

11 August 2021

To the House and Senate Redistricting Committees:

My name is Richard Nobles. I am a registered voter living in Overland Park, and my contact information is Richard.nobles@gmail.com and 206.330.1917. I am submitting testimony for the redistricting hearing held on Thursday 12 August 2021 at Matt Ross Community Center. This testimony is written testimony. I hope to be able to provide oral testimony at the KCK Community College forum in the evening.

I have made several attempts to compose what might be a compelling statement to submit to the HSRC about the importance of drawing fair congressional and legislative maps, listening to citizens and community leaders describe what their interests might be, and the like. Time and again as I attempted to put idea into pixel, I was arrested by a nagging thought: that, in this deeply polarized political environment, my singular voice among the nearly three million voices here in the Sunflower State would not matter.

Gerrymandering is an institution that is almost as old as our republic. State legislators across the country have had the decennial task of holding legislative sessions to carve their jurisdictions into chunks of land to be represented in their respective state capitols, and to a chamber that now holds 435 members to represent now all of us. And for over two centuries, this process has been high-stakes and tempestuous, with the voices of the underrepresented and the least of these often being quieted to no louder than a hum.

I am a clinical psychologist by trade. I teach clients that the act of speaking out when you believe that your voice might not matter is not necessarily *for* the individual or entity to whom you are speaking. It is often to clarify or erect boundaries.

Members of the HSRC may need no reminder of the guidelines put forward in 2012 to recognize communities of interest in legislative and congressional redistricting. They may need no reminder that failure to adequately recognize communities of interest in the redistricting process can have significant consequences for citizens of our state. They may need no reminder that failure to do so actively dilutes an individual's power of the ballot and violates planks of the social contract that speaks to cohesion and loyalty.

I say all of this to clarify a boundary, even if my singular voice is unheard. Attempts to select one's own boundaries could result in a lack of boundaries with which to be entrusted, in the administrative sense and in the macroscopic sense. Politicians can be voted out for their egregious behaviors, yes, but they are also eroding the very foundation on which this nation stands because of these behaviors. If you wish to be a part of a corrosive legacy for incomprehensible sakes, have at it—but history will not look kindly upon your participation in such endeavors.

Most sincerely,

Richard Nobles
Overland Park, KS