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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Eve Shuman, Candidate for Prince George's County Council, District 3, Comments on the Redistricting Process.

Riverdale Park, MD – Eve Shuman, candidate for the District 3 seat on the Prince George's County Council, submitted testimony today to Councilmembers on the 2021 redistricting process that will establish Council districts for the next decade. Shuman lamented the politically-tinged, secretive nature of the redistricting process and its negative impact on voter trust. Shuman's testimony presented several criticisms on the lack of transparency during the remapping. She offered a variety of policy solutions for moving forward.

Eve Shuman--who has knocked over 5,000 doors in the District since beginning her campaign in May 2021--has been a breath of fresh air to the revolving door of lifelong politicians and backroom political bickering. Residents of majority-minority and majority-female Prince George's have been clamoring for leadership that reflects who they are. Eve Shuman will continue to work hard to represent a modern, racially diverse, and politically progressive District. Shuman is running on a platform that promotes honest, on-the-ground, progressive solutions to issues surrounding working families, racial justice, small business development, and equitable infrastructure growth.

Residents of Prince George's County can find a copy of Eve's testimony attached to this statement.

For more information on Eve Shuman's County Council campaign, visit <https://www.eve4district3.com/>.

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By Authority of Friends of Eve T. Shuman, Jerome Shuman Jr., Treasurer.



November 15, 2021

Dear Members of the Prince George's County Council:

I write to voice my concerns about the 2021 County Redistricting that will establish our Council districts over the next decade based on the completion of the decennial United States Census.

We know that redistricting often occurs during election cycles and can be a contentious affair in the best of circumstances, but the politically-tinged approach unfolding this cycle, at best, injected unnecessary discord and uncertainty into our democratic process and, at worst, corroded trust in transparent and fair elections.

Speaking as a first-time, progressive candidate running for the District 3 seat on the County Council, I entered this race months ago running against the headwinds of establishment, “forever” politicians, and entrenched interests. As with any good campaign, ours hopes to overcome these challenges by continuing to devote countless hours of grassroots doorknocking, fundraising, and community engagement into our movement starting from the bottom-up. Win or lose, we expect the voters to choose their representatives, rather than the politicians choosing their voters.

We are presented with two maps today: (i) a least-change map proposed by the non-partisan Prince George's County 2021 Redistricting Commission and (ii) a radically alternative map pushed through by the majority of the County Council on the basis of strict procedure. Those in favor of the Council's alternative map assert that the map reflects policy, not politics. However, though the Council's alternative map may meet the letter of the County Charter and reflect certain important policy considerations, the process by which the Council adopted the map did not embody the spirit of a democratic and transparent redistricting process. This is borne out by the divisions on the Council, and the numerous and rightful criticisms voiced by several affected municipalities, community leaders, and residents.

A transparent election process is one in which each step is open to scrutiny by all stakeholders, whether other elected officials, voters, or the community at large. Our community must be able to reasonably and independently verify that the process is conducted with full disclosure and without irregularity, and that the results are an accurate reflection of the will of the people. Such transparency is crucial to trust and public confidence in the democratic process and the government elected to uphold it.

Given this background, I call for the honorable members of this Council to take all due and careful consideration when making a final decision between these two maps. Moreover, I propose the following efforts going forward to ensure our community feels that their voices are heard by their Council representatives:

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1. Enacting processes for the public to review and comment on draft maps as proposed by Councilmembers before they are voted on and the ability for the public to submit alternative maps directly to the Council for comment and consideration.
2. Offering additional public townhalls and Council sessions to offer the public a chance to weigh in on Council- and voter-proposed maps. Such opportunities must be in a format that are accessible to people with disabilities and those who use a language other than English.
3. Exploring further opportunities for voter-determined and apolitical drawn districts using clearly-articulated criteria and limiting the influence of incumbent representatives on the redistricting process.
4. Creating maps that preserve communities of interest and fairly creating districts so that those who have been underrepresented throughout American history, whether people of color or of low-income or otherwise, have full opportunity to elect representatives of their choice.

I am grateful that there are so many passionate residents and political leaders in our community. We Prince Georgians must be able to pride ourselves on the integrity of our elected officials. Our Council must embody transparency and accountability—we cannot utilize methods that have historically disenfranchised people of color in this country.

Regardless of the outcome of Tuesday's vote, I encourage every citizen to continue to involve themselves in the redistricting process and to use their voices to demand necessary redistricting reforms at all levels.

Sincerely,

Candidate for Prince George's County Council
District 3