

Make Your Own Testimony to Describe your Community of Interest

Introduction and Important Legal Info

Hello, my name is [insert], and I am here to testify about important features of my community. I would like to start by saying that the most important thing for this Committee to do is to respect federal and state law, including the Voting Rights Act. None of my testimony today should be used by the legislature to justify diminishing the ability of a minority group to elect the candidate of their choice or artificially distorting maps for racial and partisan purposes.

Describe the physical boundaries of your community

Describe the physical boundaries of your COI so the Redistricting Committee can locate it on a map. For example, write down landmarks, streets, bodies of water, or railroad tracks that delineate the outside border of the community. After filling out and printing your testimony, you can use the map-drawing tool at the bottom of this page to draw your community of interest.

What makes this a community of interest?

Describe the shared characteristics of this community -- examples can include shared social, cultural, economic, educational, infrastructural interests. You should try to avoid describing your community based on a shared partisan political affiliation.

Why is it beneficial for your community to be kept together in a district?

Explain why it is important that this community be kept together for political representation. How does keeping this community together help it advocate for policies that are important to it?

What is harmed by separating these communities?

Make Your Own Testimony to Improve Transparency and Fairness

Introduce yourself

1. State your name.
2. State the organization that you are representing (if any).
3. State the topic you will be discussing.

Example: Hello, my name is [insert name], I am from [insert city or neighborhood], and I am here to testify about how the redistricting process affects me and how it can be improved to better represent the people of Texas.

Put into your own words how map manipulation hurts communities.

This can be on a large scale by distorting the makeup of the entire legislature, or it can be on a local scale by breaking up communities and placing them with faraway communities that share few social and economic interests with them.

Make recommendations to improve the process.

You can echo the recommendations from the Testimony Guide, and add other things you would like to see out of the process.

Thank the Committee

Example: Thank you for taking the time to listen to me today, I hope that you will take your role in this incredibly important process seriously and listen to the people while drawing final maps.