

Testimony of Commissioner Scott Boyd (Northwest Regional Hearing)

I am Mercer County Commissioner Scott Boyd, Vice-Chairman of our County Board of Commissioners. For the last six years I have been honored to serve the 110,652 citizens presently living in Mercer County. I was raised on a farm and worked in my father's auto business through college. From there I rose through my accounting experience in businesses to chief financial officer of a large group medical practice, then of a non-profit organization. In 2016 I offered myself in service to the people of Mercer County as a full time Commissioner.

Like the Counties of the current 16th Congressional District, we are largely rural with concentrations of urban and suburban population centers that emerged as a result of the steel industry, established over 130 years ago. With the decline of steel as a major employer we have, over the last 40 years, fought the loss of population. We sense that the tide is finally turning as our industries and service providers are expanding and looking for workers to fill the shortage that began in 2019 with the expanding economy, and has risen again as we bounce back from the pandemic.

We are strategically positioned midway between Pittsburgh and Erie, Chicago and New York City - at the junction of Interstates 79, 80, and 376. Our low cost of living and immense outdoor recreational opportunities within an hour drive of Pittsburgh and Cleveland present access to the best of both worlds.

We have four hospitals, four colleges and universities, and a strong faith community that instill health, knowledge, and purpose into our daily lives.

We represent and share the values of the rest of the existing 16th Congressional District and would urge the continuation of the present lines that define it. However, as a result of the loss of one Congressional District for the Commonwealth, the geographic lines must be re-drawn and I will make the following recommendation:

Keeping with the goal of reducing the division of existing County and Municipal boundaries -

I recommend that all of Butler County be included in the 16th District rather than the existing split, and that all of Warren County be included in the new District boundaries.

Based on the 2020 Census, this should bring the total population goal of the District within close proximity to the 765,000 target.

Best wishes on your task to re-district the Commonwealth! I know the temptation is to find reasons to manipulate the boundaries for political advantage, but I urge clear lines along municipal boundaries as the most sensible goal. We do not want to see the State Supreme Court take the un-Constitutional role of drawing Congressional District boundaries again.