



Board of County Commissioners

County of Hunterdon
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MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hunterdon Commissioners Oppose Proposed Reapportionment Plan That Divides County

Hunterdon County's Commissioners, at the February 15th meeting, supported testimony by Board Director John E. Lanza submitted to the New Jersey Legislative Apportionment Commission, calling for all of Hunterdon County to be included in one legislative district, as addressed in the state Constitution, and to include Hunterdon with bordering counties that have a community of interests.

Lanza said, "It has been a long-established redistricting principle, and a condition addressed in the state constitution, that counties with populations capable of fitting within a single legislative district should remain intact."

Article IV, Section II, Paragraph 1 of the New Jersey Constitution states that each district shall be composed, wherever practicable, of one single county, and, if not so practicable, of two or more contiguous whole counties.

Lanza continued, "That principle was ignored in the 2011 re-districting by placing Hunterdon communities in three districts; 15, 16 and 23. And the draft maps presented so far continue the damage – placing many Hunterdon communities in a Mercer County dominated district.

Hunterdon County's population is just short of 130,000 people, while a full legislative district is to be around 232,000 people. Clearly, Hunterdon County should be wholly within one district."

In Lanza's letter to the Apportionment Commission he wrote, 'Demographically and geographically, Hunterdon shares more in common with its neighbors to the east (Somerset) and north (Warren) than it does with Mercer County.

By virtue of the relationships amongst the neighboring county governments, there are communities in interest with Warren and Somerset, that do not exist with Mercer County, including sharing a community college and jail consolidation.



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Hunterdon's court system is also linked to Somerset and Warren in the Supreme Court's delineation of Vicinage XIII.

Western Somerset County and all of Warren County face similar public issues, confronting and controlling sprawl, preserving and maintaining open space and farmland, and fighting the perpetual cuts to school funding from the state.'

Lanza cited to the Commission the complexity of placing Hunterdon communities in three different legislative districts, 'To highlight the most glaring flaw of the one draft map one must consider the following scenario; over one-third of Hunterdon's population feeds the Hunterdon Central Regional High School sending district (Flemington, Raritan, Readington, Delaware and East Amwell).

Under the one map, the 45,000-50,000 citizens who share this common high school will be represented by three different sets of legislators, in three different districts, and will have a determinative say as to whom those legislators will be in none of them.'

Lanza concluded, "The good news is that the two competing maps are only drafts. The 11th member of the Commission, retired Judge Philip S. Carchman, has the ability to improve and correct either map, or even create one of his own.

Hunterdon County should never have been divided between legislative districts in 2011, and the 2022 redistricting effort should be the time that that wrong is righted."