

**Written Testimony for Overland Park Redistricting Hearing,
Thursday, August 12th
Matt Ross Community Center**

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee on this important subject. My name is David Leonard, and I'm a life-long Kansas City area resident. I've lived in the Third Congressional district for more than 20 years, and during that time the district has always been competitive - I've had four representatives, Snowbarger, Moore, Yoder and David: Two Republicans and two Democrats.

This tells me the Third District as it currently stands is a district where BOTH parties have to work hard to win, where BOTH parties have to work hard to field solid candidates, and where BOTH parties have to address the issue voters in the district are concerned with.

Partisan gerrymandering destroyed competition. I created "safe" districts where only members of one party can ever win. Without competition, candidates no longer have to work hard to win, or address local issues, or even bother to field good candidates.

"Safe" districts mean the end of representatives you might disagree with, but still respect. It means a lot more representatives like Marjorie Taylor Green, who is more concerned with stirring up trouble on Twitter than actually legislating, or Matt Gaetz whose interest in underage girls outweighs his interest in his constituents.

Closer to home, gerrymandering means more representatives like state Rep. Mark Samsel who had to give up his teaching license (but not his seat in the Kansas House) after assaulting a child. It means more representatives like Senate Majority Leader Gene Suellentrop whose response to being arrested for driving drunk on the wrong side of the highway was to verbally assault his arresting officer.

Less competition means more representatives like this. If you draw "Four republican districts" as Susan Wagle so proudly boasted, all you're doing is guaranteeing the State of Kansas inadequate representation - and inadequate representatives.

Using gerrymandering to ensure safe seats at both the federal and state level is basically an admission you can't beat democrats on the issues, and have to resort to changing the rules of the game.

I hope you have the basic decency to allow Kansans to be fairly represented, both in Topeka and in Washington DC.