

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

From: Alan Barkema

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 write in support of a transparent and fair redistricting process that promotes confidence in the state's elections and strengthens the democracy we all cherish. This series of townhall meetings is a good start to the redistricting process. Additional townhall meetings, scheduled after 2020 census data are available to all, scheduled with ample lead time, and with on-line options to promote accessibility, would enable everyone to make informed choices on any appropriate redrawing of election boundaries.

While census data might suggest some marginal shifts, current congressional and legislative maps, established in a non-partisan, objective way by the courts, have the public's confidence and should serve as a largely unaltered template for the future.

Of particular note is Kansas' Third Congressional District, which wholly encompasses the Kansas side of the Kansas City Metro Area. The Third District should remain intact, enabling consistent representation of the many shared interests of Kansas City Metro area citizens residing in Wyandotte and Johnson Counties.

For example, my wife and I live in Lenexa, in the heart of Johnson County, but our interests and daily activities reach well beyond Lenexa's borders and the invisible boundary between Johnson and Wyandotte Counties. Our two kids attended Shawnee Mission West High School in Overland Park (JoCo), we are members of Saint Andrew Christian Church in Olathe (JoCo), our hospital of choice for significant medical issues is KU Med in Kansas City, KS (WyCo), I served several years as a director of the National Agricultural Hall of Fame in Bonner Springs (WyCo), my wife is a frequent volunteer at Cross-Lines Community Outreach in Kansas City, KS (WyCo), the Legends in Kansas City, KS (WyCo) is a favorite shopping and dining spot, and we enjoy attending games of the Sporting KC professional soccer club which plays in the beautiful Children's Mercy Park near the Legends mall (WyCo).

Thank you for the opportunity to share experiences from my family that illustrate how Johnson and Wyandotte Counties are an interconnected community, with no readily distinguishable boundary separating them in our daily activities. My family and I are fortunate to be part of this dynamic Kansas community. With so many shared interests, we residents of Johnson and Wyandotte Counties should retain shared representation in Washington, D.C.

Respectfully,

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