I am writing to propose the enclosed congressional district map for the Upstate NY region. This is not my own drawing, but actually the current map that designates the catchment areas for the NY State Regional Perinatal/Neonatal Program. For those unfamiliar, over 40 years ago, NY state was divided into catchment areas where any woman with a high risk pregnancy, or a newborn with severe prematurity or other disease within that region would be referred to one central, tertiary medical center. For the Syracuse region, this center is located at Crouse Hospital (inpatient) and University Hospital (outpatient) and overseen by SUNY Upstate Medical University and Crouse Hospital. Syracuse’s program is excellent and the regionalization concept has worked well since its inception.

Why use this map, or a variation of it to comply with population requirements for each? Three reasons that come to my mind immediately are practicality, “eds and meds”, and tourism.

Having districts that do not split counties allows the US Representative to have a clearer picture of the needs of the district’s county’s constituents and an ability to serve their needs. Otherwise, one representative is fighting for legislation for a town in County X while another representative is fighting against the mae legislation for a town 10 miles away in the same County X. Is this latter example practical? Sensible?

The regions in the enclosed map already unite the hospitals within that region in providing the best care for high risk pregnant women and infants. These hospitals already interact with each other, are familiar with each other, and refer patients to each other. The hospitals are often the major employers in their respective home towns. There is no question that their problems and needs are important to our government representatives. This map would provide the opportunity for hospitals and their associated health care centers to provide the region’s US Representative with a clearer picture of their concerns and needs and, to some degree, simplify the Representative’s approach to legislation that would affect the region’s health care. As far as “eds” is concerned, the colleges in the greater Syracuse region likewise are more familiar with each other and have common needs that may be different than those of other regions.

Each of these districts has a major, clearly defined tourist attractive body of water. The Buffalo region has two Great Lakes, Rochester and Syracuse have a Great Lake, and the Albany region has the Hudson River. Of course, each has a large number of smaller lakes and rivers, waterfalls, parks, etc. that distinguish the Upstate region from so many other parts of the country.

Compared to our present US representatives in their current districts, a US representative from one of these proposed districts would have a much clearer understanding of the needs of the district’s local governments, its health care facilities and probably its centers of higher education, as well as its potential for further improvement of its tourist attractions and beautiful environment. Finally, transportation for the US Representative around the district would like be less helter-skelter! In my opinion, devising regional maps similar to the current ones clearly puts politics ahead of people.

Sincerely,

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