

## **Ohio Redistricting Commission Testimony**

Testimony Location: Ohio Statehouse, Ohio House Finance Hearing Room 313

Testimony Date: September 14, 2021

My name is Tony D'Ambrosio, and I live in current Ohio House district 28, Ohio Senate District 8, and Congressional district 2.

To all those on the Ohio Redistricting Commission, thank you for allowing me to submit this written testimony

The maps submitted by the Republican members of the commission score low in Proportionality or representational fairness. Based on the statewide vote over the past decade, Ohio's average map-wide Democratic two-party vote share is 46.38%, the Republican 53.62%. With 99 Ohio House seats, the number of Democratic House seats closest to proportional is 46 and the number of Republican House seats closest to proportional is 53. The likely outcome from the Officially Proposed map by the Republican members of the commission is 32 Democratic leaning districts and 67 Republican leaning districts. This is not a fair map. There are 33 Ohio Senate seats. The number of Democratic Senate seats closest to proportional is 15 and the number of Republican Senate seats closest to proportional is 18. The likely outcome from the Officially Proposed map is 10 Democratic seats and 23 Republican seats. This is not a fair map.

Officially proposed maps appear to inappropriately "pack" minorities into Ohio House districts. Members promoting the officially proposed map have stated for the record that they failed to examine the racial composition of their map. This overt omission is in opposition to the requirements of the Ohio Constitution, the federal Voting Rights Act and disrespects both minority communities and Ohio voters. There are obvious anomalies at the individual House district level in regards compactness. For example, House district 18 at performs poorly in compactness in mathematical measurements and the 'eyeball' test. Compactness is required by the Ohio Constitution. Private citizens have drawn districts that are more competitive and more closely aligned with statewide voting preferences. Please consider these maps as you move forward.

I repeatedly wrote Governor DeWine prompting him to start the redistricting process despite the delay of census data. I always received the same terse reply. We will be following the constitutional guidelines. Yet, the commission has failed to meet the first deadline and have not met the constitutional requirements of drawing legislative maps. Prior to receiving census data, the commission could have been agreeing on definitions of terms and interpretation of current constitutional requirements and setting internal procedural timelines and guidelines so that overall deadlines could be met. There is the issue with Senate incumbents and their current district lines and how this will be addressed with future Senate district lines. The issue of representational fairness. These issues could have been addressed by the commission prior to receiving census data so that the process could move forward in an expedited manner.

I volunteer with non- partisan organizations demanding free, fair, accessible, safe, and secure elections and one non-partisan organization whose mission is to reduce gun violence and increase firearm safety. As a member of these organizations, I find I am fighting an uphill battle on all fronts. Ohio is seeing too much legislation that is disenfranchising voters and making Ohioans less safe from gun violence. The people of Ohio are not fairly represented in state or federal legislatures. I believe this is the result of unfairly drawn legislative and congressional districts.

In the past, both political parties have marginalized the other party through mapmaking and Ohio has some of the most gerrymandered districts in the country. Ohio voters adopted reforms to curb gerrymandering in 2015 for state legislative maps and 2018 for Ohio's congressional districts by over 70% of the vote. We demand an open, transparent process that results in fair maps that serve voters - not partisan, political interests. Please keep redistricting fair, transparent, non-discriminatory, and politically impartial. Maps should serve the voters - not the political interests of parties or candidates.

Thank you for considering my testimony,

Tony D'Ambrosio