

Dear KLCDR,

My name is Doug Smith and I am a registered voter in Overland Park. My e-mail is dsmith7993@kc.rr.com and my cell phone is 913-209-9590. I am offering my testimony for the redistricting hearing held on Thursday, August 12, 2021 at the Matt Ross Center. I would like to speak at the hearing and am offering this written testimony also.

Redistricting is one of the most important tasks that the legislature will undertake this year. The need to have a process that is transparent is critical in this time of cynicism about government in general and when citizens have been concerned that legislative decisions are made only for partisan purposes. Holding these hearings is a start, but only a start, toward an invitation for meaningful public input to this process. I would like to offer several thoughts about how to have a more inclusive and transparent process.

First, I'm retired and work part-time, so I can attend a day time session. But I have friends and neighbors who are still working full-time during the day and cannot be here. While they could submit written testimony, there is something meaningful about a face-to-face exchange and the opportunity to hear other opinions expressed at a hearing.

Second, for some of my older friends submitting written testimony on-line is difficult so the opportunity for a submission by mail would be welcome. Also, for some folks, physically attending a hearing can be a challenge, so the option to mail you their comments would also address both concerns.

Third, it is difficult to know what to say to you before the census data has been released. I or anyone can only speak in the most general terms about our aspirations or fears. Thus, thoughtful input from the public will be limited.

Fourth, I don't know that any criteria have been established by which the committee will develop a consistent, logical and defensible framework for drawing the local, state and federal voting districts. Without that information it's hard to understand how this committee will approach this important task. And thus, it is difficult for me, or any member of the public; to offer any thoughts on the process, either pro or con.

I think you could address these concerns I listed with some additional hearings. Holding hearings after the census data is released and you have established your criteria for the process would be welcome. Having evening or weekend hearings where working folks could attend would be useful. Having multiple hearings in the larger counties would seem appropriate. And finally having a PO Box or some address where some folks could mail you their thoughts would seem inclusive.

Thus, you could begin to address that concerns I mentioned at the beginning of my testimony, about government seemingly not being responsive or open to dialogue with the public.

Sincerely,

Doug Smith