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From: applications.administrator@capitol.local
Sent: Thursday, February 25, 2021 8:20 AM
To: Senate Redistricting
Subject: INETMAIL: Redistricting Public Input

Date: 2021-02-25
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Affirm public info: I agree

Regarding: Senate

Message:

The winter storm of 2021 was devastating throughout our state, and it affected me and my family directly. In efforts to protect our family, we gathered at my brothers home. My father also stayed with us, which meant we left both our house and his unattended. We did cover all outdoor pipes and plants prior to the storm. In total, it was my husband, niece, nephew, dad, myself, and three dogs riding out the storm together. My brother and sister-in-law were part of the ride-out crew that needed to stay with animals they work with.

At my brother's home, we were without power for 44 hours, and the temperatures inside fell between 30-40 degrees. Though we had had access to a generator, we were unable to use it immediately due to a lack of gas in our area. We quickly realized we were on our own throughout the storm and the only folks we could rely on were ourselves and neighbors. It felt like survival mode kicked in. Luckily, we never lost water and we have a gas stove we could turn on with matches. We cooked with candlelight, and stayed wearing 3-4 layers of clothing/sweaters for most of this time. We didn't have cell service throughout this time and we were unable to drive out to work or find supplies due to icy road conditions.

On Wednesday, Feb. 16, the ice started to thaw out.

Pipes broke at our home and my fathers while we were away. Luckily, our neighbor saw this and shut off our water main, which helped us avoid significant damage. Had he not been there, our living room would've been flooded and our belongings and living room would've been destroyed. My father also happened to be checking on his home when he discovered the broken pipe and was able to shut off the water.

We finally got decent cell service Thursday and Friday but were occupied with finding supplies, food, gas, and searching for plumbers. Most of us weren't able to work the whole week. It was traumatic attempting to fix something and then having to move onto the next thing to fix. We didn't have time to process any of these events and now we're left with the trauma.

Today is Thursday, Feb. 25 and our home is still without water service. We've repaired 2 separate broken water pipes, and discovered yesterday that we have a third broken pipe. With a lack of materials and access to a plumber, we don't

see an end in sight of when our home will be back to normal. We are still staying at my brother's home, without a real ETA of when we can get back to normal.

This was our experience, but we know others suffered more devastation and even fatalities. My dad was staying with us and is 65-years-old, and I feared for his well-being the most.

Dad recently recovered from COVID-19 in January.

He tested positive on Saturday, Dec. 26, and that diagnosis put our family on high alert since he has diabetes and is older. My family also suffered a sudden loss on Thursday, Jan. 14. My closest uncle suddenly passed away, my father's brother, and it's brought unimaginable heartache to our family. His wife left our entire family out of all of the arrangements and she laid him to rest in Mexico despite our family's protest.

I write all of this to hopefully highlight the devastation our family has encountered during this winter storm, at a time that we were already grieving a family loss and having been impacted by COVID-19. It feels like we're constantly having to pull through and figure out how to make it past yet another historical event. Despite what we've encountered, I know everyone in our region has been dealing with their own unique devastation. We did not feel supported by our local government and were left in the dark, quite literally.

Though we're struggling, I write this for those who are doing far worse than ourselves. Our elderly community who had to undergo these conditions and don't have the resources to protect themselves. For the families that have infants and small children. We saw one of my brother's neighbors needing to evacuate his home altogether because he has a 10-month infant. I read a news story about a family in Sugarland whose home set on fire as they tried to keep warm with a fireplace. A grandmother and her three grandchildren died in that home. That easily could've been our situation as we were moments away from moving to my dad's home because his home has a fireplace.

It doesn't feel right that our region underwent these conditions and aid isn't coming their way immediately. We're so fortunate to have family and work families to lean on during this time, and get through this together. Not everyone has this support system and I should hope those that need the help the most receive it. As for us, we're back to working and taking care of our families best we can. Crossing fingers to being able to have water service in the coming weeks.

[REDACTED]