

Written-only Testimony for Wednesday, August 11, 2021 in Hutchinson

From: Hayley Graves

To: The Joint House and Senate Committees on Redistricting
Re: Fair & Equitable Representation in Kansas

Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to supply testimony in support of transparent and fair redistricting.

I am asking that this redistricting process be extended until after the census results are available to use in this important decision making process.

The biggest problem that I have with this redistricting process is in the rushed manner in which it is being conducted. As Covid-19 delayed the census itself, it only makes sense that the implementation of the results of this census are extended so that the process can be participated in with a informed group of Kansans. This process needs to inclusive and the way it is being conducted is anything but inclusive. 14 town halls in 7 days, many in the middle of a work day, in the middle of a pandemic which keeps many people with a compromised immune system, such as myself, in their homes, is NOT inclusive. The census data, which is a legal representation of who lives here, is not being used to draw these district lines. This is not a fair representation of how the map should look. This racial gerrymandering is illegal as it goes against the Voting Rights Act of 1965. By ignoring the census data, which would give the advisory group an idea of the racial makeup of the state, they are participating in disenfranchising the votes of thousands of Kansans of color.

Without detailed 2020 Census data, I cannot make suggestions about the composition of fair districts at this time. No one, including yourselves, has had an opportunity to see detailed Census results and identify what changes are required to maintain equality of population in our districts. I urge the committee to hold additional town halls after census data is available and Kansans can review that data and offer input. I would encourage that those meetings be accessible, available online, and announced with enough time to foster engagement.

Current Congressional and Legislative maps were created by the courts and should, as possible, be altered as little as necessary to fulfill reapportionment shifts.

I ask the Advisory Group to extend this process until after the census data has dropped and return with a proposed map and additional town hall meetings so that Kansans can have a informed influence on the future jurisdiction of our state in order to maintain equality of population in our districts. Thank you for listening.

Respectfully,

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