

Dear Committee Members,

There were some audio issues with my oral testimony for the Sept 8, 2021 8:00 AM Congressional District 1 Redistricting Committee so I am also submitting a written copy.

My name is Cecil Blair Walter and I live in the small community of Columbia City in Columbia County Oregon nestled in Congressional District 1, and Oregon Senate District 16 and House District 31. Our county and communities are rural with a mostly resource based economy. I have lived here for nearly my entire life. My daughter grew up here, I have done business here, I've sat on local non-profit boards, helped organize many local fundraisers and served on our combined Chamber of Commerce Board.

I can tell you from experience, the communities in our county are close knit. We all go to the same parks, local events, restaurants and stores. We count on each other and we deserve representation FROM our local communities that understands our local economy, the issues that are important to our local businesses and the common interests and challenges that our rural citizens face. The issues are very different for rural communities than urban communities and I urge you not to disenfranchise our currently underrepresented rural citizens by combining their districts with a heavy urban presence. It would not only be unfair, it would be illegal.

ORS 188.010 Requires that the criteria for apportionment of the state into congressional and legislative districts meet the following criteria:

Be contiguous;

Be of equal population;

Utilize existing geographic or political boundaries;

Not divide communities of common interest; and

Be connected by transportation links.

That no district shall be drawn for the purpose of favoring any political party, incumbent legislator or other person.

As I have studied the maps that are before the committee I see that some of these criteria are not met. As an example, both the Oregon House and the Senate maps marked "Map C" divide our County, divide two school districts, divide our PUD and divide our Fire District along with several other local service districts. This is unacceptable and completely contrary to the criteria for redistricting. The Congressional Map B does a far better job of assuring a voice for rural citizens whereas Congressional Map A seems to place a piece of the Portland Metro Area within four separate congressional districts. As previously mentioned, the legislative Maps C literally tear our rural county apart. With all of this in mind, I urge you to do the right thing, to follow the law and to approve all three maps marked "Map B." Please allow the rural citizens of Oregon to maintain our identity and way of life. They are the most fair to our currently marginalized rural communities and meet the criteria of the Oregon Revised Statutes. Thank You

C. Blair Walter - Columbia City, OR