

I'm a Portland resident and liberal Democratic voter. I live in the Cully neighborhood now, and have lived in several different homes around Portland since 2009.

I'm here to make two requests: first, to echo APANO's position that care be taken to keep the Jade District unified. Congressional Map C divides it in half between HD 46 and HD 48. The residents of this district, many of them people of color who share related cultures, deserve a unified, coordinated voice in our political system.

My second, more complicated request, which comes only from me, is a general argument against a district system that deliberately overrepresents Democrats like myself. I urge lawmakers to select a map with multiple truly competitive districts.

Proponents of a 5-to-1 Congressional district map implicitly argue that we should deliberately gerrymander Oregon to overrepresent Democrats. This is part of a somewhat understandable scheme to offset Republican gerrymanders in, for example, Texas. The trouble with this argument is that it presumes that I, as a middle-aged liberal white Anglo Portlander with a college degree and an office job, have so much in common with a likely Democratic voter in Houston that not only do I have the *ability* to select representatives who will supposedly represent their interests once elected, I have a *responsibility* to deliberately subvert the principles of democracy to do so.

This is false. I clearly lack the information to speak for Democratic voters in Houston. I instead support federal measures that would give those Americans the power to speak for themselves. And I hate to say it, but one more Democratic House seat isn't going to be enough to pass those measures into law. The only thing that someday will is a cross-partisan search for common-ground election reforms---a search that becomes ever less possible in an ever more gerrymandered country.

Fans of a 5-to-1 map make another implicit assumption that the interests of Republicans in Oregon are so identical to those of Republicans in Texas that we as a state would gain nothing from having a larger voice within the national Republican Party. Any shared interests of Oregonians are erased, the implication goes, by the fact that these two Republicans who live thousands of miles apart are on the same political team. The *other* team.

I sometimes imagine how I might feel if I were a Republican here in Oregon, knowing that more than 40 percent of my state votes more or less my way in every election but that members of the opposing political party have arranged for themselves to control not only the majority they deserve, but fully 80 percent of the state's Congressional delegation. I suspect that if I watched that happen, it would make me see more and more radical tactics as legitimate: tactics like finding flimsier and flimsier reasons to kill substantive legislation by fleeing the state. Tactics like threatening physical violence against public servants. Tactics like actual violent insurrection.

I say this not to excuse these disgusting abandonments of republican virtue. I say it to empathize with the tens of thousands of my fellow Oregonians who vote Republican and are not personally perpetrating these repulsive tactics, but who have been gradually lured into rationalizing those tactics as necessary. I also say it to warn my fellow Democrats that once we

begin to justify undemocratic tactics as necessary in our fight against the hated other, we will, like many Republicans, eventually find it hard to stop.

For we Democrats in Oregon to create a map with **two or three consistently competitive Congressional districts** would be to believe that the correctness and popularity of our ideas will continue to regularly win in a fair fight. It would also be to reject the fantasy, common across the political spectrum, that people with whom we disagree can somehow be silenced or swept away forever. Such fantasies are both impossible and disturbing.

To reject an ever-deeper gerrymander and its pre-planned election outcomes would also be to believe in *Oregon*---to believe that our state will continue to have particular interests and unique ideas. That we can be defined by more than just our national team affiliation, and that we are a state where the majority party rules but every person's voice counts. I urge my fellow Democrats, and all my fellow Oregonians, to stand up for a competitive, representative democracy here in Oregon and in Congress.

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