

### **Testimony of Susan Murawski (Northwest Regional Hearing)**

Good morning and thank you for this opportunity to speak today about Congressional redistricting in Pennsylvania. My name is Susan Murawski and I live outside of the city of Erie in Erie County. I was born and raised and have lived in Erie County the majority of my life.

I'm here today to request a new type of redistricting process for Pennsylvania. One that is transparent, open to the public, and starts with a blank map.

The current process is driven by politics, mapping technology, and big data. We have manipulation of voting districts to benefit parties, not people. Pennsylvania's 2011 Congressional map had been labeled one of the top three starkest partisan gerrymanders in the country, and the worst in Pennsylvania's history.

I would agree with that opinion. You only had to look at the gerrymandered maps after the 2010 census to see the sad results.

Here's what happened back then to Erie County: the city of Erie, 4th largest in the state, was divided into two separate districts. What happened to the constitutional prohibition against dividing counties and municipalities? What about the principle of keeping communities of interest together? This was just one of dozens of egregious examples of Pennsylvania gerrymandering.

I want my vote to count. I want everyone's vote in PA to count. That doesn't happen with gerrymandering.

PA's own Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster conducted a poll of voters in 2019 which showed seven in ten (67%) of Pennsylvania voters supported an independent commission to draw legislative district lines. This included majorities of Democrats (66%), independents (78%) and Republicans (63%). Majorities of people in every part of the state were in favor of an independent commission. Yet their wishes were denied and we still have politicians in charge of the process.

Let's change the usual process. Start with a clean slate, drawing fresh districts to account for population shifts and the growing number of Hispanic, Asian American, and Pacific Islander residents in PA. Work with the Senate to engage the public. Not only ask the public for their opinions, use them! Be transparent throughout the process. Produce at least one preliminary map with enough time for the public to review it and offer feedback. Explain your rationale for the preliminary and final maps; what values were used to draw them? Involve both political parties, so the final map comes to a Democratic governor for his signature, not his veto.

Thank you.