

March 20, 2021

To the Chairs and Members of the Committees:

My name is Peter Kunen and I live in the City of Bend in Deschutes County.

My primary interest here is in the drawing of the legislative districts in and around Bend. As you may know, our current house districts resemble a doughnut hole and doughnut. House District 54 is the doughnut hole which encompasses most of the City of Bend. House District 53 is the doughnut that encircles Bend, taking in the communities that lie just outside the city.

The house districts have been arranged this way since at least the 1990 census, and I believe this arrangement works very well. For a time, Bend had just about the perfect population size to have its own house district.

However, due to large and rapid population growth, this is no longer the case. Bend is now estimated to have 106,000 people and is too big to have all its people fit in one house district. I believe the solution is straightforward. Both the doughnut hole (HD 54) and the doughnut (HD 53) need to be pulled in tighter, so that the hole goes from the center of Bend to take in the requisite approximately 70,000 people, and then the doughnut circles that, taking in the remaining about 35,000 people in Bend and another 35,000 people who live in communities just outside of Bend, such as Deschutes River Woods.

Bend is the only large city east of the Cascades, and as such has its own problems and concerns that are somewhat different from other high desert locales. These concerns include urban transportation systems, rapid population growth, many homeless residents, large numbers of tourists, and the crucial health of the Deschutes River.

Because of these common community interests, it makes the most sense for our House Districts 54 and 53 to remain configured as they are now, simply drawn in tighter to adjust for our population growth, and so that we will have one Senate District (SD 27) which will represent the Bend area in its entirety.

There are currently so many different possibilities for Congressional Districts that I will only suggest that, whatever district Bend may end up in, it would be best if all of Deschutes County is together in one district, and ideally all three of the Central Oregon counties, Deschutes, Crook, and Jefferson, will be in the same Congressional District.

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