

Written-only Testimony for Thursday, August 12, 2021 in Overland Park

**From: Mayte Diaz Marquez
Community specialist
El Centro Inc**

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 asking that you maintain Johnson and Wyandotte County under a unified congressional district and carryout a transparent process in redistricting.

Here are a few of the reasons for which Johnson and Wyandotte County should be maintained under the same congressional district. As a community specialist at El Centro Inc. and a Johnson County resident, I experience first-hand the needs to maintain these two counties under a single congressional district. I work with residents out of both our Johnson and Wyandotte county locations. Here at El Centro we work to amplify the voices of the most underserved and vulnerable communities by providing them with economic empowerment, civic engagement and community health tools and services. In meeting the needs of our communities, we recognize that the socio-economic disparities that affect them can only be bridged through more equitable representation. That equitable representation is supported through a unified congressional district. .

As a lifelong resident of Johnson county I recognize the need to maintain Johnson County and Wyandotte County together on a personal level. I have had religious affiliations with Catholic churches throughout Wyandotte, where the need for Spanish masses has been ever-growing and gradually recognized by local parishes. I currently attend Saint Patrick's Catholic Church on a regular basis and we regularly host events for predominantly Johnson County and Wyandotte residents. In my home city of De Soto, Kansas we are tightly knighted with our Wyandotte neighbors. Our community social media pages include residents of Wyandotte county where we regularly share concerns that affect our municipalities, share community resources and organize community events.

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.

Maintaining Johnson and Wyandotte County together would maintain our diverse cultural and ethnic communities together, allowing them to redress long standing socio-economic grievances through equitable representation.

Respectfully,

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