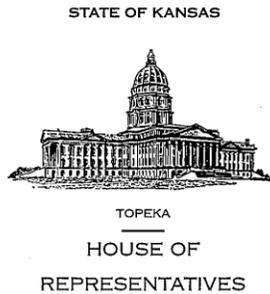


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COMMITTEE  
JOINT COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT  
JOINT COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE  
RULES AND REGULATIONS

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Testimony before the  
House Redistricting Committee  
On  
Proposed Congressional Maps  
By  
Rep. Valdenia C. Winn  
34<sup>th</sup> District – Kansas House of Representatives  
Chairperson, Wyandotte County Legislative Delegation

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony concerning the proposed Congressional maps. I appear today as the 34<sup>th</sup> District State Representative of 12 years, a Professor of History and Political Science at Kansas City Kansas Community College of 40 years, and as Chairperson of the Wyandotte County Legislative Delegation. **We are submitting testimony opposing the Congressional maps that divide Wyandotte County so that it is divided between two different Congressional Districts. We oppose those Congressional maps that remove Wyandotte County from the current boundaries of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District.**

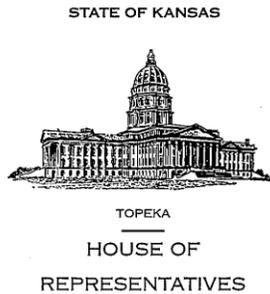
While it may or may not be the intent of the individual members of this committee who have drawn these maps, the unintended consequences of the majority of the maps drawn to date are clearly a form of gerrymandering. These consequences are similar to techniques used in the dark past of the history of the United States when it was popular to use closed primaries, poll taxes, literacy tests and restrictive registrations that denied people the right to vote.

By drawing lines that **divide Wyandotte County (North and South)** and drawing lines that **remove Wyandotte County from the current boundaries of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District** ...you have in fact divided a tightly-knit community. By removing Wyandotte County from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District you have separated a long-established community of interest, as well as, a regional economic area, thereby ignoring the fact that Wyandotte and Johnson counties are both components of the Greater Kansas City Metropolitan Statistical Area.

Why do we oppose those Congressional maps that place either parts or all of Wyandotte County into a Congressional District that stretches to the Colorado state line? It is totally illogical, clearly an act of gerrymandering, and designed to dilute the power of the vote of the Democratic Party in eastern Kansas.

By redrawing the lines in this manner, you have disenfranchised the citizens of Wyandotte County. You have diluted their vote because of the ratio of the population that is urban compared to that portion that is rural. By placing Wyandotte County, an urban community, into a predominately agricultural region, the electoral conclusion could likely result in the election of a U.S. Congressman from Western Kansas who could possibly have NO KNOWLEDGE, NO EXPERIENCE, and NO FRAME OF REFERENCE to

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the urban metropolitan area of Wyandotte County, as well as, the role that Wyandotte County plays in the Greater Kansas City Metropolitan Statistical Area. Moreover, in those maps that split Wyandotte County in half, you have increased the negative impact on the region. In short, you are establishing de facto barriers to the voters of Wyandotte County. This action is a political maneuver that is offensive to the citizens of Wyandotte County. Their electoral voices will be lost...as a rain drop is lost in the ocean!

The strength of Wyandotte County is its diversity, as well as, its re-development efforts as it is becoming a stronger member of the Greater Kansas City Metropolitan Statistical Area. Clearly there are differences in individual economic realities between the counties within the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District, but there is no denial that Wyandotte and Johnson Counties are both urban and more similar in all aspects than Wyandotte and Cheyenne Counties. (Cheyenne County is in the Northwest corner of Kansas).

Sixty years ago, a revolution known as the civil rights movement began to sweep the United States. It was led by African Americans, women, Native Americans, old and young, gay and lesbian alike. A decade of tumult resolved some issues...and left some for future generations to solve. But, in general, during the last sixty years the United States has in general agreed to honor its founding creed that all of humankind is created equal. However, we contend that the redrawing of the Congressional lines in the manner in which you have done so, will in fact, result in diminishing and diluting the constitutional rights for representation to the U.S Congress for the citizens of Wyandotte County. To us, it proves one thing...that the struggle for equality at the ballot box is not over and that the "democratic" process of redistricting is supposed to ensure that the fullest exercise of democracy in the United States...and Kansas...has been compromised and indeed, is in need of an adjustment.

We suggest to the members of this committee that it is time that you accept the premise that **"Democracy" in the United States means that the ultimate proof of equality is the right to vote!** Historically for ethnic white minorities, women, and for people of color the right to vote and protection of that right has been a long time coming.

Let me re-state our position: By the redrawing of these Congressional maps as you have done so in most of the proposed Congressional maps, you have divided a contiguous community of interest and collectively these maps are a crafty effort to deny the citizens of Wyandotte County the full equity of their votes.

I will stand for questions.

Rep. Valdenia C. Winn  
34<sup>th</sup> District-Kansas House of Representatives  
Chairperson Wyandotte County Legislative Delegation