

To: New York State Redistricting Commission

From; Lanny E. Walter, Esq., Saugerties, New York

Subject: Opposition to Congressional and State Senate redistricting that divides our Town

Dated: November 8, 2021

Good afternoon. My name is Lanny Walter from Saugerties, NY; I am a practicing attorney for over 50 years. My family moved from Rockville Center on Long Island to Saugerties in 1961 when they bought a small hotel which they ran for 30 years. Saugerties became the center of our universe.

The Congressional proposals and the Senate proposals contemplate turning Saugerties in to a community with a split representative personality. For the past 60 years during our residency in Saugerties, the residents have had one Assembly Member, one State Senator and one Congressional Representative. We have not been split in half and do not favor such treatment in 2021. The sharing of a single representative helps build community. We have a sense of what it is to be cut off from our neighbors. Currently the Town of Saugerties is the only municipality in Ulster County in the 102nd Assembly District. Our neighbors in the County, to which we are closely bound, are in Assembly District 103. At least our whole Town has the distinction of being in 102.

In 1989 the Ulster County government wanted to build a county landfill and incinerator in the middle of Saugerties on the Winston Farm, an 800 acre site next to Exit 20 of the Thruway. The community rose up as one in opposition; a non-partisan coalition came together to push back against the proposal. I was the Chair of the Winston Farm Alliance and from that vantage point came to appreciate the cohesion that exists in Saugerties. We succeeded in persuading the County to transport our trash to a mega landfill in Western New York, as a less expensive alternative.


In the 90's a shopping plaza developer joined with a Native American tribe with no roots in the Hudson Valley to install a large scale gaming casino on

the same Winston Farm. Again the community raised its voice and resources to oppose such a proposal which would radically change the nature of our community. As Chair of No Saugerties Casino Inc, I engaged with diverse members of our community to defeat that undertaking. The opposition to both projects was mounted by a political cross -section of our community in conjunction with our Town Government.

Our battles have bound us together and it would be a crucial blow to tear us apart. Saugerties has a mixture of families with long duration in the Town that make the Walter family with roots only 60 years deep seem like new kids on the block. In terms of residency we are totally integrated. Over the years people have moved in and older residents departed. We presently have more newcomers than we use to. We still live right next door to each other. We are integrated on many Town and Village Committees. We worked together to build a beautiful new library and each year we come together to make the Garlic Festival happen. Our kids go to school in the Saugerties Central School District and play sports together. We are one community with cohesion. A split in government representation will weaken our bonds. We all have worked to maintain the identity and integrity of our community and wish to keep it that way.

Cutting us in half so that literally my neighbor across the road on Van Vlierden Road will have a different Congressional Representative does nothing to help keep us a coherent community. The redistricting process favors keeping cities and towns in one district. The Letters Senate plan and both CD plans violate that principal. We are the largest Town in Ulster County, only slightly smaller than Kingston. I ask you to find a formula to keep us intact.. We have been one Town since 1812 and would like to remain so.

Thank you for serious consideration of our plea.

  
Lanny E. Walter  
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