

To the Redistricting Committee:

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to address the Redistricting Committee because it is critical that the redistricting process is as transparent and as inclusive as possible.

I am still resolved that the best way to approach a fair and equitable redistricting process is to have the current Redistricting committee relinquish its rights to administer the process and seek an independent and trusted group that reflects true diversity and eliminates the conflict of any personal, territorial or political interest. I am convinced that until this happens, the citizens of Kansas will face the negative consequences.

For instance, There are members of this committee who have shown their true colors and personalities by continuing to oppress the advancement of communities of color. Voting rights have been attacked and oppressed in the committee rooms by unnecessary and unwarranted procedures and limitations that hinder a true commitment in promoting a voice for all Kansas citizens to be heard through the voting polls.

There are members of this committee who have turned their backs to the Kansas citizens in an effort to suppress the reality of history experienced by others. They want to send a message that only their distorted lies of history matter. That communities of color don't have the right to have the history of their lives shared by all to know and see. Why? Because "it makes their children feel bad"! What about the communities of color and how their children feel? Yet again, in their myopic minds, our children don't matter.

Until members of this committee can "walk the talk" by showing they are committed to doing what is right by Kansans in truly promoting voting value by loosening rules that allow voting freedom rather than introducing limitations; AND, until members can promote criminal justice and police reform that reflect independent thoughts from the community at large and not only from selected group thinkers; AND, until the committee members understand and fight for inclusiveness in our education materials to tell ALL of America's and Kansas' lived experiences, you should defer your redistricting roles to others willing to be more neutral and fair!

Shawnee County residents have worked diligently to reach across the sometimes invisible lines of hatred, discrimination and exclusion. We realize we have more work to do because we are seeing signs of growing regression that illustrate times of behavior in our state capitals across the country when people of color were treated without regard during the reconstruction era and thereafter, although currently more subtle and many times not so much.

It is a wise and noble person who rules against him/herself for the benefit of the universal state. Where do you stand in your personal assessment of fairness and equity? Would a person who doesn't look like you agree with your assessment without reservation? Do you have the courage to defer your charge to benefit our state and its future?

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

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Founder, Kansas People of Color Action Coalition