My name is Carol Nolan, I am a resident of New Paltz in the Mid-Hudson Valley region of New York and I thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony. I represent Ulster Activists (U-Act), a group of concerned activists working to protect human rights and the environment. We are based in New Paltz and draw our membership primarily from the eastern portion of Ulster County.

We in Ulster County have some particular concerns about our congressional, senate and assembly districts. Our overriding concern is that the districts we will live in for the next ten years must be a fair compromise. This should be accomplished with maximum influence exerted by the Independent Redistricting Commission and minimal legislative influence. The IRC was created as an independent bi-partisan group while the legislature has traditionally manipulated district lines on a partisan basis.

**Congressional Districts**

Next, we will present examples of what we see as plusses and minuses for Ulster County in each of Names, Letters and Current maps for Congressional districts. From these examples it is clear that no single map satisfies all of our concerns for Ulster County. Further, if we could draw such a district, it would not take the concerns of neighboring counties into account.

* Current Map (all of Ulster County is centrally located in Congressional District 19).

Positive Example: The overwhelming positive to the current map is that it keeps Ulster County whole and central to the district.

Negative Example: Although CD19 is primarily a rural, agricultural district, it does contain the more urban population centers in eastern Ulster; these communities have strong shopping, employment and healthcare ties with the neighboring Dutchess County city of Poughkeepsie and would benefit from having Poughkeepsie included in the district. Note that CD19 already includes much of Dutchess County.

* Letters Map (Ulster County is divided into U, W and X).

Positive Example: The Ulster County city of Kingston and the more populated portion of the town of New Paltz both benefit from being in the same district with Poughkeepsie.

Negative Example: The town of New Paltz is split into districts U and W along the Wallkill River, which runs through the middle of the town.

* Names Map (Ulster County is divided into ALBNYRNSLR, DCHSWSTCHSR and JEFFRSNULSTR).

Positive Example: The town of New Paltz benefits from being in the same district as Poughkeepsie, although this advantage is offset by its being separated from Kingston.

Negative Example: The town of Woodstock, NY is a cultural and tourist center of our county. Including it in JEFFRSNULSTR cuts it off from most of the rest of the county, placing it at the very edge of a large geographic district that stretches as far north as Watertown and has little in common with Woodstock.

**State Senate and Assembly Districts**

We also studied the State Senate and Assembly maps and found similar plusses and minuses.

* State Senate: Currently Ulster County towns are included in each of State Senate Districts 39, 42, 46 and 51. In each case the Ulster County towns are on the very edge of the district. In the Letters draft, Ulster County’s main population centers are divided between BC and BD with a small portion of the county falling in AZ. In the Names Draft, all of Ulster County is included in USTRGRNCLMB.
* Assembly: Currently largest part of Ulster County is included in Assembly District 103. Districts 101, 102 and 104 also include parts of Ulster County. The Letters draft has strangely shaped districts with Ulster County distributed among DB, CZ, DA and CW. In the Names draft, the southern population centers are included in SULULSTER and the northern ones in ULSTERGREENE.

**Conclusion**

In the meetings leading up to the 9/15/2021 meeting when the first draft maps were released, all members of the IRC commission expressed a commitment to work together on a non-partisan basis to draw re-districting maps. These first map drafts, Names and Letters, do not reflect this team effort. We are requesting the members of the IRC to work together to create and vote on **ONE MAP EACH FOR CONGRESS, STATE SENATE AND ASSEMBLY**. Incorporate as many map suggestions (for example, keeping Ulster whole in the US congress) as possible, and submit your best compromise to the legislature for approval. We do not want to return to the old way of having the state legislature draw the maps.