

Written-only Testimony for Friday, August 13, 2021 in Lawrence

From: Barbara Johnston

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 in favor of collecting input from Kansans about how districts can be drawn to benefit communities.

As a resident of a small town in Kansas, I need to know that the redistricting process will be done fairly throughout the state, and I oppose partisan and racial gerrymandering. I am in favor of a non-partisan entity to prepare any redistricting plans for approval by the Kansas Legislature and prefer that the non-partisan entity complete its work without the oversight or direction for legislators or legislative committees. I would like new redistricting plans to be presented at statewide public hearings immediately after the introduction in bill form and prior to consideration by the Kansas House and Senate.

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.

I feel strongly that the redistricting process should be free of racial bias and partisanship. I urge decision-makers to designate a strong, non-partisan and independent group to manage the design of the redistricting. Thank you for considering my views.

Respectfully,

Barbara Johnston

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