

Redistricting Committee Testimony, Overland Park, Thursday, August 12, 2021  
Andy Sandler  
6339 Beverly Drive, Mission, KS 66202

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Good afternoon. My name is Andy Sandler. My wife Jill, a lifelong Kansan and I, a Kansan by choice since 1980, have lived and voted in Mission for more than 23 years. Regrettably we are on the East coast at the moment and unable to appear in person, so I appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony.

As active stakeholders both in our community and the political process, I am appalled at the continuous efforts of Republican policymakers and lawmakers to make our right to vote, and our ability to exercise it, more exclusionary and less democratic. Without exception, Republican gerrymandering attempts are predicated not on socioeconomic fairness, but with the stated aim of marginalizing or eliminating the ability to elect lawmakers that represent our changing and diversifying demographics. Time and again they have tried; time and again they have seen their attempts at stacking the electoral deck end up in our state's courts...only to have themselves rebuked and those ludicrously disproportionate borders redrawn. But even *this* is a calculated, cynical, smug move by Republicans to tilt the playing field in their favor, since the courts can only enter into the fray with precious little time to spare until the next election cycle gets underway, leaving candidates unsure of their own districts' boundaries and whether they are still even eligible to run.

2021 is no different than previous redistricting years. Republicans will use the same playbook they developed decades ago to unfairly tighten their stranglehold on the elective process. Combined with ever more restrictive voting laws, their aim is to preserve a status that, despite their most repressive efforts, will not remain quo. People come and go all the time. Some of them vote left, some for right, some vote from the center. It's not up to any single party to cherrypick who gets to exercise the right to vote. It is up to all of us to preserve that right, and fairly so. What's particularly galling is the Republican push to shove this process through even before we have the actual census data needed to balance the districts. I wish I could say this is unprecedented, but it's just another rusty old tool in their worn-out bag of dirty tricks.

We both appeal to those of you whose highest ideals and priorities are guided by reason and fairness to uphold and defend these values during the redistricting process. Borders must be drawn to reflect our changing demographics, regardless of whether they are ethnic, economic or political. It must be resolved that, as has often been said, an election's purpose is for voters to choose their representatives, not for the representatives to choose their voters. Jill and I know many of you and we know you share those high ideals with us.

How you respond to the Republican attempts to throttle democracy will have repercussions for a decade to come. Please hold to intense scrutiny the Republican assault on free and fair elections, fight it all the way to its inevitable day in court, and do so with our support and thanks.