

To: The Legislative Redistricting Committee

The fourteen town hall meetings that were held the week of August 9 -13 were a promising start to the redistricting process. Around that time Speaker Ron Ryckman was quoted as saying there would be another round of 14 town halls to be held in the fall. As fall approaches, we at the African American Affairs Commission would like to present the Legislative Redistricting Committee with a few requests.

- The LRC should adopt technical rules and guidelines before October 1 making it clear to the public that this process is being conducted in a transparent manner.
- When the next round of hearings is announced, we implore you to include more meetings in the evening and weekend hours to accommodate for working schedules.
- Now that you have current census data, the next round of hearings should prioritize counties that showed drastic population changes.
- The technical rules and guidelines should include provisions for Communities of Interest (COI) to submit maps to inform your map drawing process. This will be most crucial for communities that have long been subject to partisan gerrymandering.
- Please schedule hearings after maps have been released so the public has time to comment.
- Consider hiring a court reporter to provide real time captioning for hearings. The software used for the first set of town halls did not do a good job of capturing testimony.

Lastly, while we understand that it is too late for this cycle of redistricting, for 2030, we advocate for the implementation of an impartial board of individuals who are not affiliated with any political party to serve as the committee which draws the boundary maps to avoid the temptation of politicians to gerrymander.

The redrawing of Kansas Legislative lines will have an impact on voting, political participation, and whether Kansans, specifically the African American population, feel as though they are fairly represented in their government. The LRC has the power to bring constituents into this process or to present a series of small barriers along the way that result in Kansans feeling overlooked and disenfranchised. We trust that you will want Kansans voting over the next decade to know this committee acted in good faith and conducted the process of drawing district lines with an eye on fairness.

We will watch how this unfolds with great interest.

Thank you for your consideration,

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