

Neutral Testimony on Congressional Redistricting

House Redistricting Committee

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Chair Croft, Members of the Committee,

Less than 24 hrs to Review Maps and Submit Testimony

The House Redistricting Committee and Senate Redistricting Committee each gave less than 24 hours notice for the public to submit testimony on newly proposed congressional maps.

No Data for Analysis Before Testimony Deadline

No raw data for the proposed congressional maps was made available to the public before the testimony deadline making meaningful analysis difficult and precise analysis impossible.

Simultaneous Hearings in House and Senate Committees

The House Redistricting Committee and Senate Redistricting Committee are both holding hearings on proposed congressional redistricting maps at the exact same time, but in different rooms making it impossible for the public to provide oral testimony to both chambers.

26th Amendment and College Campuses – Youth Population Community of Interest

The 26th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution lowered the voting age to 18 and prevents states from denying or abridging voting rights based on age. The 26th Amendment is nearly identical to the 15th Amendment which prevents voting discrimination based on race. Courts have found that college students are representative of the 26th Amendment's guarantee of voting rights for young Americans. Given that young Americans are a protected class represented by college campuses, it is critical to keep college campus communities intact.

“Ad Astra” Map Concerns – Political Gerrymandering of Youth Vote

The “Ad Astra” map appears to be an intense partisan gerrymander. As it relates to the protected rights of young voters, we have concerns about the state's 4 largest universities (KU, KSU, FHSU, WSU) all being placed into heavily politically gerrymandered districts thereby diluting the voting power of young Kansans. Competitive congressional races require candidates to appeal to young voters. When districts are highly uncompetitive, as is the case in the “Ad Astra” map, young voters are less likely to be contacted by political campaigns and civic organizations thereby reducing their engagement in the political process.

“Bluestem” Map Support – Competitive College Campus Districts

We support a congressional map that does not dilute the voting power of young Kansans. Specifically, a map such as “Bluestem” which places the 2 largest universities (KU, KSU) into a competitive district.

Thank you for considering my testimony,

Davis Hammet

President, Loud Light Civic Action