

VIRGINIA REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

PUBLIC INPUT REPORT – SOUTHSIDE REGION

October 7, 2021

TOTAL NUMBER OF COMMENTS: 14

DATE: 10/6/2021 2:50:29 PM

Name: Cynthia Ingram
Stakeholder Type: Private individual
Email: cwingram@comcast.net
Locality: Redistricting should be fair and not utilized against people of color from
Region: **Southside**
Type of comment: This is directed at republicans who do everything in their power to limit people of color from improving our status in life
Map: Map #173 New Virginia Majority - House of Delegates -- Citizen submitted (9-30-21)
Topic(s) of interest: Population equality, Voting rights and political participation, Communities of interest
Community of interest name: West end Martinsville
Community of interest description: African American

DATE: 10/4/2021 4:47:40 PM

Name: Donna Cosmato
Stakeholder Type: Elected official
Email: dcosmato@gmail.com
Locality: Franklin County VA
Region: **Southside**
Type of comment: Comment on the community in which I live
Topic(s) of interest: Redistricting

COMMENTS:

District maps should remain as they are currently; Franklin coupled with Pittsylvania County.

DATE: 10/4/2021 12:30:20 PM

Name: Will Pace
Stakeholder Type: Private individual
Email: chathamwap@gmail.com
Locality: Pittsylvania County
Region: **Southside**
Type of comment: Comment on the community in which I live
Map: N/A
Topic(s) of interest: Communities of interest

COMMENTS:

My name is Will Pace and I am a resident of Pittsylvania County. I also serve as Mayor of Chatham, which is the county seat of Pittsylvania County. I have been following the efforts of the Redistricting Commission and have been anticipating how the City of Danville and Pittsylvania County would look like. I appreciate the recent changes made to keep the communities of interest intact within Danville-Pittsylvania County.
The Senate District maps (A5 and B4) are perfect for Danville-Pittsylvania County. Don't touch them. Leave them alone.
The House District maps (A7 and B6) are better than the previous versions, so thank you for those fixes. These maps split Pittsylvania County north and south, which is the way it should be done. In addition, these maps maintain for the most part the communities of interest for Chatham, Gretna and Hurt all in one House district while maintaining the communities of interest for Danville in another House district.

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Please do everything to keep these communities of interest (COI) intact and leave Senate District maps (A5 and B4) and House District maps (A7 and B6) as is for our region. I have listed the town and cities communities of interest below.

Hurt COI: Town of Hurt, Motley, Renan, Sycamore

Gretna COI: Town of Gretna, Mt. Airy, Pittsville, Sandy Level

Chatham COI: Town of Chatham, Callands, Dry Fork, Java, Riceville, Rondo, and Tightsqueeze

Danville COI: City of Danville, Bachelors Hall, Berry Hill, Brosville, Kentuck, Laurel Grove, Mount Cross, Mount Hermon, Ringgold, Stony Mill, Tunstall, and Whitmell.

Finally, Danville City and Martinsville City should NOT be placed in the same House district as these cities and their surrounding areas are NOT communities of interest. Putting the cities of Danville and Martinsville in the same House district will split their respective communities of interest and will create a Gerrymandered House District. Martinsville's COI are Chatmoss, Collinsville, and Fieldale. A Gerrymandered Danville City-Martinsville City House District will keep Chatmoss, Collinsville, and Fieldale outside of a House district with the City of Martinsville, and will keep Kentuck, Laurel Grove, Mount Cross, Mount Hermon, and Ringgold outside of a House district with the City of Danville.

DATE: 10/4/2021 4:19:39 AM

Name: Brenda Campbell
Stakeholder Type: Private individual
Email: BCAMBELL12@comcast.net
Locality: Ridgeway, VA
Region: **Southside**
Type of comment: Comment on the community in which I live
Topic(s) of interest: Communities of interest

COMMENTS:

I live in Ridgeway just south of Martinsville. Please leave the proposed Senate Districts and House Districts for Henry County and Martinsville City as drawn by the mapmakers as is. As a former member of the Ridgeway Town Council, I can attest that Ridgeway, not Martinsville, shares more similar characteristics with Danville area. As such, I believe that Ridgeway should be with a district that contains the Danville area. That being said, the City of Martinsville should not be in a House district with the City of Danville because such a move would split the communities of interest between both cities. Also, Southern Henry county communities such as Ridgeway should also be in a district with Southern Pittsylvania and Danville. All of these communities border North Carolina and deal with the same crossover jobs, businesses, shopping areas, and even some shared grant money between Virginia and North Carolina border communities. It is unique being on the border with our neighboring state.

DATE: 10/3/2021 4:03:02 PM

Name: Joyce Dianne McMahon
Stakeholder Type: Private individual
Email: diannebrook@yahoo.com
Locality: Mt. Hermon Precinct
Region: **Southside**
Type of comment: Comment on the community in which I live
Map: A7 & B6
Topic(s) of interest: Communities of interest
Community of interest name: Mt. Hermon precinct in Southern Pittsylvania County

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Community of interest description: Mt. Hermon

COMMENTS:

I live in Mt. Hermon precinct in Pittsylvania County. Please leave the map the way it's drawn in Southern Pittsylvania Co and Danville district in tact that is with city of Danville not Martinsville

DATE: 9/28/2021 3:33:38 PM

Name: Brady Walker
Stakeholder Type: Private individual
Email: walker.w.brady@gmail.com
Locality: Pittsylvania County
Region: **Southside**
Type of comment: Comment on the community in which I live
Topic(s) of interest: Population equality, Communities of interest
Community of interest name: Danville and Martinsville
Community of interest description: Martinsville has a 'Black alone or in combination' population of 48.2%. Danville has a 'Black alone or in combination' population of 53.4%.

COMMENTS:

Currently, House of Delegates District 14 runs from eastern Pittsylvania County, including the city of Danville, to eastern Henry County. Far too often, this area of the state is overlooked, and I fear this is happening again with the proposed maps by both sets of consultants. Consultants should consider drawing a House of Delegates district that includes both Martinsville and Danville.

Martinsville and Danville are connected via Route 58, share SOVA Health's hospital system, and are the region's economic hubs outside of Lynchburg, Roanoke, and Greensboro, NC. Martinsville and Danville represent an area of that state that has suffered significantly from economic and population decline since the textile and tobacco industries became unsustainable. Now, as both cities pivot towards an economy with an emphasis on technology and manufacturing, Martinsville faces the incredibly difficult task of reverting from an independent city to a town. Since 1995, three independent cities, including our neighbor South Boston, have reverted to towns. Though these reversions have been successful in the long term, I feel as though it's important to anchor Martinsville to Danville with a single delegate, to ensure economic stability and growth going forward.

These two cities also have similar racial demographics, including a large minority population. According to statistics provided by the US 2020 Census, Martinsville has a 'Black alone or in combination' population of 48.2%. Danville has a 'Black alone or in combination' population of 53.4%. I was able to create an example district that was 48.91% minority and 51.09% White. Though this does not constitute a minority-majority district, it would ensure that minorities would be able to elect a delegate of their choosing. The Readjuster Party, a biracial coalition that formed following the Reconstruction Era, had significant success in Virginia. Danville was able to elect a majority Black council and hired an integrated police force due to expanded voting access from actions taken by the Readjuster Party. Martinsville has two minority city council members while Danville has five. Historical legacy and current racial demographics must be factors in drawing a district that gives a voice to residents of the Southside. Finally, these two cities share similar voting patterns. I won't go into too much detail here as it is obvious with national polarization that urban areas tend to vote for the Democratic Party while rural areas tend to vote for the Republican party. For the 2020 Presidential Election, Martinsville and Danville voted roughly 61% for Biden to 39% for Trump. State and Federal elections mirror these numbers.

I am concerned by the lack of engagement from residents in this area. My fear is that as this commission scrambles to complete its maps in the coming days, residents of Martinsville and Danville will be ignored at the expense of districts in Hampton Roads, Richmond, and Northern Virginia. A consolidated map that is hastily submitted on a weekend and hashed out early on a single weekday morning will not ensure fair maps for all residents.

DATE: 10/1/2021 11:55:51 AM

Name: David and Jeanette Bell

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Stakeholder Type: Private individual
Email: jhbell58@hotmail.com
Locality: Danville
Region: **Southside**
Type of comment: Comment on the community in which I live
Topic(s) of interest: Population equality, Communities of interest

COMMENTS:

We are residents of the City of Danville and would appreciate your consideration of this community of interest as you are drawing the maps.

Southern Pittsylvania County and Danville City should remain in one House district including Danville's Communities of Interest.

Danville's Communities of Interest include Danville City, Bachelors Hall, Berry Hill, Mount Cross, Mount Hermon, and Ringgold. Many people who live in these areas commute and/or work in Danville.

Also, Southern Henry county communities such as Ridgeway should also be in the district with Southern Pittsylvania and Danville. All of these communities border North Carolina and deal with the same crossover of jobs, businesses, shopping areas, and even some shared grant money between Virginia and North Carolina border communities. It is unique being on the border with our neighboring state.

DATE: 10/1/2021 11:58:04 AM

Name: Dianne McMahon
Stakeholder Type: Private individual
Email: diannebrook@yahoo.com
Locality: Danville
Region: **Southside**
Type of comment: Comment on the community in which I live
Topic(s) of interest: Communities of interest
Community of interest name: Danville; City of Danville, Bachelors Hall, Berry Hall, Mt Cross, Mt Hermon, and Ringgold

COMMENTS:

I am writing to you on consideration of this community of interested you are drawing the maps. Southern Pittsylvania County and Danville should remain in one House district including Danville community of interest.

Danville community of interest includes City of Danville, Bachelors Hall, Berry Hill, Mt Cross, Mt Hermon and Ringgold. Many people who live in these areas commute to or work in Danville.

Southern Henry County communities such as Ridgeway should also be in the district with Southern Pittsylvania County and Danville. All communities border North Carolina and deal with the same crossover businesses, jobs and shopping. Also some grant money between Virginia and North Carolina.

It is a different situation being on the border with a neighboring state. I am resident if Mt. Hermon community.

DATE: 10/1/2021 11:59:24 AM

Name: Gayle Barts
Stakeholder Type: Private individual
Email: gfbarts@gmail.com
Locality: Danville
Region: **Southside**
Type of comment: Comment on the community in which I live
Topic(s) of interest: Communities of interest
Community of interest name: Danville City, Bachelors Hall, Berry Hill, Mount Cross, Mount Hermon, and Ringgold

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COMMENTS:

Thank you for allowing citizens to request consideration of this community of interest as you are drawing the maps. Southern Pittsylvania County and Danville City should remain in one House district including Danville's Communities of Interest which include Danville City, Bachelors Hall, Berry Hill, Mount Cross, Mount Hermon, and Ringgold. Many people who live in these areas commute and/or work in Danville.

I believe the Southern Henry county communities such as Ridgeway should also be in the district with Southern Pittsylvania and Danville. These communities all border North Carolina and deal with the same crossover of jobs, businesses, shopping areas, and even some shared grant money between Virginia and North Carolina border communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinion.

DATE: 10/1/2021 12:01:27 PM

Name: Mary Franklin
Stakeholder Type: Private individual
Email: aidetodwm@yahoo.com
Locality: Pittsylvania County
Region: **Southside**
Tyle of comment: Comment on the community in which I live
Topic(s) of interest: Communities of interest
Community of interest name: Ringgold

COMMENTS:

I am a resident of southern Pittsylvania County (Ringgold) and work in Danville. I have suggestions concerning the communities of interest in our region. Some of the factors that I am considering are jobs, adjoining borders to Danville, use of central services such as hospital, electric service, and regional community events. Please consider: Southern Pittsylvania County and Danville City should remain in one House district including Danville's Communities of Interest.

Danville's Communities of Interest include Danville City, Bachelors Hall, Berry Hill, Mount Cross, Mount Hermon, and Ringgold. Many people who live in these areas commute and/or work in Danville.

Also, Southern Henry county communities such as Ridgeway should also be in the district with Southern Pittsylvania and Danville. All of these communities border North Carolina and deal with the same crossover of jobs, businesses, shopping areas, and even some shared grant money between Virginia and North Carolina border communities. It is unique being on the border with our neighboring state.

DATE: 10/1/2021 12:09:31 PM

Name: Brady Walker
Stakeholder Type: Private individual
Email: walker.w.brady@gmail.com
Locality: Pittsylvania County
Region: **Southside**
Tyle of comment: Comment on the community in which I live
Topic(s) of interest: Population equality

COMMENTS:

As Delegate Adams touched on this morning, Pittsylvania County should be split on a North/South divide rather than East/West. Splitting East/West along Highway 29 will needlessly separate Gretna, Hurt, and Chatham which rely closely on each other. Additionally, Danville and Martinsville should be in a single district together as referenced in my comments submitted via email on 9/26.

DATE RECEIVED: Saturday, August 14, 2021 10:53:54 AM GMT-04:00

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FROM: varedist@dls.virginia.gov
NAME: edward strickler
EMAIL: edwardnvirginia@hotmail.com
REGION: Southside
LOCALITY: Farmville

SUBJECT: Just districting to remedy historical and present injustices harmful to rural Virginians

COMMENT:
Rural areas have the GREATEST ADVERSE health, longevity, education, job development, and other disparities, inequities and injustices. In rural communities people GET SICK more, STAY sick and disabled longer, and DIE SOONER than metro areas (see <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/reports/state-reports/2020-virginia-report>). The Richmond based Federal Reserve Bank reports that rural areas have GREATEST LAGGING ASSETS AND OUTCOMES in educational attainment, and employment-to-population ratios, and uplift out of poverty (see at https://www.richmondfed.org/research/regional_economy/regional_matters/2021/rm_03_11_21_landscape_race and other research at the Bank's site). Additionally, in some regions of Virginia, rural counties and communities are plurality or majority Black (<https://www.indexmundi.com/facts/united-states/quick-facts/virginia/black-population-percentage#map>) which means that racist Progressive Era/Jim Crow history of law making in Virginia NEGLECTED these rural areas/regions MOST, producing a legacy across generations of great injustice. Rural Virginians, therefore, suffering MORE injustice, both historically and presently, than metro Virginians, deserve utmost care in redistricting. Thank you. Edward Strickler, MA, MA, MPH, retired, School of Medicine, UVA, and past chair, Ethics Section, American Public Health Association. Farmville VA. els2e@virginia.edu

DATE RECEIVED: Friday, August 13, 2021 4:27:31 PM GMT-04:00
FROM: Suzanne Fuhrmeister <suzannefuhrmeister@gmail.com>
REGION: Southside
LOCALITY: Henry County

COMMENT:
Dear Commissioners,
I was so happy the day I realized we would have a commission to redraw the electoral districts. As the time rapidly approaches that you must present your redistricting recommendations, with so little time since receiving the census results, I know the temptation would be to use existing maps. Please choose another path. Voters did not turn out and vote to change the process just to work off the same gerrymandered maps.
Please choose another option.
Suzanne Fuhrmeister
Henry County, Va
Sent from my iPhone

DATE RECEIVED: Wednesday, August 4, 2021 1:55:45 PM GMT-04:00
FROM: Janet Demiray <patrickdems@gmail.com>
REGION: Southside
LOCALITY: Patrick County

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COMMENT:

To the Members of the Commission:

I regret that I was unable to participate in the virtual public comment meeting on redistricting for Southwest Virginia that the Commission held recently. I did wish to contribute a comment that pertains to redistricting as it affects my home community, Patrick County. Patrick County is wholly contained within the 9th Congressional District, the 20th Virginia Senate District, and the 9th Virginia House of Delegates District. I have no particular problems with the first two districts, which have had to become larger geographically over the years, as the population of Virginia shifted away from rural areas, particularly south central and southwestern Virginia. This is true also of the House of Delegates districts, as Patrick lost its "own" delegate and became part of a geographically larger district. Before 2011, this district included all of Patrick and most of Henry County and Martinsville. This made sense from many perspectives: this is an area with historic ties, a shared economy, a major transportation link (Hwy. 58), and shared governmental and public institutions, including the circuit court, the regional public library system and the community college. However, in 2011, the Republican-controlled Virginia legislature went through a redistricting exercise that included redrawing the House of Delegates districts in Patrick County and Henry County/Martinsville, with the result that one district was lost--it just happened to be that of the then-Minority Leader of the House of Delegates, and Henry County/Martinsville was split up among three different House districts. Patrick County was small enough to be kept whole, but it was put into a district with Franklin County and a few border precincts of Henry County. This district, the 9th House District, while not a terrible example of gerrymandering, could and should be made to better represent the people of Patrick and western Henry County by reuniting them in a district with their natural community of interest, which includes the rest of Henry County and Martinsville, and separating this area from Franklin County. A district that includes Patrick and Henry Counties and the City of Martinsville would have a population of about 80,000, which is within the current range for House of Delegate districts. This would not only make sense for Patrick County, but would reunite Henry County into one House district; this is especially of interest since the City of Martinsville is in the process of reversion to town status and should be united with Henry County in its state legislative district. I do not believe that such a district would have very much, if any, impact on the partisan makeup of the House of Delegates, at least not in the near future, but would make a district that makes sense for local government, businesses and voters.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Demiray

Patrick County native

Chair, Patrick County Democratic Committee

Former member, Board of Trustees of Blue Ridge Regional Library (Patrick and Henry Counties and City of Martinsville)