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Members of the House and Senate Redistricting Committees:

My name is Caleb Smith; I am the Inclusive Campaign Director for the Kansas Appleseed Center for Law and Justice, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to the belief that Kansans, working together, can build a state full of thriving, inclusive, and just communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

We strongly believe that redistricting should be an unbiased, nonpartisan process that ensures every Kansan has their vote counted equally.

Unfortunately, redistricting is too often used as a partisan weapon. Partisan gerrymandering occurs when one political party benefits by redistricting. Because race and politics substantially overlap, this often means that gerrymandering can also have negative effects on a particular race or ethnicity.

Kansas Appleseed works to engage all Kansans, and activate them to become advocates within their communities. We know that people who are civically engaged have a better quality of life. Full civic participation requires everyone's vote having equal weight. An equitable redistricting process can help ensure this.

Every vote of every Southeast Kansas resident should be protected. We want to ensure that communities of interest are respected. Everyone in this city matters and everyone in it deserves to have their vote represented as part of this community.

Thank you for your time and your engagement today. I urge you to listen to as many people as you can, and really consider the input you hear, especially from people whose life experiences may be different than yours. A good redistricting process will require both empathy and an understanding of the full range of diverse communities that make up this great state. We are all Kansans. Let's make sure everyone's vote has equal power.

Caleb Smith
Inclusive Campaign Director
Kansas Appleseed