

Koy Kunkel_SC

From: applications.administrator@capitol.local
Sent: Tuesday, July 6, 2021 8:15 PM
To: Senate Redistricting
Subject: INETMAIL: Redistricting Public Input

Date: 2021-07-07
First Name: Ann
Last Name: Jochens
Title: Dr.
Organization: Self
Address: [REDACTED]
City: College Station
State: Texas
Zipcode: [REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]

Affirm public info: I agree

Regarding: Census

Message:

As a citizen of Texas from College Station, I implore that you and your fellow Republicans and legislators create fair and equitable voting districts, rather than gerrymandering districts just for the benefit of Republicans. Please represent all the citizens of your district, not just a few. This is your sacred trust for current and future generations of Texans. My reasoning is given below.

Ours is a participatory democracy. It is a unique government that provides freedom to all our peoples and that depends upon the unity of our peoples to maintain our great democracy. It begins with the right of all citizens to vote. That right to vote by all must be protected, not disenfranchised through functional means such as highly partisan gerrymandering.

Over the last 50 years I have had the privilege and responsibility to vote for local, state and national seats. I have done so with pride and honor. I also have seen our election officials successfully prevent fraud every year, including the tightly contested 2020 Presidential election. I have observed that Americans honor our election system and that extreme fraud is not a part of any of our modern elections. With few exceptions, our elections are fair and honest, with the loser graciously admitting defeat and honorably wishing the winner well. Look at how Al Gore treated George Bush, when he could have prolonged the argument of who really won the 2000 Presidential election. Honor and truth prevailed. Not so with the current winds blowing our country into lies and deceit.

I was a Republican for most of my voting life. I cannot understand the deception and lies that are increasingly being embraced by the party. It is pushing me into the With Republicans thinking they have the only answers and Democrats have none, they seem to be moving to destroy our country's great democracy and to replace it with authoritarian controls that go against the right to vote.

My 50 years of observations lead me to fear for my country, but also to see a real chance that Texas could lead the way to a new approach that will preserve and strengthen our participatory democracy.

Our founding father and first President, George Washington, declined a third term and warned of the dangers of factionalism, which, if left unchecked, as is the case currently in our country, leads to despotism (Washington, 1796, Washington's Farewell Address to the People of the United States, https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/Washingtons_Farewell_Address.htm). He urged "that the free constitution ... be sacredly maintained" and that unity of our peoples be embraced to secure our freedom from despotism. I strongly urge you to consider Washington's concerns regarding parties that put political party over our Constitutional liberties and the unity of our great nation.

Your sacred trust now is to determine the voting districts.

Yes, the Republican Party, which represents the white and wealthy minority (including me), could determine districts that would assure that the Republican Party would win elections and maintain political control for at least 10 years to come. But I beg you to reconsider this approach.

I have observed how change from minority white control to majority black control results in a "get even" approach when the political power changes after decades of oppression by the the white minority — look at South Africa. Getting even. Oh, how I want our country to avoid this.

We are at a moment in history where we can encourage future fair treatment of all peoples of our country and avoid the excesses of the getting even approach to governance and, more importantly, avoid the decay of our democracy into despotism. I want grandchildren and beyond to enjoy the participatory government that our founding fathers established for us. I want mine to be able to fully enjoy their voting rights no matter where in our great country they live or who is in political control.

I want my old Republican Party to rejuvenate itself so it will attract people of color. We will need all our great diversity to compete in the global economy! It is in your hands and the hands of your fellow Republicans to see to it that full access to voting by all citizens is established in the districts you will create. Do what is right for the country and Texas, not what is expedient for the Republican Party to cling to power for a few more years, angering those who are unfairly omitted from their right to vote by some technicality, with the inevitable result of the getting even when whites lose power, as history shows they will.

Please celebrate the huge voter turn out of 2020 by making the Texas redistricting fair for all and by avoiding restrictions in voting. Our system works well already and will continue to do so over the decades to come if your party rejects functionally disenfranchising portions of our great nation's peoples.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Ann Jochens

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]