



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara reminds constituents, community leaders to participate in second round of public hearings on legislative redistricting starting next week

THOMAS F. O'MARA October 15, 2021

| ISSUE: **LEGISLATIVE REDISTRICTING**



This Commission, overwhelmingly approved by the voters, holds out hope for a redistricting process that is more open and transparent. It will only be effective if local citizens across this state participate to make their voices heard.

[UPDATE: The hearing for the Rochester/Finger Lakes region is scheduled for Thursday, October 21, beginning at 4:00 p.m. The Southern Tier hearing is scheduled for Thursday,

October 25 at 4:00 p.m. The hearings will be livestreamed on www.nyirc.gov/meetings.]

Elmira, N.Y., October 15—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) is reminding constituents to make their voices heard in the redrawing of state legislative and congressional districts to help ensure fair representation in state and federal government for the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions, and statewide.

“Millions of New Yorkers voted overwhelmingly in 2014 to take the politics out of the once-every-decade legislative redistricting process and put it in the hands of an Independent Redistricting Commission. The 2014 constitutional amendment creating the Commission seeks to ensure that no region of the state, special interest or political party gains an unfair advantage in the process. There is a second opportunity for the public to provide input for balanced government and I encourage concerned citizens and community leaders to participate,” said O'Mara.

Every 10 years, New York State is required to draw new district lines that reflect population and demographic changes reported in the most recent Census. Unlike in previous years when state legislative leaders fully controlled the process, more than 2 million New Yorkers voted in a 2014 referendum to give that responsibility to a new Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC).

The IRC conducted its first round virtual public hearings earlier this summer to collect input from citizens and devise the best possible redistricting plan. The commission released its initial set of draft maps of proposed legislative districts in mid-September and next week will begin holding a second round of virtual public hearings on the proposed new districts for the 2022 elections.

The IRC website allows citizen interaction. It allows residents to sign up to participate in the hearings or to submit written testimony. According to the IRC, anyone wanting to participate must sign up through the web portal for the regional hearing encompassing their specific community.

The hearing covering the Finger Lakes region is scheduled for Thursday, October 21, beginning at 4:00 p.m. Anyone wanting to participate in the meeting must sign up on the IRC website by 4:00 p.m. on October 19.

The hearing for the Southern Tier is scheduled for Monday, October 25, beginning at 4:00 p.m. Sign-ups for this meeting end at 4:00 p.m. on October 23.

For more information, including how to participate and/or submit testimony, go to:
www.nyirc.gov/meetings.

As part of its charge to revise district lines for the State Senate, Assembly and Congress, the IRC must consider impacts on existing neighborhoods and communities, based on information it gathers from its virtual hearings and written testimony.

Following this second round of virtual hearings, the IRC is scheduled to release final maps for legislative approval in early 2022.