

Testimony of **William (Bill) Bretz**, Township Supervisor, Hempfield Township

I am writing to draw attention to a few of the splits of municipalities present in the proposed State House Districts in Westmoreland County which seem to be avoidable.

District 55 - The Municipality of Murrysville (encompassing the Franklin Regional School District) is the population center of the current 54th district but it is now split in the proposed 55th district stretching from the Allegheny County border far to the east in Unity Township resulting in a group of communities including suburban Pittsburgh and Salem Township that have very diverse challenges and potentially conflicting legislative priorities. The current version of the 54th would seem much better in terms of community continuity and this change seems unnecessary. With the current Westmoreland portion of the 55th district being consolidated with the current 54th rather than expanding into the proposed 62nd because those communities have much more in common their representation could be marginalized.

District 56 - North Huntingdon Township (and Norwin School District) have been split and part of the Municipality of Murrysville (and Franklin Regional School District) along with the City of Jeannette (and Jeannette School District) have been added. The current 56th is a nearly perfect district that encompassed both Norwin and Penn-Trafford School Districts along with the several municipalities they cover without splitting. This change seems unnecessary.

District 57 - The proposed district does succeed in consolidating Hempfield Township (and Hempfield Area School District) and the several municipalities it surrounds into one contiguous legislative district. The one anomaly is splitting out the lightly populated borough of Hunker as part of the 58th because that community is both 95% surrounded by Hempfield Township and their children attend Hempfield Area School District so it makes little sense to move them. The split of the Greensburg-Salem School District is not a concern as it existed before and is geographically two communities separated by Hempfield Township already.

District 58 - The removal of the City of Jeannette and the addition of several precincts of North Huntingdon Township may be offsetting in terms of population but it creates an unnecessary split of North Huntingdon Township (and Norwin School District). To the south, the consolidation of all precincts in East Huntingdon Township and Scottdale Borough does consolidate the Westmoreland County portion of Southmoreland School District but breaking out Hunker Borough from the 57th and Hempfield School District is baffling.

I close with three thoughts - why is the 11th most populous county in the state losing a house district (54th), why would we split the communities of Murrysville and North Huntingdon (and their school districts) when they aren't currently split, and why would Hunker Borough, a community of 329 people, be left out of the 57th district and separated from the other 50,000 residents of the Hempfield Area School District?