



**TESTIMONY BY
THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS**

**BEFORE THE
HOUSE STATE GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE**

ON

CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING

PRESENTED BY

**JOE GERDES
DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**

**JULY 22, 2021
HARRISBURG, PA**

Chairman Grove and members of the House State Government Committee:

My name is Joe Gerdes and I am the director of government relations for the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on behalf of our member townships.

The Association represents Pennsylvania's 1,454 townships of the second class and is committed to preserving and strengthening township government and securing greater visibility and involvement for townships in the state and federal political arenas. Townships of the second class cover 95% of Pennsylvania's land mass and represent more residents — 5.5 million Pennsylvanians — than any other type of political subdivision in the commonwealth.

Our mutual constituents count on us, collectively, to represent their views, and accordingly, "communities of interest" should be preserved. When reapportioning congressional districts, PSATS policy, as devised by its membership, is clear. It calls for the preservation of the geographic integrity of township boundaries wherever possible, rather than dividing a township between multiple districts.

After the 2010 Census, some municipalities were split into multiple congressional districts by Act 131 of 2011. This occurred in both rural, suburban, and urban areas and in every congressional district. This situation should be avoided to allow these communities and their residents to remain whole. Most issues that impact a township are a concern to the entire township. As such, township voters and elected officials should be able to seek the input and support of one congressional office wherever possible, not fight for the attention of multiple congressional offices.

As such, PSATS urges redistricting efforts to preserve the principle of one person, one vote, by placing municipalities entirely within the same congressional district as a community of interest and avoid situations where individual municipalities are divided into different legislative districts.

In addition, congregate living quarters should be counted where they are located, specifically inmates. They use the local infrastructure for water, sewer, broadband, and transportation (*for visitation*) and it is inappropriate to send funding or weight congressional districts where these individuals lived pre-sentencing. The facilities are filled and account for head counts, not specific individuals. As such, these individuals should be included in the count for the district in which they currently reside, not their prior residence.

Congressional reapportionment is always challenging, but especially so when losing or gaining seats in Congress. We applaud the committee's intent relative to transparency and stakeholder/public input and appreciate the opportunity to comment on this important issue for all Pennsylvanians. Thank you.