

25 January 2023

To the respected Independent Redistricting Commission:

Good evening, my name is Brian A. Marsh. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you regarding the Redistricting Commission's proposed plan to change my district's geographic area.

I grew up in the Sage Hill neighborhood in Menands, in a home my mother has lived in since 1978. After college I spent 20 years as a resident of Boston. I returned home to the Village of Menands, in the Town of Colonie in Albany County. I purchased a home and have been an active community resident since 2013.

I respectfully object to the redistricting plan as proposed.

As I understand it, the proposed plan would change our district to include areas north – into Halfmoon and Waterford (Saratoga County). I strongly object to this change.

The current district reflects a balanced population of urban and suburban residents. Urban residents have vastly different needs across the spectrum of government than rural residents. Halfmoon and Waterford cross into Saratoga County and these residents have FAR fewer common interests and needs as residents in Albany and Schenectady.

People CHOOSE where they live and sometimes that choice MAY involve the political leanings of the area. Whether it is deliberate or not, it is a fact. City residents, more often than not, lean Democratic. It's a reality that exists in nearly EVERY major city throughout our country, the Capital Region is no different.

The current district that includes Albany, Menands, Colonie, Niskayuna and parts of Schenectady are very diverse, except that they tend to vote Democrat. That is a result of residents' choice to live in a more urban/suburban community with inherent liberal leanings. The same could be said for the North Country – where leanings are consistently more dramatically Conservative voting Republican. There is no doubt that across the US rural communities tend to vote consistently Republican.

That choice – of where people live and how their community reflects their priorities and values, is now being deemed some sort of electoral unfairness by this commission. It is DANGEROUS, WRONG and cannot be allowed. The will of the people of New York State (particularly this area under discussion) to pick their own representatives may be drastically altered if this redistricting goes into effect.

This commission would be taking that power away from me and every other New Yorker, especially those of my district. I ask you to reconsider your work on the Albany / Menands district and keep the Menands/Colonie community with like communities, such as Niskayuna, Guilderland, and Schenectady

Respectfully,

Brian Marsh

Resident and Village Trustee, Village of Menands