



**Oklahoma State Senate  
Select Committee on Redistricting  
58<sup>th</sup> Legislature**

**Public Comments**

*As of 4/9/21*

# Oklahoma State Senate



*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 county 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](https://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

*These are questions from the recorded question and answer time*

### **Senate Townhalls**

(Comments made at Senate townhalls, about Senate Redistricting)

Jim Eldridge, 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"

### **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]

*Emails to [redistricting@oksenate.gov](mailto:redistricting@oksenate.gov)*

- Thank you so much for the effort to engage the public ahead of redistricting committee meetings this session. I have a specific question about counts of prison and jail populations. I know you've made the effort in the past to explain that rather than attributing folks to the communities they'll return to, in Oklahoma people who are incarcerated are counted as part of the population for the area in which they're incarcerated.

At several points last year we had some major shifts in carceral populations including jail to prison transport stoppage due to COVID, the shutdown of the Cimarron Correctional Facilities and removal of incarcerated people from Kate Barnard in order to respond to a budget decrease. 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?

- Hoping to see Beckham County House and Senate district lines returned to a more traditional format. Specifically as they pertain to Elk City!
- As someone who has lived in Osage county pretty well my entire life I feel that district 10 should focus more on the smaller more rural communities it previously represented. With the addition of Ponca City and other parts of Kay County we have been redistricted to the point of being represented by senators who are primarily from Ponca City.

What we have experienced in the smaller communities of district 10 is representation that doesn't always fully consider what is best for our small schools, rural businesses, and communities. I understand and am not even upset by this. They represent roughly 25,000 people in the Ponca City area with a large school and sadly probably a majority of people who vote. It would be easier to consider what the Ponca City Public Schools superintendent says or believes simply for that fact.

The district used to focus more on the rural counties such as Pawnee, Osage, and even parts of northern Payne with a little bit of Noble. These counties and communities were more similar and made more sense to be represented by the same district.

My fear is we as the rural part of the state with deep roots in agriculture and communities with small schools will be considered as an afterthought when someone from a larger micropolitan is elected to serve us. I think our current senator is a good man and has done a good job for the district. I just fear what may happen when someone who doesn't worry about the rural parts of the district is elected.

- As the Executive Director of the Chandler Area Chamber of Commerce, I feel that it is important for Lincoln County to remain whole for Senate District 28.

Thank you for your consideration.

- I am sorry that I missed the public hearing on redistricting. It is my opinion that it is very important that Lawton have two senators representing. It has been this way for years and I support keeping two senators for Lawton
- Hello, my name is Carol Goodwin and I'm the President/CEO for the Choctaw Area Chamber of Commerce. I represent the business community in Eastern Oklahoma County (EOC), mainly the areas surrounding Choctaw, Nicoma Park, and Jones. I would like to formally request that this committee consider centralizing district boundaries in EOC.

As you move through the redistricting process this year, I ask that on behalf of the residents and leaders of Eastern Oklahoma County that you consider centralizing the legislative districts together in our area. Historically, our communities have been rural, slowly moving suburban over the last few decades. As such, our sparse population has caused us to become the natural dividing lines between districts. Now that our area has seen tremendous growth, and will continue to see growth with the opening of the Kickapoo Turnpike, I would ask that you reconsider how district lines are drawn Eastern Oklahoma County (EOC) on a state and national level.

The specific concern with the current district boundaries is that our communities tend to be on the outskirts of several districts. As such, it creates a more difficult barrier to entry when trying to access support from elected officials. The other major concern with the current district lines are the fact that they do not adhere to the organic regions of the

communities. For instance, our local technology center services Choctaw, Nicoma Park, Jones, Luther and Harrah. With Tinker Air Force Base being the largest employer in the area, it helps link us more with Midwest City, as well. As such, it makes more sense that our legislative boundaries be more closely associated within those areas.

There are a lot of delicate pieces that need to be weighed while drawing new district lines, as we also factor in the population growth from the last map. While making those decisions, I ask that you consider this request to centralize EOC's legislative boundaries.

I would love to help explain in further detail which areas we would like to centralize, and I have been working to communicate this with all of our elected officials (including Congressman Cole and Congresswoman Bice's office). We wish to work in concert with them on this project. Please contact me for any questions or more information.

Thanks!

- I would be in favor of having 2 Senators representing Lawton and the surrounding area. This would give constituents an opportunity to reach out and voice concerns to both, hopefully improving opportunities and growth in their communities. I ask that you consider my request and thank you in advance.
- March 22, 2021 To the Senate Redistricting Committee:

As the critical work of redistricting progresses, I want to be sure that you have information concerning the city of Lawton Fort Sill's anticipated growth. The city is poised for growth. Many of the measures that we have taken are already engendering progress. Based upon the growth anticipated, we respectfully request that the committee increase the senate representation for our City Limits.

In February of 2020, our citizens passed a record CIP with a long-term plan to reinvent our community. We are executing a plan that will transform Lawton Fort Sill into a community of choice for young families. Much of the CIP was for quality of life amenities such as, a record Parks & Recreation plan, investments in a Youth and Family Committee and a state-of-the-art indoor sports facility. We made a record investment in industrial development that has set us apart from other state communities. This, along with the most comprehensive industrial TIF in the state, will help us fund industrial development for years to come.

In speaking with mayors across the state, we are in an enviable position. We can offer incentives and develop the necessary infrastructure needed to recruit industry. We can accomplish this with a simple vote of the city council -instead of going to a community vote. As you can see, this is an important factor, as it shortens the timeline to "yes" for any industry seeking a new location.

Additionally, the new Army Futures Command has located two of its eight cross functional teams (CFTs) at Fort Sill (Fires Center of Excellence). These teams are responsible for taking the United States Army to the future. Significantly, we have the Long Range Precision Fires CFT (the Army's number one priority) and the Air and Missile Defense CFT (the Army's number five priority). Our purchase of the local mall has given us an abundance of space to grow the "high-tech" capabilities needed to support the CFTs. Our Fires Innovation Science and Technology Accelerator (FISTA) Park will provide the research and development (R&D) and science and technology (S&T) needed to ensure our CFTs are a great success. Much needed high tech capabilities, like Cyber Electromagnetic Activity (CEMA) Artificial Intelligence (AI), are already on the ground. More than 10 companies are planning to move into the FISTA as I write this missive.

Additionally, a partnership has been established between the OU Engineering Department and our local Cameron University to offer engineering degrees locally to help us fill companies' engineering needs.

The FISTA has changed the trajectory of our community. We have invested significantly in STEM education for over a decade. Now we are beginning to see the high tech jobs that will transform our work force. While the FISTA is a wonderful growth engine, we continue to invest in traditional industry as well. We anticipate the growth in high tech jobs will create a myriad of related opportunities. The Oklahoma Department of Commerce anticipates many business announcements this year.

Lawton is poised for growth, and by 2030, we expect to be represented by three senators. I recommend we move in that direction during this round of redistricting. During a time of unprecedented growth, we cannot afford to have less representation.

I am available to discuss at your convenience and would engage the entire committee, if that would be helpful.

Best,  
Stan Booker, Mayor  
City of Lawton

- We are very much in support of having more than one senator represent the Lawton Fort Sill community. Much growth is anticipated in the coming years through both the community at large and missions at Fort Sill. Having multiple representatives for our area will be crucial to the success of our community and its ability to contribute to the State's economy.





April 1, 2021

Oklahoma State Senate

Oklahoma Senate Redistricting Committee

One of the most important issues Oklahoma lawmakers face this year is redrawing the state's congressional and legislative districts for the next decade.

Oklahoma has seen nominal population growth of just over 5% in the past decade. We realize the redistricting process will have to consider a trend of population loss in rural areas and growth in urban areas.

The redistricting process has particularly important consequences for our area. One of those is the possibility of losing one of the two Senators representing our area.

The Duncan Chamber of Commerce whole heartedly supports the current Senate representation. Two State Senators represent our South-Central Counties providing our communities and businesses the unique opportunity to have their rural voices heard and doubly advocated.

We consider ourselves fortunate to have Senator Chris Kidd and Senator Jessica Garvin represent us. We ask as the Oklahoma Senate Redistricting Committee reapportions this year; you allow us to continue being served by these two Senators.

Sincerely,

*Chris Deal*

Chris Deal, President & CEO

Duncan, Oklahoma Chamber of Commerce

(580) 467-5371



PO Box 2000 . 1407 Whisenant Drive . Duncan, Oklahoma 73533 . 580-252-5300 . info@duncanregional.com

April 5, 2021

Senator Lonnie Paxton  
Chair, Senate Select Committee on Redistricting  
State of Oklahoma  
2300 N. Lincoln Blvd., Rm 238  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

Dear Chairman Paxton and committee members:

Please maintain the Duncan community having two state senators. Our city is currently split between Senator Garvin and Senator Kidd. In a body with only 48 members, it is nice to have two from our area. As a regional hospital, I've found having these two districts more closely mirrors our market area.

I'm happy to address any questions you may have and may be reached at (580)736-1617. Thank you for your service to our state. I know this process isn't easy, but your efforts are appreciated.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J.R. Johnson', is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Jay R. Johnson  
President and CEO

c: Senator Jessica Garvin, District 43  
Senator Chris Kidd, District 31



# LAWTON ★ FORT SILL

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

March 25, 2021

To: Oklahoma Senate Redistricting Committee

The Lawton Fort Sill community is primed for growth and expanded contribution to the state economy. We believe strongly that our community merits more than one senate representative. Please consider the following driving economic features:

The centerpiece of our local economy is the FIRES Center of Excellence located at Fort Sill. It is estimated that Fort Sill's economic impact to the state is almost \$2 Billion per year. Importantly, housed at Fort Sill are two Cross Functional Teams (CFT's). These CFT's are Long Range Precision Fires and Air and Missile Defense. They represent the number one and number five modernization priorities in the entire US Army. Needless to say, tremendous resources are being devoted to these modernization priorities. The FIRES Innovation Science and Technology Accelerator (FISTA) was recently developed to provide off base support to the CFT's on Fort Sill. We believe this to be a tremendous growth opportunity.

Also, very important to our local and state economies is the flagship Goodyear Tire and Rubber plant located in our west side industrial park. This plant is the largest Goodyear Tire and Rubber manufacturing facility in the world and produces over 50,000 tires per day at full capacity.

Lastly, voters in our area recently approved a ten-year Capital Improvement Plan that will fund exciting enhancement projects throughout our community for years to come.

The above list is a small sampling of the exciting features in our community. Other very important contributors include Cameron University and the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge, among others.

Given these features and many others, it is our belief that it would simply be inequitable for our community to be represented by less than two Senators.

Thank you all for your leadership and service to our great state.

Sincerely,



Mark E. Scott  
Board Chair  
Lawton-Fort Sill Chamber of Commerce



Dr. Krista Ratliff  
President/CEO  
Lawton-Fort Sill Chamber of Commerce



March 25, 2021

Re: Oklahoma Senate Redistricting Committee

Esteemed Committee Members,

The Lawton Fort Sill community is primed for growth and expanded contribution to the state economy. We believe strongly that **our community merits at least two senate representatives**. Please consider the following driving economic features:

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Also, very important to our local and state economies is the flagship Goodyear Tire and Rubber plant located in our west side industrial park. This plant is the largest Goodyear Tire and Rubber manufacturing facility in the world and produces over 50,000 tires per day at full capacity.

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Given these features and many others, it is our belief that it would simply be inequitable for our community to be represented by less than two Senators.

Thank you all for your leadership and service to our great state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Madigan". The signature is written in a cursive style and is followed by a horizontal line.

David Madigan  
President/CEO  
Arvest Bank Southwest Oklahoma  
580-695-1994 (mobile)

A handwritten note in blue ink that says "Thank You!". The words are written in a cursive style, with "Thank" on the top line and "You!" on the bottom line. There is a small arrow pointing from the bottom of "Thank" towards "You!".





## *Office of the Mayor*

*Stanley Becker, Mayor*

212 S<sup>W</sup> 9<sup>th</sup> Street

Lawton, Oklahoma 73501

(580) 581-3301

March 22, 2021

To the Senate Redistricting Committee:

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Additionally, the new Army Futures Command has located two of its eight cross functional teams (CFTs) at Fort Sill (Fires Center of Excellence). These teams are responsible for taking the United States Army to the future. Significantly, we have the Long Range Precision Fires CFT (the Army's number one priority) and the Air and Missile Defense CFT (the Army's number five priority).

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March 30, 2021

Oklahoma Senate Redistricting Committee  
2300 N. Lincoln Blvd.,  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

Subject: Additional Oklahoma Senate Seat in Oklahoma City Metro Area

On behalf of the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber, an economic development organization with more than 3,500 members, I am writing to express our organization's stance that the dynamic population and economic growth within our region merits the creation of a new Oklahoma City area district/seat within the Oklahoma Senate.

While population growth has been experienced in many areas of our region in recent years, I would like to highlight one specific area: the western portions of Oklahoma City located within Oklahoma and Canadian Counties. For example, between 2010-2019 Canadian County had the highest growth in the state at 28.4%. With 58,475 residents, Oklahoma City is the largest community in that county and experienced three times as much growth there in the past decade as in Oklahoma or Cleveland Counties. This area includes one of the state's five largest school districts, Mustang, and tremendous ongoing residential development. This area also represents a tremendous opportunity for future economic growth, given its prime location for business location and expansion.

Additionally, there is a strong private sector presence in this area of Oklahoma City given the impressive growth along the John Kilpatrick Turnpike (JKT) corridor that has only accelerated in the past decade. To take one example, in 2011 Paycom moved into a new 90,000 square foot office building located off the JKT. By 2020, Paycom's headquarters had grown to 500,000 square feet and the company employed an estimated 5,000. Many of these employees live and work in this area as contributors to continued growth.

These examples are just a snapshot of a growing region that boasts the 25<sup>th</sup> largest city in the United States, and the state's largest single site employer at Tinker Air Force Base with over 26,000 employees. Our region continues to make tremendous strides in key industries such as aerospace, back-office firms, and distribution.

As you continue your critical work to properly balance political representation across the state, the Chamber would like to take this opportunity to respectfully emphasize our belief that the addition of a new Oklahoma Senate member from the Oklahoma City metro is warranted and equitable given the successes highlighted above and ongoing potential for growth. Thank you for your tremendous efforts on behalf of Oklahomans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Roy Williams".

Roy Williams  
President/CEO

*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.