

To: Alabama State Reapportionment Committee
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I provided testimony at the hearing in Montgomery a few weeks ago, and wanted to follow with a written version and some additional comments now that proposed maps have been released. I'm a resident of Montgomery, and my address is currently located in CD2, SD26, HD77, and SBD5. I am a native Alabamian concerned for fair representation for all citizens of our state, particularly in light of our state's historical trend of voter disenfranchisement.

One of the things I love about Montgomery is our deep history in the Civil Rights movement. I've learned so much about Alabama since I returned to my home state nearly 10 years ago, and I was attracted to living in our state capitol by the history and our city's encouraging pattern of sustainable development in recent years. And yet there are still obvious trends of racial division in our capitol region as illustrated by the lines drawn for some of our state house districts.

First, I'd like to address my local example - State Senate Districts 25 and 26. The district I live in - Senate District 26 - is relatively compact, and lies entirely within Montgomery County with a predominantly Black relatively urban population of about 76%. Senate District 25, however - is this oddly shaped district that ranges from the Northern edge of Elmore County all the way down to all of Crenshaw County to the South. Along the way, District 25 grabs a chunk of East Montgomery and most of the City of Pike Road - both areas that are relatively densely populated and predominantly white. With the new Census information, we also know that Senate District 26 as currently drawn must be adjusted to meet the one-person, one-vote requirements.

The current squiggly line drawn between State Senate Districts 25 and 26 is drawn along racial and party lines. My neighborhood and the City of Montgomery are wonderfully racially diverse, and our Senate Districts should reflect that diversity. We also have surrounding rural areas that connect to our urban centers, which also deserve balanced representation in districts as large as those necessary for the senate district distribution. I propose Senate Districts 25 and 26 be redrawn to reflect the diversity of our people, our neighborhoods, and our regional development patterns while incorporating the new Census data. *The proposed map released earlier this week does not address my concern, and appears to have been adjusted minimally only to accommodate population shifts.*

I've focused on our State Senate districts so far, but also have concerns for the State House district lines. A total of 7 house districts include portions of Montgomery County. 3 of them (74, 76, and 77) are fully contained within Montgomery County. 3 others (60, 75, and 90) reach into Montgomery County from adjacent rural counties, and the 7th looks like Pac Man trying to eat the 3 urban districts. Similar to the concerns I described for senate districts, the lines for the Montgomery area house districts appear to be drawn to incorporate racial and income demographics rather than reflecting the diversity of our neighborhoods and communities of interest. I understand that districts with erratic shapes may be necessary to achieve balanced populations and interests. However, these lines in Montgomery can be readjusted to produce



competitive, diverse districts and lead to better representation at the state house. *The proposed map released earlier this week redistributes Districts 74, 76, 77, and 78 substantially, making district 74 more competitive but still divides communities of interest which could be more compact.*

Last but certainly not least - our city is split among three separate Congressional Districts. This is a disservice to the people of Montgomery and our city's ability to work with our Federal representatives in Congress, particularly as we anticipate a large influx of funding for infrastructure and other projects over the next few years. *The proposed map released earlier this week is somewhat of an improvement, reducing Montgomery County to 2 congressional districts. A whole-county option would be preferable.*

In closing, my personal opinion is that the community engagement process your committee designed does little to truly engage stakeholders throughout our state. Only one hearing was held after business hours, and there was virtually no outreach conducted by the committee to recruit participation. Grassroots organizations stepped up to educate Alabama residents about this important process that only occurs every ten years and affects all of our lives in so many ways. You can and should do better. Alabama deserves better.

Sincerely,

S. Kathleen Kirkpatrick
Montgomery, Alabama