

Written-only Testimony for Friday, August 13, 2021 in Lawrence

From: Brian Vancil

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 for specific measures to increase transparency of redistricting in Kansas so that everyone has confidence in the fairness of our political processes.

(1) I ask that you hold additional town halls, allowing for public comments after a collection of maps have been drafted after 2020 U.S. Census data has been released.

(2) I ask that you publish all maps considered, not just the final maps. That way the public can see how wisely you chose.

(3) I ask that you publicly document the guidelines and criteria to be used in creating maps, develop metrics to assess the guidelines and criteria, and publish the metrics for the maps proposed. In the past, the committee has offered a number of guidelines and criteria, including: numerical equality, compact and contiguous, no dilution of minority voting strength, build from Census voting districts, preserve city/county lines, recognize communities of interest, easily identifiable, avoiding contests between members of legislature or state board of education. For instance, recognizing communities of interest could be turned into a metric by quantifying population density along splits between districts. This would help to quell accusations of one party trying to divide a community of interest, like those in Wyandotte and Johnson counties. Metrics should be provided for all maps considered during the process.

(4) I ask that districts change as little as practicable, which would be helpful to the criteria of having districts be easily identifiable.

(5) Because some of the guidelines and criteria are competing, I ask that you publish your prioritization or weighting of the guidelines and criteria as the basis of your decision.

I think most will agree that these are sensible requests, helpful to the running of transparent political processes in Kansas.

Respectfully,

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