

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

**From: Kathleen McGinley**

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 here today because I have major concerns about an effort to "redistrict" our area of Kansas and I am asking this Committee for an open and ongoing study of the re-redistricting issue based on valid census data and the reality of the Third District's composition.

The Third District has been in existence for decades and Johnson and Wyandotte counties have been the core of that District. The section of Miami county that is part of the third district is becoming more and more suburban as the Kansas suburbs expand to the south.

It is particularly concerning that so much of this specific effort is based on pure and simple politics - the need for the Republican party to control every part of our state. It is just as concerning that this is occurring before the full redistricting data from the 2020 Census is released sometime in September.

I am focusing here on Johnson and Wyandotte county because they are not like every part of our state. We have elected Sharice Davids twice now to the U.S. House of Representatives. Her victories represent the desires and voting rights of the people in our area. Her actions in Congress represent what our District needs -- and our needs are quite different in many ways from other parts of Kansas. We also send both Republicans and Democrats to the Kansas House and Senate clearly demonstrating once again that we believe in bi-partisanship.

As observed by the Federal Court in its ruling creating the 2012 legislative and congressional districts for Kansas, "The Court agrees with all of the recommended plans [presented by parties in the case] that the entirety of Johnson and Wyandotte Counties should be included in the Third District. Those counties have formed the core of the Third District for decades, and as the Court concluded in O'Sullivan, they should be placed in the same district because they "represent the Kansas portion of greater Kansas City, a major socio-economic unit," and the counties' economic, political and cultural ties are significantly greater than their differences. O'Sullivan, 540 F. Supp. at 1204. The Court also agrees with O'Sullivan that Wyandotte County should be placed in a single district so that the voting power of its large minority population may not be diluted.

My family moved to Overland Park in 1958. Over the years we have been represented in the U.S. Congress by both Democrats and Republicans. Some who stand out are Representative Jan Meyers, Dennis Moore, and now Sharice Davids. Johnson and Wyandotte County are very different than most counties in Kansas. They are diverse in relation to race, education, employment, political beliefs, salaries, and living arrangements. Our area is densely populated and part of a large metropolitan area. Because of all these factors, I repeat-this is not a homogeneous area. We value human and civil rights, safe communities, education, good housing, access to health care, and a healthy environment. We value the diversity of our population. We need more affordable housing, better regional transportation - based not only on highways-but light-rail-, better paying jobs, and access to affordable child-care and health care. Sharice Davids focuses on all these issues and she is in constant communication with her constituents.

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.

I am submitting this testimony because I am concerned about the political underpinnings of this redistricting effort and the fact that the 2020 Census data on redistricting has yet to be released. I am concerned that the diversity and complexity of the Third District is not being considered. I urge the committee to work for a better Kansas not just Republican control.

I worked in Washington DC for 20 years. Fortunately, most of my years saw bi-partisan efforts to effect positive policy change for our nation. Once President Obama was elected, that ended as the Republicans worked to -- and bragged about -- stopping any efforts he made.

We still are weathering a pandemic. A pandemic that has made the rich richer and the poor poorer and sicker. National and state politics have played a role in the response to it and the spread. In the Third District leaders attempted to follow the science and protect us, while the state legislature attempted to foil those efforts. Our area needed those protections. We are an urban area with high population density. Representative Davids supported measures that would protect all her constituents.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Kathleen McGinley

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