

Date: August 12, 2021

Testimonial Only.

My name is Paramjit Bhatia and I live in Lawrence, Ks. My address is 4717 Muirfield drive. This is my testimonial.

- I am disappointed that the House and Senate Redistricting Committees' "Listening Tour" in preparation for the 2022 round of redistricting will be conducted over the course of a single week, on short notice, and prior to the Census Bureau's release of detailed population counts needed to draw new districts.
- Please reconsider this rushed hearing schedule.
- I am with the League of women voters who is committed to ensuring that district maps at all levels are drawn fairly and accurately, with the concerns of all Kansans considered and equitably represented. Rushing through this preliminary process just days before receiving Census data and without adopting unbiased redistricting guidelines guarantees that the testimony received by the Committees can be easily ignored by the Committees.
- Kansans deserve an opportunity to study the Census results for their communities in the context of the Committees' guidelines and then engage the Committees in meaningful conversations about the composition of new districts.
- Without guidelines, Kansans' testimony and information provided to the Committees during the hearings will lack essential framework.
- I support The League reiterating its request that the Committees use their guidelines to introduce fairness in this process.
- I join The League (a nonpartisan organization) to encourage the Redistricting Committees to eliminate from the traditional redistricting guidelines those aimed at taking partisan factors into consideration and protecting incumbent legislators during redistricting.
- Regarding one of the guidelines, I am with The League to encourage the Legislature to hold public hearings to ensure that communities of interest, recognized as important in the traditional redistricting guidelines, are kept intact when drawing district lines.
- Kansans deserve fair maps.

The facts that support my testimony are:

- The Committees' schedule for the Tour, which will occur August 9-13 in 14 cities across the state, was posted Friday evening.
- Hearings on the Tour will be held in Wichita, Hutchinson, Salina, Manhattan, Chanute, Pittsburg, Lawrence, Overland Park, Kansas City, Leavenworth, Dodge City, Garden City, Colby, and Hays.
- The hearing schedule a decade ago covering the same cities was spread over four months from July to October.
- Only two hearings a decade ago were held prior to the Legislature and the public having a complete set of population figures.

- The Census Bureau announced that results from the 2020 Census for use in redistricting will be available August 16.
- Redistricting Committees in Kansas have traditionally adopted “Guidelines and Criteria” for legislative and congressional districts. While non-binding, the guidelines and criteria serve the purpose of giving legislators and other Kansans a means by which to evaluate and compare the merits of competing proposals for district maps.
- The legislative Committees charged with 2022 redistricting have not adopted guidelines and criteria for districts that will be the basis for representation for the next decade.
- The Committees’ proposed 2022 guidelines include “incumbent protection.”
- The League of Women's Voters has many decades of active involvement in redistricting in Kansas and I strongly urge the committee to pay close attention to what they say.

Thank you for the opportunity,

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