

Statement from Jane Aiello, Registrar of Voters and Vice chairman of Trumbull Redistricting Committee

"My original thought when appointed to the redistricting committee was that I would begin with an open-minded concept that if we kept the 7 districts that have worked successfully, and tried to eliminate as many split districts as possible, we could disrupt the least number of households.

At the same time, we would reduce the budget. Direct contact with townspeople has made me acutely aware of their response to being bounced around unnecessarily...disenfranchised if you will....from their own neighborhoods. Some sacrifices will have to be made, but slash and burn is not the ideal choice. The 7 districts provide for an equal balance of population in each, a close involvement within each, and an impartial attempt at government.

The larger the district in size, the more alien each person is to another's needs. For instance, if you live in the southern end of a large district, why should a homeowner in the northern end care what happens south. We need to be a community, keep the community pulling together. We don't need council reps who are also out of touch. Each council member is responsible to 1715 people and should be intimately familiar with the needs of his whole district. That cannot be done if a member is responsible to over 10,290 people as in the SUPER DISTRICT. It cannot be divided up like a pie among the representatives. Each represents all.

During elections, larger districts will require more staffing, not less; that is, unless we want longer waiting at the polls and more impossible parking.

As for the schools, the Election Dept. has worked diligently to effect a better parking situation and opportunity for seniors or residents with health issues to access the polling places. There will always be issues to be resolved. That is the responsibility of the Elections Dept.

In my almost 60 years as a Trumbull resident, I have watched as the town grew from farm and swamp land, a great place to live, to a thriving suburb with a desirable location. Because it is so, it also has a transient population. We have a good school system and Trumbull can still be a wonderful place to live except that partisan politics seems to be driving almost every facet of life here, and detrimentally so. When the redistricting committee was formed, the structure of the committee members was set at 3 Republicans and 2 Democrats. I was hopeful that if the members were not biased by their political affiliations, we could come to a reasonable conclusion. Unfortunately, that seems to have been naive of me. The most important consideration for the current majority party is to gain even more control of the power base in Trumbull. These comments are based on my own conversations with majority party leaders. Even before this committee was formed, 4 districts was being planned. The unequal structure of this committee speaks volumes as to that.

Unfair manipulation\* is what we have been sworn not to do, and it is being proposed with the 4 district plan. We cannot use inflated expense figures, or meaningless statements about the panacea we reach with 4 districts, to impose a one-sided redistricting plan on our community. Again, this is about the entire town's population, not just about the voting population, or what it means politically.

\*act of gerrymandering is an unfair manipulation of an electoral area for political advantage."