

Testimony to Senate State Government Committee on Congressional Redistricting
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Eric Tamulonis

I am a 24-year resident of Delaware County and have lived in Pennsylvania all my life. I write to request that this decennial redistricting ensures that Delaware County remains wholly within one congressional district, as it is now. There are several reasons for my request.

Delaware is one of Philadelphia's four "collar counties," but shouldn't be thought of as sharing the advantages and characteristics of the posher Chester, Montgomery, or Bucks counties. Delco is Pennsylvania's third smallest county geographically but it's packed with 49 municipalities. It's the state's second most densely populated county, and in fact is twice as dense as Montgomery County and five times denser than Chester County. It has a lower per capita income, higher rates of poverty, a higher percentage of minority residents, and a higher proportion of immigrants than the other collar counties. The new census shows that Delco didn't enjoy the robust growth of the other counties; rather it grew at less than half their rate.

The county has physical issues. While a good portion of the other collar counties is rural, Delco has next to no remaining functional agricultural areas. It was industrialized early and now suffers the long-term deleterious effects of poor environmental practices, especially air and water pollution. Much of the county's infrastructure was built at the turn of the last century and is still in place, but well beyond its life expectancy. The road system is extensive and needs much more attention than there is funding available. Many residents depend on public transit to get to work, school, and shopping, and transit also needs significant support. And more recently, the county's very dense development and extensive impervious surface has made our communities especially vulnerable to destructive flooding from the more frequent, larger storms that are the new norm.

There are many more measures that apply, but it's clear that the county, although we are a scrappy place, has struggles. All these issues demand the FOCUSED attention and access to federal resources that a single congressional representative can provide.

We've seen how bad representation can get when it's splintered. Gerrymandering for partisan advantage is practiced by both sides, but it reached a troubling level in Pennsylvania beginning in 2001, and worsened in 2011, in a map that was so egregious that it was overturned by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. The Delaware County congressional districts were among the most tortured. In the 2011 map, the worm-like 1st district bored into the center of Delaware County and then slithered along the county border, chaining that handful of reliably Democratic towns with the city of Philadelphia in a sweetheart gerrymander to protect an incumbent Philly career politician. The rest of the county, which at the time was believed to be more reliably Republican, was included in the infamous "Goofy Kicking Donald" 7th district, which shamelessly snaked through parts of five counties to protect a Republican incumbent who might not have been able to

retain his seat otherwise. The congressman from the 1st district didn't have to pay any attention to his Delco constituents. The congressman from the 7th district never did figure out which parts of which towns were in or out of his territory. Both congressmen did an indifferent job, at best, in serving Delco constituents. And the inexplicable splits – including those of municipalities and precincts -- meant that many Delaware Countians couldn't say who their congressman was.

Since 2018 however, the county has been wholly included in the new 5th district and has been well served through focused attention from a single representative.

Keeping Delaware County within a single congressional district also complies with the state Supreme Court 2018 guidance that required that districts be compact and contiguous, and that districts don't divide any county except where necessary to ensure equality of population. Delaware County's 2020 population of 576,830 is well within the limits of a congressional district, and there is no need or rationale for dividing the county. In particular, please do not fall back on the excuse that congressional districts need to be precisely equal in population. The courts have disagreed, and it is absurd to try to achieve an equivalence to a phantom population of April 1 2020.

Please keep Delaware County whole.

Finally, I have a request regarding your process.

- Please provide your draft congressional map as soon as possible.
- Providing several alternative maps for comparison would be even better.
- Include a report on your thinking and choices about how districts were drawn.
- Most important: provide plenty of time for the public to review and comment on the maps. Then make the changes that the public requests.

Please consider these comments to be testimony and post them on-line. Thank you.