

April 10, 2021

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

For the record my name is Jaime Arredondo , my pronouns are he, him, *el*. I'm a proud immigrant from the State of las Monarcas, Michoacan Mexico, and I've lived in Salem, Oregon for 30 years.

I think the best way for me to express to you why redistricting matters to me and my community and why you need to ensure our voices is what drives your process and decisions is by telling you a brief story about *mi amigo* (my friend) Pedro Lemus.

One of my favorite parts of commuting to and from Woodburn is driving through Portland road NE Salem—*mi barrio* (my neighborhood). I love seeing the many taco trucks (seems like they multiply every day). I love passing by Mano a Mano Family Center wishing that someday they will own the building. I love that the neighborhood right behind them is full of *our gente* (our people). Most of them are homeowners like my *jefitos* (my parents) who finished paying their *casita* (little home) a few years ago after working a combined fifty years *en el campo* (in the fields). I always get a laugh out of seeing La Mota place too.

But, most of all, I love seeing *mi amigo* Pedro Lemus do his walk. So take a walk with me and Pedro my dear committee members.

I see him almost everyday—*alla por la* (by the) *Fruteria la Cabaña*. I remember when we met. I was a sixteen-year-old *kid* pretending to be eighteen, working *en las lumbres* (the wildfires). *Mi amigo* Pedro was the eldest out of the crew, probably in his late 50's. I always stuck to him. He had the best stories of my village *Las Ranas*. But, there was a sadness in his face when he would talk about NE Salem. He felt trapped in the four walls of his apartment. He was afraid to get out. He thought maybe he would take a wrong turn and get lost. *No hablaba ingles* (he didn't speak English). There was no *mercado* (market) nearby. It wasn't the same as *Las Ranas*. He was free over there. He knew where everything was at. He knew everyone. Walking the village was his thing.

Twenty years later, walking is his thing again. *Y como dice la canción, "Ahora ya caminas lento, Como, perdonando al viento"* (And like the song says 'Now he walks gently, as if he's asking the wind for permission.'). *Pero*, (but) he walks proudly. He spends hours out there. He grabs a *taco* at the *Birria* taco truck. Then he goes to *la segunda* (the flea market) to catch up with old friends, including my father. *Y a la vuelta* (and on the way back), he goes to *La Cabaña por unos nopales* (for some prickly pear). He still doesn't speak much English. But, it doesn't matter that much anymore. He's in the NE, House District 22. *Es su casa* (It's his home), *su comunidad* (his community), *nuestra comunidad* (our community).

You see dear committee members, redistricting is about ensuring people like me, Pedro, and our communities (your communities) feel like we belong.

I look forward to working with you on this. Thank you very much for your time and work on this issue.

Jaime Arredondo
Proud Salem community member