

REDISTRICTING OKLAHOMA

Public Comments Received by the Oklahoma
Senate and House Redistricting Committees

58th Legislature

As of 8/27/21

Comments from Joint Senate and House Congressional Redistricting Town Halls

July 8th – Oklahoma City – Oklahoma State Capitol, Room 535

- Carol Goodwin – Choctaw Area Chamber of Commerce
 - Keep Choctaw, Nicoma Park, Jones and Spencer together. Eastern Oklahoma Co has worked together, and they wish to be kept in one district rather than broken between two.
- Dave Green – Eastern Oklahoma Co resident
 - Wants to make Oklahoma City the central point then go out to the border from there as if “slicing a pie”, to make all districts the same geographically.
- Rhonda McLain – Edmond, OK
 - Wanted to know if residents who are moved into a new district will be informed?
 - Quyen responded that residents who get a new precinct will be notified via mail with a new voter ID card.
- Dan Hough – Western Oklahoma Co resident
 - Suggested all of Oklahoma Co be put into CD5 rather than breaking it up for CD4 to have some of it.
- Andy Moore – People Not Politicians
 - Asked how undercounts in minority groups will handled, regarding state legislative seats?
 - Keith answered adjustments will be made if minority groups are undercounted.
- Colonel Gene Love – Lawton resident
 - Would like to see Fort Sill and Tinker AFB be kept in the same district.
- Mark VanLandingham – Greater Oklahoma City Chamber
 - Increase Congressional representation in Oklahoma Co. Keep Fort Sill and Tinker AFB in the same district.
- Robbie White – OKC resident, Chair of Oklahoma Co Democratic Party
 - Keep Oklahoma Co cohesive, all together if possible.
- Julianna Kershen– Norman League of Women Voters
 - Where can people find legal parameters for local and county redistricting?
 - Keith answered that each city is different according to their charters, County Commissioners have an extended deadline until November 30 and schools over 1,800 students must redistrict but have until 2022.
- Oklahoma National Guard Member
 - Keep Fort Sill and Tinker AFB in the same district.
- Nancy Barrett – Via Email
 - Asks that the process be done in a fair, nonpartisan way.

- Dan Williams – Oklahoma Co resident
 - Suggested shifting CD5 into Oklahoma Co then into Northern Canadian Co (Piedmont) while keeping Tinker AFB and Fort Sill in the same district.

July 13th Virtual

- Doris – League of Women Voters
 - How are incarcerated people counted?
 - Quyen answered that they are counted where they are incarcerated.
- Jonathan Hewitt – Shawnee Resident
 - Suggested not making Oklahoma County its own district because plenty of people in Pott and Seminole Counties work in Oklahoma City. Also driving to visit their representative is more convenient if Pott and Seminole are in CD5.
- Pamela Iron – Cherokee County
 - Wanted clarification because she heard that the legislature had already voted on the maps but then heard they will vote again?
 - Keith answered that there are two parts of redistricting – Legislative and Congressional. We are currently on the Congressional lines so the public can submit a map on Congressional lines. Input is still accepted for the state legislature as well.
- Rachel Melot - CEO Shawnee Forward
 - 15,000 people commute to Oklahoma City from Shawnee and visa versa. Shawnee and Oklahoma City feel connected in many ways from economic development to infrastructure. The relationship with CD5 is great and has been helpful with getting long term projects finished.
- Helen Duchon – Resident
 - Who determines city ward, county commissioner and school board lines?
 - Keith answered that cities are all done differently according to their charters. School boards are written to be due next year, any school with more than 1,800 students (K-12) must redistrict but that is up to the board to do so. County commissioners must be finished by November 30th according to a bill passed during the first session. The House and Senate are offering their services to redraw the lines.
- Owen Underwood – Resident
 - Will political subdivisions be considered a major priority? Also, will the current Congressmen have input?
 - Quyen answered that population is the highest priority. Keith went on to say that there are no guidelines in the Oklahoma Constitution, for Congressional Redistricting, to follow boundaries, only equal population. Also, yes, the five Congressional members will be submitting input just like the 149 state legislators and the public are doing.

- Doris Kupfer- Resident
 - Will cities limits be subject to being divided up?
 - Keith answered that yes but also will be paid attention to by the legislators. The main priority is population since there is not a deviation for congressional Districts. Currently there are cities divided to meet that requirement.
- Andy Moore, People Not Politicians
 - How will the Redistricting process handle tribal boarders?
 - Quyen answered that any of the tribes are welcome to give input. The McGirt decision was not an issue during the Oklahoma Legislature Redistricting process.
- Robert – Edmond Resident
 - Feels it is important for Edmond to stay with Oklahoma City as it is a community of interest, sharing a lot in common.
- Darlene Wallace – Seminole Resident
 - CD5 should include Pott and Seminole Counties, it makes a balanced district adding rural areas to the district.

July 20th – Enid - Autry Technology Center

- Resident
 - Is there a chance of a large change to the lines passed during the first legislative session?
 - Keith answered that the likelihood of that happening is minimal as both the House and Senate have prepared by using the 5% deviation.
- Resident
 - What is the deadline for drawing lines?
 - Keith answered that the legislature passed bills to allow ample time for line completion.

July 22nd – Tulsa – Tulsa Technology Center, Riverside Campus

- Resident
 - What considerations are you taking into account since final census data was not used?
 - Keith and Quyen answered that population is the main criteria. Both the House and Senate adopted specific redistricting guidelines. Public comment, deviation, compactness are also taken into consideration.
- Tulsa Co Election Board
 - Request to keep Tulsa County all together in one Congressional district

- Resident
 - How is political data taken into consideration?
 - Quyen answered that neither chamber used political data to draw the maps.
- Resident
 - Is there a date certain to be completed?
 - Keith answered that the legislature does not have a date certain, but county commissioners do. Ideally, the legislature will be complete by November 30.
- Resident
 - Heard a rumor that Oklahoma City could be split into three districts
 - Keith responded that Oklahoma City is currently split into three districts as the boundaries of Oklahoma City are already in three congressional districts.
- Resident
 - Why does it seem like county lines are important?
 - Keith answered that county boundaries are hard lines and counties have functions within themselves. Those are lines that do not change and have been in place for many years.
- Resident
 - Is Dave's Redistricting the software the House and Senate use?
 - Keith answer that the House and Senate are using Maptitude for Redistricting by Caliper.
- Resident
 - Does Maptitude use political data?
 - Keith and Quyen answered that no, it does not but Dave's Redistricting has the option to use political data.
- Resident
 - Is it possible for a member to export the data and save it to their computer?
 - Keith and Quyen answered that no because only staff have access to Maptitude for Redistricting.
- Resident
 - Could the Republicans encourage staff to move Congressional lines in favor of a specific member?
 - Keith answered that no because this is a legislative process and both parties have to vote to approve the lines. Same situation for legislative lines. Both House and Senate committees have Democrat vice-chairs.

- Resident
 - What taken into consideration to reduce cuts and edges?
 - Keith answered that compactness was the main factor, but the House and Senate maps are more compact this time than 10 years ago.

July 27th – McAlester – Kiamichi Technology Center

- Representative Jim Grego
 - How many people does CD2 have to pick up?
 - Keith answered that CD2 needs 44,534 people according to the 2019 estimate data.

July 29th – Lawton – City Hall

- James Taylor – Lawton Resident
 - Would like Fort Sill and Tinker AFB to stay in the same district as he feels changing the district would hinder the district.
- Resident
 - Once we get all of the numbers, who is the overseer of the final product and is there an oversight to ensure everything is done to population?
 - Keith answered that the Redistricting process run like a normal bill – the House/Senate vote on the bill then it goes to the Governor for approval. Quyen answered that yes, there is an oversight – the plan will be published and available to the public before it goes to a vote on the chamber floors. Also, Dave’s Redistricting is available to the public to draw their own plans and check population.

August 3rd – Virtual

- John Grundmann - Oklahoma Farm Bureau Board of Director Member
 - Would like to keep rural areas in CD5 so that it is not completely urban.
- John – Resident
 - Can you explain the process of removing 1,000 people from CD4?
 - Quyen answered that 1,000 voters would simply be moved from CD4 and given to another district.
- Austin Buchanan - Resident
 - Congressional districts require one person deviation. Is that a state law? To my knowledge, federal law does not require such strict deviation.
 - Keith answered that Oklahoma may take on the 1% like West Virginia did (and won a Supreme Court case), but most states have done the one person deviation. West Virginia did that so they could keep counties whole.

*** All questions are answered by Keith Beall, Senate Redistricting Director and Quyen Do, House of Representatives Redistricting Coordinator**

Comments received via email

- To : Redistricting Committee,

Please consider this a formal request to keep Shawnee as part of Congressional District 5. For more than 40 years, Shawnee has been deeply connected to OKC economically . As such , Shawnee is currently part of the Combined Statistical Area (CSA) for the OKC metro. Other factors, such as water supply and rail access for Shawnee are highly connected to what happens in OKC. The improvement of Interstate 40 between Shawnee and OKC and the opening of the Kickapoo turnpike has served to improve the flow of traffic between the OKC metro and Shawnee. Because of this ease of access, persons are choosing to live in Shawnee and commute west- many studies show this trend of seeking to live OUTSIDE the larger city will only continue. So as the OKC metro may have previously been receiving the greater economic benefit from retail sale dollars etc, that has begun to be more equally reciprocal. Effectively, Shawnee and the OKC metro are “connected at the hip”. It would be a mistake for Shawnee’s placement in CD5 to change.

Thank you for your time.

Paul A Bass
President
First United Bank & Trust

- Hello. My name is Cami Engles, and I'm a business owner in Shawnee. I opened a restaurant (Theopolis Social Club) in downtown Shawnee two years ago. I also own Leaning Tree Homes, Heirloom Flooring and the Shawnee Outlook Magazine. Leaning Tree Homes has invested approximately 2 million dollars in Shawnee within the past year and a half- mainly buying and renovating run-down properties in our historic districts and turning them into fair-market value nice apartments, commercial real estate, and single family homes. I am very committed to the economic development and the progress of my community. I take great pride in the work we are doing, and I'm hoping to help change the trajectory of our town with my investment.

I was made aware of the potential redistricting of Shawnee, and I would like to express my desire to remain in our current district. I believe Shawnee is more aligned with the Oklahoma City metro than the proposed district. I also see the benefit of remaining in our district as our community has worked for years on the expansion and completion of railroad sections. I believe the redistricting of Shawnee will undermine the progress that's been made in regards to the railroad, and all the economic advantages that will afford us.

Shawnee has an incredible amount of commuters who work in OKC, and also commuters from OKC now working in our county. I believe the recent growth and private investment we're witnessing in our community would be best supported and propelled by remaining in our current district.

I appreciate your time and consideration of my point of view.

Please feel free to contact me at (405).....

Thank you

Cami Engles

- Senate,
Why? And to whose benefit would moving Pott. and Seminole counties from district 5. We are literally a shout out from the OKC metro area and a significant percentage of the population in both counties are employed by a plethora of businesses in the OKC area. Our representation should remain as is.

C. L. Prevost III

Management Development Coordinator

Gordon Cooper Technology Center

- Redistricting representatives,

I am a resident of City of Seminole and Seminole County and a business owner. It is important for Seminole and Pottawatomie counties to remain in the CD5. Seminole has many residents who travel into Oklahoma City to work. We are even the home of Troy Smith the founder of Sonic, one of the CD5's and OK's most iconic businesses. Many people have friends and family that they see often in OKC and it is important that our communities remain linked together in the same district. Additionally, the office for our representative is less than an hour away. It would take much longer to travel to many of the other districts. While there is a small office that is technically a little closer, it is not connected by a main road- which Seminole is easily connected to OKC with. This office is convenient for us and already knows us from past partnerships and federal projects.

-Darlene

- Hello,

My name is Kimber Hewitt. I wanted to take a moment to thank you for this opportunity to express my thoughts. My family and I reside in and around Potawatomi and Seminole County and I commute to Oklahoma City every day for work.

I wanted to express the importance of Potawatomi and Seminole County remaining in CD5. Many people who reside in these counties are like me and commute to the city daily for work. Their lives, businesses, and incomes are directly linked to the city. Splitting CD5 would potentially cause the residence of these counties who work in the city to no longer benefit from the projects and programs that have been built to assist them.

Lastly, I want to stress again the importance of maintaining the integrity of CD5 as Potawatomi, Seminole, and Oklahoma County economies are intimately intertwined.

Again thank you for your time and consideration.

Kimber Hewitt

- I think it is imperative that Oklahoma's new congressional districts need to be as reasonably close as possible in geographical size as well as possible.

This would help to blend urban, suburban and rural constituents, perspectives and interests.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the factors that will determine our future districts and representation.

Best regards,
Marc Hader

- I hope you'll redistrict based on census data only, not political affiliation. We need a robust political environment that represents all the people.

- Hello,
Pottawatomie County is very unique to the OKC Metro area, not only the close proximity to downtown OKC, the new turnpike, we have at least 42 single family homes that are in Oklahoma City City Limits as we speak. This is not to mention the amount of people employed at Tinker AFB and the amount of acres farmed that is shipped worldwide. We must have that diverse representation, that voice in Washington that would represent our citizens, our concerns and our HOMES in Pottawatomie county.

Thank you for your time,
Raymond J. Lutomski, Shawnee
Congressional 5th District

- In regards to removal from the 5th Congressional District:

Shawnee and Seminole are in no way similar to Tulsa area. If you look at location, shopping preferences, dining choices, lifestyle.....our areas line up much closer to Oklahoma City. Please do not let the redistricting become a political issue. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Pamela O'Rorke
Shawnee, OK

- Hi!

I live in Shawnee and, as a part of the Greater Oklahoma City community, I do not want our representation moved to Tulsa or Muskogee.

We are growing more and more as an Oklahoma City bedroom community and should be represented at the state level as such and remain a part of congressional district 5.

Thank you for your consideration.

--

Zoe Loeser

Official Letters

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CITIZEN POTAWATOMI NATION

July 29, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of the tribal government of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, a sovereign tribal nation based in Oklahoma's Fifth Congressional District. As constituents, we wanted to provide our input on potential changes to the current boundaries of the district. Our tribal jurisdiction falls in OK-5, and most of our 2,300 tribal employees, neighboring communities and partners also fall within the district. Being part of the Oklahoma City metropolitan area as a member of the district has been vital to our successes in the realms of economic and infrastructure development, public safety and education funding. Any adjustment of Pottawatomie County's current status within the Congressional district would be highly disruptive to our work in these areas, and we respectfully request that we remain in the confines of OK-5.

Thank you.


Linda Capps
Vice Chairman
CITIZEN POTAWATOMI NATION
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July 9, 2021

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

Subject: Congressional Redistricting in Central Oklahoma

Thank you for the opportunity to make public comments on Congressional redistricting. This will summarize my remarks at yesterday's Town Hall meeting. The Greater Oklahoma City Chamber is an economic development organization with more than 3,500 members. It is one of the largest chambers in the county by virtually any metric, including membership, staff, and annual budget.

From 2010-2019, Oklahoma County gained approximately 80,000 residents. We believe this substantial population shift into central Oklahoma warrants increased representation in Congress for our region. We request the following be considered by the Redistricting Committee: 1) expanding the geographical area of CD-3 to include part of Oklahoma County/OKC; and 2) expanding CD-4 into more of Oklahoma County/OKC. Because CD-3 currently abuts Oklahoma County to the north/west and CD-4 currently includes part of Oklahoma County, neither of these options would be disruptive and would facilitate the increased Congressional representation warranted by central Oklahoma's population growth over the last decade.

Additionally, we believe Tinker AFB and Fort Sill should remain together in CD-4. Tinker AFB is the state's largest single site employer with 26,000 employees and is vitally important to national security and the state's economy. Our Chamber has dedicated full-time staff at Tinker AFB and leads efforts to protect and grow the base under a contract with Oklahoma County. Keeping it in the same congressional district as Fort Sill, one of the premier Army training posts, makes sense in terms of national defense policy, growing Oklahoma's economy and alignment of military interests in CD-4.

Finally, we believe Oklahoma County/OKC should continue to have one "primary" representative, with 70-75 percent of its residents in CD-5. This would be clearly preferable to, for example, dividing Oklahoma County/OKC into approximately equal thirds or fourths when redistricting. Should that occur, central Oklahoma could go from having two or three members of Congress to effectively having none.

Thank you again for your important work on federal redistricting and allowing our chamber to participate in the process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark VanLandingham".

Mark VanLandingham
Sr. VP, Government Relations & Policy