

September 13, 2021

Good evening chairs, vice chair, and members of the redistricting committees,

For the record my name is Farrah Chaichi my pronouns are she/her, and I live in Washington county, which is currently entirely in CD1. As a lifelong Democrat you'd think I'd be tickled that Dems are in the majority for this process, but I'm not. I'm actually shocked how easy it was to glean the political bent of the drafters behind the different map proposals. Many people wanted an independent redistricting commission because voters should choose our electeds; electeds should not be choosing their constituents. But multiple organizations and the reigning majority party decided it better suited their interests at the time to maintain the one-party rule during redistricting than to neutrally represent the interests of the people of the state of Oregon so the push for an independent commission failed.

I had multiple organizations and politically connected individuals tell me to testify on redistricting, until recently we didn't even have maps so I wondered what was the point. Even now today I don't know what the point is because I don't have a name that means anything, or the kind of well-connected friends that garner influence, or the deep pockets that would garner similar influence. But I've discovered that the point is that I'm supposed to be here to state support for whatever plan gives the most power to the people who allegedly represent my interests. And that's the rub right there, based on the blatant gerrymandering from all sides it appears there aren't people representing my interests. My interest is in a fully functioning representative democracy. We've seen desperate tactics from Republicans increase over the last several years. I think if they felt like they had a chance in hell at a fair process they wouldn't be embracing tactics like denying quorum or storming capitol buildings.

Oregonians love to look down our noses and say things like gerrymandering is a Southern state problem. But map proposals showing potentially 4 or 5 of 6 Congressional seats going to Dems when we only make up 35% of voter registration would indicate gerrymandering is not solely a Southern problem. An example of that gerrymandering is Congressional Plan A, drafted by Dems, that draws a line through the middle of my hometown and inaccurately implies that my friends and family five minutes down the street in south Beaverton have more similar congressional interest with Salem than with me in north Beaverton. If my testimony

means something I really hope Beaverton stays together if Plan A is pursued, rather than being sacrificed to gerrymandering.

But the drive for my testimony tonight is to say that I think this redistricting process is a lot of effort and fanfare we do not have to do. And the opportunity to testify feels like it merely exists to placate us regular members of the public, to make us believe we have an impact. This process is shameful, and we should do away with redistricting altogether and move to a system that reflects proportional representation, like the 134 other countries around the world, where the affiliation of their voters is proportionally reflected in their legislative bodies. Instead of in our system where 35% of the voters control 100% of the state's legislative and executive power.

Thank you,
Farrah Chaichi
Beaverton, Oregon