LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OHIO

Testimony before the Ohio Redistricting Commission
Punderson Manor, Newbury Ohio
Jen Miller, Executive Director, LWV of Ohio
September 25, 2023 at 10:00 AM

Thank you Co-Chairs and Commissioners for allowing me to testify today. My name is Jen Miller, and I'm the Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of Ohio (LWVO). I am honored to advocate for all Ohio voters as well as our dues-paying members, who live in every state Senate District and all but three Ohio House Districts.

There are an infinite number of ways to draw a legislative map. But there are only two purposes – either to be fair or to seek advantage. The non-partisan, academic redistricting experts at Plan Score can compare your proposed maps to their massive archive of maps enacted across the country over several decades. These proposed maps score between the 80th and 95th percentile for partisan bias. In other words, you've created the textbook definition of gerrymandering.

To demonstrate how egregiously unfair these maps are, we have uploaded and analyzed the current, proposed, and citizen-created maps into Dave's Redistricting to compare on a number of metrics of fairness.

Proportional Fairness & Partisan Gerrymandering

Both the current and proposed maps violate Article X1, Section 6 of the Ohio Constitution, as they both favor one political party and do not correspond closely to the statewide preferences of the voters of Ohio.

HOUSE MAPS	Likely Dem Seats (toss-ups)	Likely GOP Seats (toss-ups)	Proportionality	Efficiency Gap
Current Map	25 (17)	54 (3)	69	6.17
Johnson - McDonald	37 (8)	51 (3)	91	1.77
Rodden III	32 (10)	55 (2)	84	3.16
Andrew Green	38 (7)	53 (1)	92	1.53
OCRC	35 (9)	54 (1)	87	2.52
Pranav Padmanabhan	30 (9)	57 (3)	79	4.64
Paul Nieves	32 (7)	58 (2)	71	5.73
Sykes-Russo	34 (8)	53 (4)	85	2.97
Antonio-Russo	32 (10)	54 (3)	87	2.46

McColley-LaRe	26 (11)	59 (3)	58	8.23
			A higher score is better.	**A lower score is better.**

SENATE MAPS	Likely Dem Seats (toss ups)	Likely GOP Seats (toss ups)	Proportionality	Efficiency Gap
Current Map	7 (7)	18 (1)	68	7.39
Johnson - McDonald	12 (3)	18 (0)	91	2.67
Rodden III	12 (1)	18 (2)	92	2.45
Andrew Green	13 (2)	17 (1)	100	0.5
OCRC	12 (3)	17 (1)	96	1.71
Pranav Padmanabhan	11 (0)	19 (3)	78	4.94
Paul Nieves	10 (2)	19 (2)	73	6.27
Sykes-Russo	11 (3)	18 (1)	90	2.92
Antonio-Russo	11 (3)	18 (1)	89	3.08
McColley-LaRe	8 (2)	21 (2)	49	11.07
			A higher score is better.	**A lower score is better.**

Compactness

Co-Chair Faber suggested in the hearing on Friday that compactness, as required in Article XI Section 6(C), is sacrificed when proportionality is taken into account. However, there are a number of maps that would be better starting points, which are both more compact and more proportional than both the current and proposed maps.

SENATE MAPS	**Reock**	**Polsby-Popper**
Current Map	0.3831	0.2765
Johnson - McDonald	0.4017	0.3067
Rodden III	0.4227	0.3678
Andrew Green	0.3847	0.3057
OCRC	0.4276	0.3715

Pranav Padmanabhan	0.4031	0.3793
Paul Nieves	0.4171	0.3599
Sykes-Russo	0.402	0.3211
Antonio-Russo	0.3866	0.3088
McColley-LaRe	0.3946	0.3011
	A higher score is better.	A higher score is better.

	Reock	Polbsy Popper
HOUSE MAPS		
Current Map	0.3791	0.3057
Johnson - McDonald	0.3875	0.3226
Rodden III	0.4013	0.3478
Andrew Green	0.3867	0.3184
OCRC	0.3919	0.3414
Pranav Padmanabhan	0.4229	0.3682
Paul Nieves	0.411	0.3744
Sykes-Russo	0.3706	0.299
Antonio-Russo	0.3775	0.3014
McColley-LaRe	0.3887	0.3192
	A higher score is better.	A higher score is better.

Unnecessary Splits of Communities of Interest

A community of interest is a term used to describe groups of people who share common social, cultural, racial, economic, geographic, or other characteristics/concerns. These maps unnecessarily split a number of communities, particularly communities of color. At the last hearing, Chairman Faber asked us to discuss places that could be improved, and I would like to highlight neighborhoods that are unnecessarily divided.

The following are examples in the proposed House map:
- In Franklin County: Districts 1 and 3 divide South Linden and Milo-Grogan. Districts 1 and 2 in South Columbus divide communities like Millbrook, Deshler Park, and Eastland. Districts 6, 7, and 10 all share parts of Hilltop and Westgate.
- In Hamilton County: District 27 comes up the east side of the county and then jags west to pick up and divide communities of color in Lincoln Heights, Woodlawn, and Finneytown.
- In Summit County: District 34 is anchored by suburbs of Hudson, Stow, and Tallmadge, then cuts into East Akron to pick up northern Akron communities of North Hill and Chapel Hill. District 32 does the same from the southeast to pick up East Akron communities of Goodyear Heights and Middlebury.
- In Montgomery County: District 39 again splits communities of color in Northwest Dayton and Trotwood and pairs them with rural communities like New Lebanon and Vandalia.
- In Cuyahoga County: District 22 splits southeast Cleveland communities like Moreland, Miles Park, and Warrensville Heights, cutting Bedford from Bedford Heights.
  - The 10 wholly contained districts are all above +4.5% population variance. If all 10 were at -4.5%, you could get an additional wholly contained district in the county. If all 10 were at 0% variance, the spill over district would be >50% Cuyahoga county residence, rather than <15% county residence in the proposed map.
- In Lucas County: Districts 42 and 43 divide minority communities of Auburndale, Roosevelt, Onyx, and Highland Heights.
- In Trumbull County: District 65 splits the village of McDonald and city of Girard from the cities of Niles and Warren in District 64. All four of these municipalities can fit into a single district and are more similar than pairing these two with the more rural northern areas of the county.
- In Ashtabula County, District 99 splits the coastal communities in the north from the remainder of the county, and pairs them with the majority of Geauga County. Neither Geauga or Ashtabula require to be split, but should you choose to split them, there are more logical pairings that keep communities together.

Frustrated, disengaged voters.

But perhaps we should put it in a different way, since each of you is supposed to represent Ohio voters, and several of you are Constitutional officers. In 2022, Ohio voters were 6 times more likely than Michigan voters to skip the statehouse races on their ballot. Ohioans had a profoundly gerrymandered map, and Michigan had a citizen-drawn, non-partisan map. Michigan scores well on several metrics of fairness,

with a 91 proportionality score on Dave's Redistricting and virtually no efficiency gap. Almost a quarter of the state's districts are competitive.

Michigan proves that who draws the districts makes all the difference, and that's why it's been so easy for our volunteers to get signatures for the Citizens not Politicians Amendment. The more you put on these charades, the more you make the case that politicians will never put Ohio voters, families, and communities over the temptation to make sure you and your friends get reelected.

Process

Finally, given that voters should be empowered and encouraged to testify on how the maps will impact their right to meaningful elections and fair, responsive representation, I will talk about the process. You have had over a year to improve this process for the voters of Ohio, but that is not what we have seen. We would like to encourage you to deliberate in the hearings rather than behind closed doors. Those testifying should be able to zoom in on maps on the screen to discuss specific district lines, which was a suggestion by Chairman Faber in 2021. Similarly, you could have figured out how all of us could be using the same mapping software with the same political indexing data.

The hearing schedule is even more disappointing. You gave the public very little notice and are only hosting one hearing outside of the 9 - 5 working hours. I'd ask you to consider having hearings in Toledo, Cincinnati, Youngstown, Athens, and Marietta but also another one in the Cleveland area that would actually work for many jewish voters who will still be commemorating Yom Kippur at 5:30 this evening.

But I don't actually think you want a truly fair, public, and responsive process, where voters have the tools and adequate time to create their own maps or to analyze and comment on yours. If you wanted to, you could have crowdsourced the best ideas for truly fair and responsive representation at the Ohio Statehouse.

The statistics included in this testimony are agnostic to policies, candidates, politicians, and parties. It doesn't matter which mapping software, statistical modeling, or political data is used, it's very clear that your maps aren't fair, they aren't compact, and they aren't constitutional. You can continue to lament that it is impossible to balance all the requirements within the Ohio Constitution. But when everyday people make maps, those maps are more fair, more proportional, more compact, and meet constitutional muster.

You still have the chance to do the right thing. Start with a better set of maps and set up a process that truly allows you to hear from Ohioans who know their communities better than you.

Thank you.

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