

Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs

03/10/2026 02:00 PM

HB26-1038 County Commissioner Redistricting

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Jill Duvall For themselves	<p>As a former chair of the Elbert County Democrats, in addition to serving on the "advisory" redistricting commission in 2010, I am strongly in favor of this bill. I will share with you what happened in Elbert County's 2020 county commissioner redistricting. At that time, County Clerk Dallas Schroeder asked both political parties to provide 2 citizens to formulate proposed redistricting maps. As party chair at that time, I appointed 2 Democrats to attend this meeting. At this meeting, only vague proposals were provided by Schroeder and his election clerk, Rhonda Braun. No definite numbers were provided by Schroeder, no final maps were agreed upon by this advisory commission. Dallas Schroeder then submitted a proposed map to the county commissioners, stating that this map had been agreed upon by the bi-partisan commission. (Both of the Democrats on this commission subsequently submitted written statements as to the falsehood of Schroeder's statement as they had never seen the map Schroeder presented). So Schroeder presented a map that he had personally formulated, falsely stating that it was a bi-partisan effort. Not only did he lie to the county commissioners about the origin of this map, he then proceeded to "renumber" the districts. On video, when asked by the county commissioners if there were changes to the locations of the districts, Schroeder again lied. He totally rearranged the numbers of the county commissioner districts; coincidentally, he placed his own residence in the ONE county commissioner district that had an opening at the next election. Since he was term limited as County Clerk, he could now run for County Commissioner in the one district that had an opening. Previously,</p>

	<p>his residence was in a district that would not have an opening for county commissioner in the upcoming election. Current state representative Chris Richardson was a county commissioner at this time, and he allowed this miscarriage of justice to prevail by voting in favor of Schroeder’s new map. Please vote in favor of this bill to allow citizens to have a true voice in the county commissioner redistricting following the census process and to prevent illegal redistricting.</p>
<p>jeany rush Against themselves</p>	<p>TO: SENATE STATE VETERANS & MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE RE: HB26-1038 COUNTY COMMISSIONER REDISTRICTING SPONSORS: A PASCHAL, M SNYDER, CLIFFORD, BACON, ENGLISH, FROELICH, GOLDSTEIN, JOSEPH, LINDSAY, MARSHAL, MCCLUSKIE FROM: JEANY RUSH, COLORADO CONSTITUENT 3-10-26 VOTE: NO</p> <p>INDEPENDENT COUNTY COMMISSIONER REDISTRICTING COMMISSION ADOPT NUMERICAL MEASURE OF COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT COMPETITIVENESS AND USE THAT MEASURE IN DETERMINING COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICTS?</p> <p>In Order for our democratic republic????????? We are a Constitutional Representative Republic, Not a Democracy! The people were always best served when the politicians stayed out of our business, and literally let the local communities take care of business. THE MOMENT YOU SEE REDISTRICTING, YOU start to sweat! It’s all about who did what to whose Dog?</p>

	<p>You are creating a mandate from the State, to our local community.</p> <p>Just how do you even insure "Independent Committee"?</p> <p>The PUC and Energy Commission put together from the Governor isn't Independent Anything. Neither is the CDPHE.</p> <p>We cannot trust any of you to take care of this for sure!</p> <p>It is not the State's roll/business to conduct the county business. We don't seem to be able to secure any real neutral committees, authorities, enterprise zones, groups, non-profits.</p> <p>You know you have problems when you are more concerned with a clean pet facility, than insuring women are in a clean clinic when you are allowing a live baby to be pulled out of them in the 2nd and 3rd trimester, and vote down every bill to protect children from being mutilated.</p> <p>Why would we trust your methods to redistrict a dog park?</p> <p>Sorry, but the over 500 bills put in so fast, like "SLAM BAM</p> <p>THANK YOU MAMMA" MAKES ME SICK! Three bills shot down last night, and we spoke on all three, and wrote, really made me realize there is no MORAL COMPASS IN this legislature.</p> <p>Sad Sad state of affairs. You will not make this state strong, or sustainable with the constant creation of debt, bills to hog the citizens, and committees to control our every breath. I SUPPOSE YOU WOULD SAY, I AM GIVING YOU A VOTE OF "NO CONFIDENCE." See you in the trenches!</p>
<p>Bennett Rutledge For themselves</p>	<p>Madam Chair Wallace, and members of the Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee, Good Afternoon.</p> <p>Clearly this bill has received a lot of work since my first comments upon it.</p> <p>In particular I am gratified to see, at the end of Section 3 on page 5</p>

	<p>15 (7) ANY QUALIFIED ELECTOR OF THE COUNTY MAY CHALLENGE</p> <p>16 THE ADOPTION OF A PLAN TO DIVIDE THE COUNTY INTO AS MANY</p> <p>17 DISTRICTS AS THERE ARE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ELECTED BY VOTERS</p> <p>18 OF THEIR DISTRICT BY AN ACTION IN THE DISTRICT COURT FOR THE</p> <p>19 COUNTY.</p> <p>remembering my 18th District Court's Dismissal of my Protest of a choiceless election seven years ago.</p> <p>While I still consider it unduly restrictive, and say we should make options such as approval voting or proportional voting, especially in at-large or other multiple winner districts, available to the redistricting commission, I see Section 3(7) as being a large enough step in the direction of liberty to ask you to move HB26-1038 - County Commissioner Redistricting to the Senate Floor for final passage.</p>
<p>Molly Heckman</p> <p>For</p> <p>themselves</p>	<p>Written Testimony in Support of HB26-1038</p> <p>Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs Committee</p> <p>March 10, 2026</p> <p>Submitted by: Molly Heckman</p> <p>Grand Junction, Colorado</p> <p>Chair and Members of the Committee,</p> <p>I am a resident of Mesa County and I write in support of HB26-1038, which would require independent commissions to draw county commissioner district boundaries.</p>

	<p>Mesa County is a large, geographically diverse county. Its residents span rural agricultural communities, small towns, and the Grand Valley urban corridor, each with distinct needs and priorities. When district lines are drawn by elected officials rather than an independent body, there is no guarantee that those distinctions are reflected fairly. Communities on the margins of that process, whether rural, low-income, or otherwise underrepresented, can find themselves with little meaningful voice in county government.</p> <p>HB26-1038 establishes a straightforward standard: district boundaries should be drawn by an independent commission, free from the influence of the officials who benefit from those boundaries. The bill also requires commissions to measure and promote competitive districts, an important safeguard that keeps county government accountable to all residents, not just those in safe political strongholds.</p> <p>Fair maps are not a partisan issue. They are a basic condition for government that works for everyone. I urge this committee to pass HB26-1038.</p> <p>Respectfully submitted,</p> <p>Molly Heckman Grand Junction, Mesa County, Colorado molly.advocate@gmail.com</p>
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Marcella Schieffelin

Founder, Justice Care

Jefferson County, Colorado (recent former resident of Mesa County)

March 10, 2026

Re: Written Testimony in Support of HB26-1038, County Commissioner Redistricting

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

I write in strong support of HB26-1038, which would require independent redistricting commissions for county commissioner districts. I am the Founder of Justice Care, a Colorado-based policy advocacy organization focused on human and civil rights at the intersection of healthcare, disability, immigration, education, and caregiving. I am a LEND Fellow Alumni of the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus and JFK Partners UCEDD, and a former Co-Chair of the Planning and Grants Committee of the Colorado Developmental Disabilities Council. I also volunteer with a Family Caregiver Collaborative and have spent years navigating state disability service systems, county-level decision-making, and the legislative processes that shape both. I am a recent former resident of Mesa County, now residing in Jefferson County. I offer this testimony not only as a Colorado resident with direct knowledge of Mesa County governance, but as a policy strategist and civil rights advocate with sustained expertise in how county-level decisions affect the most vulnerable members of our communities.

County commissioners make decisions that touch nearly every aspect of daily life, including land use, public health, social services, and emergency response. When district boundaries are drawn by the very officials who benefit from them, communities that are low-income, racially diverse, or underserved are at risk of being diluted, fragmented, or ignored altogether. Independent redistricting is one of the most direct tools available to ensure that all residents have a meaningful voice in who represents them.

The need for this reform is not abstract. Mesa County offers a documented and recent example of what unchecked commissioner power looks like in practice. In December 2025, the Mesa County Board of Commissioners voted 3-0 to replace two qualified, experienced library trustees who had applied to serve a second term, in a process so lacking in transparency that hundreds of residents filled the hearing room in opposition and were ignored. Community members testified that the selection criteria were never disclosed, that incumbent trustees were notified of their non-reappointment only days before the vote, and that the commissioners proceeded without acknowledging the community's clear dissent. The library board, which governs a \$10 million public institution serving all residents, was reshaped without meaningful public participation.

That same year, the Mesa County commissioners formally instructed county staff to treat multiple state and federal legal requirements as optional. The laws they declined to implement include HB21-1110, which requires local government digital services to

meet accessibility standards for people with disabilities, a law with independent federal ADA obligations that do not disappear because the state did not fully fund implementation. Also declared optional: the 2021 law enforcement accountability law requiring police body cameras, energy benchmarking and performance standards, and IT compliance requirements. Commissioner Bobbie Daniel wrote directly to the governor, stating that unfunded laws had become optional, and staff were directed accordingly. The commissioners acknowledged this stance could end up in court. What was not acknowledged is that for many residents, including people with disabilities who depend on accessible government services, those protections are not optional at all. Calling federal disability access compliance optional is not a budget argument. It is a civil rights concern.

Also in 2025, after a Mesa County deputy facilitated the 15-day ICE detention of a 19-year-old college student in violation of Colorado civil rights law, the commissioners unanimously voted to use public funds to file a federal lawsuit defending the deputy's conduct rather than accept the state's accountability process. Commissioner Cody Davis characterized the state's enforcement action as political theater. The Colorado Attorney General characterized it as enforcement of a clear legal obligation.

This bill reflects a straightforward principle: the process of drawing district lines should serve voters, not incumbents. By establishing independent commissions with clear criteria, including a requirement to measure and promote competitive districts, HB26-1038 makes county government more accountable and more representative of the communities it serves. In my work, I have seen directly how equitable representation determines whether people with disabilities receive adequate county services, whether immigrant families can access support, and whether low-income residents and family caregivers are visible to decision-makers at all. Independent redistricting is not an abstract procedural reform. It is a structural safeguard for communities that have historically been shut out of those decisions, and it is one that practitioners in disability rights, healthcare advocacy, and civil rights have long recognized as foundational to all other policy gains.

I urge the committee to pass HB26-1038.

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I urge the committee to pass HB26-1038.

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I offer this testimony as a Mesa County resident who has sincere concerns about our local governance, and to raise alarms about self-serving actions and concentrated power exercised in Mesa County that I believe HB26-1038 can directly help to address.

Mesa County offers several well-documented and recent examples of what unbalanced and unchecked commissioner power looks like. As well-reported by both the Grand Junction Daily Sentinel and the Montrose Daily Press, in December 2025, the Mesa County Board of Commissioners voted 3-0 to replace two qualified, experienced library trustees who had applied to serve a second term, in a process so lacking in transparency that hundreds of residents filled the hearing room in opposition and were ignored.

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Community members overwhelmingly testified that the selection criteria were never disclosed, that incumbent trustees were notified of their non-reappointment only days before the vote, and that the commissioners proceeded without acknowledging the community's clear dissent. The library board, which governs a \$10 million public institution serving all residents, was reshaped without meaningful public participation. Commissioners and staff responded to numerous Colorado Open Records Act (CORA) requests with vague statements that merely reiterated their authority – rather than shedding light on any of the metrics, qualifications, skills, or guidelines that they may have used to choose appointees. Mesa County Commissioners and staff also refused to provide answers about who participates in the decision-making process, how local board applications are reviewed, how interviews are conducted, and how final recommendations are determined.

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