

Dear Independent Redistricting Commission,

My name is Anne De Nigris, and I am a long time resident of New Rochelle and an educator in Mount Vernon. I am here today to share my public comment with you to assist your process in determining how Westchester's two Congressional Districts (CD16 and CD17) might be redrawn to both preserve the core communities of interest while solving the real issue of population loss across the state, while accounting specifically for the bottleneck issue that is presented with CD16. Knowing that you all are determining how to redraw CD16 to ensure that the population growth in New York City is accounted for by pushing CD16 north, I imagine that you have a few solutions before you. You've also heard from many people pushing to ensure that CD16 remains as whole as possible. This must be reconciled with the fact that a move north is inevitable. However, I want to ensure that the process and mathematical question doesn't result in a gerrymandered district.

In listening to many of the testimonies, and as a New Rochelle resident, it is important that New Rochelle not be split up simply because people or organizations from outside of our district presented that idea that solves the mathematical question. Our community is not a puzzle piece, and deserves serious consideration in the way that it will be represented as it faces many ecological, educational and economic challenges.

Furthermore, I strongly support the need to ensure that the Northeast Bronx is kept with cities such as Mount Vernon and New Rochelle as well as mid to North Yonkers where a historically Black and working class community exists. Many people move from the Northeast Bronx into southern Westchester as they grow their families. The Caribbean and Latinx communities have strong ties between these two areas. I see this firsthand as an educator.

The question of if the Rivertowns must be kept in one district or split is another question that I believe must be considered more holistically than through a singular lens of governance structure. The people of Hastings on Hudson and Ardsley have testified sharing their desire to be a part of a strong and racially diverse Congressional district. Federal representation is most represented by our values around economic, racial and and policy values. Hastings on Hudson and Ardsley are communities that care about these issues as evidenced by the recent cannabis vote and other local issues that Hastings takes on. It is clear that this community cares a lot about their connection to the same congressional district that they've been represented by for the last decade. Severing this for the sake of a few testimonies that lack holistic thinking and ignoring the people who testified, is a big mistake--and only serves to advantage the insiders who seem to be best equipped to navigate this redistricting process.

Thank you for your consideration!

Anne DeNigris