

Sept. 13, 2021

Dear House Co-Chairs Salinas, Boshart-Davis, Senate Chair Taylor and Vice-Chair Knopp, and members of the redistricting committees,

My name is Ashley Carson Cottingham, my pronouns are she/her and I am a resident of South East Salem. My House District is 21 and I am in Senate district 11. I am also the Vice-Chair of the Salem-Keizer School Board, a non-partisan position.

First off, thank you for the hard work of this committee. I know there are a lot of complexities in drawing new district lines. I am a fifth generation Oregonian, grew up in Central Oregon and now my family and I have the privilege of living in a neighborhood in Salem where our children are very close to public school and my job is just 5 minutes away.

We moved here because of how close necessities were to our house and to ensure we had minimal negative environmental impacts on our community. We have lived in our home for over 7 years and find ourselves walking and biking to most things like restaurants, the local library and our many beautiful parks.

However, our neighborhood is historically white and there is a major lack of diversity, in addition to the lack of affordable housing. As an ally, I greatly value the cultural diversity brought by communities of color living across Salem and Keizer as well as up to Woodburn where House District 22 extends.

The Salem area is home to a thriving and vibrant Latinx community, and I greatly value the array of options, where you can find culturally specific shops and restaurants, and places of worship that are more diverse. Many farmworkers and other agricultural workers live in this area.

House Plan B appears to dilute and split up the voices of working class people whose labor is so critical to this area. Please do not take this approach.

Now is the time to rebuild trust across our communities and engage in inclusive and responsive policy-making. Now is not the time to further divide into political factions and exclude critical voices.

We have an opportunity now to right some of the various wrongs of the past and take action that is anti-racist in ensuring all voices are heard and well-represented across our state. Lastly, I strongly request that you engage in Tribal consultation with Oregon's tribes to ensure an inclusive path forward in this redistricting process.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Ashley Carson Cottingham

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