

Testimony of Mark Rafail (Southwest Regional Hearing)

On behalf of the Fayette County Economic Development Office, I want to thank you for giving me this time to speak on such an important matter as this. Coming from a small city within Fayette and now with county government I felt very comfortable in talking about this issue.

When I was asked to speak, I asked myself the following questions

1. How is Fayette County alike or dislike to counties within our current map in relation to retail activity, manufacturing, or industry??
 - a. Westmoreland – is the largest of the 4 counties in the current 14 district with 30-45% more industries in the other 3, this is also reflected in the average income per household.
 - b. Washington – has the twice the amount of industries as Fayette with an average income per household higher than the State average.
 - c. Greene County – is very similar to Fayette although about 50% of the total industries, their income per household is very close.

2. Do you feel a congressional district that would include Fayette and Allegheny Counties would put the Fayette County region in unfair competition with the Urban Pittsburgh region in relation to grants, funding, and overall opportunities?
 - a. It would be very difficult for Fayette to compete for all those due to the fact that Urban Pittsburgh has the ability to receive match monies and more support due to the demographics alone. However, it is important for Fayette to work with the entire region.

3. From the point of view of Economic Development, how is having Fayette County fit into one cohesive congressional district beneficial?
 - a. As one District Fayette could work on multi-municipality projects and not split the projects up or work with several federal offices to gain support on the project.

4. Why would business want to locate here?
 - a. It is my hope that businesses realize that we in Fayette have not only what they need to locate here, for example infrastructure and work force, but just as import the amenities that the employees need to make Fayette their home.

It is my hope that the redistricting be looked at as similar counties be placed in the same district and that no county be split into several districts.