



Monday, November 15th, 2021

To the esteemed members of the Kansas House and Senate Redistricting Committees:

As you undertake the critical job of redrawing district boundaries according to Census data, we urge you to consider the unique needs of rural communities, and we implore you to heed our desire to have representation at all levels of government reflect those unique needs.

Rural counties account for roughly 85% of Kansas in terms of geography and 1 million Kansans in terms of population. We have a long history of agriculture which continues to power our state's economy, and we are fiercely committed to our values and to our communities. Our concerns include issues that may never ever occur to folks who live in urban, eastern parts of our state like Johnson and Wyandotte counties; things like slowing the outmigration of young people, tackling antitrust in agriculture, and combating the closure of rural hospitals.

For decades, our state has recognized and honored those differences by drawing legislative and congressional districts that encompass rural communities of interest. We believe that trend should continue.

We understand that the Census data reflects an ongoing situation of population loss in rural Kansas and therefore will require changes to current boundaries. We believe this phenomenon makes the case even stronger that rural needs and concerns are different from the urban areas of our state, and thus rural Kansas should remain separate and concentrated as much as possible in the new district boundaries for all levels of elected office.

As public servants, we know that you are aware of the responsibility you hold. It is up to you to make certain that the people of Kansas, in all the many communities across our state, are fairly and equally represented for the future. We urge you to make those decisions with a commitment to transparency, using the will of the people and data – not political motivation – as guiding your map-making. It is in the best interest of both rural and urban communities that you listen and act on our stated interests.

We thank you for your attention and wish you all the best in this important endeavor.

Sincerely,  
Zack Pistora, Interim Executive Director– **Linwood**

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