

From: applications.administrator@capitol.local
To: [Senate Redistricting](#)
Subject: INETMAIL: Redistricting Public Input
Date: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 9:17:02 AM

Date: 2021-09-08
First Name: Reid
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Affirm public info: I agree

Regarding: Senate

Message:

I live in Central Austin and work in San Marcos. I would like to testify about redistricting. For background, I am a U.S. Navy Veteran, a former State Department Foreign Service Officer, and currently working for my forth-generation family business with 2,800 employees and operations across Texas.

I would like to start by saying that the most important thing for this Committee to do is to respect federal and state law, including the Voting Rights Act. None of my testimony today should be used by the legislature to justify diminishing the ability of a minority group to elect the candidate of their choice or artificially distorting maps for racial or partisan purposes.

I live in an affluent community, no doubt. Yet the same issue of drawing districts to divide communities like mine also affects poorer communities that also see districts drawn to divide communities. As an example, on the U.S. Congressional district map I live TX-21, yet the next street over is TX-25, less than a mile away is TX-10 and two miles away is TX-35. It is obvious the lines were drawn to divide my community. We can vote our interests, but our interests are split among 4 districts. Similarly, in the State House I live in District 49, 800 feet away from District 48. Our community is divided, and I worry how many more communities are similarly divided yet not represented in testimony because voters lack the means or understanding of the redistricting process.

Both parties are guilty of gerrymandering at various times in our State's history, and unfortunately the current system is set up to encourage gerrymandering. I would much prefer a non-partisan, professional process to determine districts rather than the current partisan political process.

This has a corrosive effect on our democracy, at the State and Federal level. As a former diplomat I can tell you gerrymandering is one of many tactics used by authoritarian regimes across the globe to suppress the political aims of their citizens.

My view that redistricting should be non-partisan will not come to pass today, and I understand that. Therefore, I would like to insist that a public hearing be held before any map is passed out of committee after the actual maps for the bill is drawn, and insist that proposed maps be put on display for the public to view during those hearings.

I would also like to offer my strong support for, and endorsement of, the League of Women Voters Ranked Non-partisan Criteria.

