



Oklahoma State Senate
Select Committee on Redistricting
58th Legislature

Oklahoma State Senate



2021 SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON REDISTRICTING NOTES FROM TOWN HALLS

These are from discussions that took place either before the formal meeting started or after the meeting

ADA

Question about career-tech redistricting and availability/access to the population figures in the software

Questions about population figures for SD 4, 5, and 7 and the plan for each district because each district is below the population needed and all will need to add population

PRYOR

Question about SD 1 and what the plan is for making up the population needed

OKC-STATE CAPITOL

Question about Moore-Norman career tech lines and would the State Senate be able to assist them when the time came for them to look at this

DURANT

Request from local group to put McCurtain and LeFlore Counties into one state senate district

Question about redrawing local city council seats

ENID

Questions about overall census data and population figures. How to access and view. Demonstrated data.census.gov to answer his questions

CLINTON

Question about redrawing of precinct lines at the county level

Comment about the concern of declining rural population and what impact that will have on western Oklahoma state senate seats

OWASSO

Resident of SD 35 believes that the southern part of SD 35 has more in common with the SD to the east of her and she believes that the southern part of SD 35 should be in SD 25. The southern part of SD 35 doesn't have the same things in common as the northern part.

The following are questions from the recorded question and answer time

Senate Townhalls

(Comments made at Senate townhalls, about Senate Redistricting)

Resident of Pontotoc Co.

- One thing we have observed, working with our local businesses is that it has been incredibly effective to have a house district (and senate) that aligns pretty well with our county boundary, with our trade area boundary, and approximately our technology center boundary.

Resident - Durant, OK

- Based on the current estimates, how do you see the boundaries working out between rural and urban seats?

Resident - Durant, OK

- How are people in jails, university dorms, etc. counted?

Resident of Durant, OK

- How can we ensure that Bryan County is kept together?

Resident – Enid, OK

- Why did the process change from how it used to be in the 60's? Ex.: "One Person, One Vote"

Resident – Owasso, OK

- Some precincts have zero voters. Are the house and senate going to work together to reduce those?

Resident of Creek County

- "Cody Roger is my nearest Senator. I live on the very East edge of Creek County... I associate everything I do with Tulsa or Jenks. I would like to be represented by someone in those areas"

House Townhalls

(Comments made at House Townhalls about Senate Redistricting. If you would like to know the comments about the House districts, contact House Redistricting staff)

Resident of Jones, OK

- I would like all citizens within Jones city limits to be able to vote in Jones and not any other towns (i.e. having to go to Spencer to vote). Jones is currently split by two Senate districts (SD 17 & 48) and two House districts (HD 97 & HD 96) and I request that the community be in one district each. Also, do not split our school district if possible.

Resident of Jenks

- What kind of public information should we expect between the end of the public meetings and the legislation to enact plans for redistricting? I really like the way my House district (68) is shaped.

Staff notes: Follow up comment not on recording. I would be better represented by somebody who also represents a more urban/suburban area rather than somebody that represents a largely exurban/rural area. Please keep precinct 420 in Creek County (Jenks precinct) in a district that has urban/suburban leanings as it currently is. Asked that the same be considered for any Senate plan (i.e SD 37).

Resident of Lawton

- Do you have any specific plans for the Southwest region when it concerns redistricting? Specifically, is there a plan to redraw Senate District 31 to put Lawton in one senate seat, given that Lawton is losing population?

Resident of Muskogee County

- Stop the current cheating! Stop the total gerrymandering of all Oklahoma districts. Redraw lines back where they were prior to the 2010 /2011 gerrymandering. Start over with the pre-cheating lines. Appoint an independent panel of judges to oversee and assure continued fairness. [See attached testimonial for full comments including Senate comments]

Virtual Townhalls

(Comments made during the two virtual townhalls hosted by Senate and House Redistricting staff)

- Question about prisoners are counted on the Census
- Comment about trying to keep Canadian County a little more together and less choppy between so many different districts

Emails to redistricting@oksenate.gov

- Can you tell me further when population counts are taken and how/if you accounted for any of the shifts identified above? Further, are federal prison populations counted towards the population for our state if folks are incarcerated at a federal facility located in Oklahoma?
- How are jails, prisons, detention centers, and other criminal justice involved institutions represented or considered in the redistricting efforts? Are they considered in this process of redistricting?
- What is the deadline for submitting a recommended map?
- Please draw the Gatewood neighborhood in Oklahoma City in one Senate district. I believe it meets the "community of interest" standard and should not be split between two Senate districts like it was after the 2010 Census. The Gatewood neighborhood currently has one state representative (House District 88) and two state senators (Senate District 40 and 46).
- One thing disturbs me. There is created a fairly obvious conflict of interest when the incumbent is allowed to help draw his/her own district. Please explain why this is not apparently not considered unethical. Is there a Senate Rule that speaks to this issue?
- My question: I wondered if population density is considered while drawing these lines. It seems to me that the concerns of citizens living in more populated areas are often different than in less populated areas. It is easier to illustrate this with US House Districts but the question extends to OK House and Senate. I live in OK US House District 5 and that district currently is much of Oklahoma County and all of Pottawatomie and Seminole counties. This effectively cuts the metropolitan area of Oklahoma City in half with the southern half of the metro in US House District 4. The concerns and needs of the citizens in the metro are vastly different than the concerns of those living in rural areas. Considering that US House District 1 is all of the Tulsa Metro area, shouldn't the same apply to the Oklahoma City Metro. It would seem to me that US OK 5 should be Norman, Moore, OKC, and Edmond thus allowing the people with similar concerns and needs to be accurately represented. In either case it would seem to me that the Representatives from OK House 4 and 5 would both be split in their focus between their urban, suburban, and rural constituents.

On the districting of the Oklahoma House and Senate, the same question applies. The current boundaries are harder to describe in an email, but it would seem that similar economic households should be grouped to ensure that citizens are fairly represented in government. I live in Senate District 40 and House District 87 and it seems that those boundaries appear to be more appropriate in general. I guess my question there is to what degree are household income, education, age, race and other demographics considered when drawing these lines? I would hope that party registration would not be a factor.

Finally, I wonder if expected future shifts are considered at all. It is probable that Oklahoma City may continue to grow during the next decade while some rural areas are anticipated to decline in population. Does that factor?

Thank you.

- Hoping to see Beckham County House and Senate district lines returned to a more traditional format. Specifically as they pertain to Elk City!

Letters to the editor

(Comments made to local newspapers)

One of the things I love most about where I live is the diverse group of people who all call the Gatewood district home — young couples new to the area and older residents who have lived in our neighborhood for decades. We have all worked together to improve our neighborhood, the nearby Plaza District and urban Oklahoma City as a whole. And there is a lot to be collectively excited about.

Despite a lot of the common values I share with my neighbors, regardless of how we cast our votes, there are multiple legislative districts that all converge near the Plaza District. Even in Gatewood, the neighborhood is nearly split in half between two state Senate districts.

This gerrymandering, when politicians manipulate their voting districts to give themselves an advantage, focuses on what's good for politicians, not the people and not our community. My neighborhood is direct evidence of this, and that is why I am supporting a ballot initiative led by People Not Politicians.