

Good evening chair and members of the committee,

My name is Courtney Bangs and I am a Clatsop County Commissioner representing my rural district 4 of east Astoria, Svenson, Knappa, and Westport. I am speaking for myself this evening and not as a commission as a whole. My following statements are also not reflective of any dissatisfaction of our current elected officials but more out of concern in my community's future. Times have changed over the last 10 years and the rural urban divide has only grown greater.

As many know, Clatsop is a rural county that identifies itself as neither strongly Republican or Democrat. I myself am a non- partisan elected official. As a rural resident myself, I can confidently share with you the feelings that many constituents in my area share regarding our political atmosphere we've experienced over the last few years. Our state and nation has become greatly divided and aggressively partisan lately. The atmosphere has become divisive and competitive leading to constituents, especially in rural areas feeling unheard and unable to trust the government and its proceedings.

Currently, redistricting appears to a layman as a political maneuver potentially susceptible to manipulation. To quote Barack Obama, "I think we need to end the practice of drawing our congressional districts so that politicians can pick their voters and not the other way around. Let a bipartisan group do it." My goal as a local representative has been to build trust, try my best to meet in the middle with positive cooperative work, and represent all of my constituents to the best of my ability.

My concern is making sure we are gathering communities of common interest within this redistricting process. Our state has changed so much over the last 10 years, now is the time, as we restructure, to identify our communities of common interest giving them the best chance to have their concerns represented and not stifled under outside concerns or agendas. Our rural communities are concerned about equality in education, natural resource management, land use, crop production, water, livestock production, natural disaster planning, government regulations, taxation, transportation and tourism. To give you a very small and very personal example that will highlight our differences, my children's school district just offered in person music in 2020 for the first time in 2 decades but our urban constituents I'm sure have had music for quite some time. Then you add the lack of internet availability to multiple areas within our county. These issues aren't urban issues or concerns, they are rural concerns for parents trying to give they best they can to their kids. Seeing a potential map with Portland interests funneling into four of our districts causes me great concern. Sadly, that will take away our rural voice and focus on more urban concerns leaving my constituents and myself out of the conversation.

In closing, I will continually advocate for the underserved in my community and I am asking for a non- partisan result keeping communities of commonality together in order to best serve our state as a whole and hopefully meet in the middle to foster faith, hope, and good business in the process.

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