



August 11, 2021

The Joint House and Senate Committees on Redistricting
State Capitol
300 SW 10th Street
Topeka, Kansas 661612
Via E-Mail: redistricting@klrd.ks.gov

**Re: The Equitable Redrawing of Kansas State and Federal Legislative Lines
Johnson County Hearing**

Chair and members of the committee:

On behalf of Health Forward Foundation (Health Forward), I submit this letter of testimony regarding the redrawing of state legislative and congressional district lines. Health Forward is committed to health equity and sharing power with communities, neither of which can be accomplished unless district lines are fairly drawn so that the interests of communities are adequately represented.

Our service area includes Wyandotte, Johnson, and Allen counties. Wyandotte and Johnson counties have both been part of Congressional District 3 since the 1970s. They share similar cultural and historical identities as both counties abut the state line. As the most diverse counties in the state, they share interests that are common to urban and suburban communities that often diverge from the interests of the more rural parts of the state, like Allen County. It makes sense for them to comprise Congressional District 3, given their similarities and distinct differences from other Kansas counties.

For example, the economies and conditions in which people live are much different in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Greater density in urban and suburban areas lends itself to different needs in housing accommodations, public safety, economic development, infrastructure, access to health care and transportation than the needs of rural areas. All these factors result in the varying health disparities that we see in either urban or rural areas. Lumping dissimilar communities together will prevent unique lived experiences and perspectives from being raised and considered in the policymaking process.

It is critical that lines be drawn to protect the interests of the communities within them, so that voice and power are given to their residents in both the state and federal legislatures, and so that legislators may take a balanced approach to policymaking. It is also critical that input be gathered from individuals within these communities, so that their lived experiences and recommendations can be considered. We recommend this committee engage in an open and transparent process for seeking community input and keep top of mind the need for adequate community representation throughout this process.

Respectfully,

McClain Bryant Macklin

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Director of Policy and Strategic Initiatives
Health Forward Foundation