

From: applications.administrator@capitol.local
To: [Senate Redistricting](#)
Subject: INETMAIL: Redistricting Public Input
Date: Friday, March 24, 2023 9:31:07 AM

Date: 2023-03-24
First Name: Alfred
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Title: N/A
Organization: Self

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City: Longview
State: Texas
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Affirm public info: I agree

Regarding: Senate

Message:

Members of the Senate Special Committee on Redistricting, my name is Al Durante, I am a Texas voter, and a resident of Senate District 1. I would like to thank you for holding these special hearings on Redistricting, but it is hard for me to believe you are serious about this process given the short notice of the hearings, the limited time for testimony, as well as the fact that the Chair of this Committee has already put forth a bill to approve the Districts as they are currently drawn. I have spent most of the last decade working on Redistricting Reform in another state and have seen these strategies used before. While the census numbers used in determining the need for Redistricting were easily accessible for anyone to view, this availability did not prevent the gerrymandering of districts drawn in the 2021 Special Session. In fact, it seemed as though those drawing the maps were doing the legwork for those attorneys who would surely be filing suit against these egregiously Racially Gerrymandered Districts, which I found surprising, because instances of race-based gerrymandering is the one form of gerrymandering which the courts have consistently ruled against. According to the 2020 census, population growth in Texas was largely due to a 95% increase in population size among people of color, including a 10 to 1 growth rate increase of Latinx residents over White residents in the state. Yet, if we look at the maps drawn in 2021, the majority of districts were drawn to increase white voters in the redrawn districts. Maps were drawn to “pack” traditionally Democratic leaning urban and suburban districts while cracking the surrounding districts to increase their partisan advantage. Most of the maps drawn in 2020 have a 20, 30, 40, and one case a 50+ partisan (both Democrat and Republican) advantage. Not only do these highly partisan districts lead to “vote wasting,” but they are evidence of both political and racial Gerrymandering. My Senate district, SD-1, gave up some rural counties on one side of the district in exchange for some rural counties on the other. While this trading of counties led to no notable shift in partisan advantage in the SD-1, the shifting of rural counties in SD-1 and some of its neighboring districts, allowed SD-2 to be redrawn to remove East Dallas and the surrounding suburbs, in exchange for more rural predominantly white conservative counties. The “cracking” resulting from the newly drawn borders of SD-2 not only increased its conservative partisan leaning, but deduced the voting power of Texans of Color in the Eastern part of Dallas county by packing them into already predominating minority districts. Similar examples of racial gerrymandering can be found in districts in and near urban centers across Texas. To be clear this is not gerrymandering of the Red Map type, in which one party is using gerrymandered districts to win power in a governmental body, these maps are an “incumbent protection racket,” drawn to keep those who are drawing

and voting on them in their seats. This type of gerrymandering suppresses votes across party lines. It suppresses the vote of those in the minority party, who are led to believe their vote doesn't count, and it discourages voters in the majority party who are made to feel they are left without a voice, because their only choice is the same candidates decade after decade. It is time for voters in Texas to be choosing their representatives, not the other way around.

