

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

From: William Rose-Heim

Reverend

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Greater Kansas City

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 the redistricting be done fairly and without regard to political advantage for any party.

Redistricting, like any official action on behalf of the citizenry, is supposed to be done with no conflict of interest on the part of those making these important decisions. Although gerrymandering is nearly as old as the United States of America, it is one of many unscrupulous practices that weaken the capacity and resolve of an effective government of the people, for the people and by the people. The practice continues in part because decision makers seldom see or deal with the most vulnerable who suffer disproportionately as a result of partisan redistricting. Many of us in the religious community work with the disadvantaged who are often discouraged that with all their challenges, even the power of their vote is diluted for the sake of preserving the privilege and power of a part of the electorate with more advantages. Those given the authority to redraw the boundaries of legislative and Congressional districts have a sacred duty to put partisan politics aside and focus less on giving any party a self-serving advantage and attend more to facts regarding compactness, contiguity and equal population of each district. Would that we had the most current accurate U.S. Census data to help with this.

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 pray that those charged with this task will take the opportunity to exercise the highest level of integrity and fairness. Make this work something about which all Kansans may rightly feel proud.

Respectfully,

William Rose-Heim

Reverend Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Greater Kansas City

6617 West 101st Street

Overland Park, KS, KS 66212

8166177020

Brh51500@gmail.com