does this send to young voters? I co-run a major political organization on campus, and I know students already feel disenfranchised. This move to divide our community will only worsen that feeling. Again, please consider keeping the larger Rutgers community of New Brunswick, Piscataway and Highland Park in the 6th Congressional District so we can continue to achieve great things for our state and beyond.

Fox

SALVATORE M. SCHIFANO

Wayne, NJ 07470

**TESTIMONY
in connection with
the redistricting of the State of New Jersey**

My wife, Joanne, and I have been residents in the Township of Wayne for over thirty-five years. We both have paid attention to politics, but it is only within the past five years that I have been actively involved – organizing, canvassing for candidates, and participating in activities to “get out the vote”.

As a committed activist, I have knocked on thousands of doors throughout Wayne over those five years, and I feel that I have a well-founded perspective of our population.

Some observations:

1) Wayne is changing.

Our Team has run into a number of houses with new residents. We are a mostly aging, Caucasian township with a high, median income. Coupled with the fact that it's “seller's” housing market, there is an influx of buyers. I've run into a number of new residents, several from Clifton who were attracted to our Township for various reasons, including our school system. That seems to be continuing and, in many cases, they continue to work in towns where they moved from, and retain their ties with those communities.

2) New developments and affordable housing requirements will most likely add to Wayne's population boom.

Seven new developments that will meet Wayne's affordable housing State mandates are underway. It is expected that those developments will draw more families, particularly new residents from towns who previously found Wayne to be unaffordable for them.

3) Wayne's William Paterson University (WPU) attracts students from towns with a lower median income.

Given WPU's affordability, it provides more students with an opportunity to receive a quality higher education that they might otherwise not be able to attain. The students are mostly transient, commuting from neighboring towns like Paterson and Clifton.

One thing I did note that is associated with WPU is the fact that North Haledon borders the Wayne campus and is in the 11th District. Yet Haledon, right next to it, is in the 9th. While I

71x

understand that, in some cases, splitting some communities is necessary, it seems that this one must create some confusion at the federal level and could possibly be remedied.

Of particular concern at this time are the benefits that Wayne stands to garner as a result of the passage of the Infrastructure Bill. There is not a great amount of public transportation available to Wayne residents, aside from the Wayne Metro station on Route 23 that gets people in and out of New York. That's why most residents depend on their cars to commute, and much needed improvements to roads and bridges are welcome, including the Gateway Project. All surrounding towns that depend on these roads – like Routes 46, 3, and 80 – will of course benefit, and will be in line for funding from the federal government.

While Wayne remains a predominately Caucasian township, minority groups are growing. I believe this is true with the Muslim community, and there's a strong historical connection with Paterson in that regard. Mosques are located in both Wayne and Paterson and members of those congregations remain connected. That's true of other ethnic minorities throughout Wayne as well, not only in Paterson but in other towns that are more diverse than Wayne's.

In closing, since I'm a "rookie" and never paid attention to when we last went through this, there is one thing that puzzles me. When the "smoke clears" and we're left with the drafts of the proposed maps that will have such a great impact on our State for the next ten years, why are we not able to see and comment on them? To me, that's part of the democratic process and, given the fact that democracy is on "shaky ground" these days, I would think allowing such comments would be, not only a good thing but, essential.

72X

Isaac Shiram

Oakhurst, New Jersey 07755

Hello,

I don't know if it's too late to give my input regarding the new maps for New Jersey's Congressional District. I am a current resident of the fourth congressional district (R-Chris Smith) in Ocean Township, Monmouth County. I understand that the 4th district grew in population and may need to shed some areas to accommodate the population growth. I am requesting that the towns around Trenton are shed and ceded to either the neighboring 12th district or given to the southern 3rd district, and made a much more Monmouth-focused district. In exchange CD4 should (if possible) pickup the towns of West Long Branch, Interlaken, and maybe Oceanport. CD4 should retain its Republican lean. The city of Red Bank can be given to CD6, in exchange for West Long Branch and Interlaken, for example.

I am from the Jewish community in Monmouth County. We are a conservative-leaning community (similar and connected to Lakewood). Therefore I would like Lakewood to remain in CD4, as well as Monmouth's Ocean Township and Eatontown, and add to it West Long Branch and Interlaken as mentioned above. My preference would be to add the coastal towns of Deal and Allenhurst to CD4 as well (to keep my community together as much as possible) though I DON'T want to divide Long Branch and Asbury Park (those two cities should stay together as they have similar demographics, interests, and partisan makeups) and they are better represented by Frank Pallone in CD6. Ocean Township and Eatontown should STAY with Chris Smith in CD4 and can easily add West Long Branch and Interlaken. The coastal towns of Deal and Allenhurst may get tricky to add to CD4 without dividing Asbury Park and Long Branch, as I said.

I am not an expert in this nor do I know all the laws surrounding redistricting, but I would like CD4 to remain a Republican-leaning, Monmouth-centric district that keeps my community together as best as possible. Currently, Lakewood, Ocean Township, and Eatontown are together in one district, while the rest of my community is in another (Deal, Allenhurst, Interlaken, West Long Branch, Loch Arbor, and Elberon). I know Interlaken and West Long Branch should be easiest for CD4 to pick up. Just want my community to stay as united as possible, in CD4. Please DON'T give Ocean Township or nearby towns to CD6. Keep as many of the towns around the area in CD4 as possible without dividing Long Branch or Asbury Park.

Bottom Line, my community is best served and most align with Chris Smith and the Republican-leaning CD4. Asbury Park and Long Branch should stay together in CD6 with Frank Pallone. Add as many of the nearby towns as possible to CD4 without dividing Asbury Park and Long Branch (because I'm pretty sure districts have to remain contiguous- so taking away Deal and Allenhurst from CD6 while keeping Long Branch and Asbury Park together in CD6 may be tricky).

To make up for adding West Long Branch, Interlaken, and perhaps other Monmouth towns, Mercer county in the west can be removed. Democratic-leaning Red Bank as well, might be a good trade for Republican-leaning West Long Branch and Interlaken.

I hope I don't sound repetitive. And I hope my long message wasn't confusing! I appreciate the commission's hard work in trying to get fair, bipartisan maps for New Jersey that both parties can be happy with.

Thank you very much!

73x

William Squires

West Orange, New Jersey 07052

Jodi Squires

Dear Members of the Redistricting Commission,

Thank you so much for providing me with the opportunity to provide my input on the Congressional redistricting process. It's so crucial to our state that it draws a fair map that reasonably represents the communities in which we live. I greatly appreciate the degree to which you have listened to the public and ensured the community's voices are heard.

My name is William D. Squires, and I graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy and served in the U.S. Navy for 24 years before retiring. I currently live in West Orange. It was an honor and a privilege to wear the uniform and serve our great country, and I would gladly do it all over again.

I write today about the Picatinny Arsenal, a central Army installation located in the 11th Congressional District. It's the largest employer in the district and a touchstone of the community in Northwest Jersey. In addition to the active-duty personnel located on the Arsenal, it's home to over 6,000 civilian engineers, scientists, and support personnel. It develops over 90 percent of the Army's armaments and ammunition.

Being so vital to the national defense of our Nation, Picatinny is a unique community focused on the military mission. Therefore, it's essential to have a Veteran, Such as Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill, representing Picatinny and the surrounding area. Congresswoman Sherrill deeply understands the military culture, has proudly served in the Armed Forces, and knows the people and processes.

The State of New Jersey and veterans who live in the state need a Veteran who understands the military culture and defense policy to go to bat for Picatinny in Washington to ensure the state receives all of the resources necessary to continue to provide for our nation's defense and protect the jobs at Picatinny.

Additionally, I want to bring another point to your attention. Many Veterans live in the vicinity of the Arsenal with their families, who share these same interests. As a Naval Academy graduate, many of the qualities I look for in my elected leaders echo the values I learned. When I was a midshipman at the United States Naval Academy, the terms character, honesty, and integrity were used daily. These values developed our commitment to our nation and our fellow citizens and working with people from different backgrounds to complete a joint mission.

I know that fellow Veterans will fight for the needs of veterans like myself and our families, both on veteran-specific issues like VA benefits and broader needs like education and taxes that benefit everyone.

I also know that female veterans have unique needs that are not always heard. I think a Veteran who personally understands the experience of female veterans, especially as they transition to civilian life, can specifically connect and uniquely represent this community.

Veterans like myself are looking for someone that can inspire the next generation of military and civilian leaders. A veteran in Congress serves as a critical role model and can naturally and authentically connect with our community in an invaluable way.

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Congresswoman Mike Sherrill has what it takes to move New Jersey forward. She has earned my respect in the short time she has been in office.

Thank you for your time, and I am confident you will make the right decision.

Respectfully,

Commander William D. Squires, USN (ret.) United States Naval Academy, Class of 1975

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CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING TESTIMONY

Dec 9, 2021

Thank you to the Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony for fair districts that ensure that the voices of every New Jersey matter in our democracy. My name is Charlene Walker, and I am the executive director of Faith in New Jersey, a grassroots multi-ethnic multi-faith grassroots organizing entity in New Jersey with membership in every county. We are working class people, essential workers, immigrants, clergy, justice impacted citizens, youth, elders, and people of faith that are fighting for our collective liberation from white supremacy to build the beloved community.

I have lived in New Jersey most of my life. I am dismayed that the segregated New Jersey I grew up in during my childhood has changed very little. We are still separated by race and gentrification continues to displace the global majority. I grew up in Hillside, which was forced to desegregate its schools while I attended. The Black side of town I grew up in was a community within a community, with more in common with our nearby towns of Newark, Irvington, Linden and others within our current primarily Black district 10, which has been deemed the current "majority minority" which I must note uses the term "minority" which is demeaning as there is nothing minor about us we are the "global majority". As such I lift up that Hillside must remain in the 10th district with Newark, Irvington, Roselle, Rahway, and Linden as they are closely linked by shopping habits, employment, faith fellowship, and transportation.

Faith in New Jersey's work based in communities across the state with community members has helped us identify regions of common interest based on where they worship, shop, spend their spare time, the paths they commute, and economic concerns. These communities of interest were used to inform the creation of the Congressional Racial Equity Map previously submitted. I want to highlight communities such as the area of Montclair in the historic Black district which must remain in District 10 with Newark, East Orange and others where they share similar concerns about gentrification, spend their time running errands, and grocery shopping. Pennsauken is tied closely to Camden, Maplewood to South Orange and Plainfield must remain in 12 where they have similar concerns with New Brunswick to name just a few. Please keep communities of interest together.

Whether you are Black, white, Asian or Latino, Native or newcomer every person is entitled to a democracy that works for them. One where they can wield their vote to ensure all families can thrive. Some of the testimonies during the past sessions made it is clear that certain politicians, and the greedy interest groups that fund them are pitting our communities against each other to serve a political agenda that protects incumbents rather than one that helps us to have a true democracy. A democracy where the votes of the global majority are valued as equally as their white counterparts. I urge this commission to be unapologetic about fighting a regressive democracy that welcomes gerrymandering, which silences the voices of constituents to favor one party over the other. Especially when we have yet to find one a party that consistently champions policies that benefit everyone not from the wealthy top 1%. If a party is concerned about winning an election then focus on the high priority ignored voters in those districts. I echo the call to hold hearings after you have thoughtfully drawn your maps to ensure Racial Equity. Thank you so much for all you efforts.

Charlene D. Walker | Executive Director | Faith In New Jersey

Faith in New Jersey, a multi-faith and multi-racial network of faith leaders and faith communities working together to advance a social and economic justice agenda at the local, state and federal level.

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