

Testimony type: Written-only

From: Mary Galligan

To: The House Committee on Redistricting
Re: Fair & Equitable Representation in Kansas Congressional Maps
Position: Opponent

Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to supply testimony in support of transparent and fair redistricting.

I am asking that the House Redistricting Committee reject the Ad Astra map (and its successor, Ad Astra 2) because it does not serve the people of Kansas who deserve a fair congressional district map that will allow all Kansans' interests to be represented in Congress.

I am concerned about the potential for maps, such as either version of Ad Astra, to break up two important communities of interest in NE KS. In a new congressional district plan, the borders of the 3rd district should be changed as little as necessary to equalize the population as required by the US Constitution.

Johnson and Wyandotte counties are part of a large metropolitan community of interest that is surrounded by a distinct, but also cohesive 16-county community comprising the northeast Kansas community of interest. Any significant change to the 3rd district will negatively impact the northeast Kansas community so I will address both in these remarks.

A community of interest can be defined in several ways, one involves looking at similarities that create cohesiveness across an area. The other looks at how a cohesive community differs from the area within which it is situated. Either way, the densely populated Johnson and Wyandotte counties together form a singular community of interest that must be recognized and maintained intact in one congressional district. Obviously the entirety of both counties cannot be included in a single congressional district. It is important that you draw the boundary of the 3rd district very carefully to meet the one-person-one-vote requirement without fragmenting the metro community.

You have already heard much from residents of Johnson and Wyandotte counties about their reasons for keeping those counties together while recognizing the need to 'move' some population into the surrounding 2nd district. I will not repeat those compelling descriptions of the metro community but I encourage you to review them.

I will however, direct your attention to the surrounding NE Kansas community. The 16 contiguous counties surrounding the Johnson-Wyandotte community form another multi-county community of interest with an identity distinct from the metro area and the balance of the state, especially in the context of federal issues. The counties comprising this community are Atchison, Brown, Doniphan, Douglas, Franklin, Geary, Jackson, Jefferson, Leavenworth, Lyon, Miami, Osage, Pottawatomie, Riley, Shawnee, and Wabaunsee.

These 16 counties comprise the third most populated corner of the state. While densely populated on a Kansas scale, in contrast to the Kansas City metro area, the population is scattered across rural areas with significant concentrations in major towns. Three of the 10 largest cities in the state are in this area: Topeka, Lawrence, and Manhattan. By serving relatively large regions, these cities interact with a much wider geographic area than even larger cities in the KC metro area.

From the perspective of federal issues likely to be addressed by Congress, this 16-county NE Kansas area is also unique by being home to:

- the state's two largest research universities, only municipal university, and one of three regional public universities;
- the state's two largest military installations;
- the Kickapoo, Potawatomi, Iowa, and Sac and Fox nations' reservations and Haskell Indian Nations University; and
- major U.S. Corps of Engineers flood control reservoirs and nearby recreational areas, including Milford, Tuttle, Perry, Pomona, and Clinton reservoirs.

Breaking up either of these two important communities of interest would unnecessarily dilute the voices and disregard the shared interests of Kansans who live in those areas. Please preserve both of these communities as you create new congressional districts.

The Committees on Redistricting should make their maps, agendas, and deadlines available to the public with at least a full week's notice to allow enough time to review maps, and prepare and submit testimony.

In closing, as a resident of Topeka in the current second district, I urge you to reject Ad Astra 1 and Ad Astra 2 and instead create a congressional map that recognizes both the KC metro area (Wyandotte County and the core of Johnson County) as well as the important 16-county community of interest that surrounds it. This would be a long-overdue recognition of both important communities comprising NE Kansas.

Respectfully,

Mary Galligan

Topeka, KS 66614

mrygllgn@yahoo.com