

Re: House and Senate Committees on Redistricting
Dear Committee Co-chairs and Committee Members,

We are Gordon and Gail Culbertson, residents of Walterville in rural Lane County. Our family home is in the present Congressional District 4 and House District 11.

One of our most sacred rights as Americans is the privilege to vote for those who represent us in Congress and the State Legislature.

Gerrymandering of voting districts is an ugly process to manipulate boundary lines in a way that disenfranchises a group of voters. No matter the political party in power that seeks unseemly advantage through this process; it's wrong, harming our democracy and ripping deep social fissures further dividing our state.

Reviewing alternatives developed for the 2021 Oregon redistricting there are numerous examples of districts placed to benefit the current majority party. However, our focus will be on Lane County, and House District plan 'A' and implications for those living in rural areas of the county.

Four reshaped and carefully drawn districts are proposed:

- HD-7 covering "Southeastern Eugene" to the crest of the Cascades.
- HD-8 including "Southern Eugene" to Veneta
- HD-13 an area from "Northern Eugene" to the crest of the mountains between the Mohawk and Calapooia river drainages.
- HD-14 covering "Western Eugene" through Junction City.

There is a pattern here clear for anyone to see. Using 70,000 residents as the target for a House District population, Eugene's 180,000 citizens would be entitled to 2.6 districts representing them. It's curious that with a total county population of 390,000 residents and almost 5,000 square miles, there is no possible configuration of geographic boundaries that would allow rural voters in central, southern, and eastern Lane County to select a candidate without being overwhelmed and diluted by numbers of voters specifically chosen in a "root" tied to urban Eugene precincts.

The current process has selected districts completely ignoring statutes for creation of legislative districts in Oregon. Specifically ignored are these requirements.

- "Utilize existing geographic or political boundaries" – repeatedly dancing back and forth across the city limits of Eugene doesn't follow the rule.
- "Not divide communities of common interest". Communities of common interest "is a broad term that can mean any subpopulation that expresses an interest in occupying the same district". Issues concerning rural agriculture families and students at the U of O are much different. Representative Wilde highlighted this, bemoaning the new districting as separating the U of O community of "common interest".
- Under the plan 'A' proposal huge districts comprised of rural landscape are "rooted" to a few populous urban precincts across "political boundaries" of

Eugene, making it highly suspect a candidate representing the “common interest” for a large “subpopulation” of rural voters will be represented or even considered.

Oregon’s population is diverse and has a variety of economic and cultural interests. When partisan political interests assert control and threaten the legitimacy of the process, the liberty of all citizens is at risk. A non-partisan re-districting procedure is an absolute necessity to assure the integrity of legislative representation. Lane County citizens deserve honest House District boundaries that allow a chance for representation for the unique and culturally different communities, whether they be rural or within the confines of the City of Eugene.

Of the three House District plans offered, plan ‘B’ would be the only one we would support.

Sincerely,
Gordon and Gail Culbertson
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