

Hello,

First off, I don't envy any members of the committee today, I wish you all the best of luck.

My name is Ryan Reza, I am a senior at the University of Kansas, and am speaking as a constituent and dedicated Kansan. Originally from Topeka and moved to Lawrence four years ago. Born and raised here in Kansas, I love this state and want this state to grow and develop, want us to move forward towards a brighter future. I want to stay here for the long-term, start a family here, and live the rest of my life here.

You all heard me back at the Lawrence townhall, I'm here again not to yell at or confront you all about these maps, but to plead with you from someone who knows Kansas is his home and only wants the best for this state, regardless of political affiliation.

I understand that it is an extremely arduous task to draw fair and representative maps, I'm a 22-year-old, there is no way I draw better maps. But I will say that these maps, all four of them, are not fair to the people of Kansas. Now originally, my testimony covered all four maps proposed in this committee, however, due to the Senate only moving the "Ad Astra" map to the floor, I'll be covering that one. But if any legislator wants to hear my critiques of the other maps, you're more than welcome to ask.

Now, the "Ad Astra" map. This map directly impacts my community, the city of Lawrence, a place I've lived in for the last four years. First and foremost, Lawrence does not belong in the same district as Goodland, or Liberal or Dodge City. After the Census of 1990, where we went from 5 to 4 districts, Lawrence has never been in a district West of Manhattan. This map proposes us to be in the same district as the furthest most Western counties, an incomprehensible change. My entire adult life, I have known Lawrence to be in the same district as Topeka. That's because CD2, for as long as I have been alive, represents East Kansas. In High School Government class, I was taught that our district hits Nebraska, then touches Oklahoma, doesn't go past Topeka, and avoids Johnson County (like we should). CD2 is my home, I am proud of this district and the communities that make up it. This map removes me from the community I grew up in. The community I know.

I'll tell you a quick backstory. My parents are immigrants, typically a group of the population that doesn't get too involved with politics. Well, my dad was different. Dragged my sister and I to every political event we could go to at any age. I grew up in politics, but specifically, I grew up in CD2 politics. Now I'm from Lawrence, I go to KU, you could probably guess by now I'm a Democrat. So, I'm going to throw you a bunch of Democratic names that I grew up with, like Nancy Boyda, Tobias (can't pronounce his last name I'm sorry Tobias), Wakefield, Chad Taylor, can't forget Paul Davis and of course Michelle De La Isla. All of them, my family went to their events. We have pictures with all of them. CD2 runs in our blood, this is our home. Now most of them lost but, this map, takes that away from us.

I was born and raised in East Kansas, I don't know the West. The communities here, and the communities in CD1 are so different, putting them in the same district doesn't make any sense.

The Ad Astra map hurts both sides, it takes away from all communities within that district, no one gains from it. This map changes history, it throws out everything Kansans know about our representative districts.

The people of CD1 deserve a district that represents West Kansas, and ensures they have a congressman who's from West Kansas. The issues that matter to them are so much more different than the issues that impact a guy on Mass St. Imagine a world where this map passes, and CD1 elects a guy from Lawrence. How in the hell is he supposed to represent the people out West? He can't, and everyone here knows it. This map opens the door for that. They deserve proper and guaranteed representation just as much as we do. The Ad Astra map strips that from them.

Now know I spent my time here critiquing and not speaking productively. But the people of Kansas want fair maps, where their communities are represented by folks who are FROM their communities. Fair maps are the only way we have a Kansas that moves forward. I want to see a state that prospers through a representative government. I don't care who's in office. I'm a Democrat trust me on this one. All I care about, is that the people of Kansas get representatives who are from their communities. Not all the way across the state.

Thank you.