

Testimony of Paul Drucker (Southeast Regional Hearing)

My name is Paul Drucker. I was the state representative for the 157th district for the 2008-2010 session. I was the first Democrat elected to represent this district. This is important, because until my election, the 157th was considered safe Republican. After my election, in its then configuration, it was considered toss-up. As a result, in the subsequent state reapportionment, in order to protect the then incumbent republican state representative, and republican Harrisburg majority, the district became one of, if not the most, gerrymandered district in the state house.

I can speak to the effects of gerrymandering on the populace from a first-hand perspective. When I was elected, the 157th was gerrymandered, but only to a slight extent. I represented all of Tredyffrin, Schuylkill, and Phoenixville, all in Chester County. I also represented parts of Montgomery County. I represented two districts in Lower Providence and one district in (East) West Norriton. Which is part of the point I hope to make. This portion of my district was so insignificant, that I don't even remember, and I am not sure I ever knew, of the actual dimensions of this representation.

Schuylkill, Phoenixville and East Pikeland, consist of the Phoenixville school district. East Pikeland was by far the smallest portion of the district. East Pikeland was contiguous to and to a certain extent (fire and police protection for instance) synonymous with the other two townships. Nevertheless, it was in a different legislative district. West Norriton and Lower Providence were in separate school districts from each other and also the Chester Cy townships. In the time I was in office, I don't remember ever going to a school district event in these Montgomery County districts. Conversely, I don't remember ever seeing the Representative for East Pikeland Township at any Phoenixville events. (East Pikeland was approximately the same size as the Montgomery districts)

I tried not to miss any Tred or Phoenixville, or Schuylkill events, either school board or township related. I don't think I ever missed a Phoenixville Chamber event. I joined the Chamber and the Paoli businessmen association. I joined Chester County TMACC and was on the Board of Directors. I can only remember a few Mont cy events in which I participated. I joined nothing in Montgomery County.

I fought long and hard for funding and grants for my Chester cy residents. Sometimes I was even successful. I don't remember obtaining anything of a similar nature for Montgomery county.

What I am trying to say is, geography matters, school districts matter, governmental units matter, rivers and available access matter. Political affiliation doesn't. Except in Harrisburg and your concern is not good governance and the welfare of the populace but in your continuously being reelected and maintaining a voting majority in the legislature.

I beseech you not to use party affiliation to draw the lines for voting districts and by so doing disenfranchising the citizens of Pennsylvania. Instead, utilize established geographic, community, and school district boundaries to create the "contiguous and compacted districts" the PA constitution requires.