



TO: HOUSE & SENATE REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
Kansas City, KS Hearing

FROM: Joint Written Testimony from KS AFL-CIO Officers

DATE: August 12,2021

RE: 2021 Redistricting

Thank you Co-Chairs Senator Wilborn and Representative Croft, as well as committee members serving on this committee. On behalf of the KS AFL-CIO, please accept our joint testimony from Executive Secretary-Treasurer Andy Sanchez and Executive Vice-President John Nave. We appreciate this opportunity to share our concerns on a most important subject, redistricting. Your work product from these meetings will shape elections for a decade. With just one week of public input, you have your work cut out for you and we would be remiss if we did not share that concern as well as the impact of Census data could have on the process.

The Kansas AFL-CIO State Federation is a union of unions whereby unions are affiliated with the State Federation by membership. We represent 75,000 workers from both the private and public sectors that include building construction trades and manufacturing. Union members of the AFL-CIO may also be blue-collar or white-collar in their career choice. We speak for union families from every corner of the state and their concerns vary from region to region. At the core of our membership are working families and the mission to strive for a better life. To do this our member's working families must have good schools for their kids, jobs to support the family unit and the transportation systems to carry out these daily tasks.

Our primary concerns of new lines being drawn for our state, is that of the historical significance of U.S. House congressional districts drawn back in 2012. In particular, CD 3 has been noted to be a target of partisan politics and we hope this committee recognizes this as unacceptable. The lines for U.S. House congressional districts drawn in 2012 were backed with data and the institution of our Courts. Litigation is something we'd like to avoid this time around. It is our hope that new district (CD3) boundaries remain much the same with very small geographic adjustments to balance out population shifts and equal proportions. Obviously, we wish to preserve the integrity of the current map, characteristic of the dense population of the KC metro area including the whole counties of Johnson and Wyandotte in CD 3. To utilize map carve-outs of odd shapes would be a disservice to our communities and may even cause confusion changing their long standing representative or multiple variations with their

neighbors. The sanctity of our representation form of government, elections and democracy are what's at stake. Let's get it right.

Currently, it is our understanding, that CD 3 is the only congressional district experiencing growth. Urbanized Kansas City means a higher population of people of color will reside there. The Labor Movement has made it our mission to have our own leadership look more like our membership and create opportunities for diversity. So too, can our government strive for diversity. Our current representative, a woman and a minority, speaks well of our state when we consider the lack of diversity from the other elected officials in Washington, D.C.

We share with you our values of the redistricting process. With these concerns, we also urge attention be given to fairness. Find a way to show our country that political gamesmanship has no place in the process for fair government. A great deal of our work is before the state legislature. Our stake goes beyond just preserving the community of interests in CD 3. However, we know that if these core principles for CD 3 are applied, State Senate and House Districts can also be modeled fairly. The community of interest needs that we advocate for make sense; when we acknowledge the urban and racially diverse communities of metro Kansas City weighed with respect to the same community interests of more rural needs that are predominant in other parts of the state and thus should apply.

Last, you may think that your task is difficult and is sure to draw criticism, but that is untrue. A judicious process can be achieved and so too can the accolades of a job well done. Thank you for your service, your consideration of our testimony, and finally, for your quest to a positive resolution outcome.