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WHY GUNNISON COUNTY SHOULD REMAIN IN ONE HOUSE DISTRICT

Adjusting the political boundaries in Colorado occurs once every 10 years. The State Reapportionment Committee is recommending that Gunnison County be split in two Colorado House Districts with the north end of the county moved to join the Delta County House District. Our current House District 61 representative is Roger Wilson.

There are several reasons why splitting Gunnison County into two House Districts would be extremely detrimental. "Communities of interest" are completely removed in the proposed redistricting map for House District 61.

The preservation of county boundaries is also ignored. The City of Gunnison, The Town of Crested Butte and the Town of Mt. Crested Butte have been drawing ever closer together economically and culturally in recognition of common interests. All three municipalities share the same school district, the same health care system and fund the RTA which transports hundreds of people between Gunnison and Crested Butte. A single State House Representative is vital for appropriate bonding and representation of these common and synergistic community interests.

Gunnison-Crested Butte Tourism Association promotes tourism throughout Gunnison County. From Blue Mesa west of the City of Gunnison, to Cattlemen's Days in the City of Gunnison, to skiing in Mt. Crested Butte, the Tourism Association promotes everything Countywide from rafting, dining, wildflower excursions, fly fishing and more. In addition, the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), which is funded by interests in both parts of the County, and includes programs that promote air travel into the overall region, and ground transportation within the region and to Denver, illustrate that 'communities of interest' should remain whole.

All three municipalities, as well as the entire county, have a common desire to retain a vigorous ranching community and grow our tourist economy. In addition, the Chamber of Commerce in Gunnison is working with the Chamber of Commerce in Crested Butte and Mt. Crested Butte to create an Economic Development Plan as part of Governor John Hickenlooper's focus promoting economic development at the local level. The chambers are also working together on the development of a Leadership Program for the entire county.

Splitting small counties into even smaller pieces marginalize citizen's representation in every way imaginable. When more than one elected official in the same political body represents different parts of a county, it is difficult to inspire political involvement and activism among its citizens. It is also confusing for citizens to know who their elected officials are.

The current House District 61 achieves political balance which should also be goals of the redistricting process. In the past decade we have had both Republican and Democrat Representatives elected from HD 61, and in the 2010 election there was less than a five percent spread separating three candidates. In addition, populations between the Counties in HD 61 are about as equal as could be expected in a multi-county district. It is more difficult for the elected officials of Gunnison County to effectively represent their constituents if there is more than one elected official from a congressional or legislative district representing Gunnison County.

This issue is not a Republican issue, a Democrat issue or an Unaffiliated issue. It is a serious issue that would affect every citizen and most organizations in Gunnison County.

The Gunnison County Democrats
Maureen Hall, Co-Chair
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