

Written only testimony for deadline of 1/21/22

Chairman Croft and Members of the Redistricting Committee,

I am writing this quickly because I just barely learned about the deadline to submit testimony for these maps. My name is Paris Raite and I have been a full time resident/student in Lawrence after moving here from Manhattan, KS to attend KU. Although it has been hard to find much information on the process of drawing these maps, I would like to write out my concerns and opposition to the committee about the proposed Ad Astra map. As a citizen of Lawrence, I was shocked to see that we were scooped from our 2nd district and brought into the 1st district. Our community in Lawrence doesn't belong in the 1st district for multiple reasons. The main reason is that this is not our community. Lawrence is intertwined with the Topeka and Kansas City community through work, commuters, the cities, Universities, and more. To take us out is weakening our strength as a community.

Not only does this map tear our community apart but it also separates the Kansas student community. With this map, KU students are separated from many college campuses which weakens our chances from building community with Kansas students. As a full time Lawrence resident, KU student, and someone who works within the Topeka and Lawrence community, these are major concerns for my community.

I would also like to mention the visual nature of these maps. The maps just look warped, and Lawrence has been cherry picked from our normal community. Why? To weaken our power and separate us from the community the Topeka/Lawrence/Kansas City area has built. It is clear that these maps reflect underlying political motives. I can't help but think of when former Senate President Susan Wagle told an audience that Kansas Republicans goal during the redistricting process was to get Rep. Sharice Davids out of office. The Ad Astra map clearly outlines this plan which involves splitting up the Douglas and Wyandotte county communities.

Unfortunately, it seems that constituent testimony was not considered while drawing these maps. I attended the redistricting town hall here in Lawrence at KU. I heard many voices who explained to legislators that the Lawrence / Douglas county community wanted to stay together. I remember other moments where the Lawrence community even brought up the harms of splitting the Wyandotte community. Obviously our voices were not heard. I hope that this time the legislature will listen.

Paris Raite
Lawrence, KS