

Written-only Testimony for Thursday, August 12, 2021 in Overland Park

From: David Grummon

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 to keep Johnson and Wyandotte Counties in the same congressional district.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my testimony and the testimony of others regarding the redistricting of Kansas congressional and state legislative districts. I am a lifelong resident of this state. I've lived in Mitchell County, Franklin County, Douglas County, Wyandotte County and Johnson County. At this moment, my family lives and goes to school in Shawnee, but our church—with members from across the KC Metro area—is located in Prairie Village. I've been practicing law from an office in Kansas City, Kansas for 19 years, but I've been appointed to represent clients as a public defender in Wyandotte County District Court, Johnson County District Court, the City of Shawnee, the City of Roeland Park, the City of Overland Park, the City of Lenexa, the City of Merriam, and I've represented clients privately in all six counties and 50 municipalities in the KC Metro.

I mention all of this because I have seen firsthand both the division and cooperation that exists between the different communities in the KC Metro. The problems and opportunities faced in one county are always felt in the next county, especially when we are only physically separated by a street. When our communities work together, like we do with Ride KC, the Mid-America Regional Council or the Wyandotte/Johnson Council of Mayors, we can solve problems that can't be solved by any of us separately. But when we allow our communities to be divided, our ability to work together to solve mutual problems is hamstrung. We have enough lines that have been used to divide us: different funding entities, school district boundaries, highways built between neighborhoods. Let's not add congressional district lines to the list of obstacles for our cooperation. When public education, public healthcare, and public safety is good on both sides of a street, the entire community thrives. When it's lopsided, the taxpayers on both sides suffer.

So, don't do it. Don't split up Wyandotte and Johnson counties. Keep us together in the 3rd District. I know how tempting redistricting can be for politicians to eliminate opponents or make their own districts "safe." It's been done elsewhere, but to the detriment of all. Keep us out of long expensive litigation and keep our communities together.

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.

Please keep Wyandotte and Johnson Counties in the same congressional district.

Respectfully,

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