

Redistricting Committee
Regional Communities and the Boundaries of Illinois Districts – Rockford
April 5, 2021 10:00 am; Virtual Room 1

As an active member of the League of Women Voters, Greater Rockford Chapter, I am invested in the voting franchise of my community. While I applaud the General Assembly of Illinois for making our state one of the most inclusive in our country for its voting policies, I find the history of redistricting in Illinois to be grossly partisan.

I live in the 16th congressional district, one of the gerrymandered districts, drawn in such a manner that the district is faithfully Republican, at least, historically. To do this, lines are **not** drawn consistent with zip code boundaries. I deal with this every time I send an email comment to Adam Kinzinger. His email form requires more than the 5-digit zip code; I have to add my 4-digit qualifier in order for the system to determine if I am, indeed, his constituent. This secure district means that Representative Kinzinger doesn't have to respond to his Democratic constituents, like me. He never accepts invitations to debate opponents. He rarely holds public meetings to address questions.

I send Representative Kinzinger frequent email comments and routinely write formal letters delivered by USPS. And, of course, as an election judge, I vote in every election. But I feel District 16 is too secure. If the lines were drawn consistently with zip codes and without the cookie-cutter borders through Rockford, he would have to work harder to be elected, and constituents like me would have more power over his decisions.

This sheltered district is the primary reason I am motivated to write my opinion.

What do I want in a redistricting process?

I want an open, transparent process; a process that doesn't take place behind closed doors. Optimally, the meetings should be electronically open, as has been necessary during the COVID-19 pandemic. I want to be able to watch the process, especially when it pertains to the Rockford area. This is no longer a difficult process to engineer.

Rockford is a segregated city, not totally, but substantially. (I happen to live in a diverse neighborhood, of which I'm grateful.) It is divided by race, and even more by income. I think keeping the city together as much as possible, is better than dividing the have's from the have-not's. The Rock River should not be used as a dividing line, since the west side of the river has the greater concentration of low-income and marginalized people.

Optimally, this redistricting should wait until the 2020 census is finalized. Perhaps the General Assembly could seek a court order suspending the redistricting deadlines in the Illinois Constitution. Any work done prior to the finalized 2020 census should be reevaluated, and any changes should meet the same criteria as the preliminary work.

Submitted by,





Illinois 102nd General Assembly Witness Slip

General Assembly:

102nd G.A. (2021-2023) ▼

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N/A	Redistricting Committee Committee
BILL OR RESOLUTION NUMBER	Monday, April 5, 2021 10:00 AM
	Other (Subject Matter): Regional Communities and the Boundaries of Illinois Districts - Rockford.

I. IDENTIFICATION

All fields are required unless noted as optional.

Name: Teresa Wilmot

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Fax (Optional):

II. REPRESENTATION

This section is to be filled if the witness is appearing on behalf of a group, organization or other entity.

Persons, groups firms represented in this appearance:

League of Women Voters, Greater Rockford Chapter

III. POSITION

Select your position(s) on the legislative items.

Subject Matter: Regional Communities and the ▼

Proponent
 Opponent
 No Position On Merits

Add Position **Remove Position**

IV. TESTIMONY

Select the testimony types that you will supply for the hearing. (Check all that apply)

Oral
 Written Statement Filed
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