



**Oral & Written Testimony of Rachel Sweet, Regional Director of Public Policy and Organizing
Planned Parenthood Great Plains Votes
House & Senate Committees on Redistricting
Overland Park Town Hall- August 12, 2021
Contact: rachel.sweet@ppgreatplains.org**

Planned Parenthood Great Plains Votes, the advocacy arm of Planned Parenthood in Kansas, strongly supports an open and transparent redistricting process, and the creation of fair maps that will ensure all Kansans have responsive representation in Congress and in our state legislature.

American democratic norms are under threat, whether from the white supremacist violence at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, or the countless voter suppression bills passed by state legislatures this year. As states begin the process of redrawing congressional and state legislative districts for 2022, they have the opportunity to either restore people's faith in our democracy, or further erode the public's trust in government. The first step to restoring trust is a transparent process that allows for ample public input. The second is the work itself—the creation of fair maps that give all Kansans the opportunity to have their voices heard.

As members of the Kansas legislature, you are often called to make important decisions that affect Kansans' lives. In some ways, the needs of Kansans across the state, whether Finney County or Johnson County, are the same: everyone wants to be able to make a decent wage, send their kids to good schools, and drive on safe roads. But in countless other areas, we know that urban and rural communities have different priorities and needs. In fact, we see these debates play out in the legislature every year. Despite our differences, one thing remains true: all Kansans, no matter where they live in the state, deserve elected officials who are responsive to their needs and concerns.

Some elected officials, such as former Senate President Susan Wagle¹, have openly called for a partisan redistricting process, particularly as it pertains to the 3rd Congressional District. KS-03 is the heart of the Kansas City metropolitan area and includes all of Johnson and Wyandotte counties. This district represents the most racially diverse communities in the state, and those communities should be kept in one district to ensure responsive representation. Any attempt to break up Johnson and Wyandotte counties, merging them with more rural parts of the state, does a disservice to all voters—but especially to the Black and Latinx voters in KS-03.

We must do all we can to make the promise of democracy real for everyone. If we want a government that is truly of, by, and for the people, we need to have fair representation. Fair maps and an even playing field will help ensure our elected leaders are accountable to their constituents.

¹ KWCH, "Sen. Susan Wagle draws scrutiny over comments concerning redistricting," <https://www.kwch.com/2020/10/09/sen-susan-wagle-draws-scrutiny-over-comments-concerning-redistricting/>