



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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Testimony of State Representative Peter Villano
Connecticut Reapportionment Commission
Public Hearing at Fair Haven Middle School, New Haven
July 19, 2011

In this fall's Municipal elections all registered voters in Hamden's Whitneyville neighborhood will, as in all odd-numbered years, again vote for candidates of their choice at the accessible 5th District neighborhood polling place.

For the 2012 State and National elections, however, the "accessibility" changes for over 300 voters occupying apartment buildings, condos, and co-ops on the east side of Whitney Avenue and, on the west side, family homes on portions of Blake Road, Augur Street and Carleton Street.

Here's why. Following the last national census 10 years ago, a reapportionment panel, needing to adjust voter numbers between House Districts 91 (Hamden) and 96 (New Haven), arbitrarily drew a line down the center of Whitney Avenue from the New Haven line to Waite Street, separating every voter to the east from their neighbors, plus the families in those three blocks to the west. For Municipal elections, that division does not apply. But for every State and National election since then it does, and voters affected now have to get into their cars or be driven some miles to the other side of Lake Whitney and back in order to vote at Ridge Hill School or St. Stephens's School on the east side of town. There is no public transportation between Whitneyville and those schools.

Now part of New Haven's 96th District, as a consequence of that change are such historic local institutions as the Whitneyville Congregational Church, Hamden Hall Country Day School and Eli Whitney Museum.

Anthony Esposito, President of the Registrars of Voters Association of Connecticut is concerned that voter turnout suffers when polling places are changed in this manner. He sees it happening here. He advocates encouraging voter turnout by making a trip to the polls as familiar and easy as possible.

I strongly recommend that you restore the integrity of the Whitneyville neighborhood by removing that artificial line separating east and west along Whitney Avenue. Its historic boundaries must be preserved, both to promote a sense of community and to "encourage" voter turnout, an admirable goal of government.

I will be pleased to respond to any questions you and your redistricting colleagues may have. Mr. Esposito would also be pleased to share his views with you.