

Thank you Madam Chair and members of the committee.

My name is Gregg Peppin, and I reside in Rogers, MN, where I've lived for the past 28 years. Like many in Rogers, I live close to the Hennepin and Wright County border, and much of our shopping and travel patterns take us into Wright County.

Except for a very short time, I've lived my entire life in the 3rd Congressional District, going back to the 1960s when Clark McGregor was my congressman.

The 3rd District has historically consisted of suburban communities, and over the decades, has expanded west to include more of western and northwestern Hennepin County, where there are very similar communities of interest.

In 2012, the court ordered redistricting included the eastern section of Carver County, which was a natural extension of this historical expansion of the 3rd District that made sense.

At the same time, however, the court breached the large natural boundary of the Mississippi River when it went north and east to include Coon Rapids and Anoka County in the 3rd District. With all due respect to the court, this was an unusual and rather odd addition that didn't make sense either geographically or from a transportation or communities of interest perspective.

In fact, at the time that map was drawn in 2012, the most direct and convenient way to access the Coon Rapids portion of the Third was to leave the district via Highway 169, travel through Anoka, which is in the 6th Congressional District, then re-enter the Third District in Coon Rapids via Highway 10.

The Mississippi River is a strong and natural boundary that effectively separates Coon Rapids from the existing 3rd District border communities of Rogers, Dayton, Champlin and Brooklyn Park, and the city of Coon Rapids would be a much better fit in another district, likely the 6th.

Keeping Coon Rapids with the remainder of Anoka County, and removing it from the 3rd would allow the 3rd District to continue its historical westward expansion, which could be easily accomplished in one of two ways.

The first is to simply add the remainder of Carver County to the 3rd District. From a population perspective, I believe this change would be very close to break even.

The second option would be to swap Coon Rapids for the eastern Wright County cities of Hanover, St. Michael, Albertville and Otsego.

Either of these reconfigurations make much more sense for a number of reasons.

First, Highways 212 and 7 are historical transportation corridors that easily connect Hennepin and Carver County. Similarly, Highways 12 and 55, and Interstate 94 are among the highest traveled highways and freeways in the state, and seamlessly connect Hennepin and Wright County. The current rebuild of I-94 through Maple Grove, Rogers, St. Michael and Albertville all the way to Monticello will make this an even smoother corridor.

Secondly, Adding Carver and/or Wright County to the 3rd will continue the historical blending of suburban and exurban communities that have intertwined economies consisting of retail, manufacturing and agriculture.

Many of the westernmost regions of Hennepin County are largely agricultural in nature, dotted with new housing subdivisions as farmers retire and sell their land. Coon Rapids, in contrast, is fully developed without the same agricultural and economic development interests as western Hennepin and eastern Carver and Wright Counties.

Thirdly, Western Hennepin and eastern Carver and Wright counties also share historical settlement and religious affiliations with family names that go back two and three generations, and continue to this day.

The fourth reason is that there is a long history of business connections. The I-94 West Chamber of Commerce has for decades included businesses from Maple Grove, Rogers, St. Michael and Otsego. The Chamber's very popular annual "state of the cities" lunch is attended by hundreds of business owners, developers, city council members and government officials from both Hennepin and Wright Counties.

Madam Chair, and members of the committee, these are just a few of the reasons why the 3rd Congressional District should be drawn to expand upon the district's roots and include eastern Carver and/or eastern Wright County.

Thank you for your time.