Analyzing Mapping Plans

What Makes a “Good” District?

- **Equality of Population:** Districts should be as close to equal in population as possible.
- **Compactness:** The extent to which a district’s geography is dispersed around its center. People within a district should live near each other.
- **Contiguity:** Each district should be a single connected component.
- **Preservation of Political Subdivisions:** When possible, a district should not cross county, city, or town, boundaries.
- **Preservation of Communities of Interest:** Groups with a significant shared interest should be kept together in order to boost their voice in government.

What Makes a “Bad” District?

- **Intentionally Harming Voters based on their Race or Ethnicity:** This can be done by splitting a community of interest into multiple districts, or by putting all members of a community of interest in a single district to dilute their voting power as a whole.
- **Intentionally Favoring or Disfavoring an Incumbent, Candidate or Party:** Districts should not group together voters of a certain party to increase the chance that candidates from a preferred party are elected.

What am I looking for When Analyzing Districts?

- Hooks/Wiggles at the edges of a district
- Neighborhoods or blocks cut in half
- “Skinny” districts or “Bridges” that connect two far apart areas
- “Ear Muffs” or “Hats” that may also stretch across large areas to connect two far out areas.
- Where is your neighborhood within the proposed district? Are you in the center or nearly over the edge?
- Where is your current representative’s office? Do they have an office near you or is it far away?
• What other neighborhoods/towns/areas are in my district? Do you have things in common with those areas?

**Tips for Writing Testimony on Proposed Lines**

- **Congress - 26 Districts**
  - These districts are very large. Around 776,971 People. Because New York State lost a Congressional seat new districts are even larger than before – especially upstate.
  - Look at macro issues when considering these district lines
    - Is my county split?
    - Is the district drivable?
    - What other counties/areas are in my district?
    - Does my community have issues in common with their communities?

- **Senate - 63 Districts**
  - These districts are big but not too big. Around 320,655 people. Districts upstate are much larger than downstate except around the upstate cities.
  - Looking at macro and micro issues.
    - Is my county wholly within the district? Is not, where has it been split? And if so, what other counties are included?
    - Where

- **Assembly - 150 Districts**
  - These districts are the smallest of all. Around 134,675 people.
  - Look at micro issues when considering these districts:
    - Is my locality split?
    - Has my neighborhood or block been split?
    - Are things I care about (ex. school, job, stores I shop at) in the district too?
    - Who else is in my district and who are in the districts around mine?