

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

From: Mark Eisemann

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 concerned that the Committee, for political reasons, will endeavor to divide the urban counties of Johnson and Wyandotte. These counties are geographically and economically interdependent, and are best represented by a single representative who understands their shared challenges.

Johnson and Wyandotte Counties have shared economic development, transportation, environmental and educational challenges which create a community of interest that should be retained in a single Congressional district. These shared challenges are not only significantly different from rural Kansas counties, but even from those counties adjacent to Johnson and Wyandotte Counties. Both of these counties continue to lead Kansas in economic and population growth, which in turn creates infrastructure, redevelopment, education and housing challenges that are on a scale not seen elsewhere in Kansas. Having a Congressperson that understands this diverse and dynamic community of interest and can advocate for it is essential not only to the continued success of these counties, but also to the success of Kansas, as the economic engine in these counties helps support needs throughout 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.

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.

Please keep Johnson and Wyandotte counties in one common Congressional district.

Respectfully,

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