

Good evening Commissioners. My name is Rev. Dr. Victor Collier and I am the Pastor of Mount Olivet Baptist Church located in Saratoga Springs. I present this testimony as a member of The Albany African American Clergy United For Empowerment and One Hundred Black Men of New York's Capital Region, as well as on behalf of the Capital Region Fellowship Coalition and the Capital Area Urban League. We are community-based organizations and advocates of marginalized, underrepresented Black and Brown communities throughout the Capital Region. Together, we continue to encourage the public to provide input into how our voting districts are redrawn.

As you know, one person, one vote is a guiding principle of Redistricting. One person, one vote is upheld when Redistricting is done based on population. It is accomplished when equality is embedded in voting and representation. It is also a central tenet of this testimony.

During several community Redistricting workshops, we asked, "How might our communities be different if equality became more embedded in voting and representation?" We then imagined what would happen to Albany's Second Ward, or South End Neighborhood, if all voters had nearly equal voting power?"

Would we see environmental justice and resiliency? Access to quality health care right in the neighborhood? Would we see more pathways to home ownership? Would there be more community centers and better schools? Would the South End change from its current state as a food desert ushering in farmers' markets? Would there be places to work?

I used Albany's South End Neighborhood to illustrate how important it is for all of us to get Redistricting right and ensure one person, one vote, but the South End could be any Capital Region neighborhood, like Hamilton Hill in Schenectady, Middleburgh in Troy, and others.

We understand the one person, one vote and Voting Rights Act as federal Redistricting requirements. We also understand that the New York State Constitution requires voting districts be drawn to preserve communities of interest among other criteria like being compact and being contiguous.

The Capital Region is a community with a lot in common and easily defined as a community of interest. Economic development, public transportation,

healthcare, employment, and arts and culture are firmly intertwined and connected throughout Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Schenectady Counties. We benefit from having a single Congressional Representative. Moreover, Columbia, Greene, and Montgomery Counties are often overlooked as Capital Region Counties. These counties are significant economic and cultural centers of our region and are firmly connected to our community of interest.

As community-based organizations and advocates of marginalized, underrepresented Black and Brown communities throughout this region, we will continue to provide and encourage more public input and encourage you to not only listen, but let what we say inform how you draw our voting districts to ensure one person, one vote. Thank you.