I live in northern Westchester and had hoped to attend the session earlier this week in White Plains, but could not due to a last-minute work obligation. I want to voice my support for the “Letters” set of maps I have seen because at a high level they better represent a logical grouping of communities both here in Westchester and across the state.

Why am I speaking up? Two reasons. 1 – I have lived in several different parts of the state so believe that my varied perspective matters. 2 – I’m an active grassroots volunteer in cancer patient advocacy so I work with a network of volunteers across the state, organized by congressional district, so your decisions impact the daily efforts of me and my fellow volunteers.

I understand how hard your job is. You need to balance populations and urban/rural areas and create reasonably compact districts, geographically, where we voters know we can be heard. Anybody who has lived at the edge of an election district (as I have) knows it’s hard and can’t be perfect. But it has to make sense and the Names map simply doesn’t make sense.

To comment specifically on congressional district NY-17 where I live:

* The Letters map is reasonably similar to current and recent district lines which makes it easy to understand for the public. Although Westchester and Rockland counties have many significant differences, their commuting proximity to New York City creates significant similarities that drive behavior and common interests. When I first moved to the area I really noticed the “bedroom community” personality of the area as very different from my previous homes in Queens, the Finger Lakes or the Adirondacks.
* The Names map extends my district up the Hudson Valley and across to beyond New Paltz, encompassing a lot of rural areas and communities beyond the NYC bedroom community area. On this map my district is adjacent to a district that extends up to Jefferson County, so my grassroots volunteer partner in WATERTOWN would become my neighbor for our cancer advocacy. That simply doesn’t make sense.

I have lived in Herkimer County and Tompkins County, and have family still living in those counties as well as in Onondaga County so I understand upstate and central NY community patterns and concerns. The Jefferson-Ulster configuration of NY-19 on the Names map is particularly problematic in its sprawling nature and will negatively impact my friends and family.

I have voted in every election, including primaries, since I turned 18 and believe that the work you are doing is vital to our country, state and local communities. Please don’t make it harder for me and my fellow citizens to organize, participate, and make our voices heard.

Sincerely

Marcia Earle

86 Edgewood Road

Ossining, NY 10562