

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 Herlinda Herrera , my pronouns are she, hers, ella and I live in Marion County, Salem I have lived in Marion County for the past 30 years. I worked at Chemeketa Community College from 1987 - 2018 (over 30 years). As you know Chemeketa is on the northside of the county, in the city of Salem. As an educator and administrator for the college I saw our Latinex students attending the college grow from 13.6% in 2001 to 26.8% in 2019. I am proud to say that Chemeketa is a Hispanic Serving Institution(HSI).

Many of these students attend McKay Highschool and their families all live on the Northside of Salem. Other areas of Marion County that have high numbers of BIPOC students are North Salem Highschool and McNary Highschool in Keizer.

Living and working in Marion county has made me very aware of the disproportionate funding that schools get because we do not have enough voices that sit at the table to advocate for our BIPOC communities. Marion county has one of the highest numbers of families living in poverty. One of the poorest zip codes is 97305. Families struggle on a daily basis to provide basic needs such as food, shelter, and medical care. We need their voices heard.

Along Lancaster drive you can experience our diverse small businesses such as Mexican restaurants, Chinese restaurants, and stores such as Mega Foods and Wing Wa Oriental Market, etc. These are all small business owners who pay taxes and contribute to the Salem economy. These are families that live in Salem and who should have all the same opportunities that others have. Sports are very important for many families, and for some communities soccer is a family event. Families congregate on a Friday evening or on a Saturday to watch their children play in parks such as Northgate Park or high school fields such as McKay, McNary, and yes, even Chemeketa Community College.

In my opinion, Redistricting or Gerrymandering hurts the most marginalized and oppressed communities. In order to give communities an opportunity to address systemic inequities and achieve fair distribution of resources, we must have BIPOC representation. Redistricting is another form of voter suppression and a tool that reinforces institutional racism.

Thank you very much for your time and work on this issue. We hope that you continue to engage community members in this redistricting process and that it responds to the growing needs of the Latinx community and other communities of color.

Herlinda Herrera