

Redistricting Testimony: Danielle Droppers  
March 11, 2020

Co-Chairs Salinas and Taylor, Vice-Chairs, Knopp, and Boshart-Davis, members of the redistricting committees: My name is Danielle Droppers (she, her, hers) and I'm a 10 year resident of SE Portland.

I work for the Oregon Health Authority Office of Equity and Inclusion for over seven years, but I'm here this evening as a member of my community, and not representing my employer.

Redistricting is a key equity issue that deeply impacts communities of color, immigrants, and refugees by ensuring representation of the interests of communities most harmed by bad policies. In the policy world we like to call this "unintended consequences."

Without appropriate representation that's reflective both culturally and linguistically of constituents, we'll keep seeing policies made without the needs of communities in mind.

But let's be real. "Unintended consequences" is a glossing over of reality, which is that: this is one of the ways that structural racism continues to perpetuate in our policies and systems. I applaud this committee for providing this opportunity to engage in this conversation. This is a real chance to address one of the key ways that racism shows up in our legislative process.

And while this is a key equity issue, it's also not the most accessible. Some may not have had the opportunity to know about redistricting, why it's important, or how it impacts them. Civics classes are not even a required part of our curriculum in Oregon, so there may be a need for non-partisan education on redistricting.

Also, given the delays with the release of census data, I hope there will be more opportunities for community conversations, especially reaching out to communities of color and those who speak languages other than English to engage them in sharing their wisdom in how to build upon community strengths for more equitable redistricting. If anyone should be informing the redistricting process, it should be the people of Oregon who the legislature serves.

As resources to consider there are non-partisan sources for population data that could be used as we plan. For example, the [Portland State University's Population Research Center](#). There are also tools to help support community engagement best practices, which I would be glad to share if that's of interest.

I look forward to watching your efforts and engaging communities in this process. Thank you so much for your time.

