

Testimony type: Written-only

From: Mattie Bell

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 the committee to reject the Ad Astra map proposal. Lawrence should not be transferred to the First Congressional District.

Lawrence is part of the Kansas City Kansas and Topeka area. Our needs and culture are urban, and not the same as the majority rural areas of Congressional District 1 of Western Kansas. I have lived in Lawrence almost my whole life, and the whole of my voting life. It is hard to feel like I am represented in Congress. Gerrymandering Lawrence's power away by wedging us into the First Congressional District will make that even harder. It is quite clear from the map that Lawrence is being targeted. Stop trying to block our constitutional right of representation.

I would like to see Lawrence stay in the Second Congressional District where it already is. Separating Lawrence from the rest of Douglas County would negatively impact us and our voting power. Which, is obviously the goal of those who are proposing it, including presenter Representative Chris Croft. It is cowardly and despicable. Instead of trying to weaken Lawrence, try changing your policies to benefit all people. This is also an attempt to break up student representation. Lawrence is a well known college town, and is connected to others in North Eastern Kansas and the Second Congressional District. Many students that go to KU and other colleges in the state are from Kansas. By separating us you are separating students and disenfranchising them.

Current Congressional maps were created by the courts and should be altered as little as necessary to accommodate population shifts. The Kansas City Metro is currently whole within Kansas' Third congressional district and should remain in a single district as residents have shared interests in representation. 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.

We need voices representing us in Congress, and isolating Lawrence from our local community and counting us with Western Kansas-which has different needs and priorities-will only make that impossible. If you have integrity as someone elected to represent Kansans, please reject this Ad Astra redistricting proposal. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Mattie Bell

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