

March 20, 2021 CD1 Testimony

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

For the record my name is Debby Garman, my pronouns are she/her and I've lived for 16 years in Hillsboro, Washington County House District 29. My background is in arts administration, nonprofit management and communications and community engagement. I appreciate the chance to add my comments to this incredibly important process in my State.

As a senior citizen with a few decades of life experience behind me, my perspective on this challenging situation is that our priority should be to protect Oregon elections integrity. We need to work backward in timing from our May 2022 election cycle and do what needs to be done on a timeline to ensure we have clear orderly and transparent process ready for that.

Oregon is one of a few lucky States that have implemented fail-safe procedures in case of redistricting challenges. I'm not an expert in the intricacies of State and County election details, but if it can work, my first preference is that the elected legislators will be given the time and data needed to execute the process and decision-making around the redistricting changes. You all are the educated leaders in touch with your constituents who are formally designated to make good decisions. Key issues for me are transparency of process, centering needs of communities of interest, marginalized and young voters. I am NOT in support of creating an independent commission, because I do not believe that key voices will be heard in such a small sampling of citizens.

I want to be clear that the census is valuable and my priority is that we ensure we have one person one vote in Oregon. Given the timeline, I don't believe the committee can wait to start the process of drawing maps until we get the census data. I urge the legislature to begin our process using the reputable in-hand data such as numbers from the PSU Population Research Center, the American Community Survey, school districts, and housing developments that can be used to draw preliminary maps. When we receive the census data in September, I would ask the committee to review and potentially re-draw some maps. Please keep us informed along the way, and re-engage the community at each stage of the process.

Thank you for taking on all the challenging work in redistricting, for your time this morning, and for including my comments in your committee decision- making!

**PS: It occurred to me that your team is already utilizing data at hand, because you provided those great educational maps at the beginning of the online session today, showing population gain and loss! I'd guess that if you moved forward to do the redistricting work using this data, not much re-tinkering would be needed after the Census data arrives.

Debby Garman