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TESTIMONY FOR THE MEETING OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE COMMITTEES ON REDISTRICTING  
THURSDAY, AUGUST 12, 2021  
OVERLAND PARK, KANSAS – Written and Oral testimony

As a fifth generation Kansan myself and the father and grandfather of sixth and seventh generation Kansans, all still residing in our state, I appreciate the opportunity to provide you with some thoughts on redistricting.

This is an important process and since we only have the opportunity to do it once every ten years, we have to get it right. My family has been involved in politics and public service in many ways in Kansas over the decades. I was taught at an early age and tried to pass along a Kansas value I know we all hold dear – fairness. Regardless of where you live in Kansas, who you are or what you do, we expect our public servants to clear a high bar when it comes to being fair to all Kansans.

Fairness is the most important filter you have as legislators when it comes to redrawing congressional and legislative districts. We have all heard the horror stories in other states where districts are gerrymandered with ridiculous boundary lines all in an attempt for the current party in power to hang onto power. Clearly this is not a fair approach to redistricting and one we all hope you do not follow here in Kansas.

We know we will maintain our four congressional districts. Therefore, it seems logical that our current congressional district maps should stay nearly the same. While there are population shifts with the Kansas City metro region growing, it is vital that Wyandotte and Johnson Counties stay whole and stay connected in one congressional district. Since the modern era of redistricting began almost 50 years ago, these two counties have always remained connected with the same member of Congress representing them, both Republicans and Democrats.

The third district of Kansas is the most diverse district we have in Kansas. Fairness dictates that these diverse communities remain connected and represented by the same member of Congress, regardless of which political party they belong to. Splitting up Wyandotte and Johnson Counties would not be fair to its residents or to the state as a whole.

The urban/suburban constituents of this region have unique needs and they deserve to be represented with a single voice. Likewise, the constituents in more rural areas and small towns have unique needs and they deserve to be represented with a single voice.

The rule of fairness must also be applied when you go about the task of redrawing the legislative districts in Kansas. We respectfully ask you to draw a map that is fair and that truly represents your constituents, and not your political interests. I have always liked the saying that good government makes good politics. I ask you to follow that advice as you redraw the congressional and legislative districts of our great state. Thank you.