

I have lived in the community of North Bethesda for 21 years. I voted for the additional districts in the hope that it would lead to better representation than the current districts, which are too large and too heterogeneous for the members to represent community interests well. The proposed map fails to provide this for my community.

The community of North Bethesda is defined by two roads: Route 270 and Rockville Pike. The most important issues facing our community involve Route 270 expansion and development along Rockville Pike, specifically Pike and Rose and the other development between White Flint and Grosvenor. We share interests with the other communities affected by these developments, including areas such as Kensington, Potomac, Twinbrook, and the Parklawn area. The area we share the greatest interest with is Rockville. My neighborhood (Old Farm) falls along Montrose Road, and we share a school, two community pools, and a community with North Farm. Our community is completely broken up by this map.

In contrast, we do not share interests with the areas we are grouped with in the proposed map. These areas are far more interested in Beltway expansion than in anything related to Route 270, and have no interest in anything concerning Rockville Pike. The best information I have been able to find is that the commission somehow considered us a similar community to downtown Silver Spring on the basis that there are apartment buildings on Rockville Pike. Further, the original version of the proposed map did group us with several of the communities along Rockville Pike (if not 270), but this was changed at the request of another community. It is clear that the original version of the map would serve our community better, and it is not clear why the interest of the community that requested the change should be more important.

As I understand it, the commission had six goals for the redistricting. The proposed map fails to satisfy three of them for my community. It is clearly not compact. It is contiguous only because of an artificial, very thin connection in the center, clearly drawn to avoid violating this principle. And it does not preserve our community interest.

Susan Zengerle