**CHRISTINE M. FIX**

329 Wheaton Rd., Syracuse, NY 13203

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Independent Redistricting Commission

250 Broadway, 22nd Floor

New York, NY 10007

Dear Commissioners,

I am very troubled by the first draft of the Independent Redistricting Commission’s (IRC’s) proposed plan to reconfigure Assembly District boundaries in the City of Syracuse.

For decades, the City of Syracuse has been represented by two members in the State Assembly. The IRC’s proposal effectively cuts the representation of the City in half. Like many rust belt cities, Syracuse faces a litany of challenges due to rapid suburban growth that began in the era immediately following World War II, as well as the decline of manufacturing jobs. Syracuse’s population has declined by about 33% since 1950. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, Syracuse has a child poverty rate of 48.4%, the highest figure in the nation among cities with at least 100,000 people. Overall, about 30% of City residents live below the poverty line.

Having two Assembly members helps Syracuse to obtain the resources it desperately needs to confront the many challenges it faces in neighborhoods across the City. These challenges include widespread poverty, housing stability, workforce participation, transportation and internet access. I believe that two voices are louder than one, and if nearly the entire City is drawn into one Assembly District, it will have a negative impact on the neighborhoods that require significant State investments to improve the qualify of life for residents of these communities. We cannot afford to make this mistake.

Also, I would like to point out that the draft map removes the City neighborhood of Eastwood from the proposed City-centric 129th District, and places it in the new 128th District with wealthier suburbs of Cicero, Manlius, Dewitt, and Onondaga. From a socioeconomic perspective, Eastwood has very little in common with these suburban communities. It is more diverse, younger, has a much higher percentage of rental housing and a lower median income than the rest of the proposed district. How would Eastwood’s constituent voices be heard amongst the influence of Syracuse’s two wealthiest suburbs, Dewitt and Manlius? I believe their voices would be drowned out and the Eastwood community would be marginalized. It is integral that Eastwood remains in an Assembly District with other parts of the City.

Thank you for allowing me to share my comments on this matter. I hope that the IRC realizes that it has made a significant error and divided the City of Syracuse in an unprecedented way. The IRC must reconfigure the City of Syracuse so that it can continue to be split between two Assembly Districts and re-group the Eastwood neighborhood with other City neighborhoods. We desperately need the resources that two members of the Assembly would be able to continue to bring home to our City. Syracuse’s future depends on it.

Sincerely,

Christine M. Fix

Syracuse City Resident

Chair 4th Ward Democratic Committee representing Northside including Eastwood