

To the Committee on Redistricting,

This is my personal written testimony regarding the current situation at hand and my families desire here where I live regarding the redistricting process that is under discussion. **We all understand that it is time for this process again and your committee should look at ways to make it fair for all** our citizens. This has not always been the case in Oregon over the years with the ruling class over riding what is best for the people in how we are governed through this process. Both sides have used it to their advantage over the years. It needs to be non partisan and a process of the people for the people.

I hope you can keep in mind that our community and county, Columbia County, is rural and we have a unique set of concerns. It's very hard for our local politicians to represent us when our voter base is easily outnumbered by the denser populations of big cities and nearby counties. As it stands now our current legislative district out here literally has small slivers of Multnomah and Washington Counties drawn into it with high density urban population centers that have nothing to do with our rural economy or local needs. In fact, the outlying area residents, these two slivers, of the other two counties, are actually citizens of those cities and counties, work primarily in those cities and counties and daily lives and businesses are governed and affected by the greater section of those districts and have little to nothing in common with the largest land mass and lives of those of us in Columbia County.

In the redistricting process, please do not further dilute our district with metro-Portland population. Rural and small-town communities have different issues and seek different solutions from than the city. We need leadership that understands us, our needs and concerns. The recent 2020 voting record of Columbia County in local and county elections shows a clear pattern that is different from metro-Portland. However, the slices of Multnomah and Washington Counties now included in the district with Columbia County swing election outcomes for state races. The voice of Columbia County is drowned out. Many Columbia County residents will interpret the addition of more metro-Portland neighborhoods into Columbia County's district as further gerrymandering to favor one party. Additional changes to our district adding in more of the urban areas only serves to polarize the state even more than now, stoking cynicism of the prevailing government. I hope we all can agree redistricting should create a government more representative of the people, not adjusted to amplify some voices by diminishing others.

Regards,

Brian Stout

Resident of Columbia City, Oregon - Columbia County