

# **The 2021 Redistricting Process and the Public's Crucial Role**

*- By Rep. Frank Ryan (R-Lebanon)*

It is that time again when legislative redistricting issues are front and center in Harrisburg.

With the census being released in mid-year 2021, the work began on the Pennsylvania House and Senate, and federal congressional representation. Overall, the significant trends were that Pennsylvania experienced minimal population growth overall but major migration from its northwest, and northern counties to its south central and southeastern counties.

The redistricting process involves allocating the respective seats based on the revised population since the last census in 2010.

At the federal level, the Commonwealth is losing one congressional seat, going from 18 seats in Washington, D. C., to 17. The House State Government Committee, of which I am a member for the past five years, is responsible for advancing a map. We recently released a map that kept Lebanon County whole. Should the map be approved, Lebanon County will remain in one legislative district - the 11th Congressional District.

### ***There are three basic redistricting maps every 10 years:***

1. Pennsylvania State House of Representatives – there are 203 seats, which will be allocated based on population with each seat representing about 64,000 residents.
2. Pennsylvania Senate – there are 50 seats allocated with each representing approximately 260,000 residents.
3. U. S. House of Representatives – 17 seats with virtually identical population of approximately 765,000. At the federal level, each district must have an identical population count to meet a former Supreme Court requirement.

Relative to the changes impacting our area, the PA House and the U. S. House of Representatives' preliminary maps experienced the most significant changes.

For the U. S. House map, Lebanon County is tentatively no longer combined with northern counties and the entire county will be combined with all of Lancaster County and part of Dauphin County. We had this type of combination in the 1990s. The PA Senate map keeps Lebanon County intact and in the same senatorial district that it is currently.

The most significant changes are in the current PA House of Representatives map. Currently, my district, the 101st, includes North Londonderry, South Londonderry, Palmyra, South Annville, and Mount Gretna as well as other areas. In the proposed House map, all of localities except North Londonderry and Palmyra would be moved into the 98th District in Lancaster County. The 98th District is presently represented by Rep. Dave Hickernell.

North Londonderry and Palmyra would be moved into the 102nd District and be represented by Rep. Russ Diamond. Under the proposed new map, the 101st district, would include North Lebanon, West Lebanon and South Lebanon.

***Despite great representatives in the two newly created districts, my concerns for this proposed House map include:***

1. It splits our communities of interest of North Londonderry, South Londonderry and Palmyra.
2. The current 101st district office, in North Londonderry, would be in the 102nd District, so residents of South Londonderry, South Annville, and Mount Gretna would generally have further to travel to get to the district office in Elizabethtown.
3. Some of our fastest growing municipalities will likely no longer have a Lebanon representative, particularly since Rep. Hickernell has announced plans to retire at the end of the current term.

Public involvement in the legislative redistricting process from this point forward is critically important. Now that the preliminary plan has been filed with the secretary of the Commonwealth, the public's ability to provide feedback on the plan has begun. Specifically, the ability to file exceptions is now active on the [Legislative Redistricting Commission's \(LRC's\) website here](#).

The deadline to file an exception is Jan. 18, 2022. Exceptions must be either uploaded on the LRC's website or physically received by the commission by that deadline. Exceptions received after the deadline - even if post-marked before that date - cannot be considered by the commission.

Again, this opportunity for residents to intervene in the process is critically important. Please share this information with any constituent or community leader who has concerns with the preliminary map.

The commission will hold public hearings in Harrisburg in January. The hearing dates and times will be announced shortly, and I promise to keep you updated. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact me and I will be very happy to discuss them with you. I hope you all have a wonderful Christmas and a happy New Year. It is an honor to be your state representative.

***Frank Ryan, CPA, Col USMCR (Ret) represents the 101st District in the PA House of Representatives. He is a retired Marine Reserve Colonel, a CPA and specializes in corporate restructuring. He serves as vice chairman of the PSERS Pension Board and chairman of its Audit/Compliance Committee. He can be reached at [fryan@pahousegop.com](mailto:fryan@pahousegop.com).***

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