

January 4, 2022

PA Majority Policy Hearing

Testimony

Joseph Hughes, Springdale PA

My name is Joseph Hughes, I am 48 years old, born and raised in Harmar Twp-PA District 33. I grew up attending the local public schools and graduated from Springdale High School of the Allegheny Valley School District. After graduating high school and attending college for a couple years I decided to move back to Allegheny County (Blawnox Borough) and work in the union building trades. I settled in Aspinwall Borough where I lived for approximately 22 years. I decided to move back to Springdale where I currently reside and bought a commercial building to renovate.

My lifelong ties to the region are important, however so is my party affiliation. I am a Democrat and served on multiple democratic committees in leadership capacities.

Professionally, I have been a member of the International Union of Painters & Allied Trades District Council 57 for almost 23 years and I currently serve as the Director of Government Relations for IUPAT DC 57. I have been on staff as a full-time union representative for nearly 6 years. This information is relevant because I have worked with and I am now a representative for members in 32 counties including many members in the Allegheny River Valley. I have also extensively canvassed the region during multiple campaigns (federal/state/local) which has further increased my vast understanding of people of these communities.

Recently I have testified at the PA House Urbans Affairs Bi-Partisan Committee hearing in Brackenridge Borough (PA District 33) to address blight. I specifically made the valid point that blight remediation is not a partisan issue. I cited 3 different life stories of DC 57 union members who live in Brackenridge. This is yet another example of my extensive grasp on the people of the region's best interests.

Re-districting should be viewed as a (comprehensive) opportunity to provide better representation of people and never to advance a partisan political agenda.

I have multiple issues concerning the proposed new map of the PA House 33rd district from the legislative redistricting commission. The map was drawn with a suspicious reluctance to cross the Allegheny River. This has resulted in a proposed district that is saturated with inequity on many levels. The severe socioeconomic imbalance combined with the geographic challenges will result in decreased, unfair and inefficient representation of the people living in this proposed district.

The socioeconomic and historic differences between some of the communities within the newly proposed 33rd is at a level that can best be described as absurd. The preponderance of disparity within this proposed map is very unsettling to me. There is no doubt in my mind this map was drawn by someone who is completely lacking knowledge of the region and it's people. If not a lack of knowledge, then I would suspect

a blatant disregard for the people as well as an intentional gerrymandering effort which is actually worse. Regardless of intent, I foresee small river towns built on PA manufacturing with coal and steel being overshadowed by one of the wealthiest communities in the country.

My entire life experience has been spent living in and representing fellow Union members within the current and newly proposed 33rd legislative district. Therefore, I believe it is both my professional and personal duty to protect the integrity of the people who live in the PA House District 33.

Thank you for your time.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

Joseph Hughes

Springdale PA