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**Testimony:** oral and written

Note. The basis for state legislative redistricting is the 2020 US Decennial Census, and that report is just being published today, August 12. Because citizens wishing to comment don't even have access to the basis for state legislative redistricting, I object to the dates set aside for these hearings.

### Summary of Criteria in the Proposed Guidelines

My outline is derived from the Proposed Guidelines and Criteria for 2022 Kansas Congressional and State Legislative Redistricting, Kansas Reviser of Statutes, May 20, 2021. State Legislative "districts should be numerically as equal in population as practical" and federal congressional districts are to be as nearly equal to 734,470 population as practicable. This number 734,470 seems to be based on the national population because the 2019 population for the state of Kansas was 2,913,314. Dividing that number over 4 congressional districts suggests that Kansas congressional districts should be as close to 728,328.5 as possible.

For both state districts and federal congressional districts:

- Redistricting plans will have neither the purpose nor the effect of diluting minority voting strength.
- Districts should be as compact as possible and contiguous.
- The integrity and priority of existing political subdivisions should be preserved.
- Whole counties are generally termed Communities of Interest. The committee will attempt to accommodate interests articulated by residents.

### My Suggestions

#### Community of Interest.

I suggest that one way to identify Communities of Interest is to pay attention to the definitions of statistical areas used by the Census Bureau because they approximate the boundaries of local economies and interests. The following comments begin with the idea of drawing boundaries around these statistical areas and grouping those counties in the same congressional district. In addition, I believe most Kansans regard the county government as an important definer of community, so I would try to keep entire counties in a single congressional district as much as possible. Because the Census Report is not available yet, I am using the 2019 population estimates published by the Kansas Legislative Research Department on May 6, 2020.

I wouldn't presume to identify the communities of interest in other parts of the state, but I would like to share some observations about the Kansas City area. Social, cultural, racial, ethnic and economic interest are common to the population of Kansas City, Wyandotte County and the municipalities of Johnson County. Multiculturalism is a hallmark of Wyandotte County where

there is no ethnic or racial majority and that is true of a growing part of the rest of the metro area. Wyandotte and Johnson County residents identify as Kansas Citizens and shop at and share many of the same commercial districts and entertainment venues. We should not be gerrymandered to attain some blatant political advantage. I am very concerned by what I read about the current majority of Republicans that control the state legislature. Please do your constitutional jobs and keep the redistricting process fair. We will all be watching closely how you proceed with this important role of redistricting.

### Congressional 3<sup>rd</sup> District.

This area is my main focus because I am a resident of the 3<sup>rd</sup> District. I understand that the population in the Kansas portion of the Kansas City Metropolitan Statistical Area exceeds the population goal of 734,470 (or 728,328.5 in Kansas) per congressional district. So, the question is where to draw the boundary between the 3<sup>rd</sup> District and the 2<sup>nd</sup> District. The core of the 3<sup>rd</sup> District is Johnson (602,401) and Wyandotte (165, 429) Counties, which make up a 2019 population of 767,830. If those numbers hold in the 2020 Census, then 33,360 from these two counties would need to be assigned to the adjoining 2<sup>nd</sup> District. I suggest that these counties be kept whole as much as possible. Wyandotte County operates under a Unified Government which includes all the municipalities within the county, and should not be split between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Districts. Johnson County includes many municipalities ranging from the older inner-ring suburbs of Kansas City, Missouri, like Leawood and Prairie Village, to the more rural southern developments along the Miami County line. I suggest that the most logical adjustment is to include all of Miami County in the 2<sup>nd</sup> District and such minimal portion of southern Johnson County as is necessary to reach the per district population goal. As discussed below, much of the 2<sup>nd</sup> District is moderately dense population, more than the rural western part of the state and less than the densely populated urban areas in Wyandotte and Johnson Counties, so the southern Johnson County lighter population would bring the same type of issues for a representative who is responsible for representing Pittsburg, Ottawa, Lawrence and Topeka.

I have some brief observations about the other three congressional districts. These are suggestions with regard to keeping whole counties in one district, compact shape, population as nearly equal as possible and recognizing communities of interest.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District.

It is projected that the 1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District will need to expand its territory because of a decrease in population since 2010. Perhaps some counties from the west side of the current 4<sup>th</sup> District could be added to the 1<sup>st</sup> District: Edwards (2,798), Kiowa (2,475), Comanche (1,700), Stafford (4,156), Pratt (9,164), and Barber (4,427). I would move Wabaunsee County (6,912) to the 2<sup>nd</sup> district because it is in the Topeka MSA, and I would include all of Marshall County (9,707)<sup>1</sup> in the 2<sup>nd</sup> District to maintain the integrity of that county. It would make District 1 more rectangular, thus addressing the compact and contiguous guideline and it recognizes the preference for not splitting counties. In addition, there is similarity of interest if the representative from District 1 represents a largely rural community dominated by the agricultural industry.

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<sup>1</sup> Currently half of Marshall County is already in the 2nd District.

The Manhattan-Junction City Combined Statistical Area – Riley, Geary and Pottawatomie Counties are moderately dense in population and include the added legislative concern related to higher education of a major university with K-State. While these counties might share interests with the current District 2, the need to move District 1 as close as possible to 728,328.5 population, I suggest these should continue to be included in the 1<sup>st</sup> congressional district.

Congressional 2<sup>nd</sup> District.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> District includes the Topeka Metropolitan Statistical Area, which is Shawnee, Jefferson, Jackson, Osage and Wabaunsee Counties. I suggest that the new 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District should include Wabaunsee County so that the whole Topeka MSA can be represented together. This would add 6,912 from Wabaunsee County. However, this could be offset by adjustments to the 4<sup>th</sup> District.

Congressional 4<sup>th</sup> District

After the Kansas City area, the Wichita area is the most densely populated part of the state where issues include urban and industrial concerns. So the core of the 4<sup>th</sup> District should be the Wichita Metropolitan Statistical Area – Sedgwick, Butler, Harvey, Kingman, and Sumner Counties. Also, the Arkansas City Combined Statistical Area adds Cowley County to the Wichita MSA. If Harper County stays in the 4<sup>th</sup>, and the other counties to the west are added to the 1<sup>st</sup> District as suggested above, then to the east of Wichita it is a question of balancing population between the 2<sup>nd</sup> District and the 4<sup>th</sup> District. This would be Greenwood, Elk, Chautauqua, Wilson and Montgomery Counties.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my written comments for consideration.