

Cynthia Kukenberger

Redistricting testimony

As a New York resident, we all know that bipartisan voting is not counted fairly. Because all of the cities have so many more votes than the rural areas, the rural votes do not count. There is no purpose to voting. We get out-voted on every election.

Comment has been submitted

Dawn Howard

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Fri 7/16/2021 8:16 PM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

A private comment has been submitted

Please take a look at St. Lawrence County. It has been divided up into many districts, each of which are only a small portion of each representative's area...

User: Dawn Howard ([REDACTED]

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Comment has been submitted

Eric Allen

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Fri 8/13/2021 9:58 AM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

A private comment has been submitted

Make all of Washington county one district. It is a small number of voters, hardly ever sways a candidates election outcome, for the multiple districts now represented.

I would say the board of elections would save an estimate of \$80,000 over a 8yr period by reducing the number of districts in the county. The board of elections has a small staff of 4 people (counting the commissioners) who do all the prep work.

Its such a waste to hire poll workers, trucks, drivers, paper ballots and other equipment for a primary election, having workers put in a 15 hour day and only 2 or 3 people vote at a poll site. This expense spirals for general elections where early voting has workers putting in days. The county is a more formital block of voters and has a stronger "voice" when represented by one district.

User: Eric Allen ([REDACTED]

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James Wright

I want to encourage the continuation and maintenance of the current 21st Congressional District. I have served the North Country Region on the Governor's Regional Council, as Executive Director of the Development Authority of the North Country (DANC) and as State Senator, elected by the region. During the three decades of service, I have found the region shares a commonality of interest based upon its rural population, economy, small business, health care and educational institutions.

The creation of DANC as a regional entity by the state legislature documents the recognition of the commonality of the region and its support of Fort Drum, the largest single-site employer in the State. This significant economic vehicle requires the focus and the advocacy of a united congressional district. The counties of the region and district work together in support of their mutual interests. These regional interests resulted in the state government, executive and legislative branch recognizing the region with the creation of the regional authority and regional council insuring a voice for this significant rural region.

Should the district be increased due to population loss, the addition of adjacent population from Oswego County, Northern Oneida, and Herkimer County, all reflect the rural nature of the district and are contiguous to the existing district. The community of interest has been reflected in several state legislative districts.

John Adams

To The New York State Independent Redistricting Commission:

I just wanted to convey my opinions on the matter at hand. First, an acknowledgement that despite the influences of Republicans and Democrats in the halls of power, the idea they represent majorities is a mirage they maintain. They merely own the levers of power. Let us consider that not every person who is eligible to register to vote does. Let us also acknowledge the hard fact that the majority of registered voters are neither registered Republican nor Democrat. And in fact a system of taxation without representation currently exists in America, New York State included. Despite the media and the usual talking points, if we were Europe, there would be 4 major parties. A Fundamental Nationalist party, the center right party, a center left party, and a Radical Progressives party. The difficulty with 2 parties who draw lines to "their" benefit, is the bipartisan environment needed to govern for the right reasons becomes ever more elusive. The commission has an opportunity to draw lines that allow common sense centrists, who understand the concepts of compromise and the reality that no one party has all the best ideas, to compete for seats of representation. As the gerrymandering continues to get worse, it establishes districts where only one party controls, and everyone else cannot possibly vote for a candidate that actually represents their interests. If a district leans republican or democrat, the only way to win a primary against an entrenched career politician, enabled by gerrymandering, is to get further to the left or the right. The further one goes out into the extremes of a single party, the less in common they have with their whole constituency. The only thing I've ever seen fundamentalist and radicals agree on is destructive governance and destructive tactics. The extreme radicals firebomb cities and destroy property during protests while seeking to beat up police, and the extreme fundamentalists storm the Capitol, wish to destroy traditions of a republic and also seek to beat up police (If you're both beating up police, your both wrong). If all we ever do is continue create districts that encourage more polarization via one party control over a district, you create conditions conducive to further alienation between members of the same community. Competition is good. We don't restrict Burger King from opening across the street from McDonald's. We don't have stores that favor Coca-Cola in one area and different stores across town that feature Pepsi instead. We don't only allow certain airlines in certain airports. Why, because competition drives American innovation, and forces organizations to appeal to all their diverse customers instead of taking them for granted. Gerrymandering has removed competition save for the one party the district was drawn for. Without a normal healthy competitive environment in politics, political innovation wanes, and the new solutions needed to deal with the new challenges of the 21st century will elude us all. By creating "single brand" districts, just the one party that is driven by tribalism and control, and not doing what is best for all their customer or rather all their constituency, takes us all for granted and is re-elected despite legislative mediocrity or worse. You probably won't get past the legislature anyways, but it's okay if rural areas and metro areas have to find a representative that cares about both to represent them. The reality is a centrist representative may get elected for a conservative or liberal slant. Yet during their time as a representative, their vote of conscious, or a vote of integrity, versus a vote of party allegiance does not have to become a career-ending vote if districts are more centrist. IF a republican were to vote for a democratic initiative, they'll get primary threats immediately. Same if a democrat votes for a republican initiative. A centrist district may well re-elect the person for voting in a manner best for the district as opposed to the best for the party. In the districts as they currently are, if you vote against your party, primary opponents immediately come out. Once these primaries replace the incumbent with someone more radical or more fundamental, which is great for the party that had a district tailored for their party's control, it leaves the halls of governing more polarized and more dysfunctional. Districts matter. I commend you

for your efforts! New York being New York (Spitzer, Cuomo, Bruno, Silver, etc...) I will not blame you when the 2 "major" parties rip up your recommendations and do what ensures their re-elections, constituencies be damned. However, this is a process. It takes many waves upon the rocks to break them down into smaller and movable pieces of sand. You're the first wave. Thank you!!

-John Adams

Sent: Thursday, August 5, 2021 9:59 AM
To: Danielle Futia
Subject: FW: Please submit my testimony. Thank You

Karen Engstrom

From: Chautauqua Updates [redacted]
Sent: Thursday, August 5, 2021 9:57 AM
To: Douglas Breakell [redacted]
Subject: Please submit my testimony. Thank You

Dear Douglas Breakell,
Below is my form as filled out. The system will not accept me. I would like to submit a testimony for the August 9 session of the NYIRC. Please submit my testimony for me. Thank you.

Testimony: The redistricting should maintain the existing character of our region – one of small cities, rural communities and farm areas. We want to maintain the voice of the Southern tier independent of large metropolitan areas. If our region includes large cities the representation would be diminished and our quality of life placed in jeopardy. Please keep the southern tier independent and well represented as it has been.

signed, Karen Engstrom, [redacted] Mayville, NY 14757 [redacted]

Karen

Last Name *engstrom

Title

Organization

Phone *

Mobile Phone

Address *

Street Address, P.O. Box, Company Name, c/o

Suite, Unit, Building, Floor, etc.

City *

State *NY

State Abbreviation

Zip Code *



The League of Women Voters

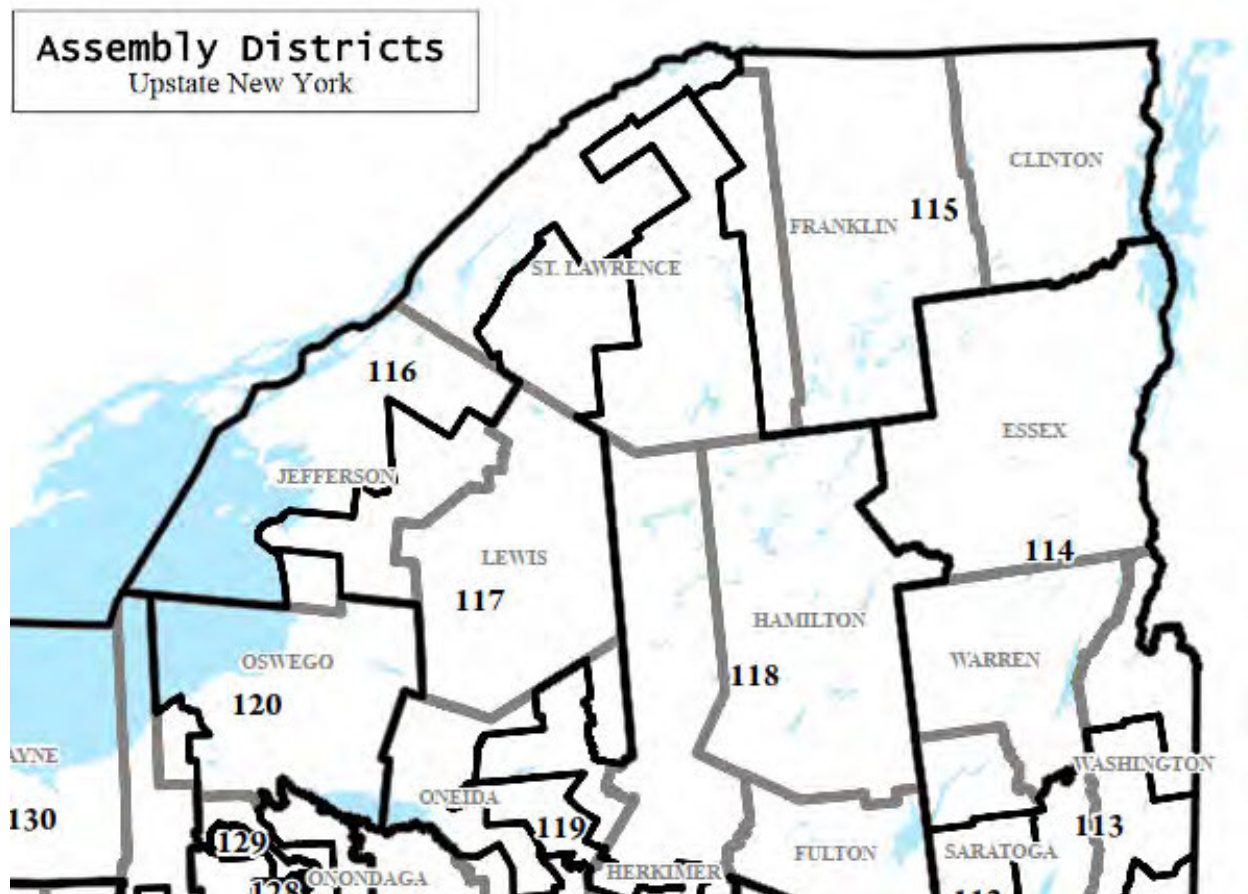
A Voice for Citizens, A Force for Change

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY

St. Lawrence County Redistricting Testimony

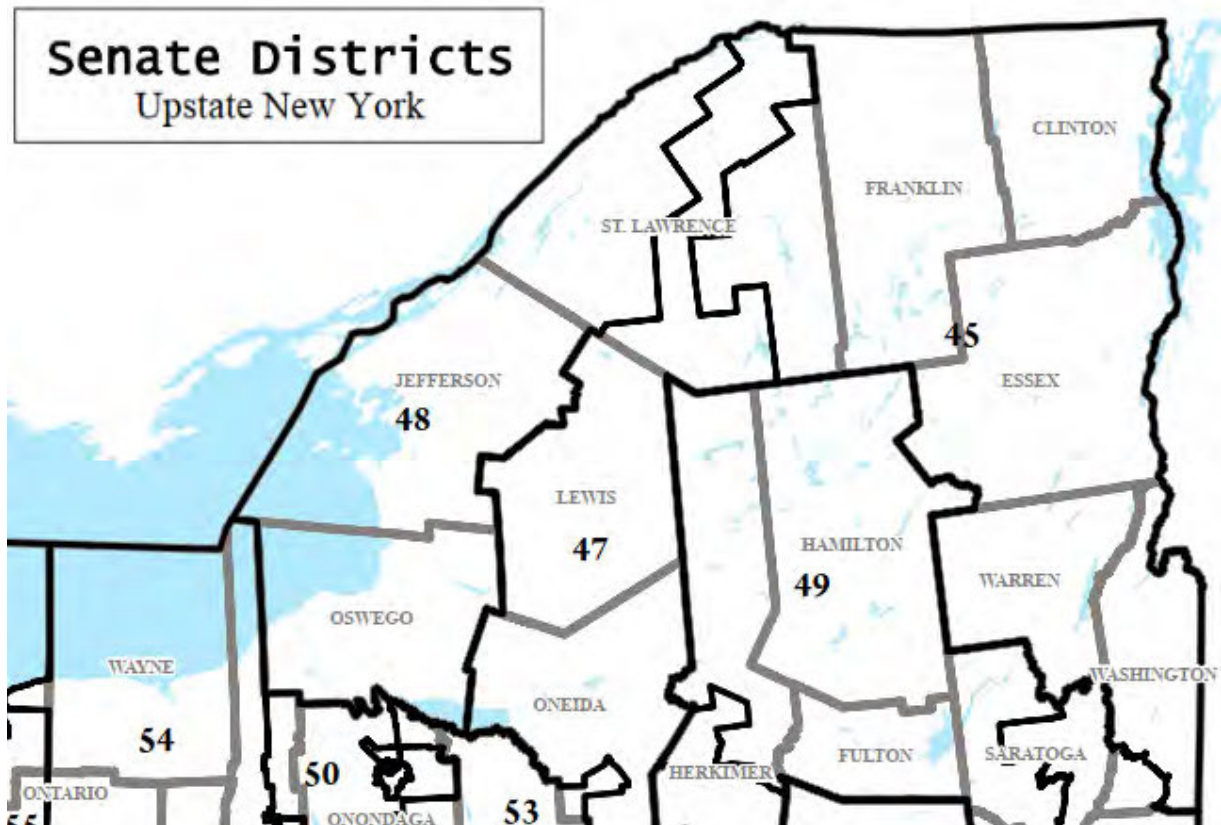
St. Lawrence County could be New York’s poster child for gerrymandering at the State level. With four Assembly and three state Senate seats, ever since 2012 the county has been sliced and diced into small parcels without regard to the integrity of the community, its economic resources, or its partisan disposition. Voters with common interests – political, economic and social – have no way to express them in a politically coherent way through their elected representatives.

St. Lawrence County, population 107,740, is divided among four Assembly Districts: 115, 116, 117, and 118. *Not one of our currently elected Assembly members lives in our county.*



A look at the Upstate Assembly District map shows that with the exception of Jefferson County to our immediate east, the other counties in the North Country region are more or less intact within their respective Assembly Districts.

We are subdivided among three Senate districts: 45, 47 and 48. Only one of our state senators calls St. Lawrence County home. Again, no other North Country county is as subdivided as ours is.



The two largest non-agricultural employers in the county are education and healthcare.

With our 17 school districts parceled out among 7 electoral districts it is impossible to politically consolidate our interests regarding primary and secondary education. We have four major universities within a ten-mile radius, yet their division among three Assembly and two Senatorial districts effectively disenfranchises our higher education community.

Our major healthcare providers are similarly split between several state representatives. Thus, both of our major economic sectors are, in effect, politically voiceless.

St. Lawrence County is the center of gravity for none of these legislative districts because we are so electorally fractured. The only time we see most of our elected representatives is during election season: in fact, we rarely see them at all. They simply don't represent enough towns in SLC to bother. They don't need the votes from our county to retain their seats, so they ignore us.

All but one of our state representatives are Republicans. This does not accurately reflect the political demographics of the county, which is more evenly split between Republicans, Democrats, independents and other parties. If our political boundaries conformed more closely to those of our county, candidates seeking to represent SLC would have to address the concerns of a broader swath of the electorate.

The problems St. Lawrence County faces are those common to other rural counties in New York: inadequate public transportation; a high poverty rate especially afflicting children and senior citizens; inadequate childcare and eldercare; food “deserts”, which are exacerbated by the lack of transportation; scarcity of accessible, and affordable, broadband; not enough good paying jobs; high costs to the County for Medicaid and other services needed to supplement family incomes.

Nevertheless, we are compelled to contact seven different state representatives on any issue of county-wide concern. To say the very least, this situation does not foster effective advocacy.

According to the most recent poll* by the Jefferson County Community College Center for Community Studies, [St. Lawrence County alone](#) of the Tri-County region (which includes Jefferson and Lewis Counties) showed a marked drop in residents’ opinion of “the overall quality of life” in their community. Fifty-two percent of those polled said “the availability of good jobs is ‘poor’ and forty percent said the overall state of the local economy is ‘poor’.” Due to the pandemic, pollsters expected a drop in outlook for all three counties, but instead found it only in St. Lawrence. Clearly its residents feel that their county is a distinctive entity!

We therefore petition the Redistricting Commission to factor in the geographical integrity of our county when considering the revision of district boundaries. The current electoral map denies us the coherent political identity that St Lawrence County needs.

*Full link for news report on the Community Surveys:

<https://www.wwnytv.com/2021/04/19/survey-shows-decline-st-lawrence-county-residents-outlook-finances/>

Kelli & Joe Samson

My husband and I have lived in Trenton, NY, Oneida County, District 118 for 8 years now. We are politically active Democrats, interested in living out the duration of our lives in the beauty of this four-season upstate area. My husband has developed a civil engineering consulting firm in the county, and I am a retired Texas elementary school teacher, now actively involved with Munson Williams Proctor Art Institute as a developing student and artist. Additionally, we are both members of our local Trenton Democratic Committee group which we are helping to grow, members of Indivisible Mohawk Valley, a local informational political organization, and as residents enrich our community with volunteering efforts, monetary contributing, and local purchasing. We are very committed to help our region thrive and survive.

I believe that for citizens like us, we want to feel that we are represented as Democrats in the area we live in. To help with this effort, the best possible scenario for our rural area would be the important opportunity to receive balanced/credible news as much as possible in order to further educate our populous. We are currently sandwiched in-between two very far-right wing Republican senators (Tenney/Stefanik) that do not truly represent what is fair or balanced information. This does not lend to a healthy, well-informed area of NY where, as always, truth, honesty, and facts count. We would ask you to please keep this and District 118 in mind when approaching redistricting, as the real growth and positive steps forward in this district depend upon it.

Thanks so much for your time.

Sincerely,

Kelli & Joe Samson

Russ Finley

The Lightning Bolt District. The Barbell District. The River District. New York is famous or should I say infamous for aligning voting districts for the benefit of political parties, not for the benefit or representation of its people. From where I sit at this time I can look out my window and literally see 4 County Legislative Districts, 3 State Assembly Districts, and 2 State Senate Districts. In fact my rural county of 110,000 people is chopped into 4 Assembly Districts, and 3 Senate Districts. But my county is not the only one that suffers from this malady. Our only form of surety in Northern NY is a consistent Congressional District, which links our heavily intertwined socioeconomic counties together.

From Saratoga to Utica it is easy to see the vast similarities and importance of 21st Congressional District. Every County has dairy, beef, pork, and poultry farms which provide a stable source of food for metropolitan areas. Every County has Maple Producers which not only provide maple products for New York but also is processed in Vermont. Our waterways are economic drivers for not just recreation. But more important commercial shipping for products produced from here all the way through the Midwest.

Further the metropolitan areas are provided safe, clean and abundant power from our vast wind farms, and the increasing number of Solar farms. Also the most important and valuable resource of hydro power generated throughout the region. A vast majority of which is sent to the New York City area. In fact New York State itself has recognized how connected in this capacity the region is by establishing the "Hudson River Black River Agency" to oversee hydro generation from Lake George to Lake Ontario.

Moving on New York State also believes that the 21st Congressional District is and should be one. In 2011 the Governor established the "Regional Economic Council". While I do not believe that Saratoga is the "Capitol Region", nor do I believe that Herkimer County is the "Mohawk Valley". The facts remain that the lines of the 21st Congressional District and District 7 of the Regional Economic Council are almost identical. Thus proving by all Economic, Societal, and Geographic standards we should not be politically subdivided at the federal level to our disadvantage.

It is for these reasons and many more. Which I am willing to provide if I am allowed the honor of oral testimony at the upcoming hearing. We cannot afford to be politically subdivided at in these challenging times.

Russ Finley

Lisbon NY

Comment has been submitted

Scott Gray

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission <submissions@nyirc.gov>

Tue 8/10/2021 5:57 PM

To: Submissions <submissions@nyirc.gov>

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

A private comment has been submitted

Jefferson, Lewis, St Lawrence, Franklin, Clinton, Essex and Hamilton. Commonality is primarily Fort Drum, hospital and school systems, destinations; the St Lawrence River, Adirondacks and trail systems.

User: Scott Gray

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Shawn Landry

- My name is Shawn L Landry and my wife Hilary A Landry are both registered Republicans. We've been conservatives since we were old enough to think for our selves. The voting district in the north country should remain the same. We do not wish to have any far leftist groups to redistrict our north country. We love our Freedoms and our God given rights to free speech and religion. We also believe in protecting our selves and our property hence the huge support of the second amendment. We are tired of small far left interest groups redistricting areas to their advantage. Most residents of this voting district are not familiar of the on goings of local and state governmental process like redistricting(Gerrymandering). This process needs to be put out there so they know how to go about this process. A more informed voting populis is a knowledgeable populis. But, as far as we are concern the north country is conservative and should remain thus. Sincerely submitted, Shawn L Landry and Hilary A Landry.