



City of Roeland Park

4600 W. 51st Street
Roeland Park, KS 66205
(913) 722-2600

August 12, 2021

Kansas Legislative Research Department
House and Senate Redistricting Committees 2021

Re: Written Testimony Only to be Presented for the Town Hall Meeting
dated August 13, 2021 in Leavenworth, KS

Dear Sen. Wilborn, Rep. Croft, and Committee Members,

Good morning.

Thank you all for your time and attention as you rapidly travel the state and consider the myriad issues and consequences that result from redistricting the elected districts within our state.

This is an important process that demands dedication, transparency, and intention as we work toward principles we all value: trust in the process, equal representation under the law, and integrity in the election process - from beginning until end.

Unfortunately, we are off to a poor start towards these goals. Today's meeting is being held during the work day, without time to review Census data, and without direction on how new districts may be composed. Kansans deserve better. Therefore, I am left with little guidance as to how to structure my comments. I'm left guessing as to how this committee might restructure our districts. I'm disappointed that neither I, nor the voters I represent, will be able to substantively participate in the redistricting process.

However, we know that Kansas will continue to have four congressional districts. Because these districts have created continuity around regional interests, the most logical solution would be to leave these districts largely intact. Primarily, I am concerned that the border between Roeland Park, KS, my city, and its neighbor, Kansas City, KS, might now be split between two congressional districts. This would greatly challenge the cooperation we rely upon on a near daily basis, especially as to infrastructure and other cooperative projects, on which we've cooperatively worked for decades. This year, we celebrated the complete redesign of Roe Boulevard, part of which was funded through the STB. Cooperation with Kansas City, within Wyandotte County, was crucial to successful delivery of this redesign. We look forward to similar projects within both communities in the coming years, including but not limited to the joint redesign of 47th Street with both Kansas City, KS and Westwood, KS.

Roeland Parkers have more aligned interests with our neighbors directly north of us who shop, work, go to school and participate in recreational opportunities in Roeland Park, than we do with those in rural counties potentially hundreds of miles away from Roeland Park. Many Roeland Parkers work, play, go to school, and enjoy recreational opportunities in Kansas City, Kansas. The needs of the metropolitan Kansas City, including but not limited to joint infrastructure demands,

should be recognized through this redistricting process. To me, that means having a united voice spoken through a single congressional representative.

As Census data becomes available, and as considerations are made with respect to changing districts, I would hope that this body finds it imperative to provide additional opportunities for comments from stakeholders. Thank you for your time and dedication to all Kansans, including those here in the metropolitan area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mike Kelly".

Mayor Mike Kelly