



Testimony

Unified Government Public Relations
701 N. 7th Street, Room 620
Kansas City, Kansas 66101

Mike Taylor, Public Relations Director
913.573.5565 mtaylor@wycokck.org

Congressional Redistricting

Delivered March 7, 2012
House Redistricting Committee

The Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City and our citizens oppose any Congressional redistricting map which removes Wyandotte County from the 3rd Congressional District or splits it from Johnson County.

While redistricting is mostly about math... making sure every district has the same number of people... redistricting offers significant challenges. Keeping communities of interest together and ensuring district lines are as compact as possible are two of those challenges. Resisting the temptation to gerrymander boundary lines for perceived partisan political advantage is another. Many of these maps fail on these grounds.

Putting Kansas City and Liberal in the same Congressional District is a ridiculous idea that will cheat residents in both eastern and western Kansas out of effective representation. How could one Congressman represent communities with such diverse interests? Just the logistics of keeping district offices and conducting town hall meetings would be burdensome. Kansas City is closer to Little Rock, Arkansas than it is to Goodland. Kansas City is closer to Oklahoma City than Liberal. The sheer size and miles of a 1st District that stretches from Colorado to Missouri makes such a district absurd.

Wyandotte and Johnson Counties are neighbors and are more communities of interest now than ever in their history. Both are significant economic contributors to the State economy. Both are urban in nature. Both a stateline with the Missouri side of the metropolitan area. Both share common needs and interests which affect major cities, including business development, home construction, health care and poverty. Another is transportation and public transit. Yet another is infrastructure, from sewers and water systems to highways. The 22 Mayors of Johnson and Wyandotte Counties meet monthly as the Council of Mayors to exchange information and discuss regional matters.

The nature of regional issues and the involvement of federal agencies and funding which treat the Kansas City metropolitan area as one common region dictate that Wyandotte and Johnson Counties are represented by the same Congressman.

Attachment 5
HCR 3-7-12



Testimony

Mayor Joe Reardon

Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City

Congressional Redistricting

**Delivered March 7, 2012
House Redistricting Committee**

It's been quite discouraging for us here in Wyandotte County to see the pure partisan politics of Topeka play out with respect to Congressional redistricting.

Some of latest maps to emerge are what Senator Hensley and others warned us about months ago: To move Wyandotte County out of the 3rd Congressional District and into the 1st Congressional District.

Wyandotte County, more than ever, is intimately connected to the Kansas City Region. Our economy is tied to the region. Our citizens dwell within the region. Our entire County is physically located within and around the 435 corridor, the loop highway that encircles the Kansas City Region.

It makes good common sense to be represented by a member of Congress whose district encompasses the Kansas side of the Kansas City Region. That's the way it is now as the 3rd Congressional District encompasses all of Johnson and Wyandotte Counties.

However, a move is underfoot to not only remove Wyandotte County from the 3rd District but to place it in the 1st District which primarily represents the most Western stretches of Kansas. Worse than that, one map splits Wyandotte County in two, with part of the County remaining in the 3rd and the other part off to the 1st. Such a move would dilute the voice of one of the state's most populous counties. Instead, this move is a bold faced one to support political desires at the expense of good representation.

It simply defies any good government logic to make such a move. Worse, it feeds into the skepticism so many people have about government operating not for the people but for the politicians. It is my hope that the Kansas Legislature will use logic and common sense and keep Wyandotte County in the 3rd Congressional District.