

KS FAIR MAPS

KSFairMaps.org

January 7, 2022

Dear Members of the Redistricting Advisory Group, Senate and House Committees on Redistricting,

The KS Fair Maps coalition is a nonpartisan grassroots education and engagement effort by organizations and individuals who want to see an equitable redistricting process that:

- is accessible to all Kansans and allows for meaningful participation regardless of location, ability, and language;
- is free of partisan tactics and bias; and
- results in districts of equal population based on the constitution, law, and communities of interest.

We write to you today to express our disappointment with the path our state's redistricting process is currently taking, especially after the discussion held by the members of the Redistricting Advisory Group on December 17th. As the Senate and House Committees on Redistricting prepare to adopt technical rules and district-building guidelines, we strongly urge you to make every effort to create a process that is open and transparent and facilitates broad public input and participation.

Specifically, we call on you to address the following barriers to a fair and equitable map-making process:

- **Remove the legislative sponsor requirement** - As evidenced by the maps submitted as testimony during the November Listening Session, the public has the software, expertise, and local knowledge required to submit good, comprehensive maps. Requiring a legislative sponsor threatens to effectively eliminate the submission of plans from community members, especially those from marginalized communities, who may lack ready access to legislators willing to stand as sponsors.
- **Eliminate physical and technical barriers to participation** - We've seen over the past two years that there are many effective ways for Kansans to participate in legislative initiatives without in-person requirements that are time-intensive and costly. Requiring physical submissions of maps via a thumb drive, or limiting testimony to in-person only, would potentially discriminate against individuals who have physical and financial limitations. We strongly encourage you to remove these barriers and to allow virtual committee testimony along with ADA-compliant, Spanish language, and sign language accommodations.
- **Create and communicate a transparent timeline** - To date, the 2020 redistricting process has operated without a public timeline encompassing the entire period, from the adoption of rules and guidelines to the enactment of new districts. Clear timelines to guide the public and its input are essential to an environment in which Kansans can fully

participate, but timelines are not enough on their own. Key events in the redistricting process must encompass sufficient time for the public to review and consider the details of plans under serious consideration by the legislature. We urge you in the strongest terms to create and clearly communicate deadlines for map submissions from legislators and the public, the creation of ample periods for public comment and testimony on committee-preferred maps, and a commitment to providing a week between committee action and floor votes on redistricting bills for all legislators to review maps and data and hear from their constituents.

- **Commit to the inclusion of community input** - Members of the Committees on Redistricting received nearly 500 pieces of public testimony in 2021. Community members are experts in how they should be represented and should continue to be given opportunities to testify during the committee process without the need to submit a state-wide map. This is especially true for members of marginalized communities that do not constitute the majority of the population in a single area. Committee members should publicly commit to providing these opportunities and taking this testimony into consideration in the map-drawing process. The public should be given ample opportunity to provide input on maps considered in committee without any preference given to selected individuals or organizations representing specific political interests.

Your actions on redistricting during the upcoming session will establish political boundaries that will impact Kansas for the next decade. Kansans are looking to you to create maps that are fair, equitable, and representative of the future we are all working toward. We call on you to resist partisan gamesmanship and commit to a redistricting process that will make all Kansans proud.

Respectfully,

ACLU of Kansas
El Centro Inc.
Equality Kansas
Kansas Action for Children
Kansas African American Affairs Commission
Kansas Appleseed
Kansas Civic Engagement Table
Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns
Kansas Hispanic and Latino American Affairs Commission
League of Women Voters of Kansas
Loud Light
Mainstream Coalition
The Voter Network
Working Kansas Alliance

CC:
Members of the Redistricting Advisory Group
Members of the Senate Committee on Redistricting
Members of the House Committee on Redistricting