



Senate Committee on Redistricting and the House Special Committee on Redistricting
Co-Chairs Taylor and Salinas, Vice-Chairs Knopp and Boshart-Davis, Committee Members

First, thank you all for your efforts in carrying out the challenging task of redistricting before you.

Democracy can be messy, it can be inefficient, and it's far from perfect. So, the sincere intention to act in good faith, to respond to the reality of the current situation, and to draw the lines of redistricting with the ideal of fairness and equality in mind, is essential to the task at hand.

The idea of an independent commission rather than legislative committees to take charge of the task of redistricting this year has been suggested. But, I am not here today, to argue for or against such an independent commission, but, to simply say this.

We are living in historic times in Oregon, impacted by a global pandemic, economic issues, social unrest and last years devastating wildfires. And this is a short legislative session with many priorities to address and less and less time to do so. And legislators are dealing with a challenging, what could be called a “messy” situation.

So, given the importance of redistricting, given other pressing legislative priorities, and the need to get the task of redistricting done as best you can, this to me is simply not the time to rush forward on any idea for an independent commission. Redistricting is a significant matter, and in a democracy such a proposed idea likewise requires significant time for serious reflection, respectful discussion, and rational debate.

Finally, therefore, with little time and more pressing work in this session, I wholeheartedly support the current approach to redistricting. And I simply ask legislators to focus their time, energy, and efforts on the work at hand versus being spent on pursuing the idea of an independent commission, especially at this time. I see this as the best way forward, right now, to serve both the current historic situation and the people of Oregon. Thank you for listening and again, your efforts in drawing the lines towards best serving everyone in our state.