

Written Testimony of Joanna Harbour for the Redistricting Hearing for CD3 on April 10, 2021

My name is Joanna Harbour and I am a resident of Estacada, Oregon (outside city limits), which is within Congressional District 3. As some of you may know, I ran in 2020 for the US Congress seat in this district. However, I am not speaking as a former candidate but as a citizen of this district.

Redistricting is one of the most important responsibilities that the State Legislators have to do. This is because you are drawing the lines that divide the people into groups for the State Representatives, State Senators, and US Representatives. You are deciding who belongs together for those offices, in essence where the lines should go to keep people who have more in common together, so that they can have a representative that reflects them. The task is hard but can be done fairly to make sure that every citizen's voice is heard. When we vote we need to know that our vote will matter and not be drowned out by others.

Congressional District 3 is currently drawn so that (as of March 2021) Clackamas County has 80,840 registered voters within this district and Multnomah County has 517,106. The part of Clackamas that is within this district is rural and the cities within it identify as rural. Most of Multnomah are within this boundary, except for a small area that contains 52,047 voters according to the Secretary of State. Multnomah County is more urban and suburban. As you can see from the numbers that means those with an urban interest far outnumber those with a rural interest. Given the current parameters, it is easy for the US Representative to ignore the rural residents in Clackamas County and still win re-election with the urban voters of Multnomah County. It does not make sense to have the more rural area of Clackamas aligned with the bulk of Multnomah. What would make sense is to make Multnomah County a district of its own and allow all of those in Clackamas to be together in a different district. I hear it is possible that we may be getting a 6th District. This will allow for more flexibility in drawing the lines.

Additionally, within CD3 is Senate District 26 (SD 26), which has a similar issue of not grouping similarly situated citizens together. There is an area in SD 26 around Powell Butte between Division St. and Foster Rd. that divides the area so that if you live north of Division St. your State Senator lives in Portland but if you live south of that street your current Senator lives in Hood River. This particular area has similar interests and values as their neighbors north of Division and does not have the same similarities with the rest of SD 26.

When redistricting it is important to do our best to be fair and draw the lines so that no group feels excluded and/or left out. Each district should include people who share similar interests (cultural, language, rural, urban, economic, road connections etc.), similar location (same county/city), and similar geography (rivers, mountains, forests, city, parks, etc.). We should not divide people in the same community by making the highway the dividing line so half of a community is in one district and the other half is in another (like the community of Damascus senate division). I understand that it cannot be perfect; however, we can always strive to do better.

At today's hearing, someone suggested (I believe named Loretta Smith) that after you have drawn the new maps, that you hold additional public hearings to get more input from the public. This is a wonderful idea. When the community sees where the lines are drawn, they can then say this makes sense or no you are dividing this important community. I highly recommend that more public hearings are held to include the residents involved in the actual drawing of the maps.