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**Testimony of
Matt Perdue
North Dakota Farmers Union
Before the
Redistricting Committee
August 26, 2021**

Chairman Devlin and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the decennial redistricting process. My name is Matt Perdue, and I am testifying on behalf of North Dakota Farmers Union (NDFU). NDFU recognizes the challenging task before the committee and appreciates this and future opportunities to provide input.

NDFU's member-driven Policy and Action highlights three basic principles to guide reapportionment of legislative districts. Those principles state that districts should:

- Cross as few county lines as possible;
- Seek to retain communities of common interest within district boundaries; and
- Give geographical balance to our legislature.

NDFU is particularly concerned by the potential loss of rural representation in the legislature. As you are aware, North Dakota's population has grown by 15.8% or 106,503 residents. Most of that growth occurred in urban areas and oil-producing counties. At the same time, 30 counties lost population from 2010 to 2020.

As the legislative map gravitates toward urban areas, some rural districts are expected to become much larger geographically. NDFU members are concerned that the sheer size of some districts may limit opportunities for them to have direct access to their legislators. In addition, some North Dakotans who currently live in primarily rural districts may find themselves in districts that are majority urban. This is also concerning to our members, who worry their interests may be overshadowed by their urban counterparts.

Where districts may increase in size or include mixed urban and rural representation, NDFU encourages the committee to explore the possibility of subdividing those districts into separate house districts. North Dakota is one of only 10 states that elects house members from multi-member districts. Single-member house districts may provide more geographical balance to our legislature and better retain communities of common interest within those boundaries.



Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. Our members appreciate the committee's commitment to holding regional meetings. They look forward to providing specific feedback and sharing local and regional concerns at those meetings.

