From:	applications.administrator@capitol.local
Sent:	Tuesday, March 2, 2021 5:46 PM
To:	Senate Redistricting
Subject:	INETMAIL: Redistricting Public Input

Date: 2021-03-02
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Affirm public info: I agree

Regarding: Senate

Message:
Hello, I am testifying today on why the redistricting process should be fair, transparent, and nonpartisan. I was born and raised in Texas district 2, a district often on national headlines as being one of the most gerrymandered districts in the country. In school, we learned about how Texas violated redistricting protocol so often that the Supreme Court required the state to get its maps pre-cleared. These acts have put great shame to our proud and independent state. We have the opportunity this year to change that.

Nobody likes gerrymandering. Neither Republicans nor Democrats. Neither conservatives nor progressives. What Texans like me want is a redistricting process that emphasizes the fair representation. The role of our political system is for people to choose their representatives, and redistricting is a vital part of that process. Manipulating this process to favor one angle or another threatens our entire system of representative democracy. Texas has a history of manipulating this process for various short-sighted political reasons. Repeating our mistakes will ensure that we destroy public trust in our system of self-government.

For these reasons, I implore the committee to make active and tangible efforts to make the redistricting process fair, transparent, and nonpartisan. Opening the process to public comments such as this one is a great step in that direction. In addition, I have three suggestions. First, I suggest using a computer algorithm to generate a foundational map. In the 21st century, we have many, cheap tools that can make this possible. I suggest using anti-gerrymandering algorithms as a first step to drawing new districts. These algorithms prioritize geographical proximity and keep communities together. This would serve as a fantastic baseline map and should be made public.
Second, I suggest that any change to this map should require a public statement with opportunity for a public response. This ensures accountability and prevents manipulation around the edges. Third, once the baseline map has been modified and finalized, I suggest a campaign to advertise it and solicit public feedback before submitting the map for final vote. This would help build public trust and serve to solidify the the idea of fairness and transparency.

Our institutions rely on a shared commitment to equal representation, and this is an opportunity to prove that commitment. I hope you take this testimony to heart. Thank you for your time and consideration.