

3/16/2021

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

For the record my name is Gaby Gardiner, my pronouns are they/them/theirs, and I live in Lane County, congressional district 4. I come from a multi-ethnic background. I was raised by my mother, and only occasionally reconnected with my father throughout my adolescent years due to wavering addiction in my early childhood. During a holiday trip to meet family in Idaho, I had a culture shock at the age of 12 realizing many family members and my father's side didn't look like me. Throughout history, Indigenous children have lost touch or been physically/spiritually distanced with their culture due to colonial structures, like blood quantum, forced removal, boarding schools, and more.

Going to school at the UO was no easy feat. As a first generation college student, I often had to walk my mom through complicated FAFSA forms, or do them myself when she didn't have the time or patience.

College is a crucial place for identity development, but it was also home to unveiling and unpacking a lot of intergenerational trauma. Our counseling services were often over-booked, and when I got appointments, I couldn't find a therapist that met my unique gender and cultural needs. If it weren't for the longhouse and the Center for Multicultural Academic Excellence (CMAE), I likely wouldn't have finished school and still had \$50,000 in debt. The Native American Retention Specialist sat me down and analyzed my grade patterns. She put me on a rigorous degree route with the philosophy department, long term plans to take on law school.

I chose a vocation in the non-profit sector and advocacy (which she still gives me beef about to this day), but I got through my bachelors and landed a decent job with better benefits than any other family member has ever been afforded. This is the importance of spaces like the Native American Youth and Family Center, the tribally recognized longhouses at the University of Oregon and Lane Community College, and other related programs/spaces. It provides a source of intergenerational healing for urban indigenous youth, and an important reason why I live in Eugene to this day.

There is also an expansive community in Eugene that benefits from these spaces. The Mother's Day Pow Wow is on it's 52nd anniversary, and brings dancers from all across the country for Eugene and Springfield spectators to buy beadwork, enjoy Indian tacos or frybread, and admire the sacred dances/songs. There is a long network of Indigenous community in Eugene who stay to make sure that food is prepped for

potlucks, Indigenous leaders are on a productive path for planning large events like pow wow, that intentional academic services are provided for BIPOC students, or come back from time to time to support and have good conversation.

The redistricting process that this committee is responsible for is very important to the development of community building. Throughout this process I believe these three key things should be at the forefront of consideration: That we should center the voices of impacted communities. Ensure that we are making communities feel represented in their district and utilize other reliable data sets like the ACS, and PSU population center.

Oregon has a history of discrimination against BIPOC folks. We know that BIPOC communities have voted as blocks, ensuring this continues is the utmost importance.

I look forward to working with this committee, the Oregon legislature and our communities to ensure that redistricting engages Indigenous and Tribal communities and that it responds to our growing needs. The Legislature's process for engaging Oregon communities in redistricting is going to be critical.

Thank you very much for your time and work on this issue, and I'd be happy to answer any questions.

Gaby Gardiner