

[3.18.21]

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

For the record my name is Michael Vasquez , my pronouns are [he/him/his] and I live in Marion County, CD 5. I have been a lifelong resident of Woodburn except for the four years I spent in Eugene for college.

My plans after graduation were to head off to become an Air Force officer, but I realized that the best way to serve my country was to serve my community. And I have to say, I have not been disappointed in my decision. Seeing the resiliency of my community throughout this pandemic, throughout the wildfires and past the winter storm has really highlighted what I already knew, that Woodburn is a place where you can count on your neighbors and community when you need a helping hand, or walk down the street if you want great mexican food.

Growing up in Woodburn and transitioning to a place like Eugene really put things into perspective for me. The community you surround yourself with is key in your success. In Woodburn I have a great support system where I'm surrounded by people who look like me and care about similar things.

Representation matters and we have seen how communities with common interest come together to build political power. With the growing number of communities of color, it has encouraged other members in my community to take on leadership roles that range from committees, school boards, and the city council. This has inspired me to take part in the greater representation movement in my community.

This is why we care about redistricting. I believe that the legislature should center the most impacted communities in this process to ensure that we feel represented in our districts.

Oregon voters have implemented backstops in place so that we can move forward with this redistricting process that also includes our engagement. This committee has great additional resources at its disposal when looking at data like the PSU Population Research Center, the American Community Survey, school districts, and housing developments to start looking at and considering.

This can give us a chance to start the process before the census data is available and then re-engage the community with maps made using census data.

I look forward to working with this committee and the Oregon legislature to ensure that redistricting engages the BIPOC communities and that it responds to our growing needs.

The Legislature's process for engaging Oregon communities in redistricting is going to be critical for the future of Oregon.

Thank you