

Statement of Dorothy Heyl

I am a resident of the city of Hudson in Columbia County, which is currently in the 106 Assembly District.

Under the map proposed by the Commission, Hudson, and almost all of Columbia County, would be shifted north, to the 107 district.

This change would severely disadvantage Hudson, broadly defined as the postal code 12534.

Hudson is a shining example of a post-industrial river town that has reclaimed its place as a cultural destination for visitors from New York City and beyond.

Over 150 years ago, Frederic Edwin Church came to Catskill to study with the most important landscape painter in America, Thomas Cole. Twenty years later, Church returned to the Hudson River Valley and created Olana, a living work of art, which is now the crown jewel of New York's historic sites and parks.

Olana will soon have a visitor's center, thanks in large part to advocacy by Assemblymember Didi Barrett. The throngs of people who want to immerse themselves in a 19th century landscape just south of Hudson and its Amtrak station will be better accommodated.

But Hudson is not just ground zero of the Hudson River School of art.

It is a diverse city, with all the challenges of urban centers.

One quarter of Hudson's residents are African American or mixed race.

In the existing district 106, Blacks accounted for **6.9** or almost 7% of the total population. Blacks are 6.6% of the voting age population.

If Hudson were moved into the proposed District 107, Hudson's Black population would be effectively disenfranchised.

They would be **less than 3%** of the Assembly district, although they are about 25% of Hudson's population.

In terms of voting age, Blacks are only 2.7% of the voting age population of the proposed district 107.

This violates the precept that districts should not deny or abridge minority rights.

And it matters.

The average per capita income in Hudson is \$22,353.

23% of Hudson's population lives below the poverty line.

As people from New York City discovered the small-town appeal of Hudson, with its extraordinary inventory of well-preserved 19th century buildings, the value of real estate soared.

We have an affordable housing crisis that can be only partially resolved through the efforts of city government and private developers.

Would an assembly member representing a district that **is over 85% white non-Hispanic** advocate forcefully for the resources Hudson needs?

We urge the Commission to keep Hudson in a district that more fairly represents its urban population.