

Redistricting Testimony

Cybele Higgins, Eugene

Good evening, Co-Chairs Taylor, Salinas, and Boshart-Davis and Vice-Chair Knopp (Kah-nope), and members of the redistricting committees

I'm Cybele Higgins, and I live in Eugene just south of the University of Oregon.

Thank you for the hard work of this committee, especially those of you who have worked to produce thoughtful, nuanced, and fair maps. I applaud your focus on giving voice and representation to all the different communities across our state.

I was born and raised in Eugene, my father having taught physics at the University of Oregon for over 2 decades beginning in the 1960's and my mother a co-founder of The Village School, a public charter school. I've lived in Eugene just south of the UO almost my entire life, the Amazon neighborhood in particular, and I've raised my children here as well because I think it's a good place to raise a family. I attended the local public schools, as did my children. We are now two generations of South Eugene High School graduates. My children have also attended Lane Community College and the University of Oregon.

I teach at Lane Community College, having taught English as a Second language working with immigrants, US citizens, and international students for the last 25 years. Prior to that, I worked in social service, serving our community's Spanish speaking families at Centro LatinoAmericano, the Eugene Public Library, and, as a medical interpreter, PeaceHealth/Sacred Heart Hospital, where I was born. I've dedicated my life to helping people access education and advance toward reaching their goals. I've seen hundreds of my previous students excelling and contributing in our community, and their children reaching even farther above and beyond to become the foundation of the next generation.

My community has grown as the University of Oregon has grown and as Lane Community College has evolved. I support Legislative House District Plan C because it keeps the UO community, including Eugene downtown where many of our students also live and where LCC has a downtown campus, largely together in one district. The other plans divide my UO/LCC community.

I think it's important to keep these higher education centers and communities together because of shared common interests. For example, the UO and LCC have commonalities in their educational missions. In fact, many students are dual enrolled at LCC and UO simultaneously, or start at LCC and then transfer to UO without ever having to move. I myself have brought my adult English language learners from LCC to the UO for lectures to practice academic listening skills and also to present their research at the UO Undergraduate Research Symposium as part of their academic presentation skills development. Many students live in my neighborhood, as well as working families, including lots of UO and LCC teachers. We need a representative who understands both populations.

I know that Oregon's [redistricting law](#) prohibits dividing communities of interest, like the University area, to preserve our ability to be heard in Salem. "[Map C](#)" preserves the University as a community of interest and helps us advocate for its interests, including increasing funding to push tuition costs down and growing student aid to fight against excessive student debt as well as improve course articulation standards. It appears that "[Map A](#)" would divide the main campus at UO into different districts, diluting its ability to be heard in Salem. Whichever map is ultimately used, it should keep the UO/LCC and our surrounding community of students and working families together.

Additionally, I want to mention that I appreciate how Plan C follows Coburg Road going into North Eugene and Highway 126/West 11th going into West Eugene as natural divisions.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.