

Dear Chair Murphy and Members of the Committee,

i am writing to offer written testimony on the redistricting hearings being undertaken by your committee. I am offering the insights with some degree of experience in the matter, having served as Mayor of West St Paul from 2005 to 2015.

The first area I would like to address is deviation. Though the Committee has some leeway, I would think it would be best to try and adhere to a 1% deviation, and not anything higher. This would minimize a built-in imbalance that could be created with a higher deviation. We only do this every decade, it makes no practical sense to start out with a wobble in the wheels of our representative democracy.

The second area I would like to bring forward is "compactness". Boundaries should be compact as to avoid crossing city or county boundaries or major natural features like the Mississippi or Minnesota Rivers. Similarly situated cities contained within the same counties should be the norm. This is especially important when allocation of the Metropolitan Council and Metropolitan Airports Commission Districts are made. West St Paul and South St Paul and the eastern half of St Paul are members of a specific district, which currently crosses a county line and the Mississippi River. There is no natural connection between the two areas, and a future district line shouldn't couple Northern Dakota County with a core city. Growth has been far more impactful in both communities, and warrants separation in representation. I believe that West St Paul and South St Paul belong in a Met Council and MAC district with other Dakota County communities.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

/s/ John Zanmiller
West St Paul, MN