

January 4, 2022

**Testimony to the Majority Policy Committee from
City of Lower Burrell Treasurer Brian Eshbaugh**

Chairman Causer and esteemed state representatives:

As an elected official of the City of Lower Burrell, I thank you for this opportunity to express the disappointment and outrage at the proposed redistricting maps announced last month.

As a 55-year resident of the city and a 27-year elected official, I have taken great interest in the political climate of the area and the state. I was a registered Democrat for 42 years, and recently changed to Republican. Instead of trying to gerrymander their way to power, perhaps the Democrats should change their policies to be more in step with the average Pennsylvanian.

Our third-class city will have its voting precincts split among two state representatives.

Our Burrell School District, consisting of Upper Burrell and Lower Burrell, will be split among two state representatives.

Our two fire companies will be split among two state representatives.

And our city will be shifted to district with the majority in a new county.

I ask you—where is the fairness??

None of these changes benefit the residents of Lower Burrell or Upper Burrell in any way. The only beneficiaries will be major population areas where the Democratic party will have a stronghold.

I understand that change is required every 10 years with redistricting. What I do not understand is why we need to accept such a radical, gerrymandered, and partisan effort to change the balance of power in Pennsylvania. There isn't even an honest attempt to hide what the goal is!!

The only reason one precinct of Lower Burrell (755 votes) was gerrymandered into of new district was to provide contiguous access to Democratic strongholds in New Kensington and Arnold. There was no good legislative purpose to that move.

When municipalities and school districts are split, funding for projects is jeopardized because large population centers will receive the lion's share of grants. Communications between government entities will suffer because of split interests among representatives.

Lower Burrell officials will have to develop new lines of communications with two new representatives. Our major question is if money is awarded from one representative, can that money be used for the benefit the whole city?

Not only does splitting the city of Lower Burrell negatively affect Lower Burrell itself, but it has further ramifications at the other end of the Armstrong County district. While no municipal lines are split, the new map breaks up the whole Kittanning "community of interest." Kittanning Borough, the county seat of Armstrong County, will be placed in the Clarion County district. It also divides the community area by separating Kittanning Borough from West Kittanning Borough, and Kittanning Township, East Franklin and West Franklin Townships.

These splits are ridiculous and are only being done to take away power bases of existing legislators or do away with them altogether.

I have heard that Chancellor Mark Nordenberg is responsible for this proposed redistricting map. He was supposed to be an arbiter between the Democrats and Republicans, but he took on a whole new role as the mapmaker. He was never elected by the people of Pennsylvania to be a power broker. He was never elected to anything. How can one man determine the fate of Pennsylvania politics for generations to come?

Redistricting should never be permitted to change the will of the people. The proposed new map does just that.

I implore this committee to do everything within their power to stop this charade.

**I propose two words be added to the goal of redistricting—
COMMON SENSE!!**

The proposed map does not pass the smell test for fairness and lacks common sense.

It needs to be re-done.

I thank the committee for your time and wish you a healthy and successful 2022.