

To whom it may concern:

I am a resident of Oregon 5th Congressional District. I am writing in support of the "Albina Soul District Map Description" that I have read and in support of equity in redrawing Oregon's Congressional District maps.

As I understand it, the proposed Sould District Map connects similar communities of color that have been spread out due to gentrification. These residents work, own businesses and have their social circles within the District, and many community leadership organizations like The Soul District, NAYA, OAME, NAACP, Albina Head Start, SEI, Urban League, POIC, Imagine Black (formerly PAALF) and the Latino network which support these communities are based in Northeast Portland. This proposed District would connect portions of Jefferson and Wasco Counties, which have large or growing populations of color, and also connect these communities with Native American populations along the Columbia River. Additionally, this map pulls in portions of Bend and Deschutes County, providing proper representation to the county that has seen the largest population growth over the past 10 years. Drawing like communities of color together strengthens the voices of people of color, urban and rural, and provides proper representation for these communities and low-income and working families. The map connects communities to the places they care about. The map also connects the current State House Districts 43,44,47,48,49,50,52,53,54,59.

It is one matter to redraw districts according to population size, or changing population density, but it can be a related matter to connect this to racial and economic justice. There is no contradiction between the two, and I will argue that it is a necessary social good that will have far-reaching and generally positive effects over the years and take us to the next census. Certainly Oregon's history demands that we act affirmatively for racial justice in order to begin to address past wrongs.

Looking at a map of our state, I can see no other means of obtaining these goals than this proposal. Every other proposal that I have seen effectively Balkanizes our state and invites increasing conflict and disparities.

I write as a proud Italian American who believes that there is nothing that people of color want that whites don't also need. Almost everyone benefits from this proposal. I also write as a union leader and activist and as a radio show host and as a resident of Oregon for nearly 25 years.

Thank you.

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