

Written-only Testimony for Thursday, August 12, 2021 in Kansas City

**From: Judith Ancel
President
The Cross Border Network for Justice and Solidarity**

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 asking the redistricting committee to maintain Wyandotte and Johnson Counties together as part of the same congressional district. I am also asking you to draw both our state representative and commission district to maintain the unity of the Argentine neighborhood and not divide them between two districts that include other areas.

I am president of a nonprofit international human rights organization which sends delegations of people to investigate human rights violations in other countries. It is important for us, even for our own protection to have a strong relationship with our member of Congress, someone who shares our commitment to human rights and who knows us. Almost all of our members live in Johnson and Wyandotte Counties with a few in Missouri. Over the years we have been able to build long term, strong relationships with our members of Congress whether they be Democrat or Republican, and this has provided security for us as well as allowing us to provide in depth information to our representative.

Furthermore, as an individual, I live in Wyandotte County, and for me Wyandotte and Johnson Counties are one community. I shop in both, go to the gym across the county line, see doctors in both counties, work on issues with citizens and elected officials in both counties. I strongly believe that the community of interest that exists here should be respected by the reapportionment committee. As the only two counties in the KC Metro area on the Kansas side, we have much more in common, have similar concerns, and feel a part of this urban community. We would not have that same community of interest if we were paired with a rural county or one whose economy and population lacks the diversity that we have.

Another concern of mine is that I live in the Argentine section of Kansas City Kansas. Argentine is a very diverse community. It is filled with churches of many denominations. There are several languages spoken here. Yet both in our commission district and our state representative district, we are split in half, one half paired with Rosedale to the south, the other with Turner to the west. The division is totally arbitrary, it crosses the lines dividing elementary schools grocery stores and communities. Indeed because both my state rep and my commissioner are from Turner which has many more voters than my little carved out section of Argentine, neither represents

my interests, and one of them doesn't return my phone calls. If Argentine doesn't constitute enough population to have a unified district, then please pair us with Rosedale with which we have many more similarities than Turner.

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.

Current Congressional and Legislative maps were created by the courts and should, as possible, be altered as little as necessary to fulfill reapportionment shifts. The Kansas City Metro is currently whole within Kansas' Third congressional district and should remain in a single district as residents have shared interests in representation.

Again I appeal to you as redistricters to ignore the political pressures on you and draw your maps to truly represent communities of interest of the people of Kansas by maintaining Johnson and Wyandotte Counties together in the same congressional district and by redrawing both the state representative district and the Unified Government Commissioner district to keep the Argentine neighborhood together.

Respectfully,

Judith Ancel
President The Cross Border Network for Justice and Solidarity
4014 Metropolitan Ave.
Kansas City, Kansas 66106
816-835-4745
jancel@igc.org