

Dear Co-chairs, vice chairs, and members of the Redistricting committees,

I hope you are having a good afternoon. My name is Milka Rebeca Mendez Osorio. I work for a non-profit organization and participate as a volunteer in organizations that support the BIPOC community. I belong to District 1. And I have lived in the city of Forest Grove for 20 years. I am part of House District 29 and Senate District 15.

To begin with, I would like to mention that I am convinced that I chose the best city to live in according to my interests and needs. I value the stillness, the security and above all the natural areas that surround me. During these 20 years I have had the opportunity to see how my community has been growing and progressing, to be specific I would like to mention some of the organizations that have grown and continue to serve my community: Adelante Mujeres, Centro Cultural, Virginia Garcia Cornelius and Virginia Garcia in Hillsboro, PCC Hillsboro Center, Pacific University, Cornelius Public Library, Cornelius Place (Senior Apartment Building) Juniper Gardens Apartments(affordable Agricultural Worker Housing) and Fern Hills Wetlands among many more. We have new parks, some schools that have been rebuilt, shopping centers, recreational centers, financial centers, all of which have been invested in infrastructure and environmental care. I am pleased to know that we have these services and that these achievements are due to the fact that our community has invested time, effort and has made its voice heard and our representatives work closely with our community.

Today I am here in front of you for the first time to thank you for the complex work that you do in the delicate task of redistricting our districts. At the same time I also want to let you know that my neighbors, family, friends and community members are worried and fearful that with the redistricting process we could lose political representation which would affect decision-making and changes in policies related to education, health care, transportation, security, accessible housing, environmental protection, infrastructure, emergency programs in case of natural disasters and more. My community is very beautiful, safe, quiet, diverse and multicultural which makes it attractive to many when choosing their new home. Our community continues to grow, which the results of the census have indicated. Therefore making the redistribution of our communities important to consider.

The redistricting process is a bit complex. I am still trying to understand this process, but what I am clear about is that it is necessary for us to be heard in this change. It is very important that each resident of our community is represented with respect and dignity. We want our representatives to work together with our BIPOC communities. We need a representation that knows us, respects us and values the richness of diversity. We want a representation that listens to our concerns, our needs, and works together with us to strengthen and grow our communities. Choosing between map A, B, and C has been a challenge for me and I want to share that geography is not my strong suit and it is difficult for me to understand the district maps, but I have been talking with friends, neighbors, members of my community, and community leaders and we have come to the conclusion that Map A is the one with which we feel most united and represented. We believe that if we choose this option we will have better representation and that the resources will be distributed in our community in an equitable way.

Members of the redistricting committee, once again, I appreciate the hard work you do in this process and although it occurs every ten years I know that it is a very valuable and delicate task because it is a decision that will affect every member of our community for years to come. Thank you for your time, thank you for listening to my testimony with attention.

Have a good afternoon,
Milka Rebeca Mendez Osorio