

Vanda Hunter

3/8/2021

RE: Redistricting

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

My name is Vanda Hunter, my pronouns are she/her/hers, I live in NE Portland, in Congressional District 3, my Senator is Kayse Jama and I live in House District 47.

Last summer, I worked as a canvasser and phone banker to get hard to count communities, counted in the 2020 Census. As a queer Black woman, living in the outskirts of the city of Portland, I found that people like myself held misinformation about the census process. Many younger folks were unaware of the importance of the census, and many renters in my area were under the impression that the census was only for homeowners. I got involved this work, so that People of Color, queer folks, renters, and low income families in my area had all the proper information on how to fill out their census forms, and in turn, this would make sure that my district was accurately accounted for.

I live in the Gateway neighborhood, nearby Parkrose High School and Sacramento Elementary. My neighborhood is home to the Gateway Discovery Park, which has been a gathering place and event space for BIPOC folks for over ten years. I am lucky enough to live very close to three major grocery stores, including two WinCos and a Fred Meyer. However, since I moved here about 2 years ago, I have noticed the overwhelming police presence in my neighborhood, and I believe that's due to the fact that this is a Black and brown neighborhood. Police patrol my local Fred Meyer everyday, and I have seen on many occasions, police officers following and surveilling young Black children walking throughout my local area. Ironically there is no governmental community engagement regarding new developments, such as large luxury apartment complexes and unnecessary storage facilities, popping up across the Gateway area.

Because of this, I would like to see redistricting happen in a way that maintains the significance of BIPOC communities of interest that have resided in East Portland for a very long time, and are not going anywhere, rather than in a way that would benefit and give wealthier and whiter populations more of a say in their governance. Until the 2020 Census data is released, the Redistricting Committee can utilize other data sources that can help you learn more about where communities are connected.

Again, I implore you all to center Black and brown communities in your redistricting analysis. Thank you for your time, and work on this issue.

Vanda Hunter