

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input and thank you for taking on this difficult task.

My name is Noelle Hagan. I'm speaking today as the former Mayor of Montrose (HD58), current resident of Gunnison (HD 61), and as a trustee of Western State College. I also ran for the HD 58 seat in 2008, and so became intimately acquainted with all the counties in district 58 as it's currently constructed. From this knowledge base, I believe the proposed division of Gunnison County does not further the goal of preserving communities of interest. Why?

- (1) Montrose County has much more in common with Delta County than it does with Gunnison County. For example, many nonprofits—Hilltop, Partners, and Hospice, to name a few, run joint programs in Montrose and Delta but not in Gunnison. Commerce between Delta County and Montrose County is much more vigorous than between Montrose and Gunnison. If you check the yellow pages, you will find numerous businesses and services with a presence in both Montrose and Delta, but few that operate in Montrose and Gunnison. Delta & Montrose's community of interest is further strengthened by the fact that both are served by the same rural electric co-op.
- (2) Gunnison County has unifying forces that many other counties lack. It is served by only one REA, has a single hospital, a single library district, a single school district, a single community foundation and a culture that actively promotes cooperation between up and down valley. Division makes no sense.
- (3) Having lived and worked in this region for 22 years, I can tell you that there are stark differences between Gunnison County and the "big dog" of House District 58—Montrose County—with regard to values and vision. The majority of residents in the two counties have radically different views on topics ranging from growth and development to immigration to the role of the arts and recreation in a community. Again, a very thin community of interest exists.
- (4) The proposed HD 58 will be even more difficult for a state legislator to adequately represent. Instead of having to familiarize himself or herself with the issues of six counties, the HD 58 representative and candidates will now have to become familiar with the issues of seven counties. Given that the drive from Gunnison to Dove Creek takes 4 hours and 15 minutes (in good weather), this plan takes an impossible situation and makes it even worse.
- (5) Finally, the map takes the home of Western State College—an institution that is celebrating its 100th birthday this year—and puts it in a legislative district for whom it is not even a regional service provider. Western is a primary economic driver for Gunnison County. What kind of legislative advocacy will this historic institution have under the new plan?

Please help us maintain our strength, our unity and our voice. Thank you for coming to Gunnison and for your service to the state.

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