

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

From: Nancy Morgan

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.

Creating fair districts starts with an open and transparent process that will help prevent partisan gerrymandering. To rebuild public trust in the map-drawing process, it is critical that this work be done in an open, fair, and transparent manner that considers public input.

14 town halls are being crammed into a single week, on short notice.

10 of the 14 town halls are taking place during the week during working hours, dramatically reducing the number of Kansans who can participate.

There is no reason for this rushed process mere days before receiving the Census data. It only makes sense that Kansans first have an opportunity to study the results of the Census in the context of the redistricting guidelines before being asked to weigh in on the composition of new districts.

This absence of guidelines means that there is no framework against which Kansans can structure their input. This process is truly unprecedented. A decade ago, hearings in the same cities were spread over four months, from July to October. Only two of those hearings were held before the Legislature and public had the complete Census data.

Because Kansas will maintain four current congressional districts, the congressional maps should remain close to their current configuration, as minimal changes are needed.

Kansas City, Kansas is currently wholly within Kansas' Third congressional district. It should remain whole in a single congressional district. With population growth in the Kansas City metro region, the Third District can be contained wholly within Johnson and Wyandotte County. Wyandotte County - and Johnson County have been in the same congressional district throughout the modern redistricting era, since the 1970s. Splitting them apart would be a blatant attempt to manipulate the maps and gerrymander the Third District.

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.

Kansas's Third District currently represents the most racially diverse communities in the state, and those communities should be kept in one district for fair representation.

Spreading like-minded voters apart across multiple districts to dilute their voting power - so that pieces of that region are separated from one another and instead combined with the more rural parts of the state, does not respect the different priorities and needs of urban, suburban, and rural communities in the state. The needs of the communities within metro Kansas City must be acknowledged, as do the needs of more rural communities, which are dissimilar to the residents of Kansas City and its suburbs.

Thank you,
Nancy Morgan RN, BSN

Respectfully,

Nancy Morgan

7311 Canterbury St
Prairie Village, KS 66208
9138324565
nancymorgan888@gmail.com