

Greetings legislators,

I submitted a redistricting proposal based on a simple premise -- democracy is served best when voting districts contain a more diverse populace. I'm not talking about racial, ethnic, religious, or even political diversity, all of which I ignored in mapping the districts. Rather, I submit that the biggest divide in this country is rural vs. urban. Including a broader range of city, suburb, and country in a district will refresh and enliven the discussion of issues.

The alternative is to group like-minded people into insular districts. This can be comfortable for incumbents, who get elected again and again with little or no campaigning. But the electorate gets disengaged over time as policy stagnates and nothing changes. In such a district "term limits" will become one of the top issues mentioned, especially by younger voters. At that point, you know democracy isn't working right -- the districts are tribal, not democratic.

I am especially pleased with the "Willamette to Wallowas" congressional district on my proposal. This district contains roughly equal proportions of urban, suburban, and country populations, as well as spanning a diverse geography with its many industries and identities. Yet it is all tied together by Interstate 84. Such a district promises to be a hotbed of political ideas and activism -- exactly what democracy should look like. It isn't possible to make all districts as "interesting", but my maps include many districts that are elongated to try to increase their diversity.

Please choose a redistricting plan that offers similar levels of diversity in the districts. Anything less is gerrymandering, and that is anti-democratic, even in its bipartisan-balanced form.

Mike Steed