Second Congressional District to expand in size

Census data show population losses, forcing boundaries to change to keep numbers even

By DAVID NAHAN

GALLOWAY TOWNSHIP — U.S. Rep. Jeff Van Drew’s congressional district, already the largest geographically in the state, is going to get larger thanks to the 2020 U.S. Census that now population drops while maintaining constant redistricting. Although it’s still speculation at this point, the Republican-controlled school in conservative voters in Democratic and Rep. Andy Kim’s Third District yet new boundaries Kim could pick up more Democratic voters. Geographically, the Second Congressional District stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Delware Bay and Delaware state line, encompassing all of Cape May, Atlantic, Cumberland and Salem counties and parts of Gloucester, Camden, Burlington and Ocean counties.

The substantial changes in the district, by the Voting Rights Act and redistricting, were caused by a drop in population, Kim said. Kim is a Democrat and represents the district, which includes parts of Cape May and Cumberland counties and most of Salem County.

For the 2020 Census, the district lost 14,046 people, or 4.8%, putting it down from 290,810 in 2010 to 276,764 in 2020, according to data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. The state’s population dropped by 0.4%, from 9,787,954 to 9,750,652.

Kim said he is working with state and federal leaders to see if the district can secure a single congressional seat.

“We’ve seen much higher growth in the urban areas up north, and in northern Sussex County we’ve seen quite a bit of growth,” he said.

Whether it’s a congressional or state legislative districts, “the southrtheastern district will need to be in geographic size to take in more people and it is an inevitable shift,” he said.

John Froomian, executive direc- tor of the William J. Hughes Tech- nology Center for Public Policy at Stockton University, said the last redistricting over the past decade, the northern part of the state grew 4.5%.

Kim is down about 14,046 people, New Jersey is not losing a seat based on the Census, unlike neighboring Pennsylvania, but population shifts mean redistricting for its 12 congressional seats and reapportionment for the 40 state legislative districts. At one point in the congressional district, it lost one seat after the 2012 Census.

In a 2003, 19th, Van Drew won his 2020 re-election campaign by a roughly 1,000-vote margin over Democratic Ant. Kennedy after switching districts. At one time Republican legislators were stalling its redistricting, Kim said.

Froomian pointed to adjusted population, in what is intended to “mirror the numbers in the state.” That is the trouble is whether there would be an attempt to dilute the conservative voters in the Second District or to cut out and dissolve the number of Democrats in the Third.

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