

NYS Redistricting: "Makes No Sense"



NY State Legislature Building

Reported by: Sean Carroll

Email: scarroll@13wham.com

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Rochester, N.Y. --- An Assemblyman from Rochester says he'll sue!

Governor Andrew Cuomo is vowing to use his veto power.

Critics, government groups, and voters from all corners of the state are attacking newly drawn legislative district lines. Every ten years, with new Census results in hand, a group of legislators are set to re-draw the political map. It is a process that has long been criticized for its partisan and political outcomes and the 2012 version does little to change that perception.

"I mean I don't have a problem with re-districting but this makes no sense," longtime 19th Ward resident and Rochester native LaShay Harris said when

looking at the newly drawn State Senate District she would be a part of.

Currently LaShay and her neighbors in the 19th Ward are represented by Republican Joe Robach of Greece who has always represented large portions of the City of Rochester.

But the newly proposed district would mean Republican Michael Ranzenhofer of the affluent Buffalo suburb of Amherst would represent the 19th Ward. The district would also include the Greater Rochester International Airport and the region's largest employer, the University of Rochester.

"Amherst is pretty much like a Pittsford of the Buffalo area and I'm very familiar because I travel all over New York State for various reasons and I mean it just makes no sense," Harris said.

Assemblyman David Gantt of Rochester tells 13WHAM News this newly proposed Ranzenhofer district is among the most objectionable in his mind. Gantt said he'll pursue legal action if these districts remain in place because of the disenfranchising effect they will have on minorities in Rochester.

"When you break up the City of Rochester into three different Senate districts for example," Kent Gardner from the Center for Governmental Research explained. "And (you) make the residents of the city a minority of the district as a whole; than I suspect that their interests are not going to be as aggressively perceived by the representative as a district that would be more consistently like the city itself."

"It doesn't matter who it is, Republican or Democrat it's wrong! Period," Harris said. "Talk to your voters, talk to your constituents, I guarantee you when you talk to the 19th Ward residents or other folks from the city they'll be like where does that come from?"

"I don't think they had the Rochester voters in mind, maybe the rural voters but this makes no sense for Rochester," Harris concluded.

The newly proposed districts would result in six different (currently Republican) State Senators sharing portions of Monroe County. Only two of them would live in Monroe County with the other four living as far away as Elma, Amherst, Newfane, and Fayette in Seneca County

State Senator James Alesi lives in Perinton and currently represents a district that is entirely within the borders of Monroe County. However his newly proposed district would stretch from the shores of Lake Ontario in Irondequoit and Rochester, to the southern shores of Canandaigua Lake and the Town of Naples which borders Yates and Steuben Counties.

Sen. Patrick Gallivan already represents a district that stretches from west of Orchard Park where the Buffalo Bills play to west of Canandaigua. Yet the former Erie County Sheriff who lives in Elma is now looking at a newly proposed district that could have him campaigning at Marketplace Mall in Henrietta and West Sparta in Livingston County.

Gov. Cuomo has called the newly drawn district lines political and he vows to veto the current proposal if it makes its way to his desk.

"The Republicans in the State Senate are understandably concerned about their future and I think that the map we see, that's what Gerrymandering is all about, it's about gaining electoral advantage," Gardner from CGR said. "The way the world works, to the victor go the spoils and one of the spoils of war in politics has been the ability to draw maps and they're taking advantage of the power they have. The question is, if the other people who have power in this relationship, particularly the Governor, are going to let them get away with it."

Redistricting is not an easy process and this link was passed along to me to illustrate just how complicated it is. Ms. Shea's Participation in Government class at Pittsford Sutherland High School used this exercise to show the challenges.