

Testimony of Jason Fink (Northcentral Regional Hearing)

Good afternoon. My name is Jason Fink and I'm the president and CEO of the Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce. Thank you to the House State Government Committee for this opportunity to address the upcoming Congressional redistricting here in Pennsylvania. I appreciate the fact that you are doing these across Pennsylvania and giving areas such as ours the opportunity to voice their thoughts on what should be considered for how the new districts will be drawn in accommodating the loss of our one Congressional seat.

To begin with my comments, I'd like to give you a baseline of Lycoming County. We have a population of roughly 114,000 people and are one of the fourteen MSAs here in the commonwealth. Most of our population can be found in the greater Williamsport area. The city itself has a population of approximately 28,000 and the greater Williamsport area is just under 90,000.

There are 8 public school districts in the county. We have two colleges, Pennsylvania College of Technology with a student population of 4500 and Lycoming College with a student population of 1500.

We have a strong industrial base here in the county. Manufacturing is vibrant and growing as we see new industries such as Digger Specialties and Chance Aluminum establishing new operations here. We're also seeing growth with existing manufacturers such as West Pharmaceuticals and Shop-Vac Corporation. Additionally, we have a strong presence of industry that conduct federal work with the Department of Defense including L3 Harris, Lycoming Engines, Sparionics, PMF Industries and QorTek.

The county has major highways running through it with I-180, US 15 and US 220. It has rail service with mainline service by NS and short-line service by North Shore Rail Road. We also have the Williamsport Regional Airport.

It should also be noted that we are also home to the US Middle District Court House in Williamsport.

Given the size of our county, we are first and foremost concerned about ensuring that any redistricting be done which keeps Lycoming County whole. This has mostly been the case when maps have been drawn, however it hasn't always been that way. From 2000 to 2010, Lycoming County was split with roughly two-thirds of the county being in the 5th congressional district and the remaining portion in the 15th congressional district.

Our congressmen during that time were John Peterson and Glenn Thompson. Both were great to work with however it was difficult at times for us in trying to work with them on county-wide issues given the nature in which we were divided. Having been through something like this in our not-too-distant past, we would strongly encourage those in finalizing the new congressional districts to keep Lycoming County whole.

We would next request that as the maps are drawn that consideration be given to provide us to be included with neighboring counties as is currently done. Those counties that I speak of include Clinton, Tioga, Union, Northumberland, Snyder and Sullivan.

There are many items that we work with these counties on as all but two of these are in the same local development district, SEDA-COG. Specifically to the Chamber, we have a number of workforce development opportunities that we work with neighboring counties here in the region. Our commute

shed for industries in our counties include all that were mentioned. Area industries also rely upon colleges in the region including Bucknell, Susquehanna, Lock Haven and Mansfield. There also is greater involvement with career and technical schools such as SUN Vo-tech and Central Mountain.

It is understood that there will be changes that need to be made based upon the loss of our congressional seat. This is part of a larger problem that we as Pennsylvanians need to look at addressing now so that we don't see this occurrence in 2030 when the next Census is complete. For now though, we ask that Lycoming County be kept whole and that our existing relationships with neighboring counties be maintained as they currently are in developing this new congressional map.

Thank you for taking into consideration our request.