

From: applications.administrator@capitol.local
To: [Senate Redistricting](#)
Subject: INETMAIL: Redistricting Public Input
Date: Sunday, September 5, 2021 10:58:27 PM
Attachments: [Redistricting testimony - Senate.pdf](#)

Date: 2021-09-06
First Name: Michael
Last Name: Curry
Title: N/A
Organization: self
Address: [REDACTED]
City: Austin
State: Texas
Zipcode: 78703
Phone: [REDACTED]

Affirm public info: I agree

Regarding: Senate

Message:

Dear Senators,

My name is Michael Curry. I live in Congressional District 25, Senate District 14, and House District 49 and represent myself. I am asking for a redistricting process that results in fair maps ensuring equal voting rights.

As you know, the purpose of redistricting is to equalize the population among districts in service of the principle of one person, one vote. Unfortunately, this State, historically, has used redistricting not to equalize the vote but for incumbent protection and partisan advantage. I don't think a single member of this committee would deny that. This rigging has damaged all voters, but none more than minority communities whose representation at different times the Legislature has limited by packing them into a district or scattering them among several. By Gerrymandering districts, the party in control can achieve disproportionate representation – something antithetical to a democratic system of government.

Drawing congressional or state legislative districts with unequal populations violates the one person, one vote principle and is illegal. Redistricting to dilute the electoral possibilities of a minority community violates the Equal Protection Clause. Creating districts to give one party or a sitting public official a favorable electoral advantage is cheating. None of us would allow our kids to cheat in school, and none of us would accept the excuse that everyone does it or that the ends somehow justified illicit means.

We find ourselves here today at another inflection point, and the question before you is this: will the Texas Legislature continue to use the redistricting process for political purposes to discount the votes of targeted citizens, or will it draw the districts based on where people live and their shared interests without considering party affiliation and voting histories. Austin has been carved up, or cracked, into four congressional districts to ensure that the majority of its citizens have no chance to elect someone who shares their policy positions. District 25 clips off a small part of Austin and combines it with a sprawling rural district that extends to just this side of Fort Worth. It does not represent a community of common interests, and you cannot justify it on Constitutional grounds. It leaves our elected representatives at best conflicted and at worst unaccountable to district voters.

The greatest threat to our democracy today is the violation of democratic ideals by those who wish to lead us. Manipulating voting districts to disadvantage a party or a community is a form of voter suppression and an assault on our sacred right to vote. It promotes polarization, undermines our Constitution, and damages our democracy. Looking the other way or “going along” while others violate democratic principles is how democracies die.

Party pressure and political self-preservation are potent forces. I am imploring you to resist those pressures and listen to your better angels. I urge you to adhere to our democratic ideal of one person, one vote and not draw districts to advantage or disadvantage any person, group, or party except to remediate past wrongs as required by Federal law or the United States Constitution.

Finally, after you release the maps, I request that you schedule additional hearings to allow public input. You have an opportunity to comment on a bill after its introduction; the public deserves the same chance.

Thank you,

Michael Curry
Austin, TX



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