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Written Comments Only

Comments on Kansas Third Congressional District Redistricting

Creating fair and representative districts should start with an open and transparent process to prevent partisan gerrymandering. The Kansas Republicans in charge of this process have thus far behaved in ways that are anything but transparent. They failed to inform the Democratic members of the scheduled 14 meetings, all of which are being crammed into a single week, and most held during working hours. This schedule is far more compressed than it was a decade ago. Moreover, there are no guidelines for participation. Finally, these meetings are taking place prior to the Census Bureau's release of the information necessary to make informed decisions on the drawing of new districts. This schedule for hearings is far more compressed this year than it was a decade ago, and both the committee and Kansas citizens have less information on which to base their discussions. If there are reason for holding meetings before the complete census data is released, the Republicans haven't provided it. The entire process appears to be designed to limit Kansas residents' meaningful participation in the process.

Because Kansas will keep its four current congressional districts, it makes sense to maintain the existing congressional maps, with only minimal change to account for shifts in population. One assumes Western Kansas will have continued to bleed residents, so it makes sense to shift rural, white Miami County residents to another district, while keeping the Third District—and others—as compact as possible. Indeed, the Third District can—and should—comprise Johnson and Wyandotte Counties, which are both part of the Kansas City Metro area and which have historically been part of the same congressional district. Kansas Three is the most racially diverse district in the state. The communities that comprise it, like the more rural communities of Central/Western Kansas, should remain in one district to ensure equitable representation.

The Kansas GOP's apparent targeting of moderate Democratic Representative Sharice Davids exemplifies its racist, homophobic core. Rather than being proud of having one of the first two Native American women in Congress representing Kansas, radical right-wing Republicans like Senator Susan Wagel make no secret of the fact that they are targeting Davids, who has worked indefatigably to represent her district. What frightens the Kansas GOP so much? They should be ashamed. They won't be.