

Liz Terwilliger for Congress

A Representative, Not A Politician

Redistricting Testimony

Liz Terwilliger

I am from Bradford County, which is in North Central PA, just on the edge of the North East Region for these hearings. Bradford County is very rural. It shares services with surrounding counties and with some counties not so close at hand. I would like to suggest to the committee that communities of interest are created by these shared services and should be preserved within the same Congressional District.

I work in Early Intervention, the Birth to 3 program, in Bradford and Sullivan Counties. These two counties are tied together in service coordination and service providers through a joinder created by the Commonwealth. The families that I serve transition from our program into the Blast, IU 17 program, which provides service throughout Bradford, Sullivan, Lycoming and Tioga Counties. These educational communities are currently all encompassed within the 12th Congressional District. Families and the educational programs have the benefit of having one Representative to whom they can take concerns. One Representative to hear the voices on both sides. One Representative to understand their perspectives and advocate for their unique needs.

Many of the families that I work with need to access pediatric medical specialists. Because we are so rural, these services are not available locally. Specialists for complex care, like a cleft palate team, and specialists for more straightforward things like a nutritional consultation are concentrated with one provider, Geisinger in Danville. Danville is in Montour County, which is just outside the 12th District as it is currently drawn. Our families with young children rely on Geisinger for pediatric specialties. Geisinger is an important part of our community, it would make sense to have them in our district. As it stands now, we have one Representative for the families receiving services from Geisinger and one Representative for the Geisinger Medical Center in Danville. There is no single Representative hearing the perspective of families and the medical community. There is no single advocate for their needs. I propose bringing Montour County, where Geisinger lies, into the same district as the families for whom they provide such a critical service. By the same logic, it would also make sense to bring the adjacent county of Columbia and the small portion of Northumberland county currently drawn outside the 12th District into the same district.

In a region of the Commonwealth as rural as ours, I understand that it is unrealistic to expect a geographically compact district. I know that the committee will work hard to maintain whole counties and communities within single Districts as much as possible. I am here today to propose that when considering boundaries in redistricting, that our district be drawn in a manner that also considers these important educational and medical communities of interest in our area.