

I would like to thank the committees on redistricting for this opportunity to share my narrative and input into this once in a decade process that will have the largest impact on our legislative elections for years to come.

I am a registered voter in Jefferson County Oregon. I am white. I am the only one of my family here so I represent myself. My father was a racist and I grew up hearing black people called everything but black. My first memory of race awareness was in the first grade when I brought a girl home from school who happened to be black and my father told her to go home. Growing up in South Florida, I lived around and among many aspects of diversity, African American, Haitian, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Mexican, Nicaraguan, the list goes on and on. I was accustomed to this, both the strengths of the diversity and the challenges of having to see beyond one's own bias. This was a part of my daily life because this was available where I lived, in the same county, town, and towns next door. I am fully aware and even more so these days, of the challenges and mistreatment my BIPOC neighbors endured. One's status and opportunities were determined by what side of the railroad track you lived on. Even so, those experiences of knowing others who were different than me and had different cultures made my life richer and I am glad for it.

While I am aware that each state and part of a state definitely has its own history, values, and culture, moving to Jefferson County has reminded me of my dad more than once. I have lived here 5 years and, in the beginning, could only see the beauty of the mountains. But in the last few years, ugliness has pervaded this beauty. I was horrified to sit in a city council meeting and hear the talk of the deaths of the Native Americans from COVID dismissed as not mattering much because they were, after all, Native Americans. I was even more horrified that no one said anything. Not the mayor, not a single council person. I have seen Native Americans called savages on Facebook. The only reason I have seen someone show an interest in Warm Springs was when their higher vaccination rate at that time would help this area meet the goals set for moving our level down.

Racism affects the very core of the fabric of our society. It feeds into mistrust, suspicion, and downright hatred. The recent school board meeting was an example of this. Reports of name calling, barely held back physical aggression, and verbal threats by some who were white were not only were examples of intimidation, but were not taken seriously by local law enforcement. The refusal of some white people to adhere to proven science and wear a mask at an event in a closed room showed contempt for those they were meeting with. As a member of the community, I feel less safe when things like this occur. So, I must be real. My concern for representation is for concern for my fellow citizens who have been so marginalized, but for myself as well. When we as a community allow this and other behaviors to take place (and by not demanding that law enforcement do something about it, we are allowing it to happen), we are ALL less safe and less stable and, well, less American. We do not demonstrate our patriotism by anger and intimidation but by making sure that fairness wins. And verbal threats do not demonstrate fairness. As a white ally of the Native Americans, I not only find this behavior repugnant but throughout this narrative, I find myself looking for a solution. Not one solution that will fix everything but one that will address an important glaring area that will assist the Native Americans and the LatinX to be better represented and allow them to formulate a political community that will assist them to meet their fair needs for representation, not more than they are allowed but not less than either. Fair. American.

The media likes to talk about "rural Oregon" as if it were a homogenous, largely white demographic. This is not true and hasn't been for a long time. The current people that represent them in the legislature do not, in fact, represent them and their interests. In fact, the rural Native and LatinX communities have

been racially gerrymandered, intentionally cut in half, or deleted altogether. With your assistance, this can stop. Racial equity needs to be prioritized in rural Oregon and you can help make that happen. You can help make the representation fair and equitable.

I support the map publicly available on ESRI titled "House bsmith78 21-09-08." There is an emphasis on rural Native and adjacent LatinX communities that share common interests and face common issues. Under this map, the three largest Native American communities in Oregon will finally get a better say in who represents them in legislature. HD57 would no longer split one of the largest contiguous LatinX populations in the state but rather join it with the Confederated Tribe of the Umatilla Reservation. The Klamath tribes citizens would be on the same district as the citizens of Klamath Falls. Warm Springs would no longer have its voting power diluted by with other communities they have nothing to do with, but rather rural LatinX communities in Hood River and Madras. And the citizens of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and the Klamath Tribes would share a common senate district.

I believe that this map has the best chance for a workable solution both to offer representation as it should be but also to offer representation of rural Oregon as it truly exists.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony at this important juncture in our legislative process.

Sincerely

Vickie Johnson