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To:

- MMDRedistricting <MMDRedistricting@albanycountyny.gov>;
- Redistricting Commission <RedistrictingCommission@albanycountyny.gov>

Good evening Commissioners,

I planned to speak at tonight's public hearing on the proposed county redistricting, but due to a conflict with this evening's Health Committee in which I Chair, I am unable to attend.

I would like to first thank you, the Commissioners of both the Albany County Redistricting Commission and the Majority Minority District Subcommittee, for your time and efforts in this crucial work, assuring an independent, fair and equitable approach to the significant responsibility of creating Albany County's Legislative Districts.

I have been watching the process and iterations of different proposals and felt neighborhoods were well represented until the most recent and final version being forwarded to the County Legislature for consideration.

My concern is specific to our requirements under New Your State law to ensure our districts are compact, and that the core of our neighborhoods and communities of interest are maintained to assure the shared needs of our neighborhoods are appropriately represented and addressed.

For 54 years I have resided within the neighborhood and district I currently represent. Our close community is unique to the City of Albany, bordered by the commercial district of Central Avenue to the north, Brevator Street and the Harriman Campus to the west, Western Avenue to the south and North Main and Albany High School to the east. The neighborhood is primarily made up of the Upper Washington, Melrose, Manning Blvd, New Albany, Beverwyck and the Pine Hills neighborhood associations and often work together to address community needs and issues affecting our island of a neighborhood in the City of Albany.

These neighborhood associations that make up this distinctive community share students of neighborhood schools; Montessori Magnet, All Saints and Pine Hills Academy, parishioners of the Blessed Sacrament Parish and the hundreds of neighborhood children that benefit from our Westland Hills Baseball and Softball League. The combination of each of these neighborhoods has contributed to a combined vibrant and walkable community - a neighborhood mix of seniors and young families that also have very specific needs for the county services we provide.

In the most recent version of the redistricting plan (Plan D), the Upper Washington Avenue Neighborhood Association (UWANA) has now been removed from their current district and close community of neighborhood association partners. The new lines relocate UWANA to across the commercial zone of Central Avenue to merge with the Third District representing North Albany and Loudonville nearly four miles away. As this was never illustrated in earlier concepts and drafts, this latest revision appears to have moved the entirety of this neighborhood into the Third District to meet required numbers without understanding the impact on residents.

I understand the necessity to move blocks or sections of neighborhood associations between different districts within the city to meet the requirements of redistricting. However, the move of an entire neighborhood association from a community of shared needs over four miles to the other side of the city and into Loudonville, fails to recognize consideration of representation for this very special community.

As a lifelong resident of this neighborhood, with family calling this special district home for five generations, I cannot support the proposed plan as currently drafted. Separating residents of the Upper Washington Avenue Neighborhood Association from the neighboring Melrose, Manning and Beverwyck neighborhoods, impacts their representation in county government.

I ask that you revise Plan D and reincorporate the Upper Washington Avenue neighborhood into the district with their neighbors in Beviewyck, Manning and Melrose. If you would like a tour of our neighborhood to understand how these current revisions will negatively impact it, I can make myself available at any time.

Again, thank you for your service and consideration,

Raymond F. Joyce

Legislator 13th LD