

From: applications.administrator@capitol.local
To: [Senate Redistricting](#)
Subject: INETMAIL: Redistricting Public Input
Date: Thursday, September 16, 2021 10:26:07 PM
Attachments: [Testimony - Redistricting.pdf](#)

Date: 2021-09-17
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Affirm public info: I agree

Regarding: Senate

Message:
Please see attachment.

[REDACTED]

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Committee Members. My name is Shelley Sallee. I live in the Highland Park West Balcones area of Austin and am here to represent myself.

Our community is blessed with natural beauty, but Austin ranks third in the country for wildfire risk in an urban area. According to the Austin Fire Department's wildfire mitigation officer, about 65% of homes in Travis County and over 49% in Austin are at risk of wildfire.¹

My neighborhood recognizes wildfire is the biggest threat to our property and security. In 2020 the City created Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) code and is working with fire and public safety departments to mitigate risk. This is just one of the many ways the City of Austin recognizes the increased risk that accompanies a changing climate. My neighborhood is also forward thinking about clean energy with the majority of those on my street now driving electric vehicles and myself and neighbors on either side installing solar panels. Austin has incentives and infrastructure to support such changes. In stark contrast, my District 10 U.S. representative has ignored such risks ever since his momentary help with the Bastrop fires of 2012. He talks about clean energy as important, but his record is one of voting against funding for renewables. His voting record disproportionately responds to the Houston end of his district. I am asking this committee to liberate my district from the weight of Houston and its entrenched oil interests.

Austin also takes pride in the diverse leadership and interest in sustainability solutions. *City in a Garden: Environmental Transformations and Racial Justice in 20th-century Austin* exposes a past of exclusionary decision-making about urban space and natural resources that disproportionately hurt black and brown neighborhoods. This city is working on more inclusive contemporary solutions to transportation, the environment, jobs, and housing. Redistricting for Travis County needs to reflect and respect these diverse interests, and I am asking this committee to make the redistricting process transparent so citizens can see if new maps reflect the integrity of their communities or dilutes the electoral power of their voices.

Most importantly, I am testifying as a teacher and parent who now faces young people who witnessed the insurrection on our nation's capital on January 6, 2020, who study the fragility of democracy in Weimar Germany and actually make analogies to our own republic! Gerrymandering breeds extremism by making electoral competition in a single party. We need more balanced districts to restore moderation to our politics. Uncivil partisanship and gridlock breed apathy and extremism. These maps can really help! You can structure to reflect those who live in Texas in 2021 or to ensure incumbents pick their voters. My students know democracy should be citizens choosing their representatives. I am asking that the new maps give the next generation that opportunity.

