

Koy Kunkel_SC

From: applications.administrator@capitol.local
Sent: Saturday, February 20, 2021 11:29 AM
To: Senate Redistricting
Subject: INETMAIL: Redistricting Public Input

Date: 2021-02-20
First Name: Angela
Last Name: Orr Heath
Title: N/A
Organization: Self
Address: [REDACTED]
City: Dallas
State: TX
Zipcode: [REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]

Affirm public info: I agree

Regarding: Senate

Message:

Dear Chairs, Vice-Chairs, and Members of the Senate Select Committee on Redistricting and House Redistricting Committee,

Hello. My name is Angela Orr Heath and I live in Dallas, Texas, Senate District 8, House District 102. I am submitting testimony on behalf of myself and my neighbors in Precinct 1026.

How districts are drawn affects our lives from the economy to healthcare and public education. Currently small segments of the city of Dallas have been grafted on to districts where many of the voters in that district have little to nothing in common with the Dallas voters. For example, Texas Senate District 8 includes parts of McKinney, Frisco, Allen, Plano, Richardson, Murphy, Sachse, Dallas, and other cities; 85% of the district is in Collin County and 5% of the district is in Dallas county.

In many instances the Dallas residents are having issues with the availability and cost of childcare, issues related to policing and lack of gun control measures for safer neighborhood. Since the Pandemic, issues related to internet access to allow students to maintain their progress, after school programs for kids whose parents are working when they get out of school. The majority of the voters in the district they have been grafted on to have little or no need for assistance in these areas. These needs are not likely to be addressed since the legislators will respond to the loudest voice, and the Dallas voters in the district have only a very small voice.

Purposefully breaking up communities and grafting this on to communities that have little to nothing in common with them takes away the community's ability to come together and advocate for important issues that impact them. Here in Dallas County we are artificially broken up into 5 state senate districts, and 14 house districts. In each instance the Dallas residents have been grafted on to existing districts causing the voices of the Dallas residents to be drowned out and underrepresented.

Because of the timing of the census and when the legislature meets, the public has been provided with a very limited time to view, understand, and comment on proposed maps. In the past, Texas legislators have made this difficult by

doing everything behind closed doors, and not giving the public a chance to comment and make requests for consideration related to their needs.

For our democratic republic to function, we the people must have a voice in the process. We must be in the room and at the table. With that in mind, I am asking that this committee commit to holding public hearings including public testimony on any maps before they are approved or passed. I ask that the committee give the public sufficient notice and capability to review the maps before any hearings. I also request that the legislators who participate in drawing the maps provide an explanation of why they chose to draw them the way they did, and not hide any communications they have had regarding the drawing of the maps. Doing this will build trust that the maps have not been unfairly manipulated. I also ask that the legislature refrain from practicing partisanship when determining the boundaries for the maps.

This is a chance for the Texas legislature to get this process right and avoid spending or rather wasting millions of taxpayer dollars on years of lawsuits. I hope that you will take my testimony to heart and make the right choices for my community and for Texas.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments.

[REDACTED]