January 25, 2023

Page Hall

135 Western Ave.

Albany, NY

New York State Independent Redistricting Committee

Good Afternoon Committee Members,

My name is Martha Harausz, from Guilderland, NY. I come to speak as a concerned citizen, and as a member of the Bethlehem Morning Voice Huddle. A grassroots group that has been meeting weekly since January of 2017. Also, representing Bethlehem Indivisible.

Today I want to speak specifically about NYIRC’s drawing of the lines for the 102nd Assembly District and how it affect the towns of Guilderland and Bethlehem.

The proposed NYRIC 102 does not abridge minorities rights, it has equal numbers, and it is contiguous. But it falls far short when considering maintaining communities of interest and geographic areas of common needs.

Guilderland and Bethlehem, each with populations of around 35,000, are suburban communities with vastly different needs and strengths from the towns they has been lumped with. Towns and villages with populations between 17 hundred residents and 6,086 residents - none larger.

 Stamford & Cobleskill both in the Catskill Mountains have primarily rural needs.

 West and north in the district along the Mohawk River, Canajoharie, St. Johnsville and Fort Plain, are all small towns in areas struggling with far different issues than ours.

 Finally, north to the edge of the district and the Adirondack Park, Dolgeville has concerns unique to its geographic area.

To me it appears that Guilderland and Bethlehem’s placement in the proposed NYIRC 102 is for the purpose of fulfilling numbers and has little to do with the our community’s needs and strengths. I calculate that the populations of Guilderland and the part of Bethlehem that is included in the 102 account for about 1/3 of the total district population. So a third of population, and the only suburban area, being pasted onto the far edge of a large rural district solely to obtain the required population goal.

Over the decades those who represent us, or seek to represent us, have come to know our strengths and needs and are willing but most importantly, prepared to work with us, and our local governments to improve or maintain situations. To suddenly be flung into a district whose representative is mostly steeped in the issues of rural communities does not give us adequate representation. Nor probably the chance to elect a more suitable Assemblyperson.

In conclusion, we would prefer lines more closely aligned with the Assembly District we were in from 2012 to 2022. I will be submitting a copy of that map when I post this on your website.

Thank you.

Martha Harausz