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Members of the House and Senate Redistricting Committees:

My name is Quinn Ried; I am the Policy Research Analyst for the Kansas Appleseed Center for Law and Justice, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to the belief that Kansans, working together, can build a state full of thriving, inclusive, and just communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

I live here in Lawrence. I attended KU where I studied political science, economics, and the law. I was very involved at the Dole Institute of Politics. It was here on this campus where I learned that politics CAN actually be a place where good people with differing ideas can come together and do what is right.

Unfortunately, redistricting has been a place where we've seen that fall apart. It has been used as a partisan weapon to dilute the voting power of political rivals. It has been used to reduce the voting power of students in Kansas, Kansans of color, and Kansans who are gay or transgendered. Disabled Kansans have not had equal access to this process. We can do better!

Every day in my job I analyze the research and data revealing these impacts. Kansas Appleseed works to engage and activate people to become advocates within their communities. We know people who are civically engaged have a better quality of life. They are safer from crime, have more access to health care, more secure housing, more nutritious food, a better quality education, and more jobs with livable wages. Full civic participation requires everyone's vote having equal weight. That is how we all thrive.

Thank you for your time and your engagement today. I urge you to listen to as many people as you can, and really consider the input you hear, especially from people whose life experiences may be different than yours. A good redistricting process will require empathy and an understanding of the full range of diverse communities that make up this great state. We are all Kansans. Let's make sure everyone's vote has equal power.

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