



Written testimony from: Connie Taylor

Organization affiliation: League of Women Voters of Johnson County

Date: August 12, 2021

Hearing Location: Overland Park, KS

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This testimony is: Oral with written testimony

Mr. Chair, members of the Redistricting Committees;

Thank you for providing an opportunity for our community to present information to you on a matter of great importance to all Kansans.

My name is Connie Taylor and I live in Olathe. I'm a member of the League of Women Voters of Johnson County. Connie Brown Collins of Concerned Voters of Wyandotte County and All Souls UU KC Justice Action Group convened community members and representatives of the following organizations:

- Judy Ancel, President of Cross Border Network
- Rev. Rick Behrens, Grandview Park Presbyterian Church
- Civic Action Ministry of Oakridge Missionary Baptist Church
- Advocates for Immigrant Rights and Reconciliation
- Justice and Equity Coalition
- Jay Holbert, President of Johnson County NAACP
- Carol Fields
- Elizabeth Reynoso, El Centro
- Gail James, Women's Equality Coalition among others

Together, we've discussed what makes our community unique and what binds us together. We're asking you to keep Johnson and Wyandotte counties together in the Third Congressional District.

Our community of interest can best be described as an urban area that includes a mix of residential, commercial, manufacturing, logistics, and industrial areas. We are a diverse community in terms of race, language, ethnicity, age, and other socio-economic factors of education, income, and housing.

- **Population density** - We have three of the largest densely population areas of the state with Kansas City, Overland Park, and Olathe. Johnson County's population density in 2019 was 1,272 person/square mile while Wyandotte County's population density was

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1,091. We are unique in that no other region/county in the state comes close as Sedgwick County's population density pales in comparison at 517 people per square mile.

- **Regional:** Together, we are part of the Mid America Regional Council that serves the greater Kansas City Metropolitan Area with many jurisdictions participating and is unique in Kansas. Regional planning assists with federal and state funding. Together, the region shares a complex and interconnected transportation network that drives the area's socio-economic stability.
- **Environment:** Our dense population along with our transportation network causes pollution that affects our residents' health, causing lung cancer, asthma, and diabetes. Our region incurs regular Air quality alerts when the pollution levels reach unsafe levels for the public. Water quality and run off/flooding issues related to population density also contribute to the region's federal response.
- **Healthcare Systems:** Our healthcare delivery system includes major hospitals, clinics, and research facilities. Cooperation and coordination among those facilities is a hallmark of healthcare in this community with KU Medical School and Hospital, Children's Mercy, and HCA Midwest serving patients in both counties. Healthcare related issues that come up in Congress include the needs of the uninsured, funding for research, augmenting response capacity during health emergencies such as the pandemic, funding and rules for Medicare and Medicaid
- **Employment:** Residents of both counties share common stories of a lengthy commute between home, work, shopping for essential supplies, and healthcare appointments. Commute time and distance during high traffic volume times is not unusual for the greater Kansas City metropolitan area and is unique to Kansas.
- **Education:** The area is home to two major community colleges as well as branch locations for Kansas postsecondary institutions and numerous private postsecondary institutions. Non-traditional commuting students comprises a large segment of the enrollment population and makes this area unique. Further, the need for federal financial assistance remains high.

Finally, we'd like to share the observations from the 2012 redistricting effort that kept Johnson and Wyandotte Counties together. The Federal Court noted:

- The historical practice and significance of Johnson and Wyandotte Counties being in the Third Congressional District as well as the core Kansas component of the Greater Kansas City Metropolitan area which is a major socio-economic unit.
- The strength of the shared economic, political, and cultural aspects of the two counties are greater than their differences.
- Strength of the voting power of the minority population made an impact in the Court's decision

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- Incorporated traditional guidelines that districts should be compact, contiguous, preserve existing districts, and group communities of interest.

To summarize, Johnson and Wyandotte Counties should remain in the Third Congressional District. Our joint community of interest revolves around urban and regional concerns involving our population's diversity and density, transportation, environment, healthcare, employment, and education.

Thank you for your time and attention today.