

Written-only Testimony for Thursday, August 12, 2021 in Overland Park

From: Karen Divelbiss

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 for the opportunity to explain my experience of my community and my concerns over the current state of possible redistricting.

My community encompasses Johnson and Wyandotte counties. I live in southern Johnson County, but work in North Kansas City. I spend time volunteering on the Medical Ethics Committee at Providence Hospital. I meet friends for lunch at The Legends and my husband and I enjoy sporting events there. As a surgeon, he has patients up and down the 435W corridor. Our community encompasses Johnson and Wyandotte counties and we love the diversity contained therein. It strengthens all of us and we have come to depend on the depth of human experience it affords us. I hope that the fact that you are holding these community meetings before the census data is available is not an indication that you are trying to be less than transparent as to your decision-making process. A promise to hold more meetings after the data is available to explain your process and recommendations would ease my concerns.

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. The Kansas City Metro is currently whole within Kansas' Third congressional district and should remain in a single district as residents have shared interests in representation,

I love the community found in Johnson and Wyandotte Counties and feel that District 3 has a unique and diverse quality that should be retained. I expect you to be transparent in your decision-making process and to give your constituents an opportunity to give feedback once more information is available.

Respectfully,

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