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Matt Ross Community Center
8101 Marty Street
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Mr. Chair, and members of the redistricting Committee,

Hello, my name is Keri O'Brien, and I am a resident, voter, and ordinary citizen here in Kansas. This is my first time speaking at a meeting like this, and I want to thank you for the opportunity to give testimony on how redistricting affects Kansans like me.

Watching the testimonies earlier in the week motivated me to submit my own. I watched the recorded live streams after work, through the technical difficulties and mic problems. I realized that I needed to speak up if I had an opinion or risk regretting that I never tried. One of the speakers on Monday pointed out that at 33 he was one of the youngest people present at that meeting. This was very relatable to me because as a millennial who uses PTO to volunteer as an election worker, I am used to going out of my way to participate in civic activities. Activities where I too am often among the youngest in the room.

The short notice and schedule for this listening tour have made it difficult for many people to participate this week and that stands in opposition to the supposedly fair and transparent goals.

Today, July 12th, the census bureau started uploading the redistricting data in legacy formats. Without current census data in accessible formats, I don't know how we can expect to discuss fair redistricting or present relevant testimony. I do know that I've been voting in Kansas my entire adult life and that I feel like my current representatives represent me, and I am concerned that redistricting may change that.

Redrawing districts to disadvantage another party is gerrymandering. It's cheating. It's not honorable or fair.

The thing about representing the people is that there is no homogeneous voting pool. Anywhere. Every community is made up of neighbors with different perspectives and differing opinions. Everywhere, even Kansas. Truly representing the people requires acknowledgment of that fact. The voters should be able to choose who they want to elect. The elected should not be able to choose their voters.

People I know often lament how polarizing these times can be. Drawing fair and unbiased maps could guarantee that we don't cement that polarization into the next decade.

Do the right thing. Do not redraw Kansas just to make four Republican districts.

Thank you for your time.