

Written-only Testimony for Thursday, August 12, 2021 in Kansas City

**From: Irene Caudillo
President & CEO
El Centro**

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.

I am asking on behalf of those we serve that this committee fairly draw congressional districts in Kansas, keeping our Wyandotte County and Johnson County boundaries intact.

My name is Irene Caudillo, President & CEO of El Centro. Our organization's mission is to strengthen communities and improve the lives of Latinos and others through educational, social, and economic opportunities.

This testimony is on behalf of an organization that has served Wyandotte and Johnson counties for 45 years. We continue to listen and learn from a proud Latino population who can be affected by unfair and gerrymandering redistricting practices. On behalf of our organization, we thank you for providing an opportunity for us to provide written testimony on a matter of great importance to our communities and its residents.

Wyandotte and Johnson Counties have seen their Latino population grow over the years. As you are aware, the highest concentration of Latinos live in Wyandotte County, but the number of Latinos living in both counties is about the same, 47,000 plus people.

Our Latino, multi-generational families, are predominately, low-income individuals and families who are uninsured/underserved in our service areas. Many of our clients struggle with health, food insecurity, educational advancement, housing rights, and pay equity. We are a proud community, building our neighborhoods and are concerned about major issues including education, housing, economy, and jobs as a region.

El Centro's is honored to be a voice for the population we serve; however, our goal is to organize voices at the grassroots level building a base that values their work to make positive change in their community and that their voice does matter. The important role we play with our community is that of a trusted organization, something our government bodies have no doubt experienced and have seen erode over the years.

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.

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.

We believe in fair representation, and we ask this committee to fairly draw congressional districts in Kansas, keeping our Wyandotte County and Johnson County boundaries intact and not partisan gerrymandered ones.

Respectfully,

Irene Caudillo
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