

Chair Taylor, Chair Salinas, Vice Chair Knopp, Vice Chair Boshart Davis, and Members of the Committee:

For the record, my name is Michael Powers. I use he/him pronouns. Thank you for the opportunity to testify as you consider how to create new congressional and state legislative districts.

I live and work in Salem, Oregon. I have lived here for most of the past 25 or so years. I moved here for work, and I have never looked back. I met my partner here and together we raised a family.

Oregon is a special and diverse place. From the shores of the Pacific to the banks of the Snake River, we have it all. Though we don't agree on it all, I hope we don't forget that we do, indeed, have it all.

Here in the mid Willamette Valley we have the smartest techies employed in high end design and manufacturing, and some of the best farmers in the world farming some of the best soils in the world. We have large and small universities, and community colleges, that prepare our young and young at heart to meet their dreams. Resurgent Native American tribes slowly overcome centuries of death and hostility with patriotism and pride.

Here in Salem we proudly host all three branches of state government, and house many of the public servants who keep them running. In a friendly fight with Eugene-Springfield, with the City of Keizer we share the 2nd or 3rd largest metropolitan area in the state. We are also an agricultural powerhouse. We have small and large family farms, competing in national and international markets. We have mainly immigrant farmworkers who work hard to grow our food and fiber, but who remain poor. We also have growing and vibrant Mexican and Central American communities here, enriching our business, cultural, and civic life. And around us we have the small towns that offer a slower pace, neighbor knowing neighbor, open spaces, and other benefits of rural life.

Your job is really, really important. Your decisions will affect so much, from how much federal and state funding our cities, counties, and districts receive, to which infrastructure projects get the green light. Your decisions will also impact the range of options we have to build our economy, and raise up our houseless populations and those who we have discriminated against for far too long.

And so I greatly appreciate that you are taking the time to listen to public comment. This is how you, our legislative leaders, lead this important process of redistricting. The public's input is important to drawing fair lines. I ask that you focus on input from people who work for a living,

sometimes 2-3 jobs, and lower and middle class families. Include Black, brown, and native people: our state has excluded them. Let's include them this time.

We do not yet have census data available. That's a challenge. However, we can still move forward. Access and use other reliable data to guide your planning. For example, I believe you can rely on data from the Portland State University population center, an official census partner. This will save time and put you at a huge advantage when Census data finally is made available.

Thank you Senators and Representatives for all your work, and thank you for the opportunity to speak with you.

Michael Powers

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Powers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

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