

MaryJane Shimsky**Majority Leader****Legislator, 12th District**

Co-Chair, Committee on Rules

**Committee Assignments:**
Appointments
Environment & Health
Law & Major Contracts
Legislation
Parks & Recreation
Public Safety
Public Works & Transportation
Social Services**TESTIMONY OF WESTCHESTER COUNTY LEGISLATOR MARYJANE SHIMSKY
BEFORE THE NEW YORK STATE INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION**

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2021

PACE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW, WHITE PLAINS, NY

Good afternoon, and thank you for convening this public hearing in Westchester County.

My name is MaryJane Shimsky. Since February of 2011, I have been the Westchester County Legislator for the 12th Legislative District, which is comprised of the southern two thirds of the Town of Greenburgh. During my tenure on the Board of Legislators, I have specialized in infrastructure issues. I have spent six years chairing the Board committees with primary responsibility for infrastructure-related issues; I have chaired the Saw Mill River Stormwater Advisory Board (SWAB) for twelve years; I helped establish the Bronx River Advisory Board (BRAB), and have been Board Liaison to the County Stormwater Advisory Board (C-SWAB).

My comments today concern Congressional redistricting in Westchester County. Based on my experience with flooding and other infrastructure issues, I ask that the Congressional districts be redrawn, to include the Hudson Rivertowns in Westchester and Rockland Counties in one district, the 17th.

It is vital to recognize that Westchester County is oriented from north to south, and not east to west. Our physical environment—our river valleys and the ridges surrounding them—run north-south. As a result, most of our infrastructure is oriented north-south. Most of our major roads, including State Routes 9 and 9A, our parkways (which track our rivers) and the New York State Thruway—principally run north-south. Befitting our County's historical, social and economic relationship with New York City, our commuter railroads and most of our bus routes run north-south. The largest sewer district in the County, on the Hudson River side of Westchester, is also oriented north-south. The single largest piece of infrastructure in our area—the Mario Cuomo Bridge—connects Westchester with Rockland County.

The proper functioning of Westchester County's infrastructure—infrastructure that we rely on the federal government to help us maintain and improve, and which must comply with environmental, traffic safety and other mandates—requires us to have a strong relationship with the Congressmembers and Congressional offices in whose districts the installations are located. Avoiding the arbitrary dividing of those installations, dividing them among districts in logical and predictable ways, will help all of us serve our constituents better.

These issues will be even more important as climate change exacerbates flooding and puts a greater premium on storm resiliency. The Rivertowns will have to contend with the Hudson River, which presents issues different from those caused by Long Island Sound in the Sound Shore communities. It makes much more sense to have one member of Congress deal with each, rather than having two members of Congress deal with both.

So when you consider what constitutes communities of interest for the purposes of Congressional redistricting, add to the other critical factors the physical settings of these communities and how their infrastructure was built within those settings. These factors suggest that the Hudson River communities have more in common with each other, and the river communities of Rockland County, than with the Sound Shore. And our Congressional districts should be drawn to reflect that.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Jane Shimsky". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Majority Leader MaryJane Shimsky
Legislator, 12th District