

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

From: Gabriella Kusko

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 worried that partisan politics is going to reduce representation of folks who are unaware of how the redistributing process should proceed. The current map for my district allows for a metro wide representation. Redrawing the maps to benefit one party and reduce the voices in the metro area is wrong.

I have lived in Johnson County for 25 years. My children have benefitted from attending SMSD and I have been a strong supporter of public education. As an adult I returned to school and became a teacher in part because of the great teachers I volunteered with. I also am living with cancer and have the benefit of having excellent health care in my community and support. I want education and health care to be fully funded and continue to benefit my community. A highly educated workforce will assist our aging population as we become more dependent on health care to live and give back to our community.

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.

Current Congressional and Legislative maps were created by the courts and should, as possible, be altered as little as necessary to fulfill reapportionment shifts. 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.

Our current district map should enhance the voices of the metro area and not be diluted in order that some representatives will be unable to gain sufficient votes and others will gain new advantage. I don't want partisan politics to undermine the quality of schools and health care services in our community.

Respectfully,

Gabriella Kusko

6624 Wedd Place
Merriam, KS 66203
913-953-7003
Gabkusko@gmail.com