

**Pennsylvania Senate State Government Committee
Congressional Redistricting
November 7, 2021**

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I'm a life-long resident of Pennsylvania and I've lived in McKean, Erie, Bucks, Centre, Philadelphia, and now Delaware County. I worked for 50 years both in the private sector and the federal government in large-scale land planning, and I have extensive experience in conducting public processes around decisions that affect the lives and well-being of citizens.

I mention this because my testimony concerns the mechanics of the public process that will lead to the development of new congressional maps for Pennsylvania districts.

I'm certain that the committee is aware of the intense public interest in the redistricting process – a result of the battle over the 2011 congressional map as well as the grass roots work of many good-government organizations. We hoped for a transparent redistricting process that comprised meaningful opportunities for public involvement.

The Senate State Government Committee's redistricting process has been disappointing. There have been few public meetings; no open opportunities to offer testimony in person; and a confusing method for offering on-line testimony and maps.

~~The series of public hearings the committee is holding is an encouraging first step, and I've followed with interest the testimony that citizens have taken the time to prepare and provide to you. However, hearing testimony and posting it on a website is only a first step toward your promise of a **transparent and reflective** process. Since July 12, I've been waiting to hear more about your process, and I'm concerned that the rest of it is missing and/or completely opaque.~~

It's regrettable that there's no law, standard, or even precedent in Pennsylvania for a truly transparent and public process, because this puts the committee in the difficult-to-defend position of making this up as you go along. Yet hundreds, if not thousands, of transparent public processes are conducted each year in the U.S. and the steps are well accepted and effective.

Below are simple standard steps that will produce a result that the public can feel confident of.

1. Provide a timeline for your work.

- State what the target date is for release of your initial draft map, the opening and closing dates for public review, and for submission to the governor.

2. Make the process responsive and interactive, rather than one-way.

Providing few opportunities for public comment and limiting that to simply taking and posting limited testimony means that information is only flowing in one direction, toward you, and without a visible result.

- Open hearings to all organizations that have been involved in this work.
- Make it easy for citizens to submit testimony.
- Open the promised mapping portal so that citizens can submit maps that can be viewed by committee members and the public.

- A transparent process means that the committee will clarify how the information that citizens have provided will be analyzed and used in your work.
- Tell us how the information is being documented, both qualitatively and quantitatively, so that you'll have the ability to use it in your work.
- Prepare and publish a summary set of conclusions that you've reached based on the compendium of our public testimony.

3. Clarify what criteria are being used to draw the map.

- As Senator Argyll noted in a May 26 press release, "Objective criteria are required in drawing congressional maps." Therefore, please clarify whether the committee has committed to using the criteria provided by the U.S. Constitution and the Voting Rights Act as the key criteria for developing the map, and, whether there are any additional criteria that you'll use as guidelines.
- State the priority order of importance of the criteria.
- Do this *before* the maps are drawn and presented.

4. Clarify who's involved in decision making.

- Describe how the SSGC will work with the HSGC.
- Clarify how minority members of the committee and legislature will be included in map-making.
- Commit to an inclusive process in which amendments offered by other legislators will be presented to the public in a timely way and, most importantly, receive a vote?
- Disclose the name and qualifications of any vendor or other consultant or advisor who's drawing the map.

5. Build in time for public review and comment.

To avoid a repetition of last decade's debacle, there must be a responsive dialogue between the legislature and the public. The legislature was unhappy when the state supreme court handed down a map in 2018 with no consultation. The public will be unhappy if you do the same thing this year.

- Ensure that you've built in a minimum of thirty days for the public to review and comment on your initial draft map.
- Present the draft map in a publicly accessible and user-friendly format such as Dave's Redistricting app to make commenting easy.
- Ensure that you have time to incorporate the comments you'll receive and to make needed changes.

6. Show your work.

Transparency means that the question "why" is fully answered.

- Provide a written report to accompany both the initial draft map and the final submitted map that describes for the public how and why decisions were made for each district.

I'll conclude by noting that in my experience few public processes provide outcomes that make everyone happy. Yet a well-run, fully transparent, interactive process that incorporates steps like those I've outlined does give the public confidence that this outcome is honest, reflective, and as fair as possible.

I ask that you consider my comments as testimony and post them online.