

September 13, 2021

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

For the record my name is Britney VanCitters, my pronouns are she/her/hers, and I live with my partner in Southeast Portland, current House District 48. My partner and I moved to Lents this May, and have lived in East Portland for 4 out of the 5 years we've been here.

Before I get into my testimony, I would like to say that changing the deadline for written testimony in the middle of the public comment period is wrong. I strongly urge the committee to reconsider this decision and continue to accept testimony until the original deadline of 5:30 PM tomorrow.

In general, I support the committee's Congressional Plan A. I believe this plan keeps communities of interest together, takes into account major transportation links, and respects important natural boundaries. For example, Portland is divided along the Willamette River. As young people living in Portland, we've viewed the River as a significant barrier to our day-to-day lives, even with reliable cars. When we lived in Goose Hollow, we rarely ventured to the eastside — we were more likely to go to Beaverton than cross the river. Since moving to the eastside, the only reason we cross the river is to attend an occasional Timbers or Thorns match. Plan A's 3rd district (my own district) does a great job of keeping communities of interest together, especially through the lens of tourism and recreation. One of the perks of living in East Portland is the easy access to the Gorge and My Hood. It also keeps the route from Portland to Bend intact, which is important due to the tourism we share back and forth, and the beer economy that our cities share. Portland, Bend, and Hood River also share common values when it comes to climate change, conservation, land-use planning, and resource management, so grouping them together in one district allows us to leverage our collective power when working on federal issues.

I find Plan B to be oddly similar to our current congressional map, and it contradicts co-chair Boshart-Davis's concerns about gerrymandering which she shared during this committee's hearing on September 3rd. Referring to Eugene, she said, "Currently, we have an urban area that silences the voices of rural communities..." she goes on to say "... we know that when you pair college students with small town residents 45 miles away to one party's political advantage - that's gerrymandering," [13:36-13:56]. When you pair a rapidly growing area such as Bend with dozens of rural communities hundreds of miles away to the minority party's advantage—that's still gerrymandering. For this reason, and those I shared earlier, I support Plan A to pair my community in east Portland with the growing area of Bend.

I also encourage the committee to look at the map that I've submitted (Congress BVC 92 21-09-04, screenshots included below), and consider adjusting district lines, especially in NE and inner SE Portland.

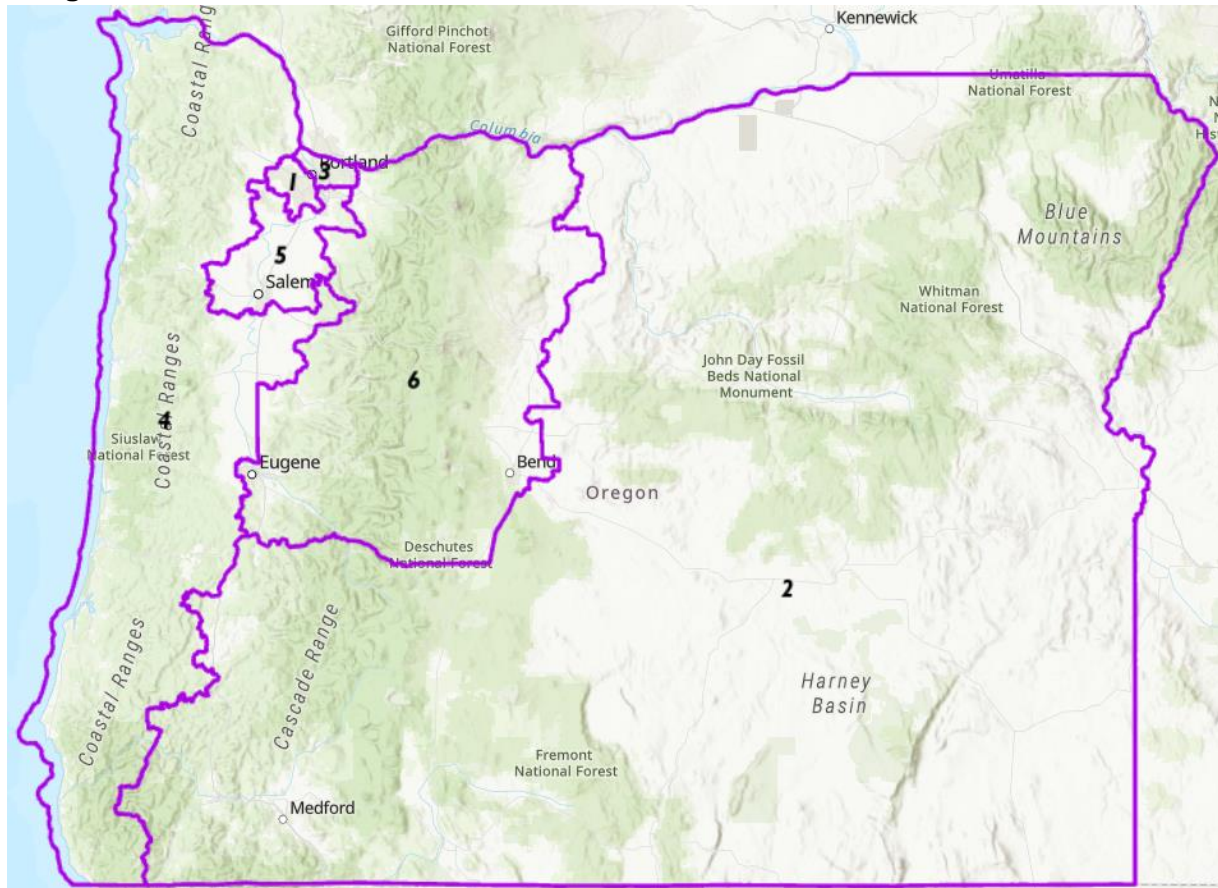
In regards to the legislative maps, I support Plan C. I feel that Lents shares common interests, barriers, and concerns with other communities along (and especially east of) SE 82nd Avenue and along I-205. And while my nearest grocery store is the Fred Meyer at the intersection of SE 82nd Ave and SE Johnson Creek Blvd (in Clackamas County), I feel more connected to the communities to the north: that's where our friends live, where we take our dog to the park, where my partner goes to the gym, where we order take-out from. In Legislative Plan B my district would be split 60-40 between Clackamas and Multnomah Counties. The differences between these counties in my area may be subtle, but they are noticeable, especially when you consider community values. I remember the first time I shopped at the Fred Meyer on Johnson Creek Blvd (pre-COVID vaccines) — there were significantly fewer facemasks than I was accustomed to seeing in Portland.

Legislative Plan C gives my community, and those with shared values to the north of us, the best opportunity to elect a leader who shares those same values. Someone who understands the impacts of living in a narrow community sandwiched between two highways (I-205 and Hwy 213). Someone who understands what it means to live in Portland, but east of 82nd Ave— how we often feel forgotten and unrepresented by city politics.

I want to thank the committee and your staff for your service and work on these proposals — I know there are a lot of important factors to consider in this process. I appreciate the attention to detail in Congressional Plan A, and Legislative Plans A and C to keep communities whole, to prioritize communities of color that have so often been disenfranchised, and to group communities of common interest together. Please keep in mind what I have shared about my community when finalizing these maps. I'm happy to answer any questions by email at britney992@gmail.com or by phone at (707) 592-2377. Thank you.

Britney VanCitters
Lents, Portland, OR

Congress BVC 92 21-09-04



Close-up of Portland Metro region

