

8 Second St.

Kerhonkson, NY 12446

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The Editor

Shawangunk Journal

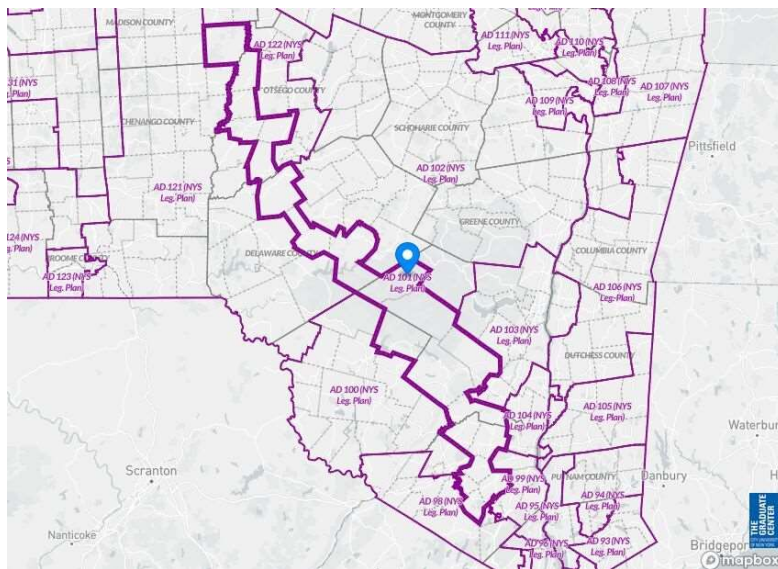
Ellenville, NY

Subject: Assembly District 101- A gerrymandered and egregiously drawn district

Dear Editor,

I am Matthew Mackey, Democratic and Working Families Candidate for NYS Assembly District 101. I am writing to you today to inform your readers of the unconstitutional and illegal nature of our district lines, how this impacts our communities, and the hope of future change and effective representation.

For a decade, Assembly District 101 has been heavily impacted by gerrymandering. As Chad McEvoy, former candidate for AD 101 puts it in a New York Times Article: "The 101st was drawn in 2012, so the story goes, by Republicans to punish one of their own caucus members yet remain a safe Republican seat. In other words, its design is actively antidemocratic." One only needs to look at the map of the district to see the gerrymandered design.



Spanning 131 miles from top to bottom, and around 30 miles at its widest points, in portions but never the majority of 6 Counties (Orange, Ulster, Sullivan, Delaware, Otsego, and Madison) and within 4 Congressional Districts, AD 101 is effectively the most gerrymandered district in New York State. On the campaign trail, when I talk about the District, people from both sides of the aisle are appalled at how the district is drawn, with the knowledge that the issues, needs, and even cultures of the upper and lower portions of the district are vastly different from each other. There isn't even a main throughfare that connects the upper and lower portions of the district, let alone towns in some cases, leaving this district to be highly challenging to represent regardless of an Assemblymember's party affiliation.

These challenges make it extraordinarily difficult to work with local, state, and congressional representatives to get the vital resources our communities need to survive and thrive, leaving the residents and families of our district to suffer without an effective voice in Albany.

Whether intentional or not, the NYS Legislature failed to recognize an even more egregious error while drawing the district, the racist and now illegal nature of our district lines. The entirety of AD 101 has a registered voter population of 90,617, 12,721 (14%) of which are registered voters of color. Of that 12,721 Registered voters of color, 12,477 (98%) live in just the Orange and Ulster portions of the District. The remaining 244 registered voters of color (2%) live in Sullivan, Delaware, Otsego, and Madison portions. What makes this particularly horrifying is that the upper portion of the district's white registered voter population is 14,058, a number which exceeds the entirety of communities of color in the lower district, effectively canceling their votes and silencing their voices. The NYS Legislature should be ashamed of themselves for allowing such an oversight and in fact just passed a law this year, the New York John Lewis Voting Rights Act that makes this district illegal.

This year, the Independent Redistricting Commission failed to deliver newly drawn maps that could be agreed upon by members of both parties. In turn the NYS Legislature created Congressional, Senate and Assembly maps which failed to meet NYS Constitutionality as determined by the NYS Court of Appeals. While the Congressional and Senate maps were redrawn, the Assembly maps were left untouched, leaving the possibility for an independent special master to redraw our district in the next election cycle.

There is a lot of work to be done that cannot wait until someone is elected to represent AD 101 to remedy this issue, which is why I have created a petition for residents to sign that lays out the case to the divide the district and provide the representation that AD 101 residents deserve. I do this with the knowledge that I may be written out of the district and unable to seek office in the area and with the residents I love because what matters more to me than any political career is that this District's voice be restored in Albany and communities of color have the justice, equality, and representation that has been long overdue to them.

The petition will be given to the Independent Special Master when drawing the new Assembly maps, in order to place a spotlight on this issue and can be found at <https://bit.ly/DivideAD101>. I encourage all your readers who reside in the district to sign and to share. Together, Change is Possible.

In Solidarity and Sincerity,

Matthew Mackey, MSW

Candidate for NYS Assembly District 101