

Sen. Argall (c/o Mr. Fred Embach),

Thank you for your work to advance the process of Congressional redistricting. I write as a Pennsylvania citizen who has been activated and engaged by Fair Districts PA to ask you to

- Open the Senate State Government Committee redistricting portal so that citizens can submit maps and view them
- State principles, metrics, values and standards in advance of drawing the Congressional district map which you intend to use in creating and evaluating that map
- Consider adopting all or some of the process standards and the evaluation metrics proposed in S.B. 222 and described in detail by Fair Districts Chair Carol Kuniholm and Legislative Director Patrick Beatty at your first hearing on May 26, 2021. I especially urge you to provide a transparent process with adequate time for the public to consider the proposed Congressional district map. And I urge you to eschew explicitly any proposed map that disproportionately advantages or disadvantages any political party or incumbent.

I am aware of the exemplary civic work of Ms. Amanda Holt in the field of redistricting. If this Committee simply followed her principle of minimizing jurisdictional splits you would proceed a long way toward fairer districts.

At the same time, I favor the alternative principle advanced by Fair Districts PA of balancing priorities and explaining the trade-offs transparently. In particular, there are areas – Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and State College come to mind – where precinct lines have not kept pace with commerce, development and demographics, so that in those areas it is appropriate to give equal priority to self-perceived communities of interest and not just to antiquated jurisdictional lines, in my opinion.

In any case, please give all citizens in all jurisdictions enough time and opportunity to review your proposed Congressional map so as best to elicit the consent of the governed. I request that this communication be recorded as public testimony.

Respectfully,

Duncan MacLean
South Lebanon Township, Lebanon County

C: Sen. Chris Gebhard, PA-48
Ms. Amanda Holt
Fair Districts PA