

Members of the Committee,

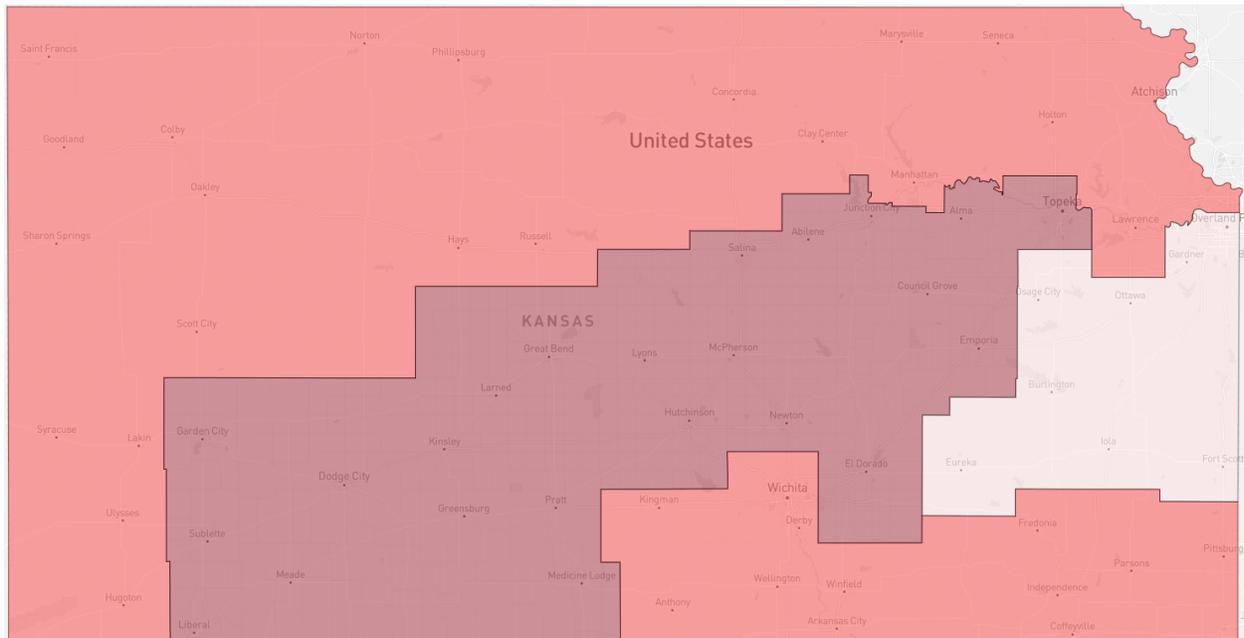
My name is Richard Pund and I am a resident of Overland Park. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on our redistricting process. I was fortunate enough to get time off from my work on relatively short notice to be here today.

First, I want to say that I believe a nonpartisan, independent redistricting process provides the best opportunity to produce fair maps for this cycle. I know other speakers like the League of Women Voters are better prepared to talk about this, so I will lend my support to what they have to say and move on to my other point.

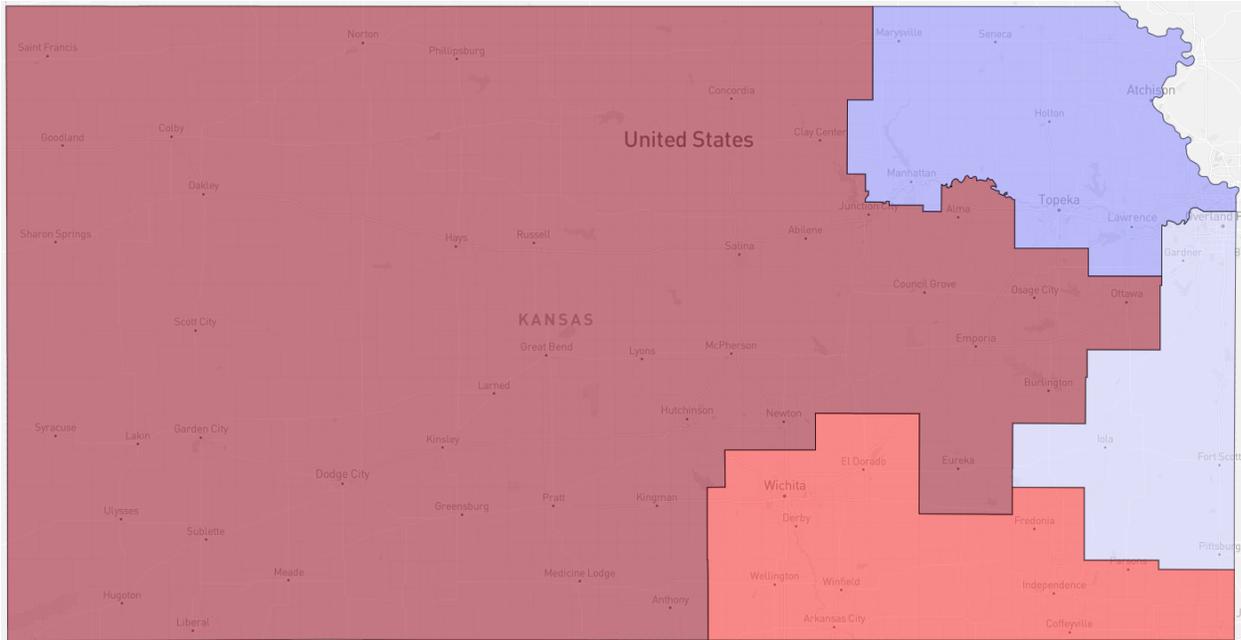
I believe many of the current complaints and challenges surrounding redistricting are just byproducts of our single-member, winner-take-all elections. Changing to multi-member districts with proportional representation (PR) would greatly improve many of these problems.

With our current system, it is not difficult to make single-member districts to suit a particular outcome. I tried making my own map using an online tool and it only took me a few minutes to gerrymander a Kansas Congressional map to have four Republican-leaning districts. It took me even less time to draw a map with 2 Republican and 2 Democratic-leaning districts. PR makes it more difficult to pack and crack voters like this because the margin of victory actually starts to matter.

Here are the maps I drew using Dave's Redistricting App. (<https://davesredistricting.org>) These maps did not split any counties and have roughly equal populations. Partisan lean is based on voting results from the 2020 Senate election.



A hypothetical Kansas Congressional map with 4 Republican-leaning districts



A hypothetical Kansas Congressional map with 2 Republican and 2 Democratic-leaning districts

It is difficult to keep every local community together when drawing single-member districts. My own neighborhood, for example, is split up across three state senate districts. A multi-member map would naturally have fewer lines to draw, so more neighborhoods and communities would be kept together.

Single-member districts also force mapmakers to choose between making a district competitive or representative. I can demonstrate this with two adjacent House districts in the southern part of Overland Park - 8 and 48. District 48 was certainly competitive in 2020, as the margin of victory was just 60 votes. Unfortunately, that also means that half of the voters in that district ended up with a representative that they did not vote for.

Next door, District 8 was one of the 45 House districts I counted that only had one candidate on the general election ballot in 2020. These districts may be representative but they certainly aren't competitive. What is the point of an election when there's only one candidate?

PR would create districts that are both competitive and representative. In a four-member district, candidates would be elected once they receive over 20% of the total vote. This system ensures a supermajority of voters would end up with a representative who they personally voted for, including voters in the minority party. At the same time, there is more opportunity for competition. A seat is up for grabs even if the district is 80-20 so there will still be a reason for voters to turn out.

What I am suggesting is not particularly new or unique. I'm basically suggesting that Kansas enacts the Fair Representation Act ([H.R. 3863](#)) for its state elections. This bill was first introduced to Congress in 2017 for federal elections. Other countries around the world like

Ireland and Australia use multi-member PR in some of their elections and have done so for decades. Locally, we already elect three or four candidates at once in the JCCC board of trustees election. While that one isn't done proportionally, voters are at least used to choosing multiple candidates in a single race.

I recognize that what I am suggesting is not realistic for this redistricting cycle. The Kansas constitution specifies single-member districts for the state house and senate, so moving to PR would require an amendment. However, I am convinced that this is a much better way to hold our elections. It is very frustrating to see the same issues coming up again each cycle when these problems have already been solved elsewhere. Think of the time we would all have to work on other policy issues if redistricting didn't have such a huge influence on the outcome of our elections. I hope the committee will take time now to assess the inherent flaws created by our election process and propose legislation that truly fixes them. Otherwise I fear that we will all be back again in 10 years rehashing the same debates over and over again.

Thank you for your time,

Richard Pund
6824 W 100th Ter.
Overland Park, KS 66212