

My name is Michael McCray. I have lived in the Pine Bluff community of Jefferson County for 40 years. We have serious problems with the gerrymandering of district maps and boundaries on both the state and local levels. I would like to keep my community together because as the current state senate district lines are drawn, I am separated from the rest of my Pine Bluff community, friends, church members and family.

I live in the southern part of the city which is on the southeast part of the County. Jefferson County has about 67,000 residents and 2 state senate districts. One district has about 52,000 residents and the remaining 15,000 of us have been drawn in another state senate district that goes all the way south to Union County. As a result, we in our county are not fairly represented. When we have issues to address, I like my friends and neighbors always reach out to the state senator who lives in Pine Bluff, is our neighbor, goes to the same community events and church with us. Unfortunately, that senator isn't my assigned state senator.

Pine Bluff is home to UAPB, SEARK, Pine Bluff Arsenal and the Pine Bluff Port, which is part of one senate district. Also, Pine Bluff is home to Jefferson Regional Hospital and Pine Bluff airport which is under the boundaries of the other state senator who lives 3 counties south of me. In my community, we deserve to be represented by a senate district that includes the entire county, its people and businesses. If Pope County, which is relatively the same size as Jefferson County can have one state senator to represent the entire County, why can't Jefferson County?

On the local level, I think it is important to maintain and support the integrity the school districts within the contiguous Pine Bluff City Limits. Currently, the White Hall School District extends across the city limits and encroaches on prime real estate property inside the city of Pine Bluff. This has the practical effect of diminishing the tax base that should go to improving Pine Bluff School Districts, which may have prevented the state takeover of Dollarway High School. Redistricting to create fair districts on all levels is a real problem and major concern for my community (Pine Bluff)

Thank you for time to hear my comment.