

Koy Kunkel_SC

From: applications.administrator@capitol.local
Sent: Tuesday, January 26, 2021 7:20 PM
To: Senate Redistricting
Subject: INETMAIL: Redistricting Public Input

Date: 2021-01-27

First Name: Karen

Last Name: Darby

Title: N/A

Organization: Self

Address: [REDACTED]

City: Georgetown

State: TX

Zipcode: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

Affirm public info: I agree

Regarding: Congressional

Message:

My name is Karen Darby, and I reside in Georgetown, Texas, in the 31st Congressional District for purposes of the federal House of Representatives. While I do not possess the expertise to draft maps to outline legislative districts, I do have concerns about the fairness of Texas'

process that resulted in breaking, for instance, Travis County into six different Congressional districts, thereby diluting the voting power of both communities of color and/or persons who share the same political philosophy, as political party was taken into consideration. Even in District 31, I am aware that, while the district includes most of Williamson and Bell Counties that are at least contiguous geographically, a chunk of Bell County was split off into another Congressional District—and that district had a higher concentration of voters who are people of color, who were cut off from other similarly situated persons whose addresses kept them in TX 31.

I urge the Legislature to use non-partisan methods for drawing legislative districts. It is useful to group together persons who are not only geographically near one another, but who also share many of the same community interests, such as similar work opportunities, access to health care facilities and public transportation, traffic and environmental concerns, and the like.

Texas does not have a good track record of developing fair, non-partisan voting districts.

To be totally fair, the legislature should not use political party as a means for grouping persons into one district.

Grouping according to contiguity and shared interests should be considered a better option. Voters should be able to choose their representatives, not have their representatives choose them based upon political preference.

As for the procedural aspects of this process, I quote some of the concerns expressed by the League of Women Voters : "What the adopted House and Senate rules are lacking are procedures and timelines that would give the public more time to participate in the actual drawing of the maps. We wanted to see virtual public input hearings after the census data was delivered to the state, longer time periods for hearing notices, and at least a 5 day minimum to review the maps. We also wanted to see equal access to legal counsel to all parties involved in the process, as well as a final report asking for the thought processes that went into drawing the maps." I urge the Legislature to, at the very least, give ample notice and opportunity for public input into hearings about re-districting. The process of drawing maps should be

transparent, and no maps should be adopted without giving the opportunity for the public to comment and/or object to the new maps. Every effort should be made to comply with state and federal law in this matter, especially with regard to the Voting Rights Act. Because of Texas' past history in violating the Voting Rights Act, this re-districting effort should proceed very carefully and very transparently.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

[REDACTED]