



Mr. Chair, members of the Committee:

My name is Tabitha Lehman and I am here today as the Advocacy Chair for the Wichita Metro League of Women Voters.

Thank you for providing an opportunity for our community to speak to you today on a matter of great importance to all Kansans. I recognize the limited time, so will quickly summarize my written testimony.

The League is a nonpartisan organization that supports citizen involvement in public policy at all levels of government and has been actively involved in advocating for creation of fair districts in Kansas for many decades.

- Without detailed 2020 Census data, we cannot make suggestions about the composition of fair districts at this time.
- As I mentioned in my written testimony, I am concerned about the timing of the maps being agreed upon. As a former election official who has gone through redistricting, I know the impact of late maps on the process of preparing for the upcoming election cycle.



- We would like to point out two redistricting practices involving the redistricting database that are troublesome from our nonpartisan perspective and in terms of fairness.
  - First, we urge the Committees to reject the proposed redistricting guideline addressing contests between incumbents. The guideline appears to protect incumbents which may lead to unfairness in future elections. Similarly, the Committees should see to it that legislators' home addresses are not included in the redistricting database.
  - Second, election results and/or voter registration information should not be included in the redistricting database. The only reason for such data to be available to map makers is to allow them to pick and choose 'safe' areas for inclusion in new districts. The League has long held that practices such as these stand in the way of creating fair districts.
- Finally, I must comment on arrangements for this "Listening Tour"



- o Hearings are important both for legislators who must make decisions and for the public whose voices may be either stifled or amplified by those decisions.
  
- o The League appreciates the Committees' willingness to devote time to listening across the state but is troubled by the compressed schedule and the short notice prior to the start of this Tour.
  
- o This situation has made it difficult for ordinary Kansans to prepare and present pertinent information that will help you in your deliberations.
  
- o Likewise, 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.
  
- We ask that you follow up this Listening Tour 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.

- o Announce opportunities for additional input at least two weeks in advance.
- o The Committees will save much time and expense if those opportunities include the ability to submit virtual testimony.
- I have expanded on these points in my written testimony filed with the Committee staff.

Thank you for your time and attention today.