
From: Jim Harlan [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, January 4, 2022 5:29 PM
To: House & Governmental Affairs
Subject: A Suggested Map Reflecting Key Principles for Congressional Districts

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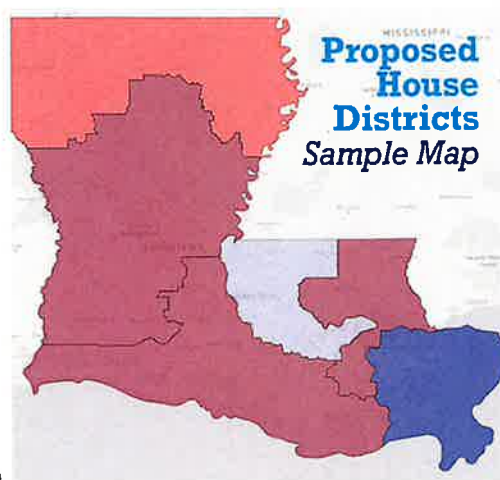
To the Honorable Committee:

At the “Roadshow” meeting in Covington at the end of November I made oral comments reflecting my perspective as a businessman citizen with a PhD Public Policy and November 2008 Congressional Candidate in LA-01. As a centrist on the political spectrum I advocate for conformance for key constitutional and systemic principles in the public interest rather than narrow political advantage. In my off-the-cuff remarks that day, I made the following points:

- (1) Electoral districts are not the property of individuals or parties holding them currently, but rather groupings of voters at various levels that should support recognition and engagement of the voters with the persons elected to both reflect the preferences of voters in a community including understanding and recognition of the often inherent competing considerations and tradeoffs.
- (2) Community of interest and compactness should be dominant principles for the drawing of political districts. Incumbency and the balancing of demographic or political interests across a larger geographic are materially less important than drawing districts that make sense to voters given established natural community identities and jurisdictional lines. Drawing compact districts based on natural or existing boundaries can improve voter and community engagement in a process that recently has been much more about partisan interest.
- (3) The maps presented showing population shifts in color and existing districts do not show the natural geographic and economic and community character that are important for district lines that reflect a logic that is more community reasonable than partisan or incumbent responsive. Incumbency should not matter. The districts are drawn to represent communities of people not individuals or parties.
- (4) As a citizen who prioritizes a fair sensible outcome even though preferring an improvement in Democratic competitiveness, I would prioritize compact community definitions over partisan and related racial demographic considerations. The process should be about principles that make sense to citizens not about partisan power or preference.
- (5) I noted that citizens of the Northshore, based on detailed polling relevant to my own Congressional campaign decisions in 2008, have a strong 95% level preference for a representative from Congress from the Northshore. This fact was one reason that I invested substantial effort and resources to provide an moderate alternative from the Northshore for the 1st Congressional district.
- (6) I noted that for the compactness and community identity objective, the 1st Congressional District could be logically drawn to start with St. Tammany and Washington Parish and then move westward though Tangipahoa into Livingston Parish as far as necessary to realize the district population numbers. This would essentially be

an “I-12” corridor and north district for the north of Lake Ponchartrain district. At the time, I had not studied any alternative maps or tradeoffs.

Recently, I have become aware of a map that realizes outcomes generally consistent with these fundamental principles. While it does include a combination of Metairie with the Northshore to make the totals work, there is an strong element of community identity in the “New Orleans” suburbs element of community character shared between St. Tammany and Metairie. This map would return to the situation similar to when I ran for Congress in 2008 and would, unlike some proposals, not bi-furcate parts of the city of Slidell from its long established St. Tammany parish identity and political participation.



This map is provided herewith.

I note the following with respect to this map:

For CD-1: Northshore geographic integrity combined with reach to include Metairie as part of “suburban New Orleans” identity.

For CD-2:: New Orelans and adjacent south of Lake parishes including the mouth of Mississippi communities that depend on New Orleans port, infrastructure, and tourism engagement as key economic elements.

For CD-3: A costal Louisiana district with major population center at Lafayette a city with both strong cultural and economic ties based on the Louisiana coast: Pointedly, this district exclude Lake Charles and Calcasieue, which is much more of a petrochemical processing economy,

For CD-5: Lake Charles and Alexandria would be focal population centers. Lake Charles reflects industrial based activities not focussed on the coast and Alexandria is a reflects vital small city concerns

For CD-4: The I-40 corridor reflects the realities of the culture and identity of rural towns along the corridor combined with the role of Shreveport/Boosier in that corridor.

For CD-6: This combines Baton Rouge with its nearby river-baed industries. The district would be roughly balanced demographically.

I suggest that the persons involved with making these decisions reflect the compact and community of interest over narrower partisan and political aspects to drawn these important lines and improve representation for Louisiana’s people.

Submitted by:

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