



Date: 2025-07-23

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Affirm public info: I agree

Regarding: Congressional

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Redistricting Hearings – Written Testimony

My name is Dale Ritzen. I live in Austin, Texas in Senate District 14. I am testifying against the Legislature's attempt to redistrict our congressional districts mid-census. I am strongly opposed to these efforts. This brazen move by the Governor and the Department of Justice to increase Republican representation in the U.S. House by taking it away from communities of color or political differences is shameful. It is blatant racial and political discrimination.

How districts are drawn affects every political issue, from the economy to healthcare to public education. If politicians are elected from districts that don't reflect the population, you have a situation where politicians support policies that the majority of people oppose, or they will not support policies that the majority of people support. When politicians manipulate maps for personal or political gain, it prevents residents like me from having our voices heard on all the policies that directly or indirectly could affect us.

Historically, Texas has chosen to shamefully "pack and crack" communities based on political and racial divisions, diminishing our voices in Congress. There is absolutely no reason to redraw congressional districts at this time as we are only midway between the 10-year census reports. It is political chicanery in the lowest, most corrupt form.

For our democracy to function, the public must have a voice in the process. It is absolutely unacceptable for both the Texas House and Senate Redistricting Committees to hold hearings without having maps available for review by the public for an adequate period before voting on the changes. As it stands, the Legislature clearly plans to severely limit and/or ignore public input and pass maps that discriminate against communities of color and those who share distinct political differences with the representatives currently residing in the Texas House and Senate.

Therefore, I am asking the Texas Senate to commit to hold a public hearing after the maps have been drawn, but before they pass through committee. The public must also be given a minimum of 5 business days notice, and the capability to review the maps, before this hearing. The legislators who re-draw the maps must explain to the press why and how they chose to draw them the way they did. All communications that passed between committee members regarding drawing the maps should also be made public. This is an opportunity for the Texas Legislature to finally get this process right and avoid millions of taxpayer dollars and years of lawsuits. Thank you for taking the time to review my input to this process.