

Louise's Redistricting Submission—Mid-Hudson Region

I live in Blue Mountain, a hamlet in the Town of Saugerties. Saugerties is in the northeastern corner of Ulster County, between the Hudson River and the Catskills. Our population, 19,038, is just over 10% of Ulster County's population of 181,851.

I'm writing out of deep concern about three of the Commission's draft maps, which among them divide and isolate my neighborhood from the heart of its community—the town and village of Saugerties—and disunite the people of Ulster County.

According to the Letters Congressional map, part of the Town of Saugerties including my address would be the tiny southernmost protrusion of Congressional District X. The rest of our town would be in District U along with our county seat of Kingston. District X lumps one fraction of our small Mid-Hudson town in with the cities of Albany and Troy, where our small-town rural interests will be as peripheral as our remote location. Furthermore, Ulster County—currently all in one District—is split among no fewer than 3 Congressional districts (U, W, and X), making effective advocacy for it at the Congressional level impossible.

The Names Congressional map places most of the Town and Village of Saugerties in the ALBYRNSSLR district along with Kingston. The small portion where I live is allocated to the JEFFRSNULSTR district. Stretching to Lake Ontario, this district utterly lacks compactness (metric 23.8). Nothing unites the minute excised portion of Saugerties with rest of that enormous district. Ulster County is again split among 3 districts, DCHSWSTCHSR being the third. Last week, I walked a disabled neighbor to vote at our poll site, past which I often jog or walk. Under Names redistricting, my neighbor and our poll site would be in one Congressional district, and I in another.

The Letters Senate map splits Saugerties, in the current SD46, between two districts. Again my portion of our town is excised from the rest, to SD51. My current State Senator has an office in Kingston, under 30 minutes and less than 20 miles away. SD51's senator is in Oneonta, more than 90 minutes and 70 miles away.

Saugerties operates as a unified community. Its residents are a solid presence in Ulster County. (For example, pharmacist Neal Smoller—a Saugerties resident—and a phalanx of local volunteers have bolstered the County health department's Covid-19 vaccination efforts on a large scale, and have even traveled far beyond county borders to vaccinate remote communities.) I'm asking that Saugerties and Ulster County be represented by a single seat in Congress, in the Senate, and in the Assembly. Even more urgently, I ask for remedy to the plans that split the robust and united community and Town of Saugerties. Thank you for your attention and for your efforts in creating these drafts.