

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

From: Courtney Durando

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 that you follow up the Town Halls with additional, well publicized, and widely accessible opportunities for Kansans to participate in this process after the Census data are available and prior to the start of the 2022 Session. That will enable you to learn what your constituents identify as their communities of interest and fair representative districts.

I'm a lifelong Kansas resident - from growing up in a rural community to raising a family in a suburb of the KC Metro, I value and admire the contributions and hard work of all Kansans. I also appreciate the diversity of thought, religion and race found in the KC metro. Education, Environment and Infrastructure are highly important to me. Johnson County is home to excellent public schools and branch campuses and by its nature as a metro area, the student profile in this region is much more 'non-traditional' than in other areas of the state. The population density in this metro area is vastly different than in other parts of the state leading to unique environmental concerns when compared to the balance of the state: water quality and run off/flooding issues related to acres of buildings and other hard surfaces; air quality issues from concentrations of vehicle traffic; air quality issue arising from the combination of population density. Residents of the metro area depend on jobs across county lines more than is common in other areas of the state and which leads to economic and social connections. Commuting long distances in high traffic volume is common in the metro region and unique in Kansas.

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.

I'm asking the committee to value the input and opinions of all Kansans - to ensure that our voices are heard. And, to make accessible opportunities for Kansans to participate in this process after the Census data are available and prior to the start of the 2022 Session.

Respectfully,

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