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April 30, 2015

To: Senate Rules Committee
From: Kate Titus, Common Cause Oregon
Re: Support for HB 2974

Common Cause supports HB 2974 to hold public hearings as part of the redistricting process.

Common Cause

Common Cause is a nonpartisan organization that works to safeguard and improve the democratic process. For 45 years, the organization has helped strengthen public participation and faith in our institutions of self-government, and has worked to ensure that government serves and is accountable to the public interest.

Role in Redistricting

Common Cause has a history of leadership on redistricting, both nationally and here in Oregon. The organization played a nonpartisan, public interest role in Oregon's last redistricting process, providing input to the House and Senate redistricting committees, public information through the media, and by working to support public participation in hearings organized by the legislature. Following redistricting, we released a report: [*Oregon's 2011 Redistricting: Successes, Concerns, and Recommended Improvements*](#), which lays out recommendations for specific reforms to improve our state redistricting, including the recommendation addressed by this bill.

Support for HB 2974

During the last redistricting process, the legislature organized hearings around the state to enable public input. These proved valuable, both for the legislative process itself and for public understanding of the process. We commend the legislature for this. This excellent and non-controversial process should be institutionalized.

Common Cause affirms several key provisions in this bill:

- Establishes public hearings as part of the redistricting process
- Specifies that hearings be held not only *before*, but also *after* draft maps are available
- Specifies *at least 10* public hearings held prior, and *at least 5* held after drafting maps
- Specifies that the hearings be held *throughout the state*, with *latitude as to where*
- Provides for *remote participation* through the use of video equipment

Common Cause commends the Senate Rules Committee for deliberating on this important issue. We urge you to support HB 2974, voting it out of committee for consideration by your colleagues in the full Senate Chamber.