To the NYS Independent Redistricting Commission: January 30, 2023

I am writing you regarding the Independent Redistricting Commission’s (IRC) proposed maps for the New York State Assembly, Districts 100 and 101.

I agree with my fellow City of Middletown elected officials in our disappointment in having Middletown and the Town of Wallkill torn from the 100th Assembly District and moved to District 101. It is contrary to our history and many of our our shared interests and common concerns.

Middletown was originally in Ulster County. The County lines today define our Orange County Government offices, but not our long standing political bonds with our Sullivan County neighbors. The late Jake Gunther’s great grandfather’s hunting dog still stands on point in Middletown City Hall. Jake, who lived in Forestburgh, was a great State Representative for Middletown, as is Aileen today.

The Erie Railroad brought folks to Sweet’s Hotel in Middletown, from which they took the stage to Monticello. The O&W spur ran through Sullivan County. Route 17 often backed up from Monticello and Liberty to the Red Apple Rest. My folks were good friends with the owners of the Concord and Nevelle and Brown’s Hotel. The resorts are gone but the summer visitors and shoppers are not. When they moved the Woodstock Festival from the Town of Wallkill it went to Bethel where today it is a performing arts center. We still read the Sullivan County Democrat. The Canvas covers many Sullivan County Arts events and venues. These all tie us together in important ways, and it is a deep connection that we would hate to lose.

Middletown and the Town of Wallkill are central to much of our MidHudson identity, particularly as a center of commerce and commercial activity, and as the gateway to our Sullivan County neighbors. We hope you will reconsider the maps you have proposed, and keep our communities linked with our common Assembly representative. It has worked well for many years, and even more so now with our strong health care connections. It was a Sullivan County foundation that allowed our new hospital to be built. We would truly hate to lose our common district in the name of independence.

Sincerely,

Gerald Kleiner, Alderman, Middletown,NY