

Koy Kunkel_SC

From: applications.administrator@capitol.local
Sent: Friday, March 26, 2021 8:40 AM
To: Senate Redistricting
Subject: INETMAIL: Redistricting Public Input

Date: 2021-03-26
First Name: Kevin
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State: TX
Zipcode: [REDACTED]
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Affirm public info: I agree

Regarding: Senate

Message:
To the Texas Senate:

My name is Kevin Hoang, and I thank you for this opportunity to be heard and seen during the redistricting process. To achieve a truly fair and open process that represents all Texans from all walks of life, it is so important that we continue to have opportunities to relay our lived experiences - especially those that are specific and special to our individual communities. For this reason, I ask that the Texas Senate resume its public hearings on redistricting. The testimonials that were given at these hearings were powerful in that they shed light on communities of interest that are too often not heard during political processes like redistricting. Furthermore, I ask that the Texas legislature allow the public to make comments and requests before the redistricting maps are finalized. This will give marginalized communities the visibility and hopefully the political representation that they deserve.

Today, I come to you as a student, a son, a brother, and a Vietnamese-American. I am from Katy, TX, and I was blessed to grow up in a community with a vibrant Asian-American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) culture. We have crawfish boils with friends in the summer, we drive 15 minutes to visit my grandma and help her take care of her grapefruit tree and rambutan bushes, we chow down at Katy-Asia town when we're not feeling like cooking, and we worship in churches and temples that are shared with and for our community. This is our life - we live, love, and share together.

Yet our votes are not counted together. My house is in US House District TX-25, but some of my friends that went to my high school and Katy Asia town are across the district lines in TX-10. My grandma - just 15 minutes away - lives in TX-7. My piano teacher, who used to give me mooncakes every time I practiced well before my lesson, lives in TX-9. She lives 20 minutes away from me. When you split up our votes like this, it's no wonder that the number of Asian-Americans in the Texas legislature - 4 out of 179 - is less than half of the percentage of Asian-Americans in Texas. We are not being seen.

It is no secret that the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community has not been historically well-represented in Texas and in the United States at large. But now more than ever, with the anti-Asian American attacks in Georgia and a full year of hate crimes stemming from anti-Asian animosity from the pandemic haunting us every day, it is clear that

we need to be better understood, better seen, better taken care of. When my mom calls me and tells me that she's at the H-Mart down the street, I am scared that she won't make it home. When I talk to my grandma and she tells me that she is doing tai chi in the park, I am scared that she won't make it home. And when I go to the library to study with my friends, they are scared that I won't make it home. I am, too.

What scares me most is that if God forbid something were to happen to my grandma, or to my grandpa, or to my uncles and aunts, the police would not be able to understand them.

They only speak Vietnamese. I've listened to the 911 calls from Georgia, and it killed me to hear the operator not being able to understand the Asian women as they were being shot, bleeding, begging for help as they were dying. They sounded like my grandma.

Like our neighbors and friends of all walks of life and all backgrounds, the AAPI community wants to be seen, wants an uninhibited path to liberty, life, the pursuit of happiness. But right now, more than anything, we just want to stop being scared. I am begging for a fair and open process in which the legislature lets the public speak and testify their experiences for their communities, and I am begging the legislature to let the public make comments and changes to the redistricting plans before it is finalized.

Please let the marginalized voices of Texas be heard. I am so tired of being scared.
Thank you for your time.

Kevin Hoang

