

Chair Grove, members and staff of the Committee:

Thank you for making the trip to Northeastern PA, and for the opportunity to address you today.

I'll start with a brief word about myself. Then, I'll discuss the northeastern corner of the Congressional map. Lastly, I'll address the map as a whole, and suggest a starting point for your deliberations.

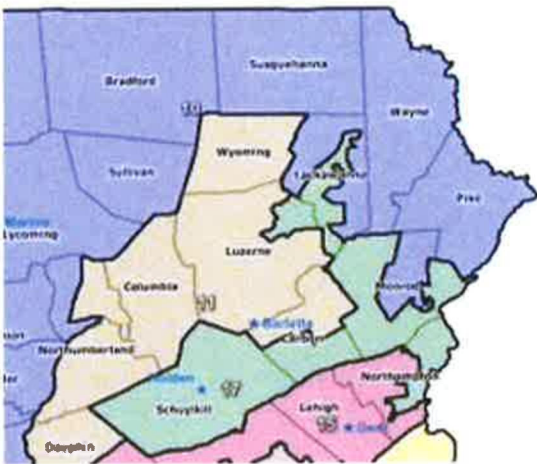
My name is Michael Waxenberg. I've been a Pike County homeowner for 32 years.

By profession, I manage technology risk. In my spare time, I draw maps. I've created prize-winning maps for Pennsylvania Congressional districts, and for the State Senate. I am currently a lead mapper for Fair Districts Pennsylvania, focusing on the Senate, and also a member of the Princeton Gerrymandering Project's National Mapping Corps, as well as a contributor to the Draw the Lines Citizens' Map. I'll return to that initiative later in my remarks.

In the five years since I drew my first Congressional map, I've become part of a community that brings together activists, academics, attorneys, geographers, computer scientists, and many more. I'm proud to call many of them friends, and I learn from them every day.

One takeaway from my mapping experience has been that none of this is easy. I appreciate the difficulty of the task before the Committee. I also know that you have to grapple with political considerations that don't constrain amateurs in the same way. So I'll try to address that aspect as well.

First, let's look at the northeast, or NEPA. The last time the Legislature went through this process, the result in our region looked like this:



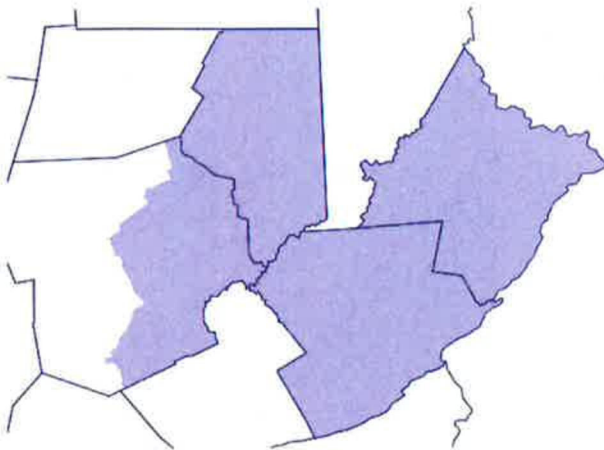
Strange shapes aside, the composition of our districts in NEPA made no sense to the people in them. The other end of our district, the old tenth, lay west of Harrisburg at the border of Franklin County, well over three hours away. (That's on a good day, when I-81 isn't jammed, flooded, or dug up.) In Pike, we were separated from Rep. Marino's home by big pieces of two intervening districts. Predictably, we didn't see much of our congressman.

That's history. In 2018, the Supreme Court struck down that map and replaced it with this:



By most metrics, the 2018 map is quite good. It's also fairly fresh, and importantly it has the Court's blessing. If Pennsylvania still had 18 districts, I would probably urge you to tweak this map as needed for population equivalence and leave well enough alone. But we're down to 17 seats, and population has shifted since the 2010 Census. So there are hard choices to make, in many regions. I'll focus first on the choices in NEPA, and then look at the statewide picture.

Depending on whom you ask, Northeastern Pennsylvania can extend as far west as Northumberland, and Tioga Counties, or even farther. I'll stick to the two areas I know reasonably well: the Poconos – my own neighborhood - and the Wyoming Valley – or, in Census Terms, the “Scranton – Wilkes-Barre – Hazleton Metropolitan Area”.



Those two communities resemble the core of the current Eighth Congressional District. That combination makes sense geographically, historically, culturally, and economically. Plus, transportation proposals under consideration at the local, state and Federal levels would connect these two areas even more closely. I've redrawn this corner of the Congressional map hundreds of times. The lines change, and sometimes Monroe gets split, but I always end up with something based on that core.

Conveniently for mappers, those two core communities get us close to the target population for a congressional district. There are close to 500,000 people in the Wyoming Valley, and about 200,000 in the Pocono Region, so we're left working the margins to reach 765,000.

The first direction to look is north. The southeastern part of Wayne County, around Hawley and Lake Wallenpaupack, is unmistakably part of the Poconos. Our commuter bus route even terminates there. The southwestern part is tightly linked to Scranton by two major arteries, I-84 and the Casey Highway.

The only question about Wayne is the northern part, above Honesdale on 191, where you enter rural Pennsylvania. But there are only 15,000 people in Northern Wayne. So the simplest answer is the same one the Supreme Court reached in 2018: put all of Wayne in PA8, because of its location, its deep affinity with both Pike and Lackawanna, and because we're not supposed to divide counties unless it's necessary, which it isn't in this case. So add Wayne, and we're nearing 750,000 people with a nice, compact district.



Where do we go to reach the population target? We're boxed in to the east and northeast by the Delaware River. Heading south, you enter the Lehigh Valley and the core of CD7. That's an area with a strong regional identity that aligns with county borders..

The remaining options involve the western edges of the district. That brings us to the bigger picture, because what you do at the western boundary of CD8 sends ripples across the state.

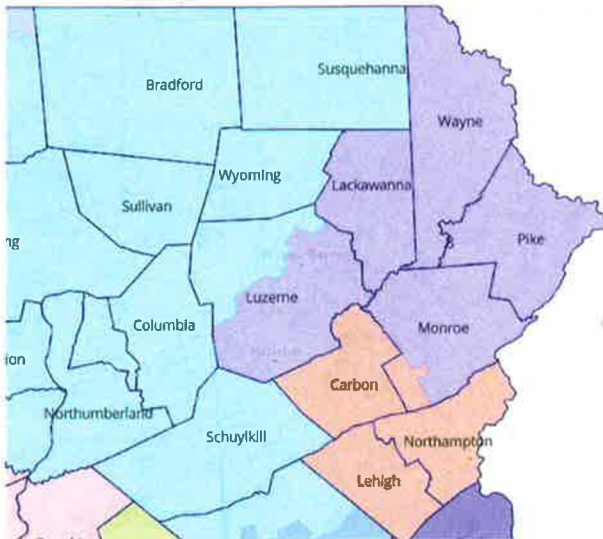
Outside this purple area - even within it - I rely heavily on the on the knowledge of the community I described earlier. I urge you to draw on that knowledge too, and I can recommend a convenient way to access it.

As you know, the Draw the Lines project team recently unveiled their Citizens' Map. Their goal was to capture the collective wisdom of 1500 contest participants – and a wider community of observers - in a single map. As one among 1500, I had the privilege of contributing in a small way to that map.

In the northeastern corner of the Citizens' Map, CD8 is pretty much what I described: Lackawanna, Pike, Wayne, nearly all of Monroe, and the Luzerne County part of the Wyoming Valley. A little bit of Monroe,



along with Carbon, goes into CD7 for numbers. So CD8 gets a bit more of Luzerne across the valley, but steers clear of Congressman Meuser's residence just up the road from here in Shavertown.



It's not that way because of my influence, or any other personal opinion. It's that way because 1500 smart mappers and commenters converged toward the same basic result, with small variations around the edges. That's largely true of the whole map. The DTL Citizens' map is uncontroversial. Crowdsourcing produces an unexciting map. In my opinion, that's a good thing.



Now, there are some tough decisions reflected in that map, but they were the preferred solutions to challenges that confront any seventeen-district map. Here are the biggest, in my opinion:

- 1) Pittsburgh is split, but in a way that residents find reasonable;
- 2) Reps. Boyle and Fitzpatrick both land in CD1 (This is easy to change, by swapping wards);
- 3) There isn't a true "Capitol District";

4) The Fifth District,, in DelCo and Chester, is not optimized for minority representation.

That's about it. No big surprises. No controversial choices that can't be undone. And no dramatic departures from the 2018 map, except what's necessary to compress eighteen districts into seventeen.

So, why this map rather than a hundred equally good maps that reflect slightly different priorities?

That's where the process matters. Their process at Draw the Lines, and your process going forward.

Draw the Lines has already sorted through input from many of your most engaged constituents, and assembled it for you into a single map. By taking this map as a starting point for your deliberations, you are already halfway to meeting the demand for citizen involvement in the reapportionment process.

Starting with the Citizens' Map should also put you well on your way toward the approval of Governor Wolf's panel of experts, and toward his ultimate signature. And you will have the beginnings of a defense against any legal challenges that make their way to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. After all, the Court ordered adoption of a map very much like this one in 2018. The maps don't just look similar. By every metric the court is likely to consider, this is basically a seventeen-district version of *their* map – without the conspicuously odd lines in Allegheny and Berks.

Now, I understand that there are political obstacles to the course I'm suggesting. One side of the aisle may think their party will do better if the Supreme Court draws the map. The other side may consider conflict with Governor Wolf more politically advantageous than the appearance of bipartisanship. If that's where we are – if cooperation is impossible – then the cynics are right and the Supreme Court will draw the map.

But if you want this constitutionally-mandated process to succeed, the Draw the Lines Citizens' Map offers a head start. And for this corner of northeastern Pennsylvania, I believe it offers as good a final answer as any.

Thank you for your attention. I'll be happy to take any questions, and I will follow the Committee's progress with interest.