

## **Testimony of Mary Anne Heston (Northcentral Regional Hearing)**

I submit these comments concerning Congressional redistricting to the Pennsylvania House State Government Committee, not as an expert, by any means, but as a concerned citizen who wants to advocate first and foremost for a fair process.

The current state of political affairs in our Commonwealth and in our nation is a sad spectacle of partisan stalemate, where disputes seem to draw more time and energy than constructive negotiations for a better future. We can change this, and a giant step forward lies in the process of fair redistricting.

We who live in the Northcentral region of PA understand that in order to reach the required population quota for Congressional representation, our district must cover a great geographic area, difficult for any Congressperson to travel and attend to regularly. Fortunately, our means of communication have greatly improved over the past decades. Nevertheless, distance and contiguous boundaries are important considerations as districts are drawn.

Perhaps few people are better positioned to know the needs and challenges of the region than the various Northcentral counties' commissioners. Daily they must consider multiple demands on revenue and resources. They work across county lines in alliance with other commissioners to access funds and build programs that address mutual concerns. I contacted the commissioners of my county to request that they provide your committee with testimony as well, and I hope they do. If you have not done so already, I would suggest that you actively solicit all the commissioners of the Northcentral counties for input in this important process. Given their multiple responsibilities, press releases alone may escape their attention.

Education, business, industry, agriculture, tourism, medical care, emergency response, and conservation of our precious natural resources are among the many important enterprises of our region. Working together with local governments, state representatives, and senators, our Congressional representative is our vital advocate in the federal government.

You know this. Forgive me for stating the obvious. But it is good to be reminded of the importance of your task, especially as you travel throughout the state and weigh so many concerns. Don't let repetition dull your commitment. People care. They want a more responsive government. Perceived fairness is a powerful incentive to participate, not just as voters but as citizens.

Thank you for your consideration.  
Mary Anne Heston  
Hector Township, Potter County