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Submission to the Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission

I have been an active participant in Alberta's political process for 12 years but increasingly I am one of a few who volunteer for a candidate, take an active interest in politics or even cast a ballot. Many among my generation and younger increasingly see the political process as lacking integrity, fairness and legitimacy. The important work that the Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission is doing goes right to the heart of these issues, and many eyes will look on your work in the next two provincial elections and decide whether they see a corrupt, unfair and gerrymandered electoral system or the work of a group of people to end the mistakes of the past and create an electoral map that guarantees that every vote will count and be considered equally.

I understand the limits of your mandate and what the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act will allow, and while the five Albertans who sit on the commission alone cannot change the problems with our democracy and the lack of engagement I urge you to consider making our electoral map fairer. The most important consideration of redrawing our electoral map must be "the requirement for effective representation as guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms." Right now the disparity between electoral divisions is atrocious. My own constituency of Edmonton-Meadowlark has a population close to the provincial average, 38,434 compared to the average of 37,820. My vote however is worth nearly half as much as a vote cast in Dunvegan-Central Peace, with a population of 23,649. Going to extremes would take Calgary-North West, with 60,511 people - nearly three times as many as Dunvegan-Central Peace, but leaving aside extremes there are clear trends - votes cast in Calgary, Edmonton and their bedroom communities count less than a vote cast elsewhere. This disparity breeds cynicism.

How to reconcile this? I urge that the commission:

- **Recommend electoral divisions that are within plus or minus 5% of the provincial average;**
- **Recommend that the Edmonton metropolitan area receive 25 electoral divisions, commiserate with their current population; and**
- **Recommend that the Calgary metropolitan area receive 26 electoral divisions, commiserate with their current population.**

Calgary and Edmonton along with their surrounding bedroom communities make up 57% of our province - and it is growing. I believe this is the first rough calculation many Albertans will do when looking at the work of your commission. In my time in our political process, I have heard countless recriminations from Albertans saying our system is corrupt and unfairly penalizes Calgary and Edmonton because of who we vote for - my assurances that the system is in fact fair and representational hinges on you.

Yours truly,

Duncan Wojtaszek