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

My name is Sarale Hickson and I live in East Multnomah County. I live in House District 50 and am involved with East County Rising. I have lived in East County since 2006 and in central Gresham for about a decade.

Thank you for the work you are putting into this committee. This is a big, important and difficult process.

I have seen a lot of change in my community in the time I have lived here. There has been a lot of migration from east and north Portland. The Black and Brown kids that grew up here have stayed and we have so many more now. Unlike the children of my friends in the exurbs of Multnomah and Clackamas County my kids have never been in a majority white classroom in their local school. Gresham looks more like east Portland than it does anywhere else. The connections between east and north Portland and west/north/central Gresham are cultural, ethnic, racial and economic. Communities of colour have been gentrified out of their more traditional neighborhood but many of their places of interest, community groups, services and traditions are based in their traditional homes. Demographically most of Gresham looks far more like east Portland than it does the rural areas of Multnomah County or the exurbs of Clackamas County.

When you have choices to make please always ask yourself which choices gives more voice to the historically disenfranchised and marginalized populations in Oregon. Rural residents are not worth more than urban residents so please make sure their votes aren't worth more. Black and Brown residents are as important to the state as white residents so their votes should be as impactful. Historically marginalized voters have found and created places where they feel safe and those areas need to be kept together in redistricting efforts to make sure their voices can be heard

Once again, thanks so much for your service and your work on this important issue. These maps are a great start. Please keep in mind what I have shared about my community when finalizing maps.

Sincerely,

Sarale Hickson