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October 11, 2022

Commissioners Volk and Campbell,

The Albany County Legislature is appreciative of the hard work that went in to the redistricting process and recognizes that the Albany County Redistricting Commission (ACRC) and the Majority-Minority District (MMD) Subcommittee undertook this process with a meticulous eye to detail and great dedication. The Legislature is committed to ensuring the best representation for its residents and as such, feels compelled to send the map back to the ACRC for further consideration. The following details the Legislature's recommendations as required by Albany County Local Law 8 for 2019, the Voting Rights Act, and the John Lewis Voting Rights Act.

Currently, Albany County has five strong majority-minority districts (MMDs) – districts one, two, three, four and six. Maintaining effective MMDs safeguards voting rights and allows minority populations to elect their preferred candidate. The final map presented to the Legislature by ACRC contained five MMDs with the possibility of two opportunity MMDs. This raises some concerns – essentially, that the districts will be weak and ineffective as MMDs. These communities of color are better served if the minority voting populations therein are not spread so thin and instead are more cohesive, unified and better able to represent the needs of their residents. For these reasons, the Legislature recommends that the ACRC and MMD Subcommittee re-review the maps to determine if a more concentrated minority voting age population in the MMDs would be more effective in producing minority preferred candidates in said districts, even if it results in the reduction of proposed opportunity districts.

The Legislature recognizes that the ACRC's decisions must be based on the data provided by the 2020 Census. Practically speaking, much has changed across the County since the survey was completed. Preserving the ability of the minority community to elect their preferred candidate is a priority. Accordingly, the ACRC and MMD subcommittee should take into consideration the impact the changing landscape will have on effective MMDs to the extent legally permissible.

Sincerely,

Andrew Joyce
Chairman

Dennis Feeney
Majority Leader

Bill Clay
Chairman, Legislative Black Caucus