

Members of the Committee,

My name is Richard Pund and I live in Overland Park. This testimony is in opposition to the Freestate 3 map, as that is currently the only House map that has been introduced. However, my opposition is more towards the redistricting process in general. I think that single-member districts are the reason why redistricting is so controversial and difficult. Proportional representation (PR) using multi-member districts as described in the Fair Representation Act would greatly simplify our map-drawing process and allow the committee to better satisfy its own criteria.

Dividing our state into single-member districts is incompatible with the redistricting principles of keeping communities of interest and political subdivisions together. With so many lines to be drawn, it is unavoidable that many communities and subdivisions are going to be split up. To give one example from Freestate 3, I see Sumner County contains parts of four House districts despite having a total population of 22,382. Other cities and counties across the state are split up into more districts than their population requires just to make the map work.

In a PR system the state could draw 25 districts and elect five representatives proportionally from each, rather than drawing 125 districts that each elect one. Reducing the number of districts means more communities of interest would remain whole.

In addition to improving the redistricting process, electing representatives proportionally would also bring significant improvements in representation and competition. In a five-member district, the five elected representatives would end up with around 83% of the votes between them. Compare this level of representation to our most recent election results. In 2020, I counted 23 representatives who were elected with less than 55% of their district's vote.

As for competition, PR would Let Kansans Vote for their representatives in every corner of the state. Right now that isn't the case. In 2020, I see 45 House districts that only had one name on the November ballot. In a five-member district, there would be seats up for grabs regardless of its partisan lean.

In my opinion, by dividing our communities and minimizing our representation, single-member districts ultimately restrict our freedom of association. Continuing with this process means that mapmakers decide whose communities will have representation and whose will not. PR would put that decision back into the hands of voters where it should be. I hope the committee is coming to the same conclusions as this process moves along and will remedy this with a constitutional amendment in time for the next cycle.

Thanks for your time,

Richard Pund
Overland Park