

To: NY State Independent Redistricting Commission

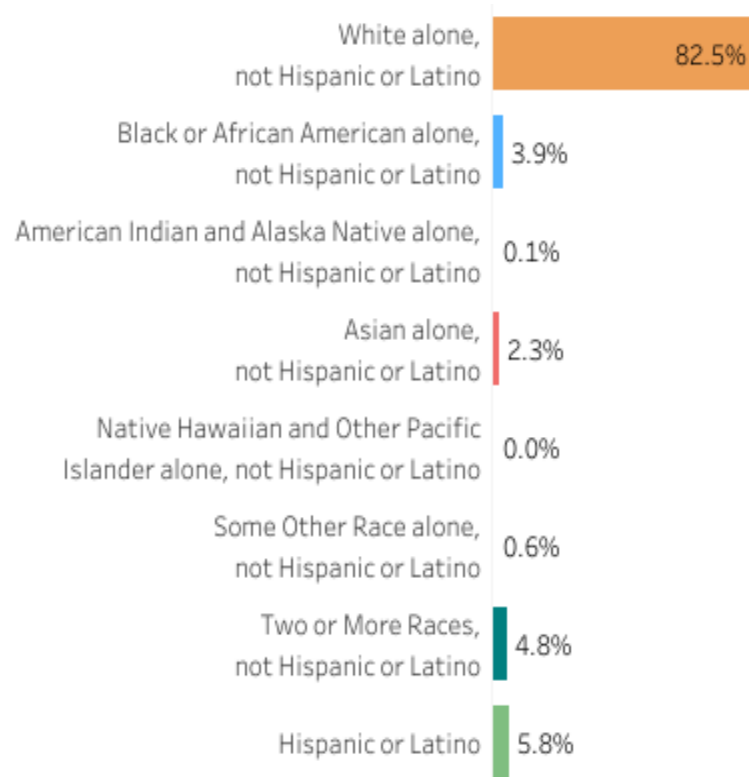
From: Maureen Wilson, Town of Austerlitz Council

I would like to present my view on Redistricting as a Columbia County NY resident and Austerlitz Town Council member. I thank you in advance for your work.

Columbia County is a place of natural beauty. It has traditionally been an agricultural economy with dairy farms, fruit and other produce. As agriculture has changed, some farms especially dairy have disappeared. But we are so fortunate to have a small wealth of farms and businesses that supply New York City markets with fresh produce, milk, cheese, and breads.

Though I live in Columbia County at present my NY Assembly District is called (AD107) Rensselaer bordering Massachusetts and it seems we are often forgotten by our NY Assembly. Way east, small and forgotten. An example of this is the state of some of our heavily traveled NY State roads. Until recently the stretch of NY 22 from New Lebanon south from NY 20 was so bad that you risked damage to your car if you traveled the speed limit. And yet we host a 2 large truck stops in Canaan which bring in a significant amount of tax revenue on fuel. It was finally repaved after much public input.

Our diversity (or lack of it) is striking as well. The following table is taken from the 2020 census:



One reason for this is the lack of viable employment in our county, as well as the high cost of housing. Whatever the reason it is my belief that diversity enriches our lives here and helps us to grow and thrive. The other demographic is the age of our population. The largest segment is 65 and older, at 24%. This is not helpful in providing a workforce for businesses, most of them being small businesses.

In summary, I believe the best course of action for our Districts is to keep our County in one piece and not divide it. The current map for NY Senate 43 is constructed along this concept.