

[REDACTED]

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Affirm public info: I agree

Regarding: Congressional

Message:

Here is suggested online testimony verbiage for the Special Sessions redistricting: Hello, my name is Nancy Nichols. I live in Tyler which is located in Smith County in Congressional District 01. I am testifying on 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 DOJ to increase Republican representation in the U.S. House by taking it away from communities of color is shameful. It is blatant racial 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 end up with situations where politicians support policies that the vast majority of people oppose, or they won't support policies that the vast 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 of these policies that affect us. For example, here in Harris County there are many people struggling to afford healthcare coverage, and the Tax Bill that was just passed by Congress by the narrowest of margins threatens to kick even more people off the Medicaid rolls. Texas already has the highest rate of medically uninsured in the country. If we had adequate representation for our communities in the Houston area, this Tax bill might not have passed. But instead, the State has chosen to shamefully "pack and crack" communities of color in Houston, diminishing our voice in Congress. In order for our democracy to function, the public needs to have a voice in the process.

It is absolutely unacceptable for both the House and Senate Redistricting Committees to be holding hearings without having maps visible to the public a map. How do you expect the public to actually participate in this process? The Legislature clearly plans to ignore public input and pass maps that discriminate against communities of color. Therefore, I am asking that this Committee to commit to holding a public hearing after the maps have been drawn but before they pass through committee. You must also give the public a minimum of 5 days notice and capability to review the maps before this hearing. I also want the legislators who draw the maps to explain why they chose to draw them the way they did, and to not hide any communications they have had regarding drawing the maps. This is an opportunity for the Texas Legislature to finally get this process right and avoid millions of taxpayer dollars and years of lawsuits, so I hope that you will take this testimony to heart. Thank you for taking the time to listen to me today.

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