

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF OHIO

**Bria Bennett, et al.,**

**Relators,**

**v.**

**Ohio Redistricting Commission, et al.,**

**Respondents.**

**Case No.** \_\_\_\_\_

Original Action Filed Pursuant to Ohio  
Constitution, Article XI, Section 9(A)

*[Apportionment Case Pursuant to S. Ct.  
Prac. R. 14.03]*

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**EXHIBITS TO RELATORS' COMPLAINT - VOLUME IV**

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# **Exhibit 27**

Ohio Redistricting Commission  
Audio Transcription  
September 13, 2021

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1 (Recording begins)

2 CO-CHAIR SYKES: I'd like to call the meeting  
3 of the Ohio Redistricting Commission to order. And  
4 before we start, we'd like to begin our official  
5 business. We'd like to thank Cuyahoga Community  
6 College, Tri-C, for hosting us today and introduce  
7 William Gary, Executive Vice President for Workforce  
8 Community and Economic Development for a short welcome.

9 MR. GARY: And it will be short. Thank you.  
10 Let me, first of all, Governor and members of the  
11 legislature and the Commission, and invited guests, let  
12 me welcome all of you on behalf of our President,  
13 Dr. Alex Johnson, who could not be with us today due to  
14 a mild illness. But it's our pleasure to have you and  
15 this meeting here at this institution.

16 As most of you know, Tri-C is the oldest and  
17 the largest community college in the state. This  
18 facility was founded in 19 -- I'm sorry, 2003 and  
19 represents one of the premier aspects of the college's  
20 workforce development -- community and economic  
21 development division.

22 We're very, very pleased to have all of you  
23 here. This facility provides training for over a  
24 thousand businesses, individuals, and government  
25 entities, and we are so pleased that you saw fit to

1 have this event here today. So I want to acknowledge  
2 also my colleague, Claire Rosacco, who worked with the  
3 Commission to bring this event there today.

4 So again, thank you for coming. We hope that  
5 this meeting will achieve the outcomes that you desire.  
6 And if there's anything that we can do to assist you in  
7 this process, by all means, please call on my  
8 colleagues. Thank you and have a great meeting.

9 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you. Appreciate your  
10 hospitality. As the people arrive, and who would like  
11 to testify, if you could please fill out a witness  
12 slip, we'd appreciate it, and provide it to the staff.  
13 At this time, would the staff please call the roll.

14 STAFF MEMBER: Sorry?

15 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Call the roll.

16 STAFF MEMBER: Co-Chair Senator Sykes?

17 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Present.

18 STAFF MEMBER: Co-Chair Speaker Cupp?

19 CO-CHAIR RUPP: Present.

20 STAFF MEMBER: Governor DeWine?

21 GOVERNOR DEWINE: Here.

22 STAFF MEMBER: Auditor Faber?

23 AUDITOR FABER: Here.

24 STAFF MEMBER: President Huffman?

25 PRESIDENT HUFFMAN: Here.

1 STAFF MEMBER: Secretary LaRose?

2 SECRETARY LAROSE: Here.

3 STAFF MEMBER: Leader Sykes?

4 LEADER SYKES: Here.

5 CO-CHAIR SYKES: A quorum being present, we  
6 will now continue the meeting. At this time, the  
7 Commission will hear testimony on the Commission plan  
8 that was introduced on September 9th, 2021, in  
9 accordance with the Commission rules.

10 These proceedings will be recorded and  
11 broadcast by the Ohio Channel, so the board, in its  
12 deliberations, may consider everything that's said. We  
13 ask our audience today to refrain from clapping and  
14 other loud noise out of respect for witnesses and so  
15 persons can hear remotely.

16 If you are here to testify, again please  
17 complete a witness slip. We ask you -- we have over 40  
18 -- over 50 witnesses today. We were in session for  
19 five hours yesterday. We're hopeful to be able to get  
20 to everyone here today. If you could limit your  
21 comments to four minutes, and the staff will raise up a  
22 card to indicate when you have one minute left and when  
23 your time has expired.

24 At this time, we'd like to start with the  
25 first witness, and the staff will read three witnesses

1 at a time, so the people can be geared up for the --  
2 for their testimony.

3 STAFF MEMBER: Gerald Barna, Catherine  
4 Buettner, George Bohan, III.

5 GERALD BARNA: I have a witness form plus ten  
6 copies of the written testimony.

7 My name is Gerald Barna. I'm currently a  
8 member in House District 57, Ohio Senate District 13,  
9 and Congressional District 7. I've been a resident of  
10 Avon, Ohio, for 18 years and lived in Lorain County for  
11 over 50 years.

12 I was employed at the NASA Glenn Research  
13 Center and retired after 40 years of service. I am an  
14 engineer, but most of my career was spent in project  
15 management and large organization management. And I  
16 was a senior executive service member and had a year at  
17 NASA Headquarters. After retirement, I consulted for  
18 small businesses and non-profit organizations.

19 During my tenure at NASA, most of the time we  
20 had stringent schedules, strong requirements that had  
21 to be met, usually constraints in funding as well, and  
22 a need to interact with many organizations and bring  
23 them together for a successful conclusion.

24 What I want to do today is give you my  
25 overall assessment of the commission introduced maps.

1 And I'd like to start though with the example of  
2 District 57. I testified about District 57 previously.  
3 It is a large district. It is not compact. It has a  
4 large group of counties and it works its way up --  
5 splits North Ridgeville and ends in Avon, Ohio, so it  
6 is not compact.

7 Avon has no significant shared interests with  
8 most of the communities in that district. But Avon has  
9 very strong shared interests with nearby communities  
10 such as Avon Lake, North Ridgeville, Sheffield Lake,  
11 Sheffield, and Eaton. When I reviewed the maps  
12 produced by the -- introduced by the Commission, I  
13 believe that all the issues I raised have been  
14 addressed. And I point this out because I want to  
15 demonstrate that it had -- it is possible to do this.

16 After initially looking at District 57, and  
17 what was done to create District 52, I looked at the  
18 remaining maps and looked for compactness, shared  
19 interests, and found that very few times could I find  
20 evidence of these things being in place. Further, in  
21 looking at what was presented in terms of expected  
22 outcomes, there was a significant increase in the  
23 number of Republican-dominated House and Senate  
24 districts, and I don't believe that is appropriate or  
25 in the best interest of the state. And I'm a

1 registered Republican.

2 I urge the Commission, the Democrats, the  
3 Republicans, to work together in good faith, willing to  
4 make compromises, and come to the -- a conclusion of a  
5 ten-year plan. Otherwise, it will be absolutely  
6 destructive to the state and harmful to its citizens.

7 Thank you.

8 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Are there any questions?

9 (Applause)

10 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you very much.

11 GERALD BARNA: Thank you.

12 STAFF MEMBER: Katherine Buettner, George  
13 Bohan, Daniel Bruce.

14 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Please state and spell your  
15 name for our record, please.

16 DANIEL BRUCE: Certainly. Hi, I'm Daniel  
17 Bruce. I assume I didn't cut in line, but I didn't see  
18 anybody else get up. I am a resident of Lakewood, 13th  
19 House District and 23rd Senate District.

20 I'm not going to get into a lot of details  
21 over maps. I was at an earlier meeting a couple of  
22 weeks ago. I wanted to give you a little bit of my  
23 perspective. One little thing about this process  
24 though. Both of these times have been during work  
25 hours. I appreciate that this one's later in the day,

1 but I work part-time. I work a bunch of part-time  
2 jobs, so this is my second time trying to take part in  
3 this process, and it has now cost me \$225.

4 I want to briefly say I hope that you all  
5 have taken a look at the maps that were submitted to  
6 Fair Maps and the winners of their competition and take  
7 a very serious look at those.

8 Okay. I'd like to talk to you about my own  
9 experience and that of many of my friends right now.  
10 We represent the younger generation that finished  
11 college and moved away from Ohio, something I hear  
12 about a lot, to big cities or to the coasts. After  
13 getting a little older and having children, moving back  
14 began to look like a good idea. It's cheaper, we can  
15 be around our family, and I like it, having grown up  
16 here.

17 Discussing this plan with my wife and other  
18 friends, the one thing that kept coming up was the  
19 politics. Ohio is gaining a reputation as a state that  
20 is moving more and more to the extreme right. I don't  
21 believe this accurately reflects the political will of  
22 the voters. I think it has happened over the last ten  
23 years largely due to this issue of gerrymandering.

24 So here we are with Stand Your Ground bills  
25 being passed and multiple bills being introduced to

1 restrict women's reproductive rights. The legislature  
2 has taken away the Governor's power to declare health  
3 emergencies, so now I'm sending my kids to school when  
4 the numbers are as bad as they were last winter, and  
5 just hoping for the best, I guess. All this while  
6 failing to properly fund public education.

7 My wife and I want to live in a place that  
8 reflects our values to some degree. We've been here  
9 for five years. As we become more aware and involved  
10 in politics in this state, we've begun discussing where  
11 else we might want to live if things keep going this  
12 direction. Given that part of the proposed budget last  
13 year was allocating funds to market Ohio to young  
14 people from other states, I don't think this is a good  
15 sign that I'm having this talk with my wife and many of  
16 my friends who have moved back.

17 You've lost our trust. You've forgotten that  
18 you're supposed to work for the people. We should not  
19 have to upend our lives, getting signatures, missing  
20 work to come to meetings, et cetera, to beg you to do  
21 your job in an honest manner with decency and  
22 integrity. I do thank you for the chance to talk, and  
23 have a good day.

24 (Applause)

25 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Are there any questions?

1           Again, I would ask you please to hold your  
2    applause so we could continue.

3           STAFF MEMBER: Glen Campbell, Ann Caruso,  
4    Sylvia Chin-Levy (phonetic).

5           MR. BOHAN: I didn't know quite how that  
6    worked. I'm George Bohan.

7           STAFF MEMBER: Oh, gotcha.

8           CO-CHAIR SYKES: Please state and spell your  
9    name, please.

10          GEORGE BOHAN: George Patrick Bohan, III,  
11    B-O-H-A-N, from Akron.

12          Chairman Cupp, Chairman Sykes, thanks for  
13    bringing the committee here today and thanks for  
14    inviting me to speak. Governor DeWine, welcome to  
15    Northeast Ohio. Welcome to Cleveland. Always happy to  
16    see you here. And thanks to the committee for giving  
17    me this chance to speak about this important issue.

18          I want to bring up three things in my time.  
19    I'm from Akron. I used to live near Lorain. We all  
20    know that Akron is divided into four Congressional  
21    districts. Lorain is divided into three Congressional  
22    districts.

23          What that means is we in Akron don't really  
24    have representation in the Congress. I live in Tim  
25    Ryan's district. I'm a registered Democrat. Okay? I

1 knock on doors for Democrats, so why wouldn't I be  
2 tickled to be in a pretty safe district? Mr. Ryan  
3 lives 75 miles away. Marcia Fudge lived 50 miles away.  
4 Dave Joyce lives almost 75 miles away. So we don't  
5 have the representation we need.

6 All of those representatives, their core  
7 constituents are really elsewhere. Their communities  
8 are elsewhere. In Akron we don't really have the  
9 representation we need because of gerrymandering, and  
10 the same is true we know for Lorain. Jim Jordan lives,  
11 what, 100 miles from Lorain? We know that Lorain is  
12 not getting the representation it needs.

13 So we need, of course, districts where the  
14 representatives represent those districts. We need  
15 competitive -- thanks. I heard a little applause  
16 there. We need competitive districts. As I said, I'm  
17 a Democrat in a Democratic district. Why wouldn't I be  
18 happy with a fairly safe district? Because in safe  
19 districts, legislators don't have to listen to their  
20 constituents. Republicans --

21 (Applause)

22 GEORGE BOHAN: You all behave.  
23 Representatives, whether Democrat or Republican, when  
24 they are in safe districts, and when they're in super  
25 safe districts, they don't have to listen to me. Even

1 the Democrats don't have to listen to me. They're in a  
2 safe district.

3 Competitive districts would help the state.  
4 We all know the last time we did this, the last time we  
5 went through this, Ohio ranked higher in education and  
6 economic. We've moved down the ladder. Non-  
7 competitive districts are part of the reason for that.

8 Primaries shouldn't be the general election.  
9 We need general elections -- competitive general  
10 elections, competitive districts. We need  
11 representatives who are testing their ideas against  
12 each other and bringing their ideas to the electorate.

13 The last thing I want to bring up -- you can  
14 tell I'm getting more and more nervous the farther I go  
15 -- 75 percent of Ohio voted for this. To ignore --

16 (Applause)

17 GEORGE BOHAN: To ignore the will of the  
18 people, you couldn't get -- you know, we know, you  
19 couldn't get 75 percent of Ohio -- well, you could get  
20 75 percent of Ohio to root for the Buckeyes, and that's  
21 about it. To get 75 percent of Ohio to root -- to vote  
22 for anything is remarkable.

23 Please don't let us down. Thanks for  
24 listening to me.

25 (Applause)

1 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Are there any questions?

2 Thank you.

3 I'd like to remind the presenters that we are  
4 limiting our presentations to state legislative  
5 districts, and particularly to maps and the map that's  
6 before the Commission. So please limit your comments  
7 to the map, the Commission map, in statements for your  
8 districts.

9 STAFF MEMBER: Glen Campbell, Ann Caruso,  
10 Sylvia Chin-Levy.

11 UNIDENTIFIED: In what order did you pick  
12 these names?

13 STAFF MEMBER: Alphabetical by who select --  
14 submitted them electronically.

15 Deborah Dalke, Melanie Emig, Rebecca  
16 Ensworth.

17 DEBORAH DALKE: I also have copies as I cite  
18 some of my materials, so I'd like you to have copies.

19 So my name is Debbie Dalke, D-E-B-B-I-E  
20 D-A-L-K-E, and I live in Bowling Green in Wood County.  
21 Now, Wood County now has too many people for one state  
22 House district and so must be split. As I said in the  
23 Toledo hearing, if the community must be divided, the  
24 people who live there should have a voice in how this  
25 is done, so I am here today to raise my voice.

1           The population issue with Wood County could  
2 be resolved by carving out a small segment and keeping  
3 Wood County largely intact. This is my preferred  
4 solution. The Commission chose to consider the Huffman  
5 map, which divides Wood County in half. The western  
6 half of Wood County was lumped into a district with a  
7 piece of Lucas County and a slice of Hancock County.  
8 This district, District 43, would be my new House  
9 district. It is not compact and it unnecessarily  
10 splits Hancock County. Hancock is small enough to be  
11 fully contained within a House -- a state House  
12 district.

13           The Huffman map also isolates me from my  
14 community. I live about a mile southwest of the city  
15 on the other side of the boundary that divides Wood  
16 County in two. I have a Bowling Green ZIP code, live  
17 in the Bowling Green school district, the vast majority  
18 of my business is conducted in Bowling Green, and my  
19 husband pays Bowling Green city taxes. There is not a  
20 valid reason for putting me in a different House  
21 district.

22           I am also concerned about your redistricting  
23 process. DiRossi, when introducing the Huffman maps,  
24 said he was instructed to draw maps without utilizing  
25 demographic or racial data. Mr. DiRossi also stated

1 that his maps fully complied with the requirements in  
2 the Ohio Constitution.

3 I believe these two statements are  
4 contradictory, which I will explain. Article XI,  
5 Section 6 of the Ohio Constitution states that a  
6 district plan should correspond closely to the  
7 statewide preferences. If, as Mr. DiRossi claims,  
8 voting patterns were not looked at when the maps were  
9 evaluated, then the mapmakers could not know if they  
10 had adhered to this section of the Constitution.

11 Article XI, Section 3 of the Ohio  
12 Constitution states that district plans should comply  
13 with federal law. A relevant federal law is the 1965  
14 Voting Rights Act. Section 2 of this Act prohibits  
15 policies that deny or abridge the right to vote based  
16 on race. A judiciary report that accompanies the 1982  
17 extension of the Act specifically mentions the creation  
18 of unusually large voting districts as potentially  
19 violating this Act.

20 And I have a reference for that. Mapmakers  
21 know they can minimize the voting power of the  
22 demographic group by packing the district with those  
23 individuals. If the Huffman maps were drawn without  
24 evaluating the racial composition of the districts,  
25 then we cannot know if some of the districts violate

1 the Voting Rights Act.

2 The League of Women Voters sponsored a  
3 mapmaking competition using publicly available  
4 districting software. It was evaluated by an emeritus  
5 professor on a number of issues, all of the issues that  
6 are in the Constitution. The official Huffman maps  
7 were compared to the contest winners, and the Huffman  
8 maps ranked noticeably lower on a number of criteria,  
9 including compactness and proportionality, fitting the  
10 voting patterns of the state. So hopefully you will  
11 take the superior -- League superior maps into  
12 consideration, and I've included a link.

13 In conclusion, this redistricting process is  
14 a slap in the face to the over 70 percent of Ohioans  
15 who voted for the redistricting reforms. The  
16 Republican-engineered maps give even more power to the  
17 Republican candidates. They are even more politically  
18 biased than the ones we currently have.

19 Private citizens were able to produce maps  
20 that better fit the Constitutional criteria than your  
21 maps, and they did so in a more timely manner and at no  
22 cost to the taxpayers. David Winston, a redistricting  
23 consultant in the 1990s, said the following: "As a  
24 mapmaker, I can have more of an impact on an election  
25 than the campaign, more of an impact than a candidate.

1 When I as a mapmaker have more of an impact on the  
2 voters, the system is out of whack," and your system is  
3 out of whack. Please reject the proposed  
4 gerrymandered --

5 (Applause)

6 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Again, please. Please. I'm  
7 going to ask again, please hold your applause.

8 UNIDENTIFIED: Mr. Chairman?

9 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Yes.

10 UNIDENTIFIED: If the nice lady would answer  
11 a question, I'd be happy to -- yes, ma'am.

12 Specifically looking at the maps, I appreciated your  
13 testimony because you talked specifically about things  
14 in the maps that I could pull up and take a look at.

15 Have you taken a look at the Democrats'  
16 suggested maps or any of the other maps on Dave's  
17 Redistricting?

18 DEBBIE DALKE: I --

19 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Can you come back to the  
20 microphone, please, so it can be recorded.

21 DEBBIE DALKE: I've taken a look at a number  
22 of them. Specifically, I've taken a look at those that  
23 are -- relate to my own districts, and the maps -- most  
24 of the maps that I remember that they did take a little  
25 chunk out of Wood County and they left most of Wood

1 County intact, and for --

2 UNIDENTIFIED: Go ahead. I'm sorry.

3 DEBBIE DALKE: And for the maps that I looked  
4 at, then again living a mile from the city of Bowling  
5 Green, that my address would still be included with  
6 Bowling Green.

7 UNIDENTIFIED: The problem -- and I  
8 appreciate that, and that's why I was looking, because  
9 I'm looking at the Democrats' proposed maps, and they  
10 split very similar to what the -- the Republican or the  
11 legislator maps did, because Bowling Green's or Wood  
12 County's population is such that you can get a whole  
13 state rep district and it has to be part of another,  
14 depending on where you do the splits.

15 And so those are all about making decisions,  
16 and the Constitution requires that we keep cities  
17 intact and townships intact. And that's why I was  
18 trying to figure out if you live outside the city and  
19 they're doing splits, depending on how they do those  
20 splits, because of the population requirements, it  
21 makes it kind of tough. And I was just curious if you  
22 knew where the Democrats' split was with regard to your  
23 house.

24 DEBBIE DALKE: That one I didn't consider. I  
25 was more interested in looking at the Wood County --

1 the maps that were entered into the contest for the  
2 Women -- the League of Women Voters. I looked at those  
3 maps. So the Democrat map, no, I'll be honest and  
4 say --

5 UNIDENTIFIED: And many of those then had to  
6 split another county somewhere to put that overflow.  
7 So it's a question of -- I mean, I wish we could all  
8 just pick which -- you know, when we're splitting next  
9 to our house, when we live next to a city, because I  
10 live in a township just outside the city as well. And  
11 I know that that gets sometimes tough, but I'm just  
12 curious if you looked at that, and it looks like you  
13 haven't.

14 DEBBIE DALKE: Not the Democrat map.

15 UNIDENTIFIED: Okay.

16 DEBBIE DALKE: As I said, I looked at the  
17 other maps, and the maps that I saw pulled out just a  
18 little section of Wood County and then added that to a  
19 county that was smaller.

20 UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you so much, and thanks  
21 for your specific testimony. That's very helpful.

22 DEBBIE DALKE: Thank you.

23 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you very much. At  
24 this time, we've been joined by some other state  
25 elected officials. We've been joined by State

1 Representative Upchurch, State Representative Smith,  
2 State Representative Brent, and the Minority Leader of  
3 the Senate, Senator Yuko. Thanks for joining.  
4 Appreciate it. I'm told we also have State  
5 Representatives Sweeney.

6 STAFF MEMBER: The next witness we have up is  
7 Melanie Emig, and after her is Rebecca Ensworth.

8 UNIDENTIFIED: Melanie isn't here.

9 STAFF MEMBER: Okay. The next witness after  
10 Melanie was Rebecca Ensworth, and after Rebecca  
11 Ensworth is Elliott Forhan.

12 The next witness is Debra France followed by  
13 Barbara Friedman Yaksic.

14 The next witness is Elizabeth Gerstenhauber  
15 (phonetic) followed by Brian Glassman.

16 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Would you please state and  
17 spell your name.

18 BARBARA FRIEDMAN YAKSIC: Sure. Good  
19 afternoon. I am Barbara Friedman, B-A-R-B-A-R-A  
20 F-R-I-E-D-M-A-N, and Yaksic is Y-A-K-S-I-C, and I'm so  
21 glad you went by the F and not the Y so I could be up  
22 here earlier.

23 Members of the Redistricting Commission,  
24 thank you for hearing my testimony today. I retired  
25 from the practice of law four years ago. Since then

1 I've been involved in much volunteer work, primarily  
2 focusing on voter access and voter rights. As an  
3 attorney, I took an oath to honor and support federal  
4 and state laws and constitutions and statutes, as did  
5 most of you, Governor DeWine, as former Attorney  
6 General; Speaker Cupp, former Supreme Court Justice;  
7 Senator Huffman and Auditor Faber as attorneys.

8 It is because of that oath and as an Ohio --  
9 concerned Ohio citizen I am testifying today. Each of  
10 you, when elected to office, took an oath, and this is  
11 a direct quote, and the cites are in my written  
12 testimony.

13 You each promised that you shall support the  
14 Constitution of the United States and the Constitution  
15 of this state. Similarly, when appointed to the  
16 Redistricting Commission, each of you, and again I  
17 quote, solemnly swore to support the Constitution of  
18 the United States and the Constitution of the state of  
19 Ohio, and to fully dis -- faithfully discharge the  
20 office -- duties of the office as a member of the Ohio  
21 Redistricting Commission on which I serve, pursuant to  
22 Article XI, Section 1 of the Ohio Constitution. This I  
23 shall do as I shall enter -- answer unto God.

24 Respectfully, except for Senator Sykes and  
25 Representative Sykes, each of you has violated these

1 oaths today.

2 (Applause)

3 BARBARA FRIEDMAN YAKSIC: Today I ask each of  
4 the Republican members of this Commission, have you  
5 upheld your oath? Have you honored your Constitutional  
6 obligation to create fair districts in state elections  
7 in Ohio for the next decade? Based on the hyper-  
8 partisan maps produced at the eleventh hours, it  
9 appears that you have acted in violation of the Ohio  
10 Constitution for the sole purpose of gaining partisan  
11 advantage, thereby perpetuating for another decade the  
12 corrupt and corrosive practice of partisan  
13 gerrymandering in this state.

14 As you are well aware, and has been testified  
15 to today, the Ohio Constitution was amended in 2015 and  
16 2018 to prevent partisan gerrymandering of voting  
17 districts. Ohio voters of all parties demanded this,  
18 as demonstrated by the overwhelming support, more than  
19 70 percent, of these issues.

20 While I am not a voting rights lawyer or  
21 expert, it is clear that, at a minimum, the following  
22 requirements of the Ohio Constitution have not been met  
23 by the proposed maps: Representative proportionality.  
24 The fact that the maps should not disfavor or favor one  
25 party or incumbents. And again I quote, "No plan shall

1 be drawn primarily to favor or disfavor a political  
2 party."

3           Given the supermajority in the proposed maps,  
4 that doesn't seem to have been met. And again  
5 compliance with federal law. And as was pointed out  
6 earlier, this map violates the Federal Voting Rights  
7 Act.

8           As testimony today and in prior hearings  
9 before this Commission repeatedly established,  
10 gerrymandered districts are corrosive to our democracy.  
11 It leads to irresponsible lawmakers who refuse to meet  
12 with or talk with their constituents or to hold town  
13 halls to find out their constituents' views. It leads,  
14 and indeed has led, to corruption of public officials.  
15 It leads to extremist views, bad policies, and policies  
16 not responsive to Ohio voters.

17           I urge each of you to honor the oaths you  
18 have given to the citizens of Ohio. Adopt a fair,  
19 proportionally representative map that complies with  
20 all Ohio and federal statutes. To do otherwise and  
21 adopt the current map will only invite litigation, and  
22 thus unnecessarily waste taxpayer dollars, which of  
23 course should be avoided.

24           Adoption of the current map is an  
25 unconscionable betrayal of all Ohioans, and I ask that

1 you honor the wishes of Ohioans. Thank you.

2 (Applause)

3 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Are there any questions?

4 STAFF MEMBER: Ralph Turek followed by  
5 Elizabeth Gerstenhauber.

6 RALPH TUREK: How many minutes do I actually  
7 have? I'm just curious.

8 STAFF MEMBER: Four.

9 RALPH TUREK: Four? Wow. Okay. My name is  
10 Ralph Turek. I'm a 41-year Strongsville resident, and  
11 I have serious concerns about the maps that you've  
12 proposed.

13 Drawing political maps that divide states  
14 into legislative districts favoring one political party  
15 over the other run counter to the core of the  
16 democratic principle that we are all entitled to equal  
17 representation. Gerrymandering is wrong, and it's in  
18 everybody's interest to stamp it out. However, the  
19 maps proposed by this Commission suggest that perhaps  
20 you are not prepared to do that.

21 More than one week after a Constitutional  
22 deadline, as we expected, at the latest possible  
23 moment, you're proposing maps that appear to adhere  
24 only marginally to the established criteria for  
25 redistricting and were drawn entirely, by the way, or

1 entirely without the input or support of the  
2 Commission's minority members, who by the way submitted  
3 a timely manner -- in a timely manner a map which you  
4 rejected on technicalities.

5 Now, according to the reporting that I've  
6 read, and bear in mind the unreasonable short time that  
7 you've given us to study and understand the proposed  
8 maps, these maps not only fail to meet several of the  
9 important criteria -- redistricting criteria  
10 established by federal law, but actually create more  
11 highly gerrymandered districts than we currently have,  
12 and this is not what we, your constituents, had in  
13 mind.

14 One criterion stipulates that the district's  
15 partisan makeup reflect the partisan makeup of the  
16 state as a whole. In other words, in Ohio over the  
17 past ten years, we've had state elections and have had  
18 53 percent vote Republican and 47 percent vote  
19 Democrat. Each alleged -- each legislative district  
20 would ideally comprise 53 percent Republicans and  
21 47 percent Democrats.

22 Now, I recognize that is an impossible thing  
23 to achieve. Still, a casual look at the proposed House  
24 map, for example, reveals very few districts that even  
25 remotely approach that ideal, with partisan splits in

1 the range of 80/20 perhaps the most common.

2 I understand that the currently proposed maps  
3 would likely award Republicans 67 of 99 House seats and  
4 23 of 33 Senate seats. So I ask, in a state where the  
5 popular support for the two parties is close to 50/50,  
6 how is it fair that we be represented by better than  
7 two Republicans for every one Democrat? How is that  
8 representative of our population and how is that  
9 democratic?

10 Another criterion that appears to have been  
11 overlooked involves racial makeup. Both the Ohio House  
12 and Senate maps appear to appropriately pack minorities  
13 into just two districts, House Districts 24 and 25.  
14 This is in the Cincinnati area. Inconceivably, members  
15 promoting the map have actually stated on record that  
16 they failed to examine the racial composition of their  
17 map. This not only disregards an essential criterion  
18 for map drawing, it disrespects the Ohio Constitution,  
19 the Federal Voting Rights Act, minority communities,  
20 and all Ohio voters.

21 In our own Northeast Ohio area, the odd  
22 sprawl and irregular borders of House Districts 13, 14,  
23 18, and 22 all appear to disregard the criterion  
24 requiring compactness and they raise questions about  
25 the motivation for the jagged boundaries. I wish that

1 these maps had been proposed at least a month ago, as  
2 they should have been, to allow more time for study and  
3 input.

4 And I suspect that the things I'm mentioning  
5 -- excuse me -- are mere scratches on the surface, that  
6 there are other inequities built into these maps.  
7 People are generally fair-minded, and all we asked of  
8 you was that you be fair. Instead we have to sit now  
9 and watch in dismay and disbelief as history prepares  
10 to repeat itself as this Commission proceeds to cement  
11 another four years' electoral advantages that resulted  
12 in total control of Ohio's government by the Republican  
13 party for the better part of the last three decades.

14 It's regrettable, it's shameful, it's an  
15 embarrassment, and it's a slap in the face to all  
16 Ohioans. Thank you.

17 (Applause)

18 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Are there any questions?  
19 Thank you very much.

20 STAFF MEMBER: Elizabeth Gerstenhauber  
21 followed by Chris Glassburn.

22 UNIDENTIFIED: I'll be Chris.

23 (Laughter)

24 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Mr. Co-Chair and members of  
25 the Commission, ladies and gentlemen, on September the

1 9th, the Commission submitted a map for consideration.  
2 And since then, the -- our staff, all of our staffs  
3 have been working together over the weekend, Friday,  
4 Saturday, Sunday, and some of today. And out of those  
5 deliberations, Leader Sykes and I are presenting an  
6 amendment to the Commission's map.

7 This is to amend -- starting with the  
8 Commission's map, to amend it, to encompass some of the  
9 considerations and discussions that have been taking  
10 place. This is done also for transparency's sake.  
11 Instead of waiting until the end and producing a map,  
12 we've produced a map already, one that we thought would  
13 be considered.

14 But also we want to submit a map now to let  
15 you know what was being considered at this particular  
16 time and the position that we're taking at this  
17 particular time. And Chris Glassberg is going to  
18 present the map, the amendment offered by Leader Sykes  
19 and myself.

20 CHRISS GLASSBURN: Okay. Thank you, Co-Chair  
21 Sykes and Co-Chair Cupp and members of the Ohio  
22 Redistricting Commission, for the opportunity to speak  
23 to you about changes that Co-Chair Sykes just  
24 referenced.

25 My name is Chris Glassburn. I own a company

1 called Project Govern and I serve as the consultant and  
2 map drawer for the Ohio Senate Democratic Caucus. What  
3 we're showing you today is a proposed amendment to the  
4 Commission plan. The numbering scheme is not designed  
5 for the process outlined in the constitution. It is  
6 designed to be an amendment to demonstrate new lines.

7 The amendment first used the commission map  
8 as its base. If changes were not made, then the map  
9 remains as the commission map outlined. We used the  
10 same approach as the commission map. I'll move to  
11 Northeast Ohio here, side-by-side. These are Ohio  
12 House districts. We use the same approach as  
13 commission map did to address the drawing of House and  
14 Senate districts in Northeast Ohio. That is to say we  
15 resolved the pairing issue of two House districts in  
16 Trumbull county. Those two districts now will be in  
17 the same Senate district as the commission proposed;  
18 however, in doing so we now have been able to restore  
19 the city of Solon to be wholly in one district, unlike  
20 the commission map, which had split it.

21 I go in more detail into each of these  
22 regions as I go along, but I want to emphasize the  
23 overall changes first. Throughout the map, we have  
24 enhanced constitutional compliance by reducing splits  
25 of cities, counties, and a township throughout the

1 state. Specifically on the township, we eliminated the  
2 commission single split of a township in Stark County.  
3 So there are now no townships splits in the entire  
4 state.

5 We increased the number of competitive seats  
6 and our map is now closer to the proportionality  
7 required by Article 11, Section 6 of the Ohio  
8 Constitution and is closer now than the commission map  
9 to that ratio. This amendment should be interpreted as  
10 further evidence that Leader Sykes, Co-chair Sykes, and  
11 our respective Democratic caucuses are serious about  
12 enacting a ten-year tenure map. The map initially  
13 presented by the Senate Democrats two weeks ago was  
14 rated as having 44 likely Democratic House seats and 14  
15 Democratic Senate seats. Our map today would result in  
16 42 likely Democratic House seats and 13 Democratic  
17 Senate.

18 As with our first proposal, the districts  
19 were drawn in compliance with the Voting Rights Act to  
20 ensure minority communities can select their candidate  
21 of choice. We would also like to make one note about  
22 the feedback we've received from outside individuals  
23 and groups to the commission. We have taken those maps  
24 very seriously in our caucuses. We have listened very  
25 carefully to what you have said. Specifically want to

1 underline a difference.

2 Many of the maps that have been presented to  
3 the commission had been dependent upon Dave's  
4 redistricting app. I myself had been a user of the  
5 platform for over a decade, a contributor, and very  
6 fond of it. It's an incredibly useful tool. However,  
7 the platform is not specifically designed for  
8 compliance with the Ohio Constitution. Fr example, One  
9 of the maps that won the fair districts competition  
10 scores very well in competitiveness; however, it also  
11 has over 50 splits of cities throughout the state.

12 Dave's redistricting app was not intended to  
13 ensure compliance with the Ohio Constitution. It is a  
14 tool for the public to draw maps and to submit maps. I  
15 will now proceed through the rest of the state.

16 So as you can see on the two projectors, the  
17 Northeast Ohio region and our Ohio House maps, these  
18 maps are colored by the partisanship; results in 19  
19 Democratic House seats in Northeast Ohio versus the  
20 commission's initial proposal of 14. Additionally, the  
21 commission had proposed splitting the City of Cleveland  
22 seven times with no House districts in the city  
23 entirely. The map that is before you today reduces  
24 that number from seven to five and there are two House  
25 districts entirely within the City of Cleveland.

1 City of Akron has been reduced from three --  
2 being in three House districts to two, with one wholly  
3 in the city of Akron.

4 As I alluded to earlier, in Stark County, the  
5 township split has been removed. And in -- throughout  
6 Northeast Ohio, again, we have increased the  
7 proportionality.

8 This is a little bit of a closer-up view of  
9 Cuyahoga County. In Lorraine County in specific, we  
10 have two Democratic index seats. This slide says one  
11 and the commission proposed one. This is another key,  
12 but a minor difference between the Ohio data and Dave's  
13 redistricting app. Dave's takes the elections from  
14 2020, 2016, and some of the elections from 2018. There  
15 are three races, down-ticket races, that were missing  
16 from that data set. In this case, that difference is  
17 the difference between the second Lorain County seat  
18 being determined to be Democratic versus Republican.  
19 It's a very competitive seat.

20 In Summit and Portage County you can see that  
21 we have unpacked Democrats as well as we did in  
22 Cuyahoga County and there is now a Democratic-leaning  
23 seat in Portage County for a difference of two on the  
24 proportionality.

25 Again, Stark County the difference is

1 primarily the township split elimination.

2 In Trumbull and Mahoning County there are now  
3 two seats as opposed to one, and they are more compact.

4 In Franklin County, neighbors --  
5 neighborhoods are better held together. We heard  
6 extensively about communities such as Clintonville,  
7 communities between 315 and I-71 and various other  
8 areas of Columbus. The new map changes the paring  
9 county from Union to Pickaway and now provides for a  
10 more, again, consolidated neighborhood-based map, as  
11 well as in generally a more compact map.

12 In Hamilton County the proposal creates five  
13 Democratic House seats versus four from the commission.  
14 But as important, the City of Cincinnati had been split  
15 additional times in the commission map. This map  
16 provides for two seats entirely within the City of  
17 Cincinnati and only one district being paired with  
18 suburbs, as opposed to multiple.

19 In Montgomery County you'll see, one of the  
20 more stark differences. In the center of Montgomery  
21 County, the commission map had centered most Democrats  
22 for the entire county. This proposal proposes they had  
23 two very competitive districts, one that is -- I'm  
24 sorry, there's a seat entirely in Dayton, a second  
25 seat, which has only the remnants of Dayton, and a

1 third seat that has the inner ring suburbs of Dayton.  
2 The latter two seats are very competitive. This also  
3 results in a Democratic Senate seat in the Dayton area.

4 Lastly, in Lucas County, there are few  
5 changes; however, as was actually just referenced by  
6 someone talking about Wood County, the Wood County  
7 district in the commission map had portions of three  
8 counties ; that has been reduced to two. Overall,  
9 again, counties and city splits have been reduced  
10 throughout the state.

11 In the proposal we're offering here, the City  
12 of Toledo now has two districts entirely inside of it  
13 instead of just one. And so those are some of the  
14 highlights of the House version of the proposal. I can  
15 continue into the Senate, but I want to stop and allow  
16 for questions, if Co-chair Sykes sees fit.

17 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Are there any questions at  
18 this time? Please continue.

19 CHRIS GLASSBURN: Okay. Move down from the  
20 staple.

21 As I say, there was very little changes in  
22 Northwest Ohio for the House districts, except for the  
23 elimination of a handful of splits. This has resulted  
24 in a different configuration of counties in Northwest  
25 Ohio; however, they are now whole counties, as opposed

1 to some fragments in different areas.

2 I do want to stress throughout the state  
3 there are actually a number of districts, both House  
4 and Senate are identical. Huron County paired with  
5 Lorain County, for example, is one of those. That's  
6 the pink district on the far right-hand side of each  
7 map.

8 Within Northeast Ohio, again, we emphasize  
9 compactness, preserving communities, and reducing  
10 splits in the major cities, as well as the  
11 proportionality. This proposal would result in five  
12 Democratic-leaning Senate seats in Cuyahoga and Summit  
13 Counties, as well as a small portion of Geauga. That  
14 foot into Geauga is the same concept as the commission  
15 map. And we preserve the two competitive seats  
16 identically in Lorain/Huron, as well as  
17 Portage/Trumbull.

18 In central Ohio the proportionality is  
19 enhanced by one seat towards the Democratic side with  
20 the county adjoining Franklin now being Pickaway  
21 instead of the Northwest Union County. Additionally,  
22 with the districts being combined by neighborhood, we  
23 have, in general, much more compact districts with  
24 easier-to-interpret lines, boundaries, such again as  
25 upper Arlington, Morse Road, the interstates that are

1 easier for residents there to determine.

2 And finally, in Southwest Ohio, again, it was  
3 a priority for us to reduce splits of cities and to  
4 keep communities whole. There is now a Dayton base  
5 seat entirely inside of Montgomery County, as opposed  
6 to being shared with the surrounding exterior counties.  
7 And in Hamilton County, the most notable difference is  
8 the addition of a seat that is, I believe, 50.1 percent  
9 Democratic, so the most competitive seat in the state.

10 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Are there any questions?

11 (Commission confer)

12 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Okay. There's a question.

13 (Indiscernible)

14 CO-CHAIR SYKES: The availability of the  
15 maps?

16 CHRIS GLASSBURN: Are the maps available  
17 today is the question to the Co-chairs. Yes, they are  
18 available. They are live currently on Dave's  
19 redistricting app, one name "Sykes/Sykes September 13th  
20 House" and the other named "Sykes/Sykes September 13th,  
21 Senate." And I believe our public outreach team will  
22 be sharing those links very shortly as well, but you  
23 can search for them now.

24 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Leader Sykes?

25 LEADER SYKES: Thank you. Thank you to the

1 co-chairs. Thank you to the co-chairs.

2 Thank you, Mr. Glassburn, for the  
3 presentation. One note was also just shared with me.  
4 These maps are also on the redistricting.ohio.gov  
5 website, in case anyone wants to look at them.

6 For the members of the commission, I would  
7 like to reiterate my commitment to figuring out how we  
8 get to a ten-year map. While we know that we have two  
9 days to figure it out, sometimes that feels like a  
10 lifetime and sometimes it feels like just a blip of a  
11 second. It is important for both the Senate and House  
12 Democratic caucuses to put forth what we deem as  
13 something we can continue to negotiate on. And that is  
14 why you all are seeing these maps and we hope that they  
15 can be taken seriously. And as we go through the next  
16 two days, I do encourage the members of the public, as  
17 you see fit, to communicate with us where you would  
18 like to see edits because, again, these are ultimately  
19 your maps as well.

20 I do believe, and I'm going to continue to  
21 hold out hope, I do continue to keep mustard seeds of  
22 faith with me, no matter where I go, that we can get to  
23 a ten-year map. And in doing this and providing this  
24 demonstrative activity, let's not only -- the members  
25 of this commission but the individuals throughout this

1 state who have told us not once, but twice, in hundreds  
2 of testimony and hours of testimony to continue to be  
3 transparent and share how we can update this process.  
4 So this is that for our caucuses.

5 So again, as we continue through the next two  
6 days, please share that feedback, members of this  
7 commission. We would be -- well, I can just speak for  
8 myself, would be open to all comments and criticism, as  
9 long as they are constructively getting us towards a  
10 ten-year map that we can pass before the end of this  
11 week or by Wednesday, specifically.

12 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

13 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Any additional comments or  
14 questions?

15 Thank you very much.

16 UNIDENTIFIED: We need to get a flag.

17 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Auditor Faber?

18 AUDITOR FABER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and  
19 thank you for your testimony. And I appreciate -- I  
20 just want to appreciate working with Vern and -- I'm  
21 sorry the chair and leader by showing us these earlier  
22 today and walking through some concerns. And one of  
23 the things that you mentioned, I think I just need to  
24 emphasize, because I was one of the people who was out  
25 there on Dave's redistricting, trying to figure out why

1 looking at the Weiss map and looking a bunch of the  
2 other maps. And it's your position that those maps  
3 would essentially be unconstitutional if we were  
4 adoptive them or work for them as the framework. Is  
5 that what I heard you say?

6 MR. GLASSBURN: So Mr. Auditor and the two  
7 co-chairs, I'm not an attorney. It's not my  
8 qualification to do that, but I have, on my screen  
9 here, the Weiss map and I'll just show you an example  
10 from Cuyahoga County, where I live and am more familiar  
11 with. So please forgive the slow internet connection.  
12 Okay.

13 So Dave's redistricting utilizes the data  
14 from the census, as well as data aggregated by  
15 volunteers for 2016 and 2018. And that is, again, a  
16 very close and useful number. However, the layer that  
17 I have turned on is labeled as "city lines." It is  
18 the, in terms of the census language, the minor civil  
19 division. In Cuyahoga County that is cities, but many  
20 other parts of the state, it does not perfectly  
21 coincide, but Cuyahoga County is a good example.

22 So for example, again, we are currently in  
23 the City of Warrensville Heights. In this map, the  
24 City of Cleveland Heights, just north of us, is divided  
25 twice. The City of South Euclid is divided. The City

1 of North Royalton is divided. The City of Strongsville  
2 is divided. The City of North Olmsted is divided. The  
3 Township of Olmsted Township is divided. And this is a  
4 consistent thing throughout the state in this proposal.

5 So just on its face, it is hard to see how  
6 this would be viewed as constitutional, Mr. Auditor.

7 AUDITOR FABER: Mr. Chairman, I appreciated,  
8 frankly, your staff pointing that out to me today in  
9 our discussions because I was laboring using, frankly,  
10 the Weiss map and other maps to try and look what we're  
11 trying compromise. So I appreciate you guys coming  
12 forward with these proposals and we'll be happy to  
13 study them and go through and look forward to working  
14 with you to see if we can't figure out how to make them  
15 work.

16 CO-CHAIR SYKES: There is a question?

17 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes, I have a question. So  
18 some of the criteria are actually (indiscernible). So  
19 don't -- can't you -- did your maps -- did you evaluate  
20 your maps on all of this criteria to see where they may  
21 be better on some of the criteria but worse on the  
22 other criteria?

23 MR. GLASSBURN: S Mr. Co-chairs, if I can  
24 restate the question for the whole audience to hear,  
25 the question was competitiveness and the

1 proportionality, as well as preservation of communities  
2 of interests are -- and compactness are criteria  
3 throughout, how did we, in our map, evaluate those  
4 weighed different conflicts?

5           The constitution is -- again, I'm not a legal  
6 scholar or an attorney, but the constitution is fairly  
7 straightforward, albeit it's complex. It outlines that  
8 House districts are drawn first through Section 3, and  
9 then Senate districts are drawn through Section 4, and  
10 then you look to compliance with Section 6, which  
11 includes the proportionality and the compactness.

12           It is entirely possible in the map that we  
13 have presented today here on behalf of both the House  
14 and Senate Democratic caucuses, does that. It complies  
15 with Section 3 and Section 4 to the greatest extent  
16 possible. In Section 6, once you have reached that  
17 threshold of what is -- what are the most communities  
18 you can preserve, once you're near that threshold, then  
19 you look at the continuum of what is the  
20 proportionality I can achieve. What is the compactness  
21 I can achieve and still maintain the compliance with 3  
22 and 4.

23           Our proposal, we believe, comes very close to  
24 meeting those goals as well as maintaining the  
25 compliance with 3 and 4. These don't have to be

1 entirely mutually exclusive goals.

2           So, for example, the proportionality called  
3 for in the Constitution would be 45 House Democratic  
4 seats. Our proposal is 42, which is partially in the  
5 spirit of compromise but partially because it is the  
6 maximum compliance with Section 3 at the same time. I  
7 hope that answers your question.

8           REPRESENTATIVE SYKES: So I just want to  
9 clarify, so there's an order and that can be  
10 (indiscernible) the lower the number in the  
11 Constitution, those are more important criteria than  
12 the higher ones. Is that basically what you said?

13           MR. GLASSBURN: To the Co-Chairs, again, I  
14 want to emphasize, I don't represent as a legal  
15 scholar. The plain reading language of Section 6 is  
16 that you have -- in order to comply with it, you must  
17 not abridge any of the other sections, 2, 3, 4, 5, and  
18 7, while you're complying with 6. That does not mean,  
19 ignore 6. That does not mean do not attempt 6. It  
20 says shall attempt, but you must comply with the other  
21 sections at the same time. And that is what we  
22 endeavored to do and we believe we have done so.

23           CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you very much for your  
24 testimony. We appreciate it.

25           MR. GLASSBURN: Thank you. Thank you.

1 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Questions? Yes, Senator  
2 President Huffman.

3 PRESIDENT HUFFMAN: Thank you, Co-Chair. Is  
4 -- did you consider competitiveness when preparing this  
5 amendment and this map?

6 MR. GLASSBURN: To the Co-Chairs, and to the  
7 Senate President, competitiveness is not an explicit  
8 criteria in the Ohio Constitution. With that said,  
9 it's clearly an item that was considered in the spirit  
10 of the reform that was passed. To the extent that  
11 competitiveness could coincide -- and again, the other  
12 1 through 7 were complied with. Yes, it was something  
13 that we looked at, but no, it was not superior to any  
14 of the other explicitly named criteria in the  
15 Constitution.

16 PRESIDENT HUFFMAN: Thank you. Can I have a  
17 follow up, Mr. Co-Chair?

18 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Yes.

19 PRESIDENT HUFFMAN: Thank you.

20 Is the concept of drawing, as you did, to  
21 ensure, I guess, and maybe ensures not the right word,  
22 but to draw 57 Republican districts and 42 Democratic  
23 districts? I mean, I guess the result of that is that  
24 -- I mean, the intent or likely result of that is what  
25 you've drawn, to have a 57/42 Republican majority in

1 the House. And how does that square with the concept  
2 of competitiveness since if you have a Democrat  
3 district, a Democrat's going -- whoever wins the  
4 primary is going to win, and vice-versa, regarding the  
5 Republican districts?

6 MR. GLASSBURN: So again, to the Co-Chairs  
7 and the Senate President, the map that we have proposed  
8 has -- again, the index of the nine races that are  
9 provided in the Ohio dataset is slightly different from  
10 that within the Dave's Redistricting app. But within  
11 the Ohio dataset averaging those nine races, we have 20  
12 seats in the House that are between 55 and 45 for the  
13 respective parties in a two-way analysis. The  
14 Commission map has 18. So to that extent, yes, we were  
15 looking to, if again all other provisions were  
16 addressed, look at competitiveness.

17 PRESIDENT HUFFMAN: I'm sorry, one more  
18 follow up, Mr. Co-Chair?

19 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Yes.

20 PRESIDENT HUFFMAN: And I appreciate it.  
21 This is fantastic work that you've done and your  
22 explanations are helpful. So if I have it -- I'm going  
23 to try to restate it and you tell me if I get this  
24 incorrectly. So 20 of -- in the House, 20 of the 99  
25 districts are between -- have an index between -- for

1 the Democrat -- well, for both, for all 99 seats.

2 MR. GLASSBURN: Yes.

3 PRESIDENT HUFFMAN: Between 45 and 55.

4 MR. GLASSBURN: Yes.

5 PRESIDENT HUFFMAN: And which would mean 79  
6 districts are on either side of that, and probably  
7 likely difficult for one -- a Democrat to win in a 56  
8 or above Republican district and vice-versa. Is that  
9 right?

10 MR. GLASSBURN: Yes.

11 PRESIDENT HUFFMAN: So we'll have about 20  
12 competitive districts, and under this proposal, about  
13 79 non-competitive districts. Is that fair?

14 MR. GLASSBURN: I believe so.

15 PRESIDENT HUFFMAN: Okay. That's all the  
16 questions I have, Mr. Co-Chair.

17 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Auditor Faber?

18 AUDITOR FABER: Thank you. Just as a follow  
19 up to that, and I think it's important, and I can't  
20 tell you how much I appreciate you being here. And  
21 again, you educated me earlier and you're continuing  
22 it.

23 On this process, one of the reasons that you  
24 end up with only 20 competitive districts, and that's  
25 with a fairly broad definition of competitive,

1 10 points, is because Ohioans tend to live in clusters.  
2 They tend to live around people who think like them and  
3 vote like them generally, so it makes it more difficult  
4 if you're going to draw compact districts and not draw  
5 what we used to call spider webs, to pick people up, to  
6 unpack those districts. Is that essentially what you  
7 explained or what has been explained to me as to why  
8 those -- so many districts seem to be non-competitive?

9 MR. GLASSBURN: So through the Co-Chairs to  
10 the State Auditor, the reality of the political  
11 geography of Ohio is that, yes, either party can win a  
12 majority, reasonably expect to win a majority in a  
13 House or Senate map that is drawn that follows all of  
14 the rules of the Ohio Constitution.

15 But there is also the reality that if you  
16 follow those rules, you will draw in the Ohio House a  
17 very high number of Republican-safe seats, and you do  
18 not have a choice but to do that. If you follow that  
19 to its logical conclusion to go very far in terms of  
20 just maximizing competitiveness, you will  
21 disproportionately go in one direction, which is  
22 towards the Democratic seats. So there is a limit to  
23 where within reason, if you were trying for  
24 proportionality, that when you start making more  
25 competitive seats beyond a certain point, you start

1 actually undermining the entire map. I hope that  
2 answered your question.

3 AUDITOR FABER: I think it did, but I just  
4 want to make sure I'm clear. That's in large part  
5 because certainly in areas of the state, it is very  
6 difficult to draw a competitive district because the  
7 people who generally live in that area -- let me give  
8 you an example that's not too far from here.

9 If I pick the city of Cleveland, it's going  
10 to be tough. I mean, I looked at some of your numbers  
11 and I looked at some of your districts. You've got a  
12 couple of districts that are drawn with over 80 percent  
13 Democrat voters. I assume that's not because you're  
14 gerrymandering. My guess is that you'd like to unpack  
15 that. You're the Democrat map drawer, so you'd like to  
16 unpack that. But there are other reasons why you put  
17 that concentration, and maybe one of them is really  
18 there was nowhere else to go because they're  
19 concentrated in a limited area.

20 MR. GLASSBURN: So through the Chairs, to the  
21 Auditor, if there were no rules, could there be in  
22 excess of 55 Democratic House seats? Yes. Did we  
23 attempt to do that? No. Because that would not  
24 remotely follow the preservation of communities and  
25 city boundaries, township boundaries, et cetera.

1           Could you do more than 42? Yes. We  
2 demonstrated that with our first map. This map that we  
3 are offering today again is in the spirit of  
4 demonstrating compliance with 3 and 4 in the  
5 Constitution very literally, as well as to try to give  
6 proportionality and to demonstrate a good-faith effort  
7 to be -- to present a ten-year map for this Board to  
8 consider. Thank you.

9           CO-CHAIR SYKES: Secretary LaRose?

10           SECRETARY LAROSE: Thank you, Co-Chai. And  
11 Mr. Glassburn, I want to echo what my colleague,  
12 Auditor Faber, has said. I appreciate the chance to  
13 learn from you and from your expertise, because I think  
14 one of the things that your testimony has made clear to  
15 everyone is truly how complex this process is, right?  
16 And I really appreciate that you all have made what I  
17 consider a good-faith proposal here, one that leaves  
18 some room to do some work together.

19           I sincerely appreciate the passion that we've  
20 heard in testimony all over the State and that we've  
21 heard today, and I share that passion. That passion  
22 comes from a place of genuinely caring about trying to  
23 make this process work better, and I've got to say, I  
24 was a redistricting reform warrior from the very  
25 beginning, when I started in the state Senate in 2011,

1 telling people about Elbridge Gerry from 1812 and all  
2 of this.

3 And we worked together, many of us, to get  
4 this proposal in front of the voters that they  
5 overwhelmingly supported, so I share that passion. But  
6 what I don't share is some of the pessimism that we've  
7 heard because what I've seen is that our teams are  
8 working collegially and trying to work in good faith,  
9 and so I just wanted to say I appreciate that. All  
10 right.

11 (Crosstalk from audience)

12 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Please. Please. Please.  
13 We have to respect each other, please.

14 Are there any additional questions?

15 Seeing none, thank you very much for your  
16 presentation.

17 MR. GLASSBURN: Thank you very much.

18 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you.

19 Yes?

20 UNIDENTIFIED: These maps, when you put these  
21 together, you didn't know (indiscernible) and because I  
22 don't -- you know, these old maps (indiscernible) and  
23 is that a factor in (indiscernible) certain areas?

24 MR. GLASSBURN: So to the Co-Chairs --

25 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Let me state this to -- this

1 will be the last one we can -- we have to move on.  
2 We've got, you know, a few hours left. Would you  
3 please answer this one and this would be the last one,  
4 okay?

5 MR. GLASSBURN: Absolutely. And again thank  
6 you to the Co-Chairs and the Commission for the  
7 opportunity to speak.

8 As I stated in my testimony, yes, the Voting  
9 Rights Act, as well as proportionality that has called  
10 for a proportionality in Section 6, and the adherence  
11 to federal law elsewhere in the Ohio Constitution, the  
12 Voting Rights Act is federal law, and so, yes, that was  
13 a factor.

14 Our consideration though was in again the  
15 preservation of minority voters having the opportunity  
16 to choose their candidate of choice. If you look at  
17 the statistics and look at these communities, I think  
18 those communities would in fact be pleased with this  
19 map. I believe our House and Senate caucuses value  
20 very much the minority communities that are served in  
21 those districts, as well as I believe the other party  
22 seeks to do so as well.

23 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you very much.

24 MR. GLASSBURN: Thank you.

25 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you. Appreciate it.

1 STAFF MEMBER: The next witness --

2 UNIDENTIFIED: What about amendments? Vote  
3 on amendments.

4 STAFF MEMBER: The next witness is Brian  
5 Glassman followed by Mark Griffiths.

6 CO-CHAIR CUPP: Well, while we're waiting for  
7 the disconnecting of the computer, if you would go  
8 ahead and state and spell your name for the record,  
9 please.

10 BRIAN GLASSMAN: Representative Cupp, Senator  
11 Sykes, as Co-Chairs, and to all members of the  
12 Commission, my name is Brian Glassman, G-L-A-S-S-M-A-N.  
13 I'm a professor emeritus at the Cleveland Marshall  
14 College of Law.

15 I'm here today to comment on the proposed  
16 General Assembly district plan, not as a Republican or  
17 as a Democratic, but as an advocate for voter  
18 participation. Such participation is essential to the  
19 health of our representative democracy.

20 Simply put, gerrymandering stifles  
21 participation. Many will conclude that there is no  
22 point in participating since their voice is not being  
23 heard. In our representative democracy, our voice is  
24 our vote. Again, many will conclude that there is no  
25 point in voting if their votes don't count. That is

1 effectively the case where voting districts are  
2 gerrymandered.

3           When I testified on August 23rd, and even  
4 when I provided supplemental testimony on August 27th,  
5 there was no map to analyze or discuss. Finally, on  
6 September 9th, the Senate President proposed a General  
7 Assembly district plan.

8           I was disheartened to see that, compared to  
9 the current maps, the proposed maps offered little or  
10 no improvements on the key criteria of proportionality  
11 and competitiveness, and even worse scores than before  
12 on the criterion of minority representation based on  
13 scoring by Dave's Redistricting app.

14           The non-partisan Princeton Gerrymandering  
15 Project reached similar conclusions, including an  
16 overall grade of "F" of advantage to the Republicans,  
17 and also a grade of "F" on the criterion of partisan  
18 fairness for the proposed Ohio State House Map.

19           However, I'm encouraged that others have  
20 proposed maps that produced significant improvements on  
21 the keys -- key criteria previously mentioned, while  
22 still satisfying other requirements such as contiguity,  
23 compliance with state and federal law, and equal  
24 population.

25           My comments focus on proportionality and

1 competitiveness because those are tools available to  
2 improve representational fairness by fixing  
3 gerrymandering, and are either explicitly or implicitly  
4 made part of this Commission's toolkit in Ohio  
5 Constitution, Article XI, Section 6, with a map that  
6 better reflects partisan voting patterns in our state,  
7 roughly 54 percent Republican and 46 percent  
8 Democratic, participation is more likely to rise.

9           Similarly, with a map that contains more  
10 competitive districts, participation is again more  
11 likely to rise as voters see political races in which  
12 their votes will count. That will produce better  
13 candidates and better ideas, critical elements of a  
14 robust representative democracy.

15           One duty of legislators is to be responsive  
16 to the will of the people. When well over 2 million  
17 Ohioans voted for the 2015 ballot initiative, over  
18 71 percent of all votes cast, we sent you the strongest  
19 possible message that the current system was broken and  
20 that a transparent bipartisan process -- through a  
21 transparent bipartisan process, we wanted you to create  
22 maps for the state House and Senate that better reflect  
23 who we are.

24           Adoption of maps by purely partisan vote was  
25 not what Ohioans wanted and was a procedure only to be

1 used as a last resort in the interest of voter  
2 participation so essential to our representative  
3 democracy at its best. I urge you to reject a partisan  
4 result and instead agree on one that is responsive to  
5 the will of over 71 percent of Ohio's voters.

6 Thank you for the opportunity to address the  
7 Commission today.

8 CO-CHAIR RUPP: Thank you, Professor  
9 Glassman. Are there any questions for the witness?  
10 Seeing none, thank you.

11 Next witness?

12 STAFF MEMBER: Mark Griffiths, followed by  
13 Jennifer Hada (phonetic).

14 MARK GRIFFITHS: Good afternoon. My name is  
15 Mark Griffith. That's spelled G-R-I-F-F-I-T-H-S. I  
16 live in House District 57 and Senate District 13. And  
17 I thank the members of the Commission for the  
18 opportunity to submit testimony at this hearing.

19 I'd like to amend briefly my testimony that I  
20 prepared in reaction to the information that we just  
21 received. First of all, it's difficult to -- for me to  
22 evaluate the maps because, as was pointed out last  
23 Thursday, when you presented maps, there was no city  
24 information listed.

25 I didn't realize, apparently, if you go to

1 davesredistricting.org, you can put -- get city  
2 information to show up, but I didn't realize that that  
3 was the place that we should look for that. I've been  
4 looking at the Commission's website. So I'll have to  
5 work on evaluating that.

6 I also have to say that, while I appreciate  
7 the presentation today, and I appreciate Leader Sykes,  
8 your expression of hopefulness or optimism that you  
9 expressed, I'm stuck with some of the things you said  
10 last Thursday when the Republicans presented their map,  
11 and that is have we kind of seen this before, where a  
12 really egregious map is presented and then compromises  
13 are made, and then it's not quite so bad, but in  
14 reality it's still a pretty bad map. So I have that  
15 skepticism still.

16 (Applause)

17 MARK GRIFFITHS: I must state that I think  
18 you failed the voters of the state of Ohio with this  
19 Republican-backed map that's been proposed by the  
20 Commission. The map is more gerrymandered than the  
21 current map. The sponsors of the map admitted that  
22 they did not consider either proportional  
23 representation or the Voting Rights Act when  
24 constructing this map. Such considerations are  
25 required by the Constitution. Why would this

1 commission adopt, albeit as a starting point, a map  
2 that fails to comply with the Constitution?

3 A volunteer group of Ohioans formed the Ohio  
4 Citizens Redistricting Commission. They created  
5 proposed maps along with a report detailing the  
6 methodology prior to September 1st. None of the  
7 members of this citizens commission are state office  
8 holders. What they have done is produced fair maps  
9 that comply with the legal requirements through an open  
10 and transparent process.

11 This group has no vested interest in  
12 maintaining the status quo, and therefore have produced  
13 maps that comply with the Constitutional requirements.  
14 The OCRC has shown that the goal of proportional  
15 representation is not aspirational but attainable.

16 This Commission should immediately adopt the  
17 maps proposed by the Ohio Citizens Redistricting  
18 Commission. They're certainly more in compliance with  
19 the Constitution's requirements and would provide a  
20 more balanced starting point than the maps being  
21 proposed by the Republican majority of this Commission.

22 My wife and I collected hundreds of  
23 signatures on the Fair Districts Fair Election petition  
24 effort a couple of years ago. This effort allowed us  
25 to speak to hundreds of voters on this topic. Voters

1 told us over and over again that voters need to pick  
2 their representatives and not the other way around.

3 As citizens of this state, we demand better.  
4 Supreme Court Justice Kagan said, and I quote, "If  
5 there is a single idea that made our nation, it's this  
6 one. The people are sovereign. The people get to  
7 choose their representatives, and then they get to  
8 decide whether to keep them. Election Day is what  
9 links the people to the representatives and gives the  
10 people their sovereign power. That day is the  
11 foundation of democratic governance, and partisan  
12 gerrymandering can make it meaningless."

13 Thank you.

14 CO-CHAIR RUPP: Thank you for being here to  
15 testify.

16 (Applause)

17 CO-CHAIR RUPP: Any questions for the  
18 witness? Hearing none, the next witness name is  
19 Jennifer, Jennifer Hada?

20 STAFF MEMBER: The next witness is Mark  
21 Hennessey followed by Robert Howard.

22 CO-CHAIR RUPP: Please come and state and  
23 spell your name for the record, please.

24 ROBERT HOWARD: Thank you. My name is Robert  
25 Howard, H-O-W-A-R-D, and I appreciate the opportunity

1 to contribute to this effort, and I was very interested  
2 in that lesson in mapmaking. It is a -- it's good to  
3 see. It's good to be part of this.

4 I live and vote in the 75th House and 18th  
5 Senate District in Franklin Township near Kent. I  
6 would like to comment on the issue of redistricting,  
7 specifically to oppose the first draft maps recently  
8 released by the Commission and to call for maps that do  
9 a much better job of representing the voters of Ohio.

10 I've spoken with several of my friends and  
11 neighbors about both the process and the need to  
12 respect Ohio's voters. The newly issued maps are  
13 designed to promote the interest of the existing  
14 legislators and their sponsors rather than to allow  
15 Ohio's voters to have their votes count with equal  
16 weight; that is, one person, one vote.

17 Specifically, the House and Senate districts  
18 should respect Ohio's Constitutionally required  
19 characteristics as previously defined. And I won't go  
20 into the rest of that. The maps as proposed by the  
21 Republican members of the Commission do not represent  
22 Ohio's voters fairly or reasonably, nor are they likely  
23 to produce representative legislative bodies to help  
24 shape both the government and the economy of Ohio to  
25 benefit all of us.

1           Instead, these maps are designed to shape the  
2 environment to favor some voters and ignore others. I  
3 believe these proposed maps embody gerrymandering.  
4 This effectively means that the legislators will  
5 continue to choose their voters rather than be chosen  
6 by the voters, all the voters, not just those they  
7 expect to support them.

8           As you might deduce from these remarks, I  
9 don't think Ohio citizens are well served by a system  
10 based on distorting districts in order to distort  
11 outcomes. I believe in fair elections, even -- or  
12 especially those that result in the election of a group  
13 of legislators who fairly represent the values and  
14 interests of the whole of Ohio, not just select  
15 interest groups.

16           The future of Ohio is in the balance, and  
17 these are difficult, demanding, and trying times. We  
18 will all benefit from a legislative process that draws  
19 from the entire population, where representatives of a  
20 great variety of interests, knowledge bases, and  
21 potential solutions can be fairly debated, and where  
22 legislators are incentivized to fashion workable  
23 compromises rather than narrowly defined benefits  
24 targeted to meet the specific interests of individual  
25 companies, groups, or individuals.

1 Ohio's legislative districts at all levels  
2 should strive for balanced and competitive districts,  
3 which can foster contests, which will improve the  
4 chances for innovation, growth, and adaptation that  
5 will yield better ideas, better laws, and better  
6 outcomes for all of Ohio. I ask you to reconsider and  
7 to produce maps that have a chance to lead to such  
8 systematic improvements that will benefit all Ohioans.

9 Thank you.

10 CO-CHAIR RUPP: Thank you for testifying.  
11 Are there questions for the witness?

12 (Applause)

13 CO-CHAIR RUPP: Seeing no questions, thank  
14 you.

15 ROBERT HOWARD: You're welcome.

16 CO-CHAIR RUPP: Next.

17 STAFF MEMBER: The next witness is Tommy  
18 Jackson followed by Randall James.

19 TOM JACKSON: Thank you.

20 CO-CHAIR RUPP: Please state your name and  
21 spell it for the record, please.

22 TOM JACKSON: Sure. Good afternoon. I  
23 haven't been called Tommy since my cousins called me  
24 that when I was about seven years old. My name is Tom  
25 Jackson, J-A-C-K-S-O-N, and I am from Solon, Ohio.

1 CO-CHAIR RUPP: Thank you.

2 TOM JACKSON: And Ohioans overwhelmingly  
3 voted to fix our broken system of mapmaking. Ohioans  
4 are tired of the status quo of rigged partisan maps  
5 that protect supermajorities and interfere with good  
6 governance.

7 Ohioans overwhelmingly voted for fair maps.  
8 And as has been demonstrated here, I recognize the  
9 complexity of creating truly representative maps, but  
10 it doesn't appear you even tried. There's no fairness  
11 and no progress in your map. I'm outraged that you put  
12 forward maps that are worse and not better than the  
13 current ones.

14 (Applause)

15 TOM JACKSON: This so-called working document  
16 needs significant improvement to clear the lowest  
17 threshold of being constitutional and consistent with  
18 what Ohioans voted for. In evaluating the map, I  
19 considered three factors that I believe are essential  
20 to have a legislature that can produce good public  
21 policy.

22 First, to keep core communities together  
23 because there's no valid reason to divide towns and  
24 small cities. And second, the maps must be -- must  
25 proportionally represent the diverse views of our

1 state. And finally, and most importantly, the maps  
2 must allow for and incentivize competition,  
3 collaboration, and compromise, to bring forth the best  
4 people and the best ideas. And in all three areas, the  
5 proposed maps are even worse than the status quo, and  
6 I'm asking you to do better.

7 As a Solon resident, I resent that my  
8 community is one of those selected to be divided and  
9 cracked. But maybe I should be proud. I moved to this  
10 city in part because of the diversity and strong sense  
11 of community that brings together people from all types  
12 of backgrounds. We share a top school district, public  
13 library, a wonderful community center, and municipal  
14 services.

15 We have shared interests around public  
16 safety, good roads, quality schools, and a strong local  
17 economy. We have a proud history of working together  
18 and coming together as a community, so why would you  
19 divide the city in half other than to crack the growing  
20 majority of Democratic-leaning voters? I can only  
21 assume that you're upset with the results of current  
22 elections.

23 By all measures, Ohio is a slightly  
24 Republican state, and Governor DeWine received just 50  
25 percent of the statewide vote in 2018. But the

1 proposed map is even more disproportionate than the  
2 current lopsided makeup of the legislature, roughly 55  
3 percent Republican and 35 percent Democrat.  
4 Supermajorities like this are bad for democracy. They  
5 lead to corruption, stale or backward ideas. Extreme  
6 legislation is often bad policy and simply bad  
7 lawmaking.

8           The new map as proposed will likely expand  
9 the Republican supermajority, and that's not the  
10 progress the voters demanded and that Ohioans deserve.  
11 Analysis of the proposed maps shows just one  
12 competitive district in the House and just two in the  
13 Senate. And worse, the proposed map targets the House  
14 districts where the Democrats gained votes or flipped  
15 seats in the last three election cycles.

16           I was actively involved in the campaigns to  
17 elect my state representative, Phil Robinson. And  
18 ahead of the 2018 elections, we were told it would be  
19 impossible to elect a Democrat in this district because  
20 it was carefully crafted to be a safe Republican seat.  
21 But the district demographics have shifted, and we knew  
22 this seat had become more competitive. Representative  
23 Robinson won in 2018, and again in 2020, by close  
24 margins, which means we're in a truly competitive  
25 district.

1           The voters actually had a choice, and as a  
2 result, we elected one of the best young lawmakers,  
3 someone who is highly regarded in his community, the  
4 district, and the statehouse. And why would you want a  
5 map that eliminates these types of competitive seats?

6           Phil Robinson and the other Democratic reps  
7 that this map tries to root out are the very kinds of  
8 lawmakers we desperately need in our legislature, those  
9 who have innovative and competitive ideas, those that  
10 have listened to and work with a variety of interest  
11 groups and points of view and have demonstrated a  
12 commitment to getting things done. These lawmakers  
13 can't take votes for granted. They know their margins  
14 and they work hard for every vote.

15           CO-CHAIR RUPP: Mr. Jackson, your time has  
16 expired and actually exceeded that. If you could take  
17 30 seconds and wrap up, that would be great.

18           TOM JACKSON: Certainly. No matter how much  
19 your budget tries to market Ohio as a progressive  
20 state, no advertising campaign will offset the backward  
21 policies that are the direct result of gerrymandering.  
22 You said at the September 9th hearing, this is just a  
23 starting point and working document. I hope you stay  
24 true to those words. Thank you.

25           (Applause)

1 CO-CHAIR RUPP: Are there any questions for  
2 Mr. Jackson?

3 Seeing no questions, thank you for  
4 testifying.

5 Next is Randall James, I believe, was called.

6 STAFF MEMBER: The next witness is Barbara  
7 Kaplan, followed by Andrew Cotuson.

8 CO-CHAIR RUPP: I am going to echo what  
9 Co-Chair Sykes asked at the beginning, if we could  
10 avoid applause for either side. We've also been  
11 informed that people have assisted listening devices,  
12 and it does interfere with that, so we would ask you to  
13 be respectful of that. Thank you.

14 And you may proceed. Please state your name  
15 and spell it for the record.

16 BARBARA KAPLAN: Thank you, members of the  
17 Redistricting Commission, for giving me this  
18 opportunity to speak to you. My name is Barbara  
19 Kaplan. That is spelled with a K-A-P-L-A-N. I am a  
20 resident of Summit County. And as you've heard from  
21 many other speakers today and previously, I'm sure,  
22 this map as proposed represents an abject failure to  
23 comply with the Ohio Constitution.

24 I'm not going to tire you or bore you --  
25 apparently some are -- with repeating what has already

1 been said. I live in Peninsula Village. It's really  
2 little. Some of you know where it is; many of you  
3 don't. It is the most gorgeous place on earth,  
4 surrounded by the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. We  
5 are totally landlocked in that regard.

6 So we're small, but we service over three and  
7 a half million visitors a year, most of whom are  
8 actually residents of the county and surrounding  
9 counties. I live ten minutes from Hudson. I live ten  
10 minutes from Bath. I live five minutes from Richfield.  
11 I live 40 minutes from New Franklin.

12 As the current district and the proposed  
13 district are drawn, all of -- not all of those are  
14 within my district. The district is being drawn as a  
15 long, narrow stripe down the western side of the  
16 county, and it just doesn't work. It didn't work for  
17 the last ten years. I have not been represented.  
18 Demographically, culturally, economically, my village  
19 most resembles Hudson, Bath, and Richfield. It does  
20 not economically resemble the southern part of the  
21 county. It just doesn't.

22 In addition, my district works closely with  
23 Bath and with Cuyahoga Falls because we share an  
24 interest in the Cuyahoga River Watershed, which neither  
25 New Franklin nor Norton have any interest in. So it

1 doesn't matter whether I have a Republican or a  
2 Democrat representing me. They are not going to  
3 represent the interests of my community or the  
4 communities that are adjacent to me. It just doesn't  
5 work.

6 I will say that, at least at first glance,  
7 the Democratic amendment may in fact address some of  
8 those issues so I do hope that will be considered.  
9 Looking at this map in conclusion, as it exists right  
10 now, the only thing I can think is it's the result of  
11 either incompetence, indolence, or deliberate  
12 malfeasance, because it is cracked, it is packed, and  
13 it's mess, it's a gerrymandered mess.

14 (Applause)

15 BARBARA KAPLAN: Lastly, I will just add I  
16 really do hope that there will be a cooperative spirit.  
17 I can make that minute. But I will tell you that I  
18 called Leader Sykes' office today and Senator Huffman's  
19 office and I was told that there were no meetings  
20 working on these maps over the weekend. Perhaps their  
21 aides were wrong or misled or just didn't get the  
22 information, but that is what I believe to be true at  
23 this point. Thank you for hearing me.

24 CO-CHAIR RUPP: Are there questions for the  
25 witness?

1           Seeing none, thank you for testifying.

2           (Applause)

3           STAFF MEMBER: The next witness is Andrew  
4 Cotuson followed by Stephen Kellat.

5           CO-CHAIR RUPP: Thank you for being here.  
6 And if you'll state your name and spell it for the  
7 record, please. Thanks.

8           STEPHEN KELLAT: Thank you. Thank you,  
9 Mr. Speaker. My name is Stephen Kellat. That is  
10 spelled S-T-E-P-H-E-N K-E-L-L-A-T. I'll confine my  
11 remarks to issues with boundary lines on the proposed  
12 map. That would be the most profitable use of time.

13           To redraw the lines to the 32nd Senatorial  
14 District creates problems. Although the lines were  
15 redrawn to include the majority of the district's  
16 population, they presently exclude the currently  
17 serving senator, Sandra O'Brien, who has more than two  
18 years remaining on her term. The redrawn lines deprive  
19 the people in the newly drawn 32nd district of the  
20 services of a state senator, as the Republican party  
21 would need to decide how to fill the vacancy that was  
22 created, as no other senator would be living nearby to  
23 plausibly represent that district.

24           Senator O'Brien's currently neighboring  
25 senator, Senator Jerry Cirino, lives in Lake County and

1 faces a redrawn map that sharply changes his district  
2 to the point that he would become the new senator  
3 representing not just Mrs. O'Brien but me. That the  
4 Republican party is depriving itself of the services of  
5 one of its first-term state senators is baffling.

6 Turning to the proposed map for the House, we  
7 see an unusual tentacle slithering into Ashtabula  
8 County. This particular line lumps communities like  
9 Harpersfield, Austinburg, Eagleville, Rock Creek,  
10 Geneva, and Geneva-on-the-Lake into a district of Lake  
11 County communities instead of being included with  
12 neighboring communities in their own county.

13 Part of the problem with this horrible  
14 tentacle is that while it includes the village of Rock  
15 Creek in that Lake County based district, it leaves  
16 Trumbull Township to its west between it and the  
17 Geauga-Ashtabula County line in a completely different  
18 district. Overall, this does not help community  
19 cohesion in the largest county in our state.

20 All the maps that have been proposed have  
21 frankly taken a jigsaw to Ashtabula County. The  
22 current working proposal sneaks a tentacle from Lake  
23 County into it. The Senate Democratic Caucus chopped  
24 the county into an east-west split. The winners of the  
25 public mapmaking contest are going to approach

1 splitting the county diagonally, with the split running  
2 from Orwell -- pardon me, from Orwell in the  
3 southwestern corner to Conneaut in the northeastern  
4 corner.

5 Ashtabula County has its own more natural  
6 split. The main population centers and affinity  
7 communities are the cities of Geneva, Ashtabula, and  
8 Conneaut. All three are north of interstate Route 90.  
9 The national weather service splits the county using  
10 I-90 as the dividing line when it gives forecasts for  
11 Ashtabula Lakeshore and Ashtabula Inland.

12 I urge that you consider sticking with a more  
13 natural split used by the National Weather Service.  
14 Our population follows that split just as much as our  
15 weather does. Our county isn't large enough to support  
16 a single House district, but can you at least break us  
17 up in our ways that respect our traditions, history,  
18 and culture.

19 Thank you for your time and consideration,  
20 and I yield, Mr. Speaker, for any questions or comments  
21 from all of the members.

22 CO-CHAIR RUPP: Are there questions from any  
23 of the Commission?

24 Seeing none, thank you for testifying.

25 STEPHEN KELLAT: Thank you, sir.

1 STAFF MEMBER: The next witness is Caitlin  
2 Johnson followed by Jay Ketchaver.

3 CAITLIN JOHNSON: Hello, my name is Caitlin  
4 Johnson, and I am the Communications Director of Policy  
5 Matters Ohio. Thanks for having me here today and  
6 we're a research --

7 CO-CHAIR RUPP: If you would, could you spell  
8 your name for the record, please?

9 CAITLIN JOHNSON: Sure, C-A-I-T-L-I-N  
10 J-O-H-N-S-O-N.

11 CO-CHAIR RUPP: Thank you.

12 CAITLIN JOHNSON: And I'm a resident of  
13 Shaker Heights, which is House District 9 and Senate  
14 District 21. So I'm here representing my organization,  
15 which a lot of you are probably familiar with. We do  
16 research and analysis, and our hope is that we're going  
17 to provide you, our policymakers, with the best  
18 information possible so you can rate -- write laws and  
19 rules that make Ohio a vibrant and healthy and  
20 prosperous place for all of us, no exceptions.

21 But I'm also speaking today as an Ohioan  
22 whose family came here from Ireland in the 1920s in  
23 search of political freedom and economic opportunity.  
24 I live in Shaker Heights, like I said, with my husband,  
25 my son, and my stepchildren, and I want Ohio to live up

1 to the promise my grandparents came here for.

2 And since I'm mentioning my family, I just  
3 want to say to Governor DeWine, you know, my cousin was  
4 Pat Sweeney. He was the great legislator from  
5 Cleveland. A lot of you probably know him. And I was  
6 so touched last year after he passed when you and  
7 Lieutenant Governor Husted went on TV and talked about  
8 him. And I think Pat really kind of embodies that  
9 spirit of working across party lines and putting Ohio  
10 and the community that he's serving first.

11 And I hope that you can kind of -- you can  
12 remember my cousin and the words that you said about  
13 him when you're making this decision, because I know  
14 that he would want us to do what's best for all the  
15 people in Ohio, and not just, you know (indiscernible)  
16 and doing what we can to hang on to power.

17 So that said, all Ohioans deserve the freedom  
18 to choose the elected leaders who are accessible and  
19 accountable to the people, we the people. No matter  
20 where we live, or what we look like, or what political  
21 party we support, and that's fundamental to our  
22 American form of government. But today certain  
23 political interests are rigging the rules to divide  
24 communities and minimize the power of black and brown  
25 Ohioans just so they can hang on to power and wealth.

1           And Ohioans know what's happening. We can  
2 see this very clearly. And when we don't believe in  
3 the people elected to represent us, and we don't  
4 believe that those people care about our families and  
5 our communities and our future, we're going to lose  
6 faith in our government. And in a state and in a  
7 nation that is so intensely divided, that I think we  
8 all can recognize how damaging that is. The  
9 consequences of that are really painfully clear.

10           So you all, the members of the Redistricting  
11 Commission, have a chance to show Ohioans that the  
12 politicians aren't concerned about how to keep their  
13 party in power or how to appease their donors, that you  
14 want us all to live in a thriving state where we can  
15 make our voices heard.

16           But instead we're seeing the opposite. The  
17 maps approved by the commission along party lines make  
18 a mockery of the constitutionally mandated process  
19 voters approved and affirmed the worst stereotypes  
20 about politicians. And as I mentioned, I have  
21 politicians in my family. I like politicians.

22           Now, I work at a research institute, so I  
23 know the data about Ohio really well. And we just  
24 released our State of Working Ohio Report that shows  
25 more and more of the wealth that hardworking Ohioans

1 create is in the hands of the wealthiest few and the  
2 highest paid, people whose wages are being held -- the  
3 rest of us, our wages are being held down.

4 Ohioans have suffered under districts that  
5 are drawn to live -- deliberately silence our voices.  
6 We haven't had good outcomes in nearly every measure  
7 that matters. We are underperforming the nation,  
8 whether it comes to infant mortality rates, and  
9 especially in the case of black babies. We're  
10 underperforming. Our college accessibility and  
11 completion rates are behind the nation. This system  
12 has not worked well for the people and it's not serving  
13 us.

14 Now, like I said, I live in Shaker Heights.  
15 I'm a third generation Clevelander. Anybody knows that  
16 lives in Cleveland that when you draw a district that  
17 stretches across the city, that what you are -- from  
18 west side to east side, what you are really doing is  
19 diluting and silencing the black vote. We all know  
20 that. We all know that.

21 (Applause)

22 CAITLIN JOHNSON: So I know that my time has  
23 come to an end and, you know, I have a lot to say, but  
24 really it's disingenuous to do anything beyond trying  
25 to keep our communities together. You know, Ohioans,

1 you all have a chance to show us that we can do  
2 something. We can do something together as a state.  
3 We can come together across party lines, and you can  
4 show the nation that that's possible too. Let's be an  
5 example. Let's hold a high -- let's do what Governor  
6 DeWine said, show that this is a state -- a progressive  
7 state that people will want to come to.

8 And if you all take your job seriously and  
9 make your choices based on what's best for the people,  
10 we can have that. So thank you.

11 CO-CHAIR RUPP: Any questions for the  
12 witness?

13 Seeing none.

14 STAFF MEMBER: Jay Ketchaver followed by  
15 Marion Krieger.

16 JAY KETCHAVER: Thank you for your time  
17 today. I hope you can hear me through this mask. My  
18 name is Jay Ketchaver, that's K-E-T-C-H-A-V-E-R, and I  
19 live in Lakewood.

20 In 2015 and 2018, Ohioans across the  
21 political spectrum overwhelmingly voted in favor of  
22 fair districts. I spent countless hours gathering  
23 hundreds of signatures for these reforms, and I talked  
24 to Democrats, Independents, and Republicans. Everyone  
25 agreed that the people of Ohio should pick their

1 politicians and not the other way around.

2 Now, the following comments are directed  
3 solely at the Republicans on the Commission who have  
4 approached this entire redistricting process in bad  
5 faith. The truth is that the vast majority of Ohioans  
6 voted for fair districts and reforms. Republicans are  
7 lying when they claim that they couldn't do anything  
8 because the census data was delayed, that their maps  
9 are fair, that they're following the Constitution, or  
10 whatever other excuse they offer for their  
11 machinations.

12 The truth is Republicans are trying to commit  
13 an even more egregious gerrymander because they only  
14 value political power. They have nothing but contempt  
15 for the people of Ohio, the Constitution, and  
16 democracy. We know what's -- we know what you're  
17 doing. We're not going to stand for it. Follow the  
18 Constitution, respect the will of Ohioans, and do your  
19 jobs.

20 (Applause)

21 CO-CHAIR RUPP: Thank you for testifying.

22 Next witness.

23 STAFF MEMBER: Marion Krieger followed by  
24 Catherine LaCroix.

25 CATHERINE LACROIX: Hi, good afternoon,

1 Co-Chairs and members of the Commission. My name is  
2 Catherine LaCroix. That's C-A-T-H-E-R-I-N-E, LaCroix  
3 like the water, L-A, capital C, R-O-I-X.

4 I am Co-President of the League of Women  
5 Voters of Greater Cleveland, which is an all-volunteer  
6 organization. I live in Shaker Heights, and I voted  
7 Ohio House District 9, Ohio Senate District 21, and  
8 U.S. Congressional District 11.

9 I have several comments about the Commission  
10 maps under discussion today that were introduced last  
11 week on September 9th. On September 10th, Friday  
12 morning, we sent the best information we could get to  
13 our over 700 members and many other volunteers for them  
14 to review. Many commented that the information on the  
15 maps was too limited for them even to tell whether  
16 their community was kept whole. There were many  
17 deficiencies. No one could understand what the maps  
18 even did. Clearly, we all needed a tutorial on Dave's  
19 Redistricting.

20 Other League members commented that once  
21 again the time and location of the hearings did not  
22 permit them to participate during the workday. So I  
23 and other regular citizens very much appreciate the  
24 volunteer map experts and other concerned citizens who  
25 are appearing at these hearings with detailed analysis.

1 And in that spirit, I would like to offer some specific  
2 observations on the maps that are currently proposed by  
3 the Commission.

4 A few features on the East side, at least,  
5 can be seen by anyone. The district including Shaker  
6 Heights has an odd additional piece, the village of  
7 Woodmere, a largely black populated village connected  
8 with the rest of the district only by a bridge over a  
9 highway, thereby separating the residents of Woodmere  
10 from the school district to which they belong, which is  
11 on their side of the highway, and taking that largely  
12 minority population and packing its residents into a  
13 district that already is quite diverse.

14 The cities of South Euclid and Lyndhurst are  
15 separated into different House and Senate districts  
16 even though they share a school district and other  
17 services. The City of Solon, as has been observed, is  
18 split between two districts. The City of Pepper Pike  
19 is separated from its neighbors to the east and west,  
20 which are the neighbors that -- with whom it has most  
21 in common, and placed in House and Senate districts  
22 that wander across the county to distant points and  
23 communities that have nothing in common with Pepper  
24 Pike.

25 Also obvious from the shapes on the

1 Commission proposed maps, many of the districts violate  
2 the Ohio Constitution as has been observed because they  
3 are not compact. And a previous witness specified the  
4 same ones I picked out, Senate District 27, House  
5 District 22, House Districts 14 and 18, and the little  
6 snake on the lake, House District 13.

7 In addition, the data appear to show that  
8 Democratic-leaning House districts in Cuyahoga County  
9 are as much as 4 percent over the average population  
10 number for a district. In other words, more people are  
11 packed into each district, reducing their leverage and  
12 representation.

13 I could not understand why these districts  
14 were so long and meandering and so overpacked with  
15 people until I saw the analysis by Fair Districts  
16 showing the partisan imbalance of the maps. So, as has  
17 been observed, there are constitutional violations.  
18 The Commission districts ignore the compactness  
19 requirement in order to build a map that, as a whole,  
20 was drawn to disproportionately favor a single  
21 political party. There is no excuse for this, and I'm  
22 not even touching on the Voting Rights Act issues. The  
23 Commission proposal is based on an unconstitutional  
24 approach to map making. We urge it to be rejected.

25 Based on today's testimony, I'm tempted to

1 feel encouraged by the proposal -- most recent proposal  
2 of the Democratic Caucus. But how do I know, the  
3 ground keeps shifting. This entire process has been  
4 disturbing, but I choose optimism.

5 As I stated in my first testimony on  
6 August 23rd, I hope that you will rise to the occasion,  
7 listen to the voters of Ohio, and approve fair maps  
8 that fully comply with the Ohio Constitution and  
9 federal law. Thank you.

10 (Applause)

11 CO-CHAIR RUPP: Questions for the witness?

12 Thank you for testifying. Next witness.

13 STAFF MEMBER: Karen Leith followed by Dale  
14 Miller.

15 KAREN LEITH: Members of the Redistricting  
16 Commission, I am Dr. Karen Leith. Karen spelled with a  
17 K, Leith, L-E-I-T-H. I reside in Hudson, which is  
18 House District 37 and Senate District 27. I spoke at  
19 the Akron hearing on August 27th.

20 My comments are based on two broad  
21 experiences that I have mentioned before at the  
22 August 27th. As a League of Women Voters member for  
23 the last 41 years, I have been part of the campaigns  
24 that put these issues on the ballot. Having gathered  
25 signatures, managed volunteers, I worked hard to get

1 out the vote. I cannot ignore the incredible  
2 gerrymandering on the current presented map of both the  
3 Ohio House and Senate districts.

4 Second, as a retiree of the Catholic  
5 Commission of Summit County, I spent 30 years, the last  
6 seven as Executive Director, bringing the most  
7 vulnerable voices to the table. Our mission was to  
8 make sure all voices were heard, and I look at the map  
9 you have presented and see more voices silenced. I  
10 have spent too many years bringing underrepresented  
11 voices to the table to let this go.

12 In my various positions, I have remained an  
13 independent voter, willing to work with any and all  
14 elected officials. The issues have always been my  
15 focus. In the last few years, I have definitely felt  
16 that elected officials no longer listen, and these maps  
17 are definitely evidence of that. I do not understand  
18 how you can present maps such as these when 71 percent  
19 of all 88 counties want fair maps. Those voices are  
20 Democrats, Republicans, and Independents.

21 Further comments, listening to the Commission  
22 meetings, and I have been observing all the hearings  
23 and Commission meetings, I am shocked to hear that the  
24 racial data was not used to make sure there was  
25 compliance with the Voting Rights Act. I am now part

1 of the League of Women Voters committee called Real  
2 Talk that highlights the very issues of people of  
3 color. Ohio's communities of color must be considered  
4 in forming districts, and that's not by packing  
5 districts with people of color.

6 Next, as a resident of District 37 of the  
7 House, I am horrified to see what you've done to it.  
8 It has moved from a very compact, very competitive  
9 district, one that has flipped back and forth, to  
10 something that is sprawling. Look at it. It's  
11 District 23 up there. Basically something is wrong  
12 when the Redistricting Committee takes a good district  
13 that respects communities of interest, that is both  
14 compact and competitive, and turns it into a sprawling  
15 district covering three counties.

16 Having worked with and for the people of  
17 Summit County, I know the importance of keeping  
18 communities together, of respecting communities of  
19 interest.

20 And for the sake of time, my last comments  
21 have to do with the lack of bipartisan and transparent  
22 procedures. Both partisan maps, those presented by  
23 Republicans and the earlier ones presented by the  
24 Democratic Caucus are unacceptable. Also, the fact  
25 that this Republican map is so bad, there's no such

1 thing as fixing it. Throw it out. Start again.

2 (Applause)

3 KAREN LEITH: And not providing a script to  
4 explain the choices is not helpful. I'd like to know  
5 why District 23 has to meander through three counties  
6 when it was once and is right now a very compact and  
7 competitive district. And jamming these hearings in  
8 before you intend to produce the final map tells us  
9 that you're not listening to us. You're just going by  
10 the letter of the law.

11 That's not what we asked of our elected  
12 officials. We want fair maps. Please consider what  
13 you're doing, listen to the people of Ohio, and give us  
14 fair maps. Be leaders. Be statesmen. Thank you for  
15 your consideration.

16 (Applause)

17 CO-CHAIR RUPP: Questions for the witness?

18 Seeing none, next witness, Dale Miller, I  
19 believe. Former member of the Ohio Senate, I do  
20 believe.

21 DALE MILLER: Speaker Bob Cupp, Senator  
22 Vernon Sykes, members of the Redistricting Commission,  
23 thank you for the opportunity to address the Ohio  
24 Redistricting Commission.

25 My first comment is that the available maps

1 and block lists are not well designed for public use.  
2 More detailed maps along with precinct lists which can  
3 be cross-referenced against publicly available maps  
4 would be more helpful.

5 I'm speaking this afternoon to call your  
6 attention to the egregious deficiencies in the draft  
7 map for Cuyahoga County. The proposed map is not at  
8 all compact. It mercilessly chops up Cleveland into  
9 disorganized little bits and distributes those bits to  
10 numerous districts with no regard whatsoever to natural  
11 communities. Proposed districts such as Number 13, 14,  
12 and 18, would serve well as instructional examples for  
13 gerrymandering.

14 I call your attention in particular to the  
15 plight of the West Park community which comprises  
16 Cleveland's Wards 16 and 17 on the far west side of the  
17 city. As I understand the proposed map, each of the  
18 two wards would be chopped up and distributed among at  
19 least three different state representative districts.

20 The West Park area has been a coherent and  
21 well-defined neighborhood for at least 100 years. It  
22 is geographically small in size with a population of  
23 about 45,000 people, less than 40 percent of the target  
24 population of a state representative district. There  
25 is no valid reason why it should not be included in a

1 single state representative district.

2 My colleague, Marty Sweeney, also extends his  
3 greetings to you and also asked that the West Park area  
4 be kept whole as a single district.

5 The voters of the state of Ohio  
6 overwhelmingly passed constitutional amendments  
7 designed to make State Representatives and State Senate  
8 districts compact and politically fair. This proposed  
9 map does neither. It draws lines that split up  
10 communities and organizes districts in ways that make  
11 no sense from the perspective of easily understandable  
12 community representation. And it creates a state of  
13 districts -- a set of districts that statewide will  
14 likely have a political result that differs widely from  
15 the overall division of popular votes among candidates  
16 of the two major political parties.

17 I call upon you as a Redistricting Commission  
18 to fix this map and create districts that reflect the  
19 popular will and reforming the redistricting process,  
20 districts that are compact respect natural communities,  
21 are politically fair and will be good for ten years.

22 I close by reminding you that even if you  
23 cannot bring yourselves to be politically fair, you can  
24 at least create a map that is advantageous to the  
25 majority party while still cleaning up the distorted

1 shapes and dismembered communities found in the current  
2 map. Please do at least that much.

3 Thank you very much for your attention and  
4 consideration of my testimony.

5 CO-CHAIR CUPP: Are there questions for the  
6 witness?

7 Auditor Faber.

8 AUDITOR FABER: Thank you. It's good to see  
9 you.

10 DALE MILLER: Thank you.

11 AUDITOR FABER: Representative, Senator.  
12 Specifically, have you had a chance to look at the  
13 Democratic maps that have been proposed?

14 DALE MILLER: I have not. I just saw them  
15 presented earlier in today's meeting and don't know  
16 much about them.

17 AUDITOR FABER: So you don't know if they  
18 take care of the issue you identified with that  
19 community?

20 DALE MILLER: From the quick look, it looked  
21 like it certainly was an improvement. But whether it  
22 completely addresses it or partially addresses it, I  
23 only saw it for a few seconds, so couldn't give you a  
24 definitive answer.

25 AUDITOR FABER: We're -- and again, trying to

1 get a better answer. Where is that in Cleveland?

2 What --

3 DALE MILLER: This is in the far west side of  
4 the city. It's near the Cleveland Hopkins airport. It  
5 runs from approximately West 140th Street to the Rocky  
6 River border.

7 AUDITOR FABER: Staff guidance tells me that  
8 they took care of part of it, but not all of it.

9 DALE MILLER: Okay.

10 AUDITOR FABER: Thank you. And again, these  
11 are the kinds of things that are helpful for us to  
12 hear. Thank you.

13 DALE MILLER: Okay.

14 CO-CHAIR CUPP: No further questions. Thank  
15 you for coming.

16 DALE MILLER: Okay. Thank you.

17 CO-CHAIR CUPP: Next witness is?

18 STAFF MEMBER: Representative Kent Smith.

19 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: So we -- am I on?

20 CO-CHAIR CUPP: Yes, and then would you spell  
21 Smith for us, please?

22 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: So, I was a little  
23 surprised that we jumped from M to S in the last names,  
24 but -- so my name is Kent Smith. K-E-N-T S-M-I-T-H. I  
25 want to thank the Commission for being here.

1 I currently represent House District 8. I  
2 think I would be in House District 19 based on the  
3 current map being considered by the Commission. The  
4 ballot referendum language spoke to the importance of  
5 keeping communities together and also representative  
6 fairness. The -- but it's also -- just plain and  
7 simple, it's about math.

8 The map that is before us displaying Cuyahoga  
9 County has Cuyahoga County split between Districts 13  
10 through 22 with District 23 going over into both  
11 Cuyahoga -- both Geauga and Summit County.

12 Now the population of Cuyahoga County,  
13 according to the last census, the most recent census,  
14 is 1,264,817. The average district size if you take  
15 the Ohio state population and divide it by 99, would be  
16 119,186.

17 So, if you do the math of Cuyahoga County, we  
18 should have ten districts, if you just take the 119,186  
19 and divide it. And that would actually leave you a  
20 surplus of 72,957 voters, which is more than half of  
21 what the average district would be.

22 So the issue of rounding gets Cuyahoga County  
23 to 11 complete districts that would be within the 5  
24 percent variance of, again, the margin, of -- the  
25 average of 119,186.

1           So I'm concerned that Cuyahoga County will  
2   lose its represent -- representational fairness because  
3   it's -- it will lose districts that it shouldn't lose  
4   if you just do the basic math of the average population  
5   of Cuyahoga County divided by what should be the  
6   average population of State House districts.

7           Again, this is a state that has voted for  
8   Barack Obama, Sherrod Brown, Mike DeWine -- good to see  
9   you, Governor -- and Donald Trump. In the last  
10   presidential election, as you all know, this state went  
11   53 to 45 in favor of President Trump. And the  
12   Democratic -- and the counties that voted majority  
13   Democratic were Franklin, Cuyahoga County, Summit,  
14   Lucas, Montgomery, and Hamilton and also Athens County.

15           So again, if the spirit of representational  
16   fairness is important to the members of this  
17   Commission, as I believe the voters dictated in both  
18   2015 and 2018, then keeping Cuyahoga County in 11  
19   districts, I think is one of the ways to meet that  
20   goal.

21           Anticipating the question about did I take a  
22   close look at the proposed Democratic map and would it  
23   meet this criteria? I couldn't tell based on the map  
24   that was displayed.

25           I would also suggest that this will lead to

1 better legislative outcomes. And I'm going to play a  
2 little bit of inside baseball now, but I think you all  
3 on the Commission are going to understand what I say  
4 when I say that there's a discharge petition in the  
5 Ohio House for House Bill 248 that just Friday, the  
6 Ohio chamber warned all of us would be a terrible bill  
7 for business. And we couldn't get a discharge petition  
8 on House Bill 6 after the former speaker had been  
9 arrested by the FBI.

10 (Laughter and applause)

11 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: So the notion of -- so  
12 again, I think we have to beware of what a  
13 gerrymandered map will do, not only to unfairly affect  
14 Cuyahoga County, but with the legislative outcomes that  
15 the members of the General Assembly will, in turn,  
16 produce. Thank you very much for your time and  
17 attention.

18 CO-CHAIR CUPP: Are there questions for  
19 Representative Smith?

20 Hearing none, thank you.

21 STAFF MEMBER: Marvin McMickle, followed by  
22 Kevin Conwell.

23 MARVIN MCMICKLE: Good evening. My name is  
24 Marvin, M-A-R-V-I-N, McMickle, M-C-M-I-C-K-L-E. I'm  
25 Pastor Emeritus and also interim pastor at Antioch

1 Baptist Church in the city of Cleveland, Ohio.

2 However, I live in Shaker Heights, House District 9,

3 Senate District 21.

4 I wish that this process was only about lines  
5 and maps. I wish that lines and maps were the end of  
6 the process. What I believe, however, is that lines  
7 and maps are a means to an end. And the end is  
8 reducing full and open and competitive political  
9 engagement in the two-party system in the state of  
10 Ohio.

11 I think that lines and maps are designed to  
12 turn African-American and other minority voters into  
13 collateral damage on the road to a political powerplay  
14 that is happening not just in Ohio, but to be honest  
15 it's happening all across the country.

16 While many of us focus our political  
17 attention, and understandably so, on what is happening  
18 in Washington, D.C., the truth is the things that  
19 frighten me the most are not happening in Washington.  
20 They're happening in state legislatures all across this  
21 country.

22 (Applause)

23 MARVIN MCMICKLE: It is the state  
24 legislatures that are attacking voting rights. It is  
25 state legislatures that are trying to limit what can be

1 taught in public schools in Ohio and across the  
2 country. It is state legislatures that are busy at  
3 work to create safe districts in which one party rule  
4 can be established in the state of Ohio, Texas,  
5 Wisconsin, Arizona, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and  
6 many other states as well.

7 And so I appeal to this Commission to ask  
8 itself whether or not it has an agenda. The agenda is  
9 not maps and lines. The agenda is the accumulation of  
10 political power for the perpetuation of a political  
11 agenda which does not have at its heart or on its mind,  
12 apparently, the best interests of the all the persons  
13 who live in the state of Ohio.

14 I am here to speak for those whose voices are  
15 seldom heard, whose voices and votes are often taken  
16 for granted, and who wonder whether or not the end  
17 result of this process makes them more or less citizens  
18 of the State of Ohio.

19 I oppose the maps and lines as they are  
20 currently being presented, because I do not think this  
21 is at all about maps and lines. This is entirely about  
22 agendas and plans and intentions where one party will  
23 continue to impose its will on the remainder.

24 I just finished a panel discussion about  
25 what's happening in public education in this state. We

1 need representation to be sure that the voices and  
2 views of all persons, of all political persuasions are  
3 heard. That is not what is being accomplished with  
4 these maps and these lines.

5 (Applause)

6 CO-CHAIR CUPP: Questions for the witness?  
7 Hearing none -- I hear none. Thank you for  
8 testifying.

9 (Applause)

10 COUNCILMAN CONWELL: Thank you very, very  
11 much. I just received this email -- counsel -

12 CO-CHAIR CUPP: If you could just state  
13 your --

14 COUNCILMAN CONWELL: Council Member Kevin  
15 Conwell from the City of Cleveland. I've been down to  
16 -- downstate, matter of fact a lot of times. I've been  
17 at your committee meetings, battling against Stand Your  
18 Ground. I've been downstate battling against House  
19 Bill 22. I've sent you several letters and  
20 disagreements, and I've walked my neighborhood time and  
21 time again. Matter of fact, I even sent a letter to  
22 the Governor himself and texted to him my opposition  
23 against Stand Your Ground.

24 So I received this this morning. And I'm not  
25 happy. And if the councilman just received this about

1 this hearing here, my residents, who are your  
2 residents, don't know anything about this. And I  
3 represent a majority African-American ward. And when  
4 you look around here, you don't see African-Americans,  
5 not even in attendance here, and they're your bosses  
6 also. Because you know the voters are the bosses.  
7 They're your board of directors.

8 So I reached over to my great State  
9 Representative, Upchurch, and I said, they need to come  
10 to our ward and face the African-American community at  
11 Glenville High School. He said, I'll reach out to them  
12 and I ask them to come to Glenville High School so that  
13 the children also at Glenville High School will see  
14 this process and learn about this process and what  
15 you're doing to our community. We need you to come  
16 there. And I reached out to you, Churchill (sic).  
17 You said it's no problem for you guys to come.

18 Now is there a problem for you to come to the  
19 African-American community? Because when I look at  
20 this map, it's not a good thing. It's not a good thing  
21 for us. You split it in half. We will not be  
22 represented.

23 We probably won't even -- I got to tell you,  
24 Representative Sykes, we probably won't even have an  
25 African-American representative. And Churchill (sic)

1 is good. He writes me and tells me what's going on  
2 down there.

3 You're disenfranchising my community and my  
4 people. You're hurting us. You heard the great  
5 Reverend McMickle talk about the lines. This is more  
6 than lines. I feel for my residents.

7 When we talk about drive-by shootings and gun  
8 legislation, and when we talk about infant mortality in  
9 the community, we need someone that is from the  
10 community and is for the community and has the goodness  
11 of the community at heart.

12 (Applause)

13 COUNCILMAN CONWELL: But when we see these  
14 districts broken up, look -- look at here. District  
15 20. You have Ward 9, Ward 6 and Ward 4, and East  
16 Cleveland. They're in District 20 as well. You have  
17 Cleveland Heights and University Heights. It's not  
18 connected right. The demographics there is not right.  
19 Because when you feel the infant mortality, that's in  
20 Ward 9. The drive-by shootings, it's in Ward 9. We're  
21 hurting. We need to have, when you look at District 19  
22 as well, Cleveland 8 and 10, must be with Ward 6 and 9  
23 and 4. They got to be in there together.

24 And you have to reach out to the community.  
25 You have to do a survey analysis in our neighborhood,

1 talking with my residents, your bosses, the Black  
2 clubs, the street clubs, the pastors as well, and how  
3 this will benefit us.

4 This, the way this map is drawn right now, is  
5 going to hurt my people. And I'm going to go door to  
6 door in my neighborhood and write a letter. And you  
7 know I will, Governor, to my residents and tell them  
8 about what's going on, and tell them to write to you,  
9 and we will be at every meeting.

10 But I need you -- and I'll yield real quick,  
11 because I believe for my residents, I need you to come  
12 to the mighty -- to Glenville High School and talk with  
13 the people there so that they can have an up-close  
14 view, a genuine concern, and so that you have a  
15 sensitive ear to help the African-American community.  
16 I yield for your questions.

17 CO-CHAIR CUPP: Thank you.

18 Any questions for the witness?

19 (Applause)

20 CO-CHAIR CUPP: I see none. Thank you for  
21 testifying.

22 SECRETARY LAROSE: Speaker? Speaker?

23 CO-CHAIR CUPP: Oh, I do. Secretary LaRose.

24 COUNCILMAN CONWELL: I'll listen. Yeah.

25 SECRETARY LAROSE: Thank you, Speaker.

1 COUNCILMAN CONWELL: How you doing,  
2 Secretary?

3 SECRETARY LAROSE: Good sir. Good to see  
4 you. Thank you.

5 COUNCILMAN CONWELL: You've been to my  
6 neighborhood.

7 SECRETARY LAROSE: Yeah, I have.

8 COUNCILMAN CONWELL: Yeah, I saw you.

9 SECRETARY LAROSE: How are you doing?

10 COUNCILMAN CONWELL: I'm doing great. I'm  
11 doing well. But not by this map --

12 SECRETARY LAROSE: Yeah.

13 COUNCILMAN CONWELL: I'm not a happy camper.

14 SECRETARY LAROSE: Well, I appreciate the  
15 passion and the love that you have for your community,  
16 and that's evident.

17 COUNCILMAN CONWELL: I'm in love with my  
18 community. Not love -- I'm in love.

19 SECRETARY LAROSE: Amen. Amen.

20 COUNCILMAN CONWELL: I'm in love with it.

21 SECRETARY LAROSE: Is the Democratic proposal  
22 that you saw an improvement? And if you need time to  
23 take a look at it, I'd love to hear your feedback, and  
24 you can call me or whatever. Let me know if that  
25 proposal that you saw from the Senate and House

1 Democrats just now is an improvement in your opinion.

2 COUNCILMAN CONWELL: You will get a letter  
3 from me. You will get a letter from me and everybody  
4 here will get a letter from me.

5 SECRETARY LAROSE: A letter may take too  
6 long.

7 COUNCILMAN CONWELL: You know, you'll get  
8 that from me -- and the Governor know. I'll text you  
9 my letter, Governor, about what's going on with this  
10 right here. I'm not happy.

11 SECRETARY LAROSE: A letter may take too  
12 long. If you could email me or call me, that'd be  
13 wonderful.

14 COUNCILMAN CONWELL: I'll email you. I'll  
15 call you. And even if I have to drive down to Columbus  
16 to see you, I'll do that as well.

17 SECRETARY LAROSE: Thank you, sir.

18 (Applause)

19 COUNCILMAN CONWELL: Thank you very much.  
20 Any other? As well as you, Mr. Sykes. Thank you.

21 CO-CHAIR CUPP: Thank you for testifying.

22 Next witness?

23 STAFF MEMBER: Terrence Upchurch, followed by  
24 Andrew Montlack.

25 REPRESENTATIVE UPCHURCH: Good evening,

1 everyone. Speaker Cupp, Senator Sykes, Leader Sykes,  
2 Governor, Secretary, good to see all of you.

3 I just want to echo the sentiments of  
4 Councilman Conwell. His ward is in my district, and  
5 it's very important that we don't break up Cleveland  
6 neighborhoods. When you break up Cleveland  
7 neighborhoods, Cleveland loses its voice, particularly  
8 on the northeast side which has been at a disadvantage  
9 for decades.

10 And these maps will continue that  
11 disadvantage, and they will leave neighborhoods behind.  
12 So I'm going to be brief. I'm happy to answer any  
13 questions about the neighborhoods that are being broke  
14 up and the communities that are being torn apart.

15 So that's all I have to say. I just wanted  
16 to echo the sentiments of my councilman who I brought  
17 down here to speak in front of this committee.

18 CO-CHAIR CUPP: Leader Sykes?

19 HOUSE MINORITY LEADER SYKES: Thank you,  
20 Chairs.

21 Thank you, Representative, for joining us and  
22 hosting us in your county today. Can you talk a little  
23 bit more specifically about what communities you would  
24 like -- whether it's by ward names, by community names,  
25 or institutions, landmarks? Just kind of help us

1 understand better what it is that you would like to  
2 see.

3 REPRESENTATIVE UPCHURCH: Sure. Absolutely.  
4 So if you all look here to the map, the district that I  
5 live in would be the proposed District 19, which is  
6 Cleveland Ward 8 and 10. This is considered North  
7 Collinwood and South Collinwood, which is one community  
8 that has always been together, whether you look at  
9 State Senate districts or State House districts.

10 Senator, I know you're familiar with that  
11 area. You've represented that area before.

12 Now just going further southbound, you hit  
13 the Glenville neighborhood, which is where Councilman  
14 Conwell is from, which is where I represent a  
15 historical African-American neighborhood. And these  
16 communities have always been together and they've  
17 always been a consolidated block of the northeast side  
18 of Cleveland. They've always spoke with one voice,  
19 right? And they've always had the same representation  
20 in the House and in the Senate.

21 This is something like I've never seen before  
22 where you've got a line being drawn right in the middle  
23 of a community. Even though they're different  
24 neighborhoods, they're still one community and they're  
25 still on the same. And they're still fighting for the

1 same resources at the local level.

2 And if you go further west, I cover this -- I  
3 cover downtown Cleveland, which is its own  
4 neighborhood. That's also being carved, it appears, it  
5 looks, into a Senate district that goes all the way to  
6 Lakewood if I'm looking at that correct?

7 UNIDENTIFIED: (indiscernible.)

8 REPRESENTATIVE UPCHURCH: Yeah. I don't know  
9 how that's going to work. I mean, there's competing  
10 interests. You know, Cleveland -- downtown Cleveland  
11 has its own unique set of issues and its own unique set  
12 of interests. And not taking anything from Lakewood,  
13 Ohio, but they've got their own unique set of issues  
14 and their own interests. And to have those interests  
15 competing with one another, when I imagine that  
16 district is already going to be part of a caucus that  
17 is in the super minority, it's going to -- it's really  
18 going to just leave out not just the people in downtown  
19 but the people in Lakewood also.

20 So I mean these are just some of the things  
21 that I'm noticing. I haven't had an opportunity to  
22 look at this map in depth, but these are just some of  
23 the things that I'm noticing that could be detrimental  
24 with these maps.

25 CO-CHAIR CUPP: Representative Upchurch, are

1 these communities together under the current map?

2 REPRESENTATIVE UPCHURCH: They are. Under  
3 the current map, my district has the Collinwood  
4 community and the Glenville community. So that would  
5 be comprised of three Cleveland wards: 8, 9, and 10,  
6 the entire northeast side of Cleveland, I represent  
7 right now.

8 CO-CHAIR CUPP: Okay. Thank you.

9 REPRESENTATIVE UPCHURCH: You got it. And  
10 just a point of clarification. I know my councilman  
11 has had a long day. It is Upchurch, not Churchill.  
12 All right.

13 That's all right. That's all right. Hey,  
14 it's a long walk from here to Glenville, bro, all  
15 right? I'm just kidding. Thank you, everybody.

16 (Laughter and applause)

17 CO-CHAIR CUPP: All right. Thank you.

18 Next witness?

19 STAFF MEMBER: Andrew Montlack, followed by  
20 Anthony Small.

21 ANTHONY SMALL, SR.: Good evening. Good to  
22 see you, Governor, and to the staff and the board here.  
23 We're so glad to have you. My name is Reverend  
24 Anthony L. Small, Sr. I am the senior pastor of the  
25 Starlight Missionary Baptist Church. I am also the

1 President of The East Cleveland Concerned Pastors.

2 My history is I am a 35-year veteran of the  
3 Cleveland Police Department as a detective. I'm here  
4 about East Cleveland. The way you got it now is three  
5 cities are split, and we would like to work together.  
6 If you're going by the census, remember the people. I  
7 represent 17,500 people in the city of East Cleveland.  
8 That census did not say that, and I'm here to represent  
9 them. As a preacher, as one that cares for other  
10 people, I need to make sure they get their just due.

11 I talked to the Governor. Thank you for his  
12 representative that he sent to us, to the preachers.  
13 We preachers must stand together for the people of God,  
14 those in and out of the faith. That's what we're here  
15 for.

16 If we're going to do it right, let's do it  
17 right and fair. I've been an Ohioan all my life. I  
18 lived in Cleveland all of my life. The Governor knows  
19 my dad, Reverend Doctor Edward Small that stood with  
20 the Stokes boys, that elected Carl Stokes, one of the  
21 first African-American presidents. And I look at his  
22 picture everyday, Governor, and say, why me now? And  
23 now I know. Because the rights of the people of God  
24 are being violated.

25 When I looked at the 2016 map, it said it was

1 unconstitutional. I like what you're doing but let's  
2 make sure we be fair. Because it's not the people you  
3 have to answer to. It's God. Thank you. Any  
4 questions?

5 CO-CHAIR CUPP: Thank you. Are there  
6 questions for the witness?

7 ANTHONY SMALL, SR.: God bless you.

8 CO-CHAIR CUPP: Thank you.

9 Auditor Faber?

10 AUDITOR FABER: Thank you. Did you have a  
11 chance to look at the Democratic proposal?

12 ANTHONY SMALL, SR.: Yes, I did.

13 AUDITOR FABER: Did that fix the East  
14 Cleveland problem?

15 ANTHONY SMALL, SR.: No. We're still -- if  
16 you look at it right now, you've got East Cleveland,  
17 and then you've got South Euclid. Then you've got  
18 Cleveland Heights. The one that you had when I was  
19 upstairs, the one previous to the one that he had, it  
20 comes close. But you bring -- there's -- well, some  
21 cities that are split in half.

22 What I would like to do, to tell you the  
23 truth, is what they did in Warrensville. Get all those  
24 cities that border one another, for us to work  
25 together. And my job as the President of East

1 Cleveland Concerned Pastors is to bring all  
2 municipalities together. That's why I've been working  
3 so close with the Governor's officer and with  
4 Mr. LaRose's office to make things are done decent and  
5 in order. We need to stop working in silos and work  
6 together. That is my purpose.

7 CO-CHAIR CUPP: Go ahead. Go ahead.

8 AUDITOR FABER: I was just going to say, if  
9 we can -- if I were to give you the proposed maps of  
10 Northeast Ohio, the Democrat maps, could you tell me  
11 where you would think we would need to merge or make  
12 changes to take care of the concerns that you have?

13 ANTHONY SMALL, SR.: Sure.

14 AUDITOR FABER: And I'll just give you this.  
15 You bring it back up to me when you're -- when you get  
16 a chance to look at it. I appreciate it more than you  
17 know.

18 ANTHONY SMALL, SR.: Okay. Thank you so  
19 much.

20 AUDITOR FABER: Thank you for your service,  
21 sir.

22 ANTHONY SMALL, SR.: No problem, sir.

23 CO-CHAIR CUPP: Secretary LaRose?

24 SECRETARY LAROSE: The auditor took my  
25 question, but I look forward to seeing your work on

1 this and I enjoyed worship once with you all a while  
2 ago before COVID. I look forward to coming back.

3 ANTHONY SMALL, SR.: Yes.

4 SECRETARY LAROSE: Thank you for all that you  
5 do.

6 ANTHONY SMALL, SR.: No problem. Thank you.  
7 God bless you. And Governor, take care of yourself. I  
8 feel like I'm in church now.

9 CO-CHAIR CUPP: Leader Sykes.

10 ANTHONY SMALL, SR.: Go ahead, Sister. How  
11 you doing? Good to see you.

12 HOUSE MINORITY LEADER SYKES: Thank you,  
13 Reverend Small. I am a church girl so I know what you  
14 got to do to get people's attention. No worries.

15 So you talked about East Cleveland, that  
16 there are 17,000 people, but the census did not count  
17 them. Is that what I heard correctly?

18 ANTHONY SMALL, SR.: No. It does not show  
19 up. There are 17,527, I believe.

20 HOUSE MINORITY LEADER SYKES: That is the  
21 population that you know it to be, but not with --

22 ANTHONY SMALL, SR.: In East Cleveland,  
23 correct.

24 HOUSE MINORITY LEADER SYKES: -- the census.  
25 But not with the census calculated?

1           ANTHONY SMALL, SR.: That's not what the  
2 census counted. Unfortunately, my people are scared of  
3 government. And it's been happening ever since I was a  
4 police officer. Even when I go to the neighborhoods,  
5 they thought I was in there to take their goods. No.

6           I've been explaining, just like the  
7 Governor's office that you guys send out to us, it's  
8 just about accounting your family. That's all it's  
9 about. And they were scared that you were going to  
10 come in and take from them.

11           Now, if this was another setting, I would ask  
12 you to help me show them that you're not going to do  
13 that. It's almost like the same thing when dealing  
14 with the shots. They think that you're putting a chip  
15 in there for some reason.

16           We got the same fight. Help us with that  
17 fight. This here, we need to get rid of this. We need  
18 to come together, do what we need to do.

19           But there's over 17,000 people in East  
20 Cleveland and if you looked at the last voting, less  
21 than 600 voted because they believe their votes do not  
22 count. And that's what I have to deal with as a  
23 pastor. But I got the faith that one day, I'll get  
24 them where they need to go.

25           Any other questions?

1 God bless you. Take care.

2 UNIDENTIFIED: God bless you.

3 CO-CHAIR CUPP: Thank you.

4 We are going to take a five-minute break now  
5 and then we'll reconvene.

6 (Recess taken)

7 CO-CHAIR SYKES: We'd like to call the  
8 meeting back to order. Call the name, please of the  
9 next witness.

10 STAFF MEMBER: Diane Morgan, followed by  
11 Katie Paris. Diane Morgan, followed by Katie Paris.

12 CO-CHAIR SYKES: State your name and spell  
13 it, please.

14 KATIE PARIS: Sure, my name is Katie Paris.  
15 That's K-A-T-I-E, Paris, P-A-R-I-S. And I'm the  
16 founder of Red Wine and Blue, which is a community of  
17 thousands of suburban women, all across Ohio, who want  
18 to have our voices heard. I'm also a suburban mom  
19 myself, of course, with two young boys here in  
20 Northeast Ohio.

21 Now every mom knows how to pick out a bully  
22 on the school board in about five seconds. And that's  
23 about how long it takes to see what a power grab the  
24 Republican proposed maps are. I'm sorry, I got a  
25 mom -- I'm a mom. I've got to call it like it is.

1           The Ohio Constitution requires that our  
2 districts are proportional. That means, of course,  
3 that their partisan makeup is representative of Ohioans  
4 as a whole.

5           You know, one of the reasons I was most  
6 excited to move to my husband's home state of Ohio,  
7 almost a decade ago, was because of the political  
8 diversity of our state. But our state legislature does  
9 not reflect that diversity.

10           The average statewide vote split over the  
11 past decade has been about 46 percent Democratic and 54  
12 percent Republican. Yet, the officially proposed  
13 Republican maps would give Republicans 66 percent.  
14 That's two-thirds of both House and Senate seats.

15           Since the 2016 election, women across Ohio  
16 suburbs have been increasingly engaged in the civic and  
17 political process here. We've been getting informed on  
18 the issues, finding common cause with women in  
19 neighboring communities, and even running for office.  
20 Still, the number one obstacle to participation is the  
21 belief that your vote, that your actions just don't  
22 matter.

23           I hear it all the time. Women in highly  
24 gerrymandered areas cannot believe that they live in a  
25 district -- different district from their neighbors

1 down the street. But most importantly, they're  
2 demoralized, because they understand that even if they  
3 organize, even if they convince everyone they know on  
4 an issue or for a candidate that they believe in, they  
5 can't secure representation that reflects their voice  
6 or their values. The officially proposed Republican  
7 maps would further disempower voters.

8           Republicans have seen what happens when  
9 suburban women organize. So here's what's going on.  
10 They're attempting to further divide up suburban areas  
11 and dilute our voices. They've also seen what happens  
12 when white, Black, and brown voters in urban and  
13 suburban districts unite across our differences. So  
14 they're attempting to concentrate minority populations  
15 into fewer districts.

16           You see, at the heart of every bully's power  
17 grab is fear. They fear what happens when the rest of  
18 us have a real voice. So I ask you all, the  
19 Redistricting Commission, to say no to these proposed  
20 maps and say yes to the people of Ohio. Thank you so  
21 much for your time.

22           (Applause)

23           CO-CHAIR SYKES: Any questions?

24           Okay. Thank you.

25           STAFF MEMBER: Jacqueline Peck, followed by

1 Peter Petto.

2 JACQUELINE PECK: Jacqueline Peck, J-A-C-Q-U-  
3 E-L-I-N-E, Peck, P-E-C-K. I live in Kent. That's  
4 Ohio Senate District 18 and House District 75, and  
5 Congressional District 13.

6 I thank all of you Commissioners for this  
7 opportunity to speak today. I've edited my comments  
8 based on what we've already heard and I'm focusing on  
9 one issue that's actually a process issue.

10 I'm a professor, retired from the University  
11 of Akron. I have published research. I have worked,  
12 editing research for publication, and I have a great  
13 concern when district maps are drawn without regard to  
14 sound use of data and sound analysis.

15 In the case of drawing these maps, I'm  
16 talking about the data of the census, community  
17 factors, and also voting as our -- as Chris presented,  
18 past voting patterns.

19 I was very pleased to see all of that data  
20 presented in that map, and I will take a much closer  
21 look when I get back home. And I encourage everyone to  
22 do so.

23 I learned a lot through the presentation  
24 about the difficulties of mapping and the challenges,  
25 and I also thank the Sykes for their maps -- Sykes and

1 Sykes. And will be looking closely at that.

2 So I ask you now, just to be sure you engage  
3 in sound use of data, sound analysis of data, and if  
4 the Commission needs help, I suggest Caitlin Johnson,  
5 was it? And her firm that does help in analyzing and  
6 research data, so we heard it today.

7 I also encourage you all, for the benefit of  
8 all of us, to continue working together and come  
9 forward with a map that does honor all voices in the  
10 state of Ohio. Thank you for listening.

11 (Applause)

12 STAFF MEMBER: Peter Petto -- next witness  
13 after Peter Petto is Sharlene Poissant.

14 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Please state and spell your  
15 name, please.

16 PETER PETTO: My name is Peter Petto,  
17 P-E-T-E-R P-E-T-T-O, from Bay Village. House District  
18 16, Senate 24, Congressional 9.

19 I'm a retired high school statistics and  
20 mathematics teacher. I recently helped the League of  
21 Women Voters construct a districting map that was  
22 submitted to the Cuyahoga County Redistricting  
23 Commission and helped several chapters of the League  
24 with community maps that were submitted to Fair  
25 Districts gallery, and the Ohio Citizens Redistricting

1 Commission. I'm here today to offer analysis of the  
2 maps proposed by the Commission on September 9th and  
3 tell you that these maps should not be the maps chosen  
4 for Ohio.

5 On August 23rd, I testified in Cleveland  
6 before this Commission on several topics, including my  
7 community, the west shore suburbs of Cleveland that  
8 comprise Bay Village, Rocky River, Fairview Park, West  
9 Lake and North Olmsted. At that time, I made this  
10 plea: Please don't break up our community.

11 On September 9th, the majority party's  
12 mapmaker, Mr. DiRossi, began his testimony with praise  
13 for all the citizens who had testified at the statewide  
14 Commission hearings. However, I see no evidence in the  
15 maps he produced that he took any of that testimony  
16 into consideration. My West Shore community, with a  
17 total population of 122,879, could have remained intact  
18 as a House district that is within the target range.  
19 Instead, it was split into three House districts.

20 Suburban Rocky River was combined with  
21 Lakewood and a swath of Cleveland that extends nearly  
22 to University Circle, far beyond downtown. Similarly,  
23 suburban Fairview Park was combined with another swath  
24 of Cleveland that snakes eastward across urban  
25 Cleveland to the other side of town past East 80th

1 Street. I've attached maps of those to my written  
2 testimony.

3 The other four community maps that I helped  
4 construct were similarly fractured. Mr. DiRossi also  
5 began by talking about how in a regular map many  
6 municipal boundaries are, and talked about rivers and  
7 gave illustrations about Columbus and elsewhere. I  
8 think it's instructive to look at one place where those  
9 constraints are substantially eliminated within a big  
10 city, the city of Cleveland.

11 Cleveland has a population of 372,624, and  
12 that comprises 3.12 ratios of representation. It must  
13 be split and mathematically could be split into exactly  
14 three House districts, combined into one Senate  
15 district, all weighing in at 4 percent above target.

16 What happened? Cleveland was in the proposed  
17 House maps, split not three ways, not four ways, not  
18 five ways, but eight ways, and only one of those  
19 districts was entirely within Cleveland.

20 Look at the map of the districts I've  
21 provided you, and you will see the dark shadow of 2011,  
22 at least three snake-shaped districts. Many broken  
23 neighborhoods.

24 In hearing -- in that hearing, Mr. DiRossi  
25 said his maps comply with all the constitutional

1 requirements, over and over again, whenever he was  
2 asked about Section 6. A listener to those hearings  
3 might think that he meant that these maps satisfy every  
4 constitutional instruction.

5 That's not what Mr. DiRossi appears to have  
6 meant. I think that what he meant was that the maps  
7 satisfy Section 3, the section labeled Requirements for  
8 Drawing Senate Districts or -- and House Districts.

9 His testimony made clear that they don't  
10 satisfy Section 6, additional district standards, when  
11 he asserted repeatedly that he did not consider  
12 partisan preference. He also claimed that he did not  
13 consider demographics, which speaks to the Voting  
14 Rights Act under federal law.

15 Many maps that satisfy Section 3  
16 constitutional requirements have been submitted to this  
17 Commission. More than a few do better than the  
18 Commission map with respect to other constitutional  
19 derivatives. I believe that for the Commission to  
20 fulfill its Section 6 duty, you need to score each and  
21 every one of those maps' partisan composition and  
22 compactness, and then choose the map among those that  
23 best meets these targets.

24 The other thing that you must do is attempt  
25 or you must attempt to do is to determine whether a map

1 was drawn primarily to favor or disfavor a political  
2 party. At a minimum, you must ask mapmakers about  
3 their mapmaking procedure.

4 I've about a minute more. Would you allow me  
5 to finish? Is that okay?

6 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Please. Please.

7 PETER PETTO: If their mapmaking procedure  
8 was automated, they should disclose the algorithms that  
9 were used. And you should apply statistical methods  
10 that can show impermissible political gerrymandering.

11 If I told you that I didn't use partisan data  
12 to draw a plan, I think that's unpersuasive. Everybody  
13 knows the Democrats are clustered in high population  
14 and urban areas. It's easy to draw a map that favors  
15 one party without using specific data.

16 When I was young, my parents had a lot of  
17 requirements and many standards for my conduct. It was  
18 not unusual for me to say, "I heard you." And they  
19 would reply, "But were you listening?"

20 I hope that you heard and listened to these  
21 thoughts and that you will take them into consideration  
22 as you do the right thing. Thanks for your time. I'm  
23 happy to answer any questions.

24 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Are there any questions?

25 Thank you.

1 PETER PETTO: Thank you.

2 STAFF MEMBER: The next witness is Sharlene  
3 Poissant, followed by Norma Robbins.

4 CO-CHAIR SYKES: The next witness?

5 STAFF MEMBER: The next two witnesses are  
6 Judith Saltzman, followed by Sarah Serrasene  
7 (phonetic).

8 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness?

9 STAFF MEMBER: The next witness is Juliet  
10 Sweany, followed by Daniel Sweeney.

11 DANIEL SWEENEY: Good evening.

12 CO-CHAIR SYKES: State your name and spell  
13 it, please.

14 DANIEL SWEENEY: Daniel Sweeney, M.D. I'm in  
15 from Bay Village, Ohio. First of all, I'm glad to be  
16 able to speak here this evening. I think you needed to  
17 hear from another Sweeney if you come to Cleveland,  
18 Ohio.

19 I am a recently retired family physician.  
20 And as such, one of the things I'd like the co-chairs  
21 to do is to make sure their Commission members wear  
22 their masks when they're in these meetings.

23 (Applause)

24 DANIEL SWEENEY: Everyone -- every other  
25 person in this room has been wearing a mask throughout

1 the hours we've been here, and I wish that all the  
2 Commission -- Commissioners were doing the same until  
3 they had to speak, like I'm speaking now. So that's my  
4 off-the-cuff comment.

5 I have a long political ties with Ohio. My  
6 grandfather was the Honorable Mark Nell Sweeney,  
7 Congressman from Cleveland from 1932 to 1942 during the  
8 New Deal -- Deal era.

9 My father was Honorable Robert E. Sweeney,  
10 who was a congressman at large from 1964 to '66, during  
11 the Great Society Congress. And he also was County  
12 Commissioner of County -- Cuyahoga County from '72 to  
13 1976, and a good friend of George Voinovich and Seth  
14 Taft, even though he was a Democrat and they were  
15 Republicans.

16 Because I have such lineage, I have a strong  
17 interest on our political landscape in Ohio. I  
18 consider myself a progressive independent and speak  
19 here as an Ohio citizen. I am markedly disappointed  
20 and actually appalled at the map that was put forward  
21 by the majority of this Commission. I'm concerned  
22 about the state as a whole, and not just about  
23 Northeast Ohio.

24 I did some simple calculations, and this is  
25 not based on maps. The state of Ohio, as of the 2020

1 census, has 11,689,100 citizens. I then looked at the  
2 top 17 counties, which are mostly urban and suburban  
3 with the highest population. Those populations were  
4 7,332,229. The other 77 counties were predominantly  
5 rural and their population was 4,467,219.

6 If you look at the divide between the rural  
7 counties, which most often are Republican or lean  
8 Republican, and the Democratic urban or suburban ones  
9 that most often are leaning Democrat, 62 percent are  
10 with the 17 counties of urban and suburban. And 38  
11 percent was with the other 77 counties.

12 Since most of the counties swing republic --  
13 since mostly rural counties swing Republican, and most  
14 urban and suburban are now swinging Democrat, the  
15 current Commission maps at 65 percent Republican and 35  
16 to 45 percent Democratic reverse this number and  
17 ignores the reality of 2020 census of the State of Ohio  
18 and population shifts.

19 If the Commission was to follow the 2015 and  
20 2018 Ohio Constitution, and these simple calculations,  
21 their maps reflect somewhere between 55 and 60 percent  
22 Democratic leaning and only 45 -- 40 to 45 percent  
23 Republican leaning based on the demographics.

24 The other important thing that's been spoke  
25 about here is how this affects the minority population,

1 21 percent of which in the state of Ohio is 2,578,791.  
2 The vast majority of these live in urban areas or  
3 suburban areas. The Commission's maps ignoring the  
4 2020 data is, in effect, disenfranchising millions of  
5 the minority community in Ohio.

6 These maps should not be adopted by the  
7 Commission; and if adopted, are in violation of Ohio  
8 Constitutional amendments. And the very -- other voter  
9 they will disenfranchise is myself as an Ohio citizen.  
10 Thank you.

11 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Are there any questions?

12 Thank you.

13 Next witness?

14 STAFF MEMBER: Paul Szymanowski, followed by  
15 Rob Thompson.

16 CO-CHAIR SYKES: State your name and spell  
17 it, please.

18 ROB THOMPSON: Good afternoon. I'm Rob  
19 Thompson, T-H-O-M-P-S-O-N.

20 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you.

21 ROB THOMPSON: I listened to the online  
22 testimony of Commission members on 9 September when  
23 your map was introduced. Most Commission members  
24 admitted that the map was a work in progress and  
25 promised to work in a bipartisan manner over the

1 weekend to improve the map.

2 Have changes been made to the map? If so,  
3 why hasn't the new map in progress been published?

4 Seeing your work is essential for public  
5 input. The Ohio Constitution requires a map that be  
6 accompanied by a statement explaining what the  
7 Commission determined to be the statewide preference of  
8 the voters of Ohio, based on the election results  
9 during the last ten years.

10 Where is that statement? And what is the  
11 preference ratio for Republican and Democrat that you  
12 used in arriving at your map?

13 And any map must be accompanied by a  
14 statement that describes how the statewide proportion  
15 of districts in the plan corresponds closely to those  
16 voter preferences.

17 Where is that statement? And how do you show  
18 this correspondence?

19 My point is that written statements provide  
20 more insight into your thinking than even the maps do.  
21 It's too bad that we won't even see these statements  
22 until a map is adopted.

23 The proposed State House map has little  
24 correspondence to voter preferences. Putting aside the  
25 competitive districts, the Republican map provides 56

1 Republican-leaning districts, but only 22  
2 Democrat-leaning districts. So you want us to accept a  
3 72 percent Republican-weighted map when the Ohio  
4 constitution requires a 55 percent Republican-weighted  
5 map. If the proposed maps do not follow the Ohio  
6 Constitution, then Ohioans reject the maps.

7           The Ohio Constitution states that no general  
8 assembly district plan should be drawn primarily to  
9 favor or disfavor a political party. I, by myself,  
10 using only public software, devised a map for more  
11 representative than your maps even with all your state  
12 resources available to you.

13           The winners of the Fair Districts competition  
14 and others produced excellent maps; fair, compact and  
15 with attention to non-white voters. Ohioans reject the  
16 Commission's maps and demand much, much better.

17           To be more specific, I looked at your State  
18 House map and focused on the five districts in the  
19 Toledo area. One of your proposed districts starts in  
20 the western suburbs, snakes along the Maumee River, and  
21 ends in the eastern and northern suburbs, almost a  
22 complete circle. Is that what you call compact?

23           Another district is a wonderful example of  
24 gerrymandered packing. 75 percent Democrat. My edits  
25 preserve communities, give compact shapes, and produce

1 fair districts. The Toledo area votes 54 percent  
2 Democrat and 43 percent Republican, and my map has  
3 three Democrat-leaning districts and two  
4 Republican-leaning districts. A representative map.

5 I hope you will give my edits and others'  
6 edits your utmost attention. I have the maps here.

7 The Ohio Constitution allows for the Ohio  
8 Supreme Court to intervene if the statewide proportion  
9 of districts in the plan whose voters favor each  
10 political party does not correspond closely to the  
11 statewide preferences of the voters of Ohio. The  
12 proposed maps are in violation. If you want a court  
13 fight, you're going to get one.

14 Please avoid a public, lengthy court battle  
15 that serves no one well. Get to work, do what Ohioans  
16 want, not only what you want. Thank you.

17 (Applause)

18 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Any questions?

19 Thank you.

20 Next witness?

21 STAFF MEMBER: Heather Tuck-Macalla, followed  
22 by Robin Turner.

23 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Please state your name and  
24 spell it, please.

25 ROBIN TURNER: Absolutely. Robin Turner.

1 R-O-B-I-N T-U-R-N-E-R. Good evening, Co-Chair Sykes,  
2 Co-Chair Cupp, and members of the Ohio Redistricting  
3 Commission. Thank you for the opportunity to be here  
4 today.

5 I'm here today to talk about why fair  
6 districts are important to my community and why the  
7 past ten years of gerrymandering in Ohio has been so  
8 devastating for so many of us in Ohio. Again, my name  
9 is Robin Turner. I'm a mother, I'm a community leader,  
10 and also happen to be formerly incarcerated.

11 I am from Cleveland, Ohio. And over the past  
12 ten years, I have seen my community's political power  
13 and ability to influence policies that affect, to  
14 decline due to unfair maps and rigged rules of the  
15 political game. I am very concerned and worried about  
16 the safety of my family and myself. There's been an  
17 increase in poverty and crime where I'm from,  
18 especially violent crimes involving guns. I'm always  
19 contemplating moving out of this area, but what would I  
20 -- what would that solve if I move? I'm not the kind  
21 of person who runs from problems that plague the  
22 neighborhood I'm from.

23 I want to help find solutions. I work with  
24 Ohio Organizing Collaborative, and our members,  
25 organizations in regards to Building Freedom Ohio,

1 which builds political power for formerly incarcerated  
2 individuals and their families. But the problem is, I  
3 don't think that many elected officials really know  
4 what happens in our neighborhoods. I never see or hear  
5 from any of them until it's time for reelection.

6           When it comes to making my community better,  
7 and making all of Ohio better, the gerrymandered  
8 districts we've had for the last decade keeps us from  
9 getting to that. We are never able to move our agenda  
10 forward because we don't have any power to make policy  
11 at the state level. We want to build a safer community  
12 by ending mass incarceration and investing in our  
13 communities, but all too often, our voices are unheard.

14           There's a total mistrust of political  
15 officials, which is not how a democracy is supposed to  
16 work. All people in this state, no matter their  
17 background, or where they live, what color, deserve to  
18 feel and be seen represented by the people we elect.  
19 I'm asking the Commission to please put party interests  
20 aside to make sure that the people in our state have a  
21 chance to create solutions and make their communities  
22 better.

23           Please follow the spirit and the letter of  
24 the reforms Ohioans voted for in 2015. We need real  
25 representation in this state, which means the number of

1 Democratic and Republican seats in the House and Senate  
2 need to mirror how Ohioans actually vote, roughly 46  
3 percent Democrat and 54 percent Republican.

4 We live in uncertain times. We deserve more  
5 certainty that our voices will be heard and our  
6 interests represented. Thank you again for the  
7 opportunity to be here. This concludes my testimony.

8 (Applause)

9 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Are there any questions?  
10 Thank you.

11 The next witness?

12 STAFF MEMBER: David Wales (phonetic)  
13 followed by Joshua Walker.

14 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness?

15 STAFF MEMBER: Maureen Welch, followed by  
16 Tessa Xuan.

17 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Please state and spell your  
18 name, please.

19 SUE DYKE: I'm testifying on behalf of my  
20 friend who can't be here today for medical reasons.  
21 And she can't testify virtually, so she asked me to  
22 read her testimony for her.

23 Her name is Maureen Welch and I am Sue Dyke.  
24 And I'm just reading her testimony that she sent me  
25 today. There's no way for her to testify, so I just

1 wanted to make sure her voice could be heard.

2 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you.

3 SUE DYKE: Okay. I'm going to skip the  
4 platitudes and I'm just going to go right into it.

5 Maureen Welch is a resident of Guilford  
6 Township in Medina County and I'm presenting testimony  
7 on her behalf.

8 Let's see. I have -- she says, I have been  
9 recently interacting with Medina County citizens about  
10 redistricting reforms since early 2016. Most recently,  
11 I've been facilitating groups, providing input for  
12 community maps in Medina County.

13 I don't think we talked about Medina at all  
14 today, so I just wanted to -- I feel like this -- her  
15 testimony should really be paid attention to. Let's  
16 see.

17 It was alarming but very telling to hear that  
18 the mapmakers were instructed by GOP legislative  
19 leadership to disregard the Voting Rights Act and  
20 proportionality as required in the Ohio State  
21 Constitution. It was not surprising the independent  
22 mapping experts quickly indicated the map is not  
23 competitive and will ensure a Republican stronghold in  
24 the Ohio statehouse, even ensuring that Republicans  
25 pick up several more seats.

1           The official working map, on these grounds  
2 alone, is unacceptable to the voters of Ohio who  
3 overwhelmingly supported the 2015 state redistricting  
4 reforms, and we demand that you work with the minority  
5 members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission to develop  
6 fair, proportional and competitive legislative maps.

7           I also have concerns related to Medina  
8 County. Even though there is no reason to split Medina  
9 County, on your official map it is split, yet again, in  
10 a north/south manner and the western half of the Medina  
11 County is paired in a district with Ashland and  
12 Northwest Holmes county, with Wayne county sitting  
13 specifically -- conspicuously sitting between Medina  
14 and Holmes. This does not benefit Medina voters and  
15 does not reflect where they spend most of their time.

16           In 2021, while mapping where Medina Countians  
17 live, work, shop, and spend their leisure time and get  
18 their health care, not one person mentioned Ashland or  
19 Holmes county as communities of interest or traveling  
20 there regularly for services or work. This is yet  
21 another attempt to gerrymander Medina voters, placing  
22 us at a disadvantage when petitioning our legislative  
23 officials, ensuring the continuing problem that voters  
24 do not know who the representatives and senators are  
25 and even worse, the offices of the representatives and

1 senators are confused by the gerrymandered districts  
2 and don't know where their districts are.

3 That confusion is a diversion from public  
4 service and takes away from voters trying to work with  
5 legislators on issues and concerns. Gerrymandering,  
6 which is what you guys have done with the GOP or Matt  
7 Huffman's map is a way legislators turned their backs  
8 on voters and create apathy amongst the population.  
9 And maybe that's what you need to get reelected is  
10 voter apathy. That's my comment. Sorry. Sorry,  
11 Mosey.

12 I ask you to consider Jeff Wise's Ohio House  
13 and Senate maps. In these maps Medina County is whole  
14 and paired with Wayne and Western Summit counties,  
15 which makes total sense if you're trying to keep  
16 communities of like interests together. In talking  
17 with community members all over Medina County in 2021,  
18 people cited strong ties to the Western Summit County  
19 for shopping, leisure, health care services, and work,  
20 as well as residents from Southern Medina. People all  
21 over the county consistently mentioned easy access to  
22 I-76 and 71 and it makes it easy to get to Fairlawn,  
23 Akron and Cleveland. They have infrastructure in  
24 Medina County, as well as environmental and health care  
25 concerns, such as there's no hospital that delivers

1 babies in Medina County.

2           Anyway, I'm going to -- I'm speeding along  
3 here. Ohio voters spoke with their vote in 2015. We  
4 do not want to be packed and cracked into gerrymandered  
5 districts that dilute our votes and make the primaries  
6 the competitive race and the general election a done  
7 deal, even though the gerrymander is hidden in false  
8 compactness. Ohio voters expect and are asking the  
9 Ohio Redistricting Commission to follow the letter in  
10 the spirit of the redistricting form passed in 2015.  
11 We spoke with our votes in 2015, and those votes are  
12 clear.

13           We want proportional districts and  
14 competitive districts that represent the population of  
15 Ohio and do not unfairly benefit one political party  
16 over another due to gerrymandering. Draw fair  
17 districts and let the chips fall where they may.  
18 Medina County wants to remain whole and be placed with  
19 communities that reflect where we spend our time and  
20 share our values. It is very clear that Jeff Wise's  
21 map for the House and Senate meet these standards.  
22 Consider these maps as the official working map, or I  
23 would say, now that you presented a Democratic  
24 compromise map, perhaps you should -- this is my  
25 comments here -- that you consider that as you're

1 working map.

2           It's time for the Ohio Redistricting  
3 Commission to reevaluate their course of foot-dragging,  
4 apathy, and blatant noncompliance with the Ohio  
5 constitution and federal law and pivot to passionate  
6 and hearty bipartisan work to do the will of Ohio  
7 voters. And if -- in case you're wondering what we  
8 mean by hearty bipartisan work, it means meet with each  
9 other outside of this formal public meeting and hash it  
10 out. Again, those are my comments. Very -- I continue  
11 to be frustrated that no progress has been made since -  
12 - other than what the Democrats, the Senate Democrats  
13 have provided today in advancing fair maps.

14           And, Secretary LaRose, I would just like to  
15 mention, it's really not fair for you to ask people  
16 what they think about the Democratic senate maps that  
17 were just presented before we showed up in this  
18 meeting. How are we supposed to do that.

19           CO-CHAIR SYKES: Please address the chair.

20           SUE DYKE: Thank you.

21           CO-CHAIR SYKES: Please address the chair.

22           SUE DYKE: Any questions? I don't know if I  
23 can answer questions about Medina, but I will try.

24           CO-CHAIR SYKES: Secretary LaRose?

25           SECRETARY LAROSE: Thank you, Co-Chair.

1           And, yes, ma'am I understand the frustration.  
2   My email address is Frank@ohiosos.gov, so once you do  
3   get a chance to look at the Democratic maps, please do  
4   let me know -- just so that you know, we are working  
5   together. As we speak actually, both Republican and  
6   Democratic staffers, while we're busy here, are  
7   collaborating and trying to find opportunities for  
8   middle ground. The auditor and I met with the Senate  
9   Democrats and House Democrats today. So those are the  
10   kind of things, and I believe others have as well. So  
11   very much a work in progress there.

12           My question is about your Medina County  
13   comments. So I want to understand correctly. What  
14   you're saying is that Medina County should be kept  
15   whole within one House district. Is that what your  
16   testimony was?

17           SUE DYKE: Mrs. Mosey's testimony, Maureen  
18   Welch. And I don't see why it needs to be split in  
19   half if you're taking pieces from other counties, I  
20   mean, just from a logical standpoint. But I would like  
21   to just respond also to your comment, is that even  
22   calling your office every week and we speak with Mr.  
23   Ward. And he's still talking about the census being  
24   the reason that nothing's getting done. So maybe you  
25   need to advise him differently. And so I just wanted

1 to, you know, again, point that out.

2 In addition, I noticed that you were telling  
3 Mr. Conwell to hurry up and get comments to you, that  
4 he shouldn't write a letter, because that's going to  
5 take too long. That's not his problem. This is the  
6 Commission's problem. And as far as we're concerned, I  
7 mean, I think I speak for a lot of people in this room  
8 who expect you to be meeting with each other outside of  
9 sitting behind a table and it doesn't seem to be  
10 happening.

11 I mean, I appreciate the fact that you're  
12 talking here and that you're asking questions, but  
13 y'all should have been meeting for months now.  
14 All right? Maybe even -- maybe -- well, maybe starting  
15 in January, I'll give you that, all right, when the new  
16 session started. But I mean, that's no substitute.  
17 It's nice, but it's no substitute.

18 You need to be sitting in a conference room  
19 talking to each other and hashing it out. And  
20 nothing's happened since I testified, what was it,  
21 Wednesday or Thursday of last week in Columbus.

22 So anyway, that's not Mosey's testimony,  
23 that's mine. I'm sorry, but I mean, when you ask  
24 questions and you make comments like that, this is the  
25 way people feel in this room, like we're just not being

1 listened to. You hear us, but you don't do anything.  
2 I mean, nothing's changed since Wednesday. I've had to  
3 prepare multiple testimonies for this. What have you  
4 done?

5                   Anyway, so I'm done.

6                   SECRETARY LAROSE: Mr. Co-chair, a member of  
7 my staff was mentioned. I do want to say that Mr. Ward  
8 is a very dedicated and hard-working and valued member  
9 of our team. The point that he makes is a valid one  
10 about the census bureau data being five months late.  
11 It has put us in a great --

12                   SUE DYKE: This is a tired argument.

13                   SECRETARY LAROSE: But it's a fact that have  
14 put us at a great disadvantage, but nonetheless, this  
15 is the circumstance we have to deal with. And that's  
16 why I've asked if someone does have some constructive  
17 feedback, we're up against a deadline of this  
18 Wednesday. And so just as a practical matter, the  
19 sooner we can hear that, the better, and I really  
20 appreciate that.

21                   SUE DYKE: We gave you that constructive  
22 feedback since March. Okay? We have been calling all  
23 of your offices since March. This is nothing new. All  
24 right? And for you to sit here smug --

25                   CO-CHAIR SYKES: Please. Please. Please

1 direct to the Chair, please.

2 SUE DYKE: I'm sorry.

3 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Yes.

4 SUE DYKE: For us to be treated in a way  
5 where we are pushed away when we make calls every week,  
6 if not more frequently, and we've been bugging  
7 everybody to do this. You guys, the Republicans,  
8 control the process and you are the reason that this is  
9 up -- that our backs, all of our backs are up against  
10 the wall. You put us here and that's why we're angry.  
11 You had plenty of notice.

12 So I don't -- I apologize for not doing your  
13 decorum here, but I'm just a regular person who's just  
14 very upset that you have put our backs against the wall  
15 and your own.

16 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you very much.

17 SUE DYKE: Thank you.

18 (Applause)

19 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness?

20 LEADER SYKES: State Representative Juanita  
21 Brent.

22 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Please state your name and  
23 spell it please.

24 TESSA XUAN: Hello. My name is Tessa Xuan,  
25 T-E-S-S-A X-U-A-N. I believe it's my turn.

1           Good evening. Thank you for the opportunity  
2 to testify. I'm a resident of the Ohio City  
3 neighborhood in Cleveland. I serve as the statewide  
4 director of OPAL, a statewide grassroots feminist  
5 organization that is building power with Asian,  
6 Asian-American, and Pacific Islander communities across  
7 Ohio.

8           I'm here to oppose the acceptance of the  
9 proposed Republican voting district maps, and instead  
10 strongly support fair maps that leads to a robust and  
11 participatory democracy in our state. I'm a proud  
12 Ohioan. I've lived in Ohio since my family first moved  
13 here from Kentucky when I was two years old. And  
14 during my lifetime, I've lived in seven different  
15 counties across the state.

16           The makeup of the current gerrymandered state  
17 house does not accurately represent the state that I  
18 live in. And as a result, our state house has  
19 consistently skewed unfairly toward one political  
20 party, focusing its energy on pushing through extreme  
21 policies that benefit a select few, rather than feeling  
22 the pressure to solve the problems that the majority of  
23 us care about.

24           Firstly, I'd like to say that as an Ohioan  
25 and as an Asian-American, I'm still feeling quite

1 furious about the HB-6 nuclear bribery scandal, which  
2 was described as likely the largest bribery/money  
3 laundering scheme ever perpetrated against the people  
4 of the state of Ohio by us attorney David M. Devillers.  
5 This bribery scandal has put Ohio on the map as having  
6 one of the most corrupt state legislatures in the  
7 nation. Not only did our lawmakers try to steal  
8 \$1.3 billion from working families across the state,  
9 they also stood by and said nothing, basically giving a  
10 pass when dark money poured into mailers, going to  
11 every single household that engaged in racist,  
12 xenophobic, misleading, and fear-mongering tactics.  
13 And these are tactics that have made Ohio a less safe  
14 state for people who look like me.

15 This is an age-old strategy of demonizing and  
16 scapegoating foreign countries and immigrant  
17 communities in order to get away with harming  
18 predominantly black, brown, and poor communities.  
19 Gerrymandering is why our officials thought that they  
20 would be able to get away with this corruption. And  
21 gerrymandering is why HB-6 has still not been fully.

22 If the Republican-proposed Ohio House map is  
23 adopted, then my neighbors across the street from me in  
24 Ohio City will live in a completely different district.  
25 The line on West 50th Street does not make any sense

1 based on --it's not a natural boundary for our  
2 community. The tight-knit community that I live in  
3 will be split up and our power will be diluted.

4 Representational fairness should also include  
5 an effort to draw districts in a way that the voices of  
6 minority populations are not drowned out. The current  
7 proposed maps from the Republicans does exactly this to  
8 Asian and AAPI populations in black and brown  
9 communities in Ohio.

10 I am a member of the AsiaTown Cleveland  
11 Advisory Committee and the Republican-proposed maps  
12 draw awkward lines around this working-class, low-  
13 income immigrant neighborhood separating AsiaTown from  
14 black and brown communities that share similar  
15 interests and socioeconomic status to the east of the  
16 neighborhood.

17 I also know that Asian and AAPI communities  
18 were disappointed this past year and a half to see the  
19 state legislature almost completely ignore the  
20 resurgence in acts of violence against our communities.  
21 We heard from seat officials that token representation  
22 on a few committees was a substitute for measures of  
23 actual substance with actual funding that we knew would  
24 keep our communities safe. My fellow OPAL members  
25 brought painful stories to our state representatives of

1 being verbally assaulted on the Cleveland RTA, our  
2 elders being spit on while walking down the street, our  
3 children being called racial slurs while getting ice  
4 cream at Graeter's, and even one Vietnamese restaurant  
5 in Dayton being forced to shut down after being set on  
6 fire and spray painted with the words "China virus."

7 Even after the mass shootings in Atlanta and  
8 Indianapolis targeting Asian and Sikh American workers,  
9 not even a resolution acknowledging these harmful  
10 incidents was passed. The state house has not been  
11 responsive to our needs and it's clear that it has not  
12 been looking out for our interests in any meaningful  
13 way. The fact that the members of this Commission  
14 admitted they did not even consider the importance of  
15 racial composition while drawing maps is unacceptable  
16 and disrespectful to our communities.

17 I just ask that you please honor and protect  
18 our democracy by setting a level playing field and  
19 adopting maps that reflect the political and modern  
20 racial makeup of Ohio. Thank you so much.

21 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Any questions? Leader  
22 Sykes?

23 LEADER SYKES: Thank you so much for your  
24 testimony today. I really appreciate you sharing about  
25 the AAPI community in Northeast Ohio, specifically

1 Cleveland. So you went through very quickly the part  
2 of the city where there are new Americans residing and  
3 if you could just be a little bit more specific so as  
4 we take your feedback, we can better understand where  
5 you want us to move things.

6 TESSA XUAN: So AsiaTown is just east of  
7 downtown Cleveland and in both the House and Senate  
8 proposed maps from Senator Huffman, there are awkward  
9 lines that basically cut off the AsiaTown neighborhood  
10 from other working-class low-income neighborhoods  
11 directly surrounding Asia town. It's -- I think in  
12 this map it shows -- it's the very east part of  
13 District 13, so it's in the same district as Rocky  
14 River, which does not share similar socioeconomic  
15 status or, you know, similar interests of housing  
16 insecurity, interests of, you know, needing more green  
17 space in the neighborhoods. So that, that district  
18 line does not make sense.

19 And I've -- I'm on the AsiaTown Advisory  
20 Committee, I've worked with the Midtown Cleveland CDC.  
21 So it's, it's cutting through Midtown as well.

22 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you very much.

23 TESSA XUAN: Thank you.

24 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness.

25 LEADER SYKES: State Representative Juanita

1 Brent followed by Jaladah Aslam.

2 REPRESENTATIVE BRENT: Thank you, co-chairs  
3 and commissioners -- I mean Commission for coming to  
4 House 12, so thank you for coming to my House district.  
5 I have a plethora of notes from texts, from people who  
6 have sent me texts who are sitting at home because we  
7 do not honor -- or not, not honor, but offer virtual  
8 options. So you will hear me talk about multiple parts  
9 of this Cuyahoga County.

10 First a note that was given to me is that  
11 Cleveland needs to have multiple districts in Cuyahoga  
12 County that touch Cleveland, but not at the expense of  
13 diluting black and brown communities. I will get into  
14 the details of that.

15 House District 13, which includes Lakewood,  
16 which is on the farthest west side of the county and  
17 ends over in the Hough community, which has become the  
18 new Snake on the Lake. If you have looked at Hough,  
19 that is a historically black community. And then you  
20 look at Lakewood, that is a very progressive community,  
21 in so many words, but communities that do not tend to  
22 mix when it comes to voting habits or demographics at  
23 all, and is very far in between each one. And it's  
24 very -- it's not compact at all.

25 Also point number three about Solon being

1 split, Solon was one of our cities that has worked  
2 really well about where is working within our region.  
3 It's no reason that a anchor city like itself is being  
4 split within our State House District 18, which  
5 includes Fairview Park, which has an average income of  
6 \$68,000 goes all the way -- House District 18 goes all  
7 the way to Ward 5 of Cleveland, which is the poorest  
8 part of our state, which is the most concentrated part  
9 of not having wealth. The average income in Cleveland  
10 Ward 5 is 11,000 in that part of the public housing  
11 area. So why would we put public housing, which is the  
12 average income is 11,000, with Fairview Park, which is  
13 a farthest Western part of it, which is also put in  
14 House District 18?

15 House District 21 includes Woodmere, which is  
16 the only city that is not be -- that's part of the  
17 Orange school district that is not in House -- that's  
18 being split from that House District. Problem with  
19 that, even if you look at the Orange school district,  
20 is being split up between two Senate districts and  
21 three House districts is being split up between House  
22 District 21, House District 20 -- I mean House District  
23 23, House District 22, and House District 21 with all  
24 the different school districts. It's very problematic  
25 that we have five cities that are all part of this

1 school district and they are being split up between two  
2 different Senate districts and three different House  
3 seats. Orange school district has an A rating and the  
4 communities are very close over there. People work  
5 really well. And it's like, why are we splitting them  
6 between three points of representation for this House  
7 District?

8 House District 18 and House District 20  
9 splits up Ward 7, which includes our AsiaTown. It also  
10 includes Hough. These are communities that are very  
11 intertwined with each other. And you also break up  
12 part of the AsiaTown also.

13 House District 23, which is the joke on the  
14 side Cuyahoga County is our three-ring circus of three  
15 different counties being split up. If we were to just  
16 decrease the amount of population for each House  
17 District, we would not need to have a House District  
18 that goes into three different counties for House  
19 District 23.

20 The Fairfax community, which is in House  
21 District 21 and 20, which is being split, which is a  
22 community that's being intentionally split is the  
23 Fairfax and Larchmere community, which is being split  
24 up. That's another community that's being split up  
25 right now. And then very important, downtown

1 Cleveland, which is being split up between House  
2 District 18 and 13. Our downtown should not be split  
3 up between two different House districts. Historically  
4 it's all kept as whole and now you're splitting it up  
5 into two different districts.

6 And also our Cleveland Clinic area, which is  
7 very growing, is being split up between House District  
8 20 and House District 13, which is very problematic as  
9 we are growing businesses within that area and also  
10 when it comes to housing.

11 I'm respectful of time, so I stopped. Did  
12 you have any questions?

13 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Any questions? Secretary  
14 LaRose?

15 SECRETARY LAROSE: Thank you, Representative.  
16 Appreciate the detailed look at the Cuyahoga County map  
17 that you've done there. And I know, as was expressed  
18 earlier, that the time to review the proposal from the  
19 House and Senate Democrats has only been limited, but,  
20 if you do get a chance to take a look at that, I'd love  
21 to hear your feedback when you get a chance. Please  
22 don't hesitate to shoot me an email.

23 REPRESENTATIVE BRENT: I will.

24 SECRETARY LAROSE: All right. Thank you,  
25 Representative.

1 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you very much.

2 Thanks. Next presenter.

3 LEADER SYKES: The next witness is Jolanda  
4 Ozlem.

5 JALADAH ASLAM: Nope. That's not how you say  
6 it.

7 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Pronounce and please spell  
8 your name please.

9 JALADAH ASLAM: Absolutely. Good evening.  
10 Thank you. Chairs, Co-chairs Cupp and Sykes, Governor  
11 DeWine. I see you still there. Leader Sykes,  
12 Secretary LaRose, and Auditor Faber. My name is  
13 Jaladah Aslam. First name is J-A-L-A-D-A-H, last name  
14 is A-S-L-A-M. I live in Austintown township in  
15 Mahoning county, and I'm here as president of the  
16 Youngstown Warren Black Caucus.

17 I'm not going to go over some of my  
18 testimony, as you've already heard it. And I think we  
19 all know where we're at. The reality is, is that the  
20 voters have said twice that we want this thing fixed.  
21 The voters have said, overwhelmingly, we want this  
22 thing fixed. And that's true. Let's be honest.  
23 Ohioans don't agree on things like this. We don't  
24 agree at 70 and 75 percent of the time of the way  
25 something should be done. We've been clear on what we

1 want to happen here. And so I hope that the map that  
2 was approved strictly on partisan lines, by a vote of  
3 5-2 last week is truly a starting place; it is not  
4 where we will end up, because I can tell you there  
5 isn't a single person that I've talked to on either  
6 side of the aisle in my community that will be happy  
7 with those districts.

8 I do want to point out a couple of things to  
9 you. First of all, looking at the map that was  
10 submitted, my Senate district would really be adversely  
11 affected. I live in a 33rd Senate district and the  
12 proposal put forth by the majority party added Carroll  
13 County to that district. Now, Carroll County and  
14 Mahoning County don't have anything in common. Okay?  
15 Not only that, you're taking a city that is majority  
16 minority, Youngstown, and you're packing us with  
17 Columbiana and Carroll Counties.

18 Now, Columbia is already part of the  
19 district. By moving Carroll County into that district,  
20 that's just a way of ensuring more Republican votes,  
21 and so that the African-Americans and Latinos in the  
22 Youngstown area will not be adequately represented.  
23 That's a problem. That's a major problem.

24 And before I'm asked by the auditor, did I  
25 look at the new maps? Yes, they did take Carroll

1 County out of that district. And thank you very much  
2 to the Senate and the House Democrats for looking at  
3 that.

4 I do want to say something else. I do a lot  
5 of work with young people, trying to get them engaged  
6 in the political process, trying to get them involved  
7 in campaigns and the importance of voting. And when  
8 people submit -- when you guys submit maps that are  
9 heavily gerrymandered after the voters have told you  
10 that that's not what they want, it really proves to the  
11 young people that everything that we tell them is not  
12 true, is true. When we tell them, don't worry, the  
13 system isn't rigged against you, don't worry that  
14 you're going to be treated fairly, don't worry, your  
15 voice is going to be heard, your vote counts, and when  
16 they see something like this, then they say, see,  
17 what's the point? Why should we get involved?

18 That's not something -- that's not a legacy  
19 that I want to leave to our next generation. And I  
20 don't think any of us here should want them to feel  
21 that way. So I'm asking that you, as a body, as one  
22 commission, instead of looking at just Democratic maps  
23 and Republican maps, come up with a map that's fair to  
24 all Ohioans, submit that to us, and please make sure  
25 that it is fair. Because I'm telling you now, if it's

1 not fair, you know this is not going to end well, it's  
2 not going to end today. There's going to be lawsuits  
3 and there's already talk about another referendum going  
4 on the ballot. And the next time we will not be asking  
5 elected officials to do this. We will be asking an  
6 independent commission because you will have failed us  
7 and failed us miserably.

8 (Applause)

9 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Are there any questions?  
10 Thank you very much.

11 JALADAH ASLAM: Any questions? I do have --

12 LEADER SYKES: The next witness is Jane  
13 Genevieve followed by Kelly Gauche.

14 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness please.

15 LEADER SYKES: The next two witnesses are  
16 David Gorrin followed by Laura Irvin.

17 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Would you state and spell  
18 your name please?

19 KELLY GOSHE: Hi, my name is Kelly Goshe.  
20 It's not at all what it looks like, I know. It's  
21 K-E-L-L-Y G-O-S-H-E. Thank you, all of you, for still  
22 being here.

23 Members of the commission, thank you for  
24 allowing me to speak today. My name is Kelly Goshe. I  
25 reside in Moreland Hills. My kids attend Orange school

1 district. Thank you for the shout out. She's right.  
2 I currently reside in Ohio House District 6 and Ohio  
3 Senate District 24. Before I start my official  
4 testimony, I want to make two points. I'd like to  
5 refer to the Ohio Constitution, Article 11(3)(a), which  
6 is about the requirements for drawing house of  
7 representative districts for the general assembly.

8 It says the whole population of the state, as  
9 determined by the federal decennial census, or if such  
10 as unavailable, such other basis as the general  
11 assembly may direct. So I'm not an attorney. I don't  
12 know the Ohio Constitution by heart, but it seems to me  
13 that maybe the general assembly like could have gotten  
14 the ball rolling a little earlier on this. Yes, we  
15 wouldn't have had perfect numbers, but could have  
16 gotten a start and then proceeded further when the  
17 census information was available.

18 Also to the question several times about  
19 whether people have looked at the initial Democratic  
20 map, I haven't heard any speakers today say that the  
21 Democratic map was the end-all/be-all. I haven't heard  
22 any speaker say, ignore everything else, just go with  
23 that one. It is the Republican map that this  
24 commission has so far voted on and put forth to the  
25 public. So I think it makes sense that it's the

1 Republican map and the Republican gerrymandering,  
2 Republican packing, Republican cracking, that is what  
3 people have spoken about today.

4 If the commission wants to go back to the  
5 initial Democratic map and put forth that as the  
6 working map, by all means, I guarantee you people would  
7 have had comments on it. I looked at it briefly. I  
8 would have had comments on it as well. So I think  
9 that's our starting point.

10 Much of my prepared testimony was either  
11 highlighted or negated by the amended proposal that was  
12 put forth earlier by Senator Sykes and Representative  
13 Sykes. I came to highlight the splitting of District  
14 23, the splitting of Orange school districts, cities.  
15 Thank you, Representative Brent; I appreciate your  
16 comments. And also the splitting of the City of Solon,  
17 which makes no sense whatsoever. I live very close to  
18 Som Center Road and under the proposed maps, if you  
19 travel Som Center Road from the top of Solon to the  
20 bottom of Solon, which is only five miles, you would go  
21 back and forth between districts six times. That seems  
22 a little crazy to me.

23 Instead I was going to recommend Mr. Jeff  
24 Wise's submitted maps, which keeps the City of Solon  
25 intact in my district, but apparently splits cities in

1 others. I admit I have three children, three young  
2 children. I had to bribe them with a lot of candy just  
3 so I could sit and look at the maps in my district, so  
4 I apologize if I didn't closely examine other  
5 districts. Without having looked at it closely, it  
6 does appear that the proposed amended map we just heard  
7 about closely abides with the Ohio Constitution.

8 Thank you again, Representative Sykes and  
9 Senator Sykes and to the gentlemen who explained that  
10 information. I hope this committee is sincere in its  
11 gratitude for their good faith effort. I hope you vote  
12 on that amended now, today and maybe take that up as  
13 your new working map.

14 When I spoke to this commission in Akron, I  
15 highlighted the importance of competition in our  
16 districts. No, not all districts have to be  
17 competitive, and that is not a requirement outlined in  
18 the constitution, but surely having more competitive  
19 districts as allowed for in the Sykes' amended  
20 proposal, more competition is better. Competition,  
21 spurs innovation. Competition spurs growth. , Ohio and  
22 its economy needs more of that. I hope -- commission,  
23 I will finish up quickly. Would they allow me to  
24 proceed?

25 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Are there any questions?

1 JALADAH ASLAM: No, I'm -- I've reached my  
2 time limit. May I please continue?

3 CO-CHAIR SYKES: You can take one minute,  
4 please.

5 JALADAH ASLAM: I will do my very best.  
6 Secretary LaRose, I really appreciated your comments  
7 earlier about moving forward in a bipartisan process.  
8 I sincerely hope you mean it. I understand your  
9 frustration with the cynicism and disappointment and  
10 pessimism that some speakers have expressed today. But  
11 I also hope you will understand that when we have been  
12 disappointed and blatantly ignored again and again, and  
13 again, it's hard to have faith that others are working  
14 in good faith.

15 Again, Secretary LaRose, the governor has  
16 left, but I address my comments to them because I'm  
17 just more familiar with their speeches and so it's not  
18 a slight to the rest of the commission, but I think,  
19 like many of the citizens sitting here today and in the  
20 overflow rooms above, will be registering as  
21 Republicans in the 2022 primary. I disagree with you  
22 and the governor a lot, but in my heart of hearts, I  
23 really believe that you have the best interest of  
24 Ohioans and that you want to do what is best for our  
25 state. And so I will vote for you in that primary.

1 I just urge you to do the right thing. You  
2 have seen the extremism, you have seen the vision. You  
3 know, that this map, the currently proposed map, is not  
4 what is right for Ohio. It's not what's right for our  
5 citizens. It's not what's right for our economy  
6 because this division and the extremism is killing us.  
7 We've got to get back to common sense. We've got to go  
8 back to balance. Please do the right thing. Thank  
9 you. Thank you for allowing me to go over, I  
10 appreciate it.

11 (Applause)

12 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness. Briefly,  
13 Secretary LaRose.

14 SECRETARY LAROSE: Thank you, ma'am. I'm a  
15 parent of three as well, and I want to make my  
16 daughters proud. So we're going to work as best we can  
17 to get to that compromise. Thank you.

18 DAVID GURAN: Hello. My name is David Guran,  
19 spelled G-U-R-A-N, from Akron. I can encourage this  
20 committee to vote no or against Republican map  
21 submitted on Thursday, September 9th. That day that  
22 the map was submitted, you voted quickly to vote for  
23 it. Today there was an amended map that was offered,  
24 but today you didn't take a vote on that amended map.  
25 I encourage you to vote for that map, because actually

1 it's moving towards much better map. Why don't you do  
2 that today so we know where the direction of this  
3 committee is going?

4 So we were still under the Republican map.  
5 We'll under the Republican map. The map maintains and  
6 increases the stranglehold of the power of the  
7 Republicans on the citizens of Ohio. Under the super  
8 majority rule by Republicans has led to one of the  
9 largest political corporate scandals that was allegedly  
10 commissioned by Representative Larry Householder and  
11 his friends. Besides taking a bribe from First Energy,  
12 Householder raised large amounts of campaign  
13 contributions that Larry distributed to other  
14 Republicans. Then the votes of those of these  
15 Republicans was purchased to pass HB-6.

16 Even now we are still paying for two coal  
17 fire plants in Indiana, and then fit the efficiency  
18 programs and the alternative not fossil fuel power  
19 projects have been scrapped and are still eliminated.

20 The practice of accumulating campaign  
21 donations and then distributing that money to other  
22 candidates who will be beholden to those politicians is  
23 still occurring. That is actually what was done by  
24 Huffman in 2018 and by Cupp in 2020. If you look at  
25 Ballot Expedite [sic], you'll see their financial

1 records. Of course the Republican plan is to have a  
2 four-year map. Mr. LaRose, this is the reality. It's  
3 time to stop. Continue your fantasy of optimism.

4 Aare all five Republicans going to be  
5 complicit with the boys from Lima, Huffman, and Cupp?  
6 Only when Amy Actin was the head of the state  
7 department of health, DeWine actually seemed to be a  
8 leader. However, now that -- however, we know now that  
9 DeWine's inability to change the gun laws, as he  
10 promised after the mass shooting, is still -- he has  
11 still not fulfilled that promise. He signed a law, a  
12 stand-your-ground law, that puts a target on black and  
13 brown people and people like me who stand up and speak  
14 out.

15 And people should know that there is a woman  
16 that is running as a Democrat for governor and a woman  
17 that's running as a Democrat for secretary of state.

18 (Simultaneous speaking)

19 CO-CHAIR SYKES: If I could interrupt you  
20 just --

21 (Simultaneous speaking)

22 DAVID GURAN: Let me finish my comments.

23 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Please, if you could speak  
24 to the maps.

25 UNIDENTIFIED: We need to be courteous, so we

1 have 41 more people who would like to speak.

2 DAVID GURAN: We're not being courteous. But  
3 not being courteous by what what's been done by the  
4 Republicans.

5 CO-CHAIR SYKES: So we've been talking about  
6 the maps, so please curtail your comments to the maps.

7 DAVID GURAN: In conclusion, it's time to  
8 trash the September 9th map. Vote on the amended map  
9 as was presented tonight. Tonight.

10 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you.

11 LAURA IRVIN: My name is Laura Irvin,  
12 L-A-U-R-A I-R-V-I-N. And I'm here testifying against  
13 the gerrymandered Republican-drawn state house map. I  
14 want to thank y'all for showing up today to hear the  
15 testimony of your constituents. I'm from Lorain  
16 County. I'll tell you a little bit about what's going  
17 on in Lorain County.

18 In 10 of the last 11 or more presidential  
19 elections, voters in our county have voted for the  
20 Democratic candidate. We are a Democratic county.  
21 Lorain County we have seven countywide elected  
22 officials who are Democrats, and we have four  
23 countywide elected officials who are Republicans, one  
24 of which is a coroner. Until the last election, all  
25 countywide electeds were Democrats.

1 I'm sure you've heard about the shenanigans  
2 that have been going on between the two newly-elected  
3 Republican commissioners, hiring lovers, firing lovers,  
4 hiring campaign managers, firing campaign managers,  
5 hiring campaign donors, firing campaign donors, hiring  
6 people who are unqualified, firing some of those  
7 people, one Republican commissioner telling the other  
8 to resign. The list of their scandals goes on as a  
9 soap opera.

10 Needless to say, not a whole lot is getting  
11 done in Lorain County because of the two Republican  
12 commissioners and their foolishness. These are the  
13 same ilk as the Republicans in Columbus who cheat us  
14 out of tens of millions of dollars through First  
15 Energy, dark money, back-room dealing and school  
16 vouchers to ECOT.

17 I digress to point out that when Republicans  
18 are in charge, when they have a super majority, they  
19 cheat, they cost us money, they cost us lives, and I'm  
20 sick of it. This is exactly what you're doing with the  
21 drawing of these maps. The way the Republicans have  
22 drawn Lorain County is a perfect example of  
23 gerrymandering and cheating. Putting Lorraine city and  
24 Elyria in the same district is a textbook example of  
25 packing a district. You have packed the Democratic and

1 minority votes. The spirit and the intent of the  
2 voters was to end gerrymandering.

3 We want competitive districts. We want  
4 districts that reflect our community. We want  
5 districts that reflect our voting patterns. We should  
6 have at least two competitive districts, if not three,  
7 in Lorain County. You have drawn zero competitive  
8 districts in Lorain.

9 For House District 53 you have drawn  
10 Vermillion in the same district as Willard. Tell me  
11 what connection the people in Vermillion on Lake Erie  
12 have to do with the farmers in Willard. Vermillion's  
13 main revenue is from tourism. Vermillion's businesses  
14 are in the boating industry, with a focus on boat  
15 repair, boat sales, marinas, fishing charters, docks,  
16 and boat storage. Willard is a small rural farming  
17 community.

18 What do the people of Oberlin, who work for  
19 one of the most prestigious colleges in the country  
20 that's known for the Allen art museum and the music  
21 conservatory, have in common with the farmers in Huron,  
22 which by the way, is Ohio's number one county in  
23 producing vegetables. We're not talking apples and  
24 oranges here. We're talking tractors and soybeans  
25 versus Mozart and museum tours.

1 Both are good, but they don't go together.  
2 They shouldn't be represented by one -- they should be  
3 -- they should not be represented as one community  
4 because they are not one community. Oberlin should be  
5 represented by the same person who represents Lorain  
6 County Community College in Elyria. Oberlin is eight  
7 miles from Elyria. Oberlin is 46 miles from Willard.

8 I would add that our state is a purple state,  
9 not a red state. The only reason people think we're a  
10 Republican state is because our state legislature is so  
11 gerrymandered. We should have at least 44 house --  
12 Democratic house seats and at least 15 Democratic  
13 senate seats.

14 Aren't you tired of the extremists in your  
15 party dictating how you can vote? Don't you want to  
16 win fair and square? Don't you feel dirty when you  
17 cheat? What do we have to do to make you want to be  
18 fair? We've voted for a fair process. We voted for a  
19 fair map and that's what we deserve.

20 (Applause)

21 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness, please.

22 LEADER SYKES: Randall Nichols?

23 RANDALL NICHOLS: My name is Randall Nichols,  
24 R-A-N-D-A-L-L. Nichols is N-I-C-H-O-L-S. And I would  
25 like to ask the commissioners to turn their devices

1 away, turn your phones over, please. I'd like to have  
2 your attention. Thank you.

3           You've got a room full of presenters who are  
4 compassionate and knowledgeable and very technical.  
5 And your maps just dismiss all that. And so the  
6 technical side of it is pretty obvious. They know more  
7 than you do, and yet you will go away from here and  
8 gerrymander some more. It's a given. It's your  
9 history. Even Democrats. It's your history to  
10 gerrymander for political advantage, not for fairness  
11 or equity.

12           And so what I want to do is not address the  
13 technical, but more of the moral in just a couple of  
14 minutes. I'll bet a dollar, which is lying in front of  
15 Bob Cupp, that whatever you present goes to court. It  
16 will be illegal. It will be unconstitutional and  
17 there'll be a big fight. So you're going to ignore  
18 almost all of what you've just heard. And there's a  
19 dollar. My name is Randall Nichols. You can get in  
20 touch with me if you'd like.

21           What you want to do is preserve your power,  
22 your money, and your egos. Politicians, you know, many  
23 of them are psychotic; that's been proven. And you  
24 want to preserve that ego, that power you get from  
25 being in charge of things. You love it. And that's

1 what you want to keep more than you want to keep  
2 equality or fairness.

3 And one of the things I know for certain is  
4 that the Republicans take their commands from, bow down  
5 to, really believe in Trump, who steals from kids'  
6 charities, calls people "motherfuckers," lies every  
7 time he opens his mouth, calls women's "skanks" and  
8 "pussies," and that's the guy you look up.

9 (Banging gavel)

10 RANDALL NICHOLS: Excuse me.

11 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Please, please, please.

12 RANDALL NICHOLS: I'm just repeating Trump's  
13 words.

14 CO-CHAIR SYKES: We don't have to repeat  
15 those, please.

16 RANDALL NICHOLS: Well, I just -- I'm quoting  
17 our president or former president. What you're doing  
18 with this kind of an idea, among many others, like the  
19 ECOT scam you helped perpetuate, what you're doing is  
20 killing Ohio. You're killing democracy. You're  
21 miscreants and you are immoral.

22 (Applause)

23 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness, please.

24 LEADER SYKES: The next witness is Shari  
25 Obrenski followed by Mary Kelsey.

1 CO-CHAIR SYKES: State and spell your name.

2 SHARI OBRENSKI: My name is Shari Obrenski,

3 S-H-A-R-I O-B-R-E-N-S-K-I. I'm the president of the

4 Cleveland Teachers Union and a voter in House District

5 60 and Senate District 25. Good evening, Co-chair

6 Cupp. I see Co-chair Sykes, and members of the

7 commission that are still sitting at the table.

8 I testified in Cleveland, along with dozens

9 of other concerned citizens, regarding the importance

10 of a truly fair and Democratic redistricting process.

11 To Auditor Faber, who has left the room, Senator Sykes

12 and Leader Sykes, it is nice to see you again. It is

13 unfortunate that the other members of the commission

14 were unable to make their in-person attendance at the

15 last round of hearings a priority. There were many

16 people that changed their schedules to attend those

17 hearings, though they were clearly inconvenient for

18 both the commission and the citizens alike.

19 The maps that the commission voted to adopt

20 for formal introduction within just a few hours of

21 their presentation last week, demonstrate that we were

22 not heard during those hearings, but rather that the

23 majority party has chosen to clink to a system that the

24 voters of Ohio have overwhelmingly rejected. I also

25 served on the fair districts mapping competition

1 advisory committee. As has been pointed out by  
2 previous speakers, these maps were created by private  
3 citizens who attempted to do what should have been done  
4 by this commission, which has put forward a map that is  
5 fair to the citizens of Ohio.

6 While I understand that those maps are not  
7 perfect, I dare say they were created with more  
8 intention to meet the spirit of the Ohio constitution  
9 than that which has currently been introduced. The  
10 voice of the people cannot be allowed to fall on deaf  
11 ears. Which is precisely what has occurred over the  
12 last 10 years in our gerrymandered state. You have a  
13 legal, ethical, and moral responsibility to do the  
14 right thing.

15 Secretary LaRose, I wish that I shared your  
16 optimism, but when your voice is repeatedly ignored,  
17 optimism is difficult. When the families that you  
18 serve are continually marginalized by their state  
19 legislature, it's hard to have faith. When the members  
20 that you serve are routinely derided by so many of  
21 their elected officials, trust is tough. Subverting  
22 the voice of the people by packing and cracking  
23 districts, which is what those maps do, is shameful.

24 Once again, black and brown people are  
25 ignored or worse, minimized, and competitive districts

1 are scorned. Upholding the status quo will result in  
2 more of the same, a general assembly that focuses,  
3 focuses on the red meat of the base, produces low  
4 quality and too often unopposed and sometimes corrupt  
5 candidates, and often fails to serve in the best  
6 interests of all of the people of Ohio.

7 If you are truly here to serve the people and  
8 desire the voters to fully participate in our  
9 democracy, you will discard the hyper-partisan map you  
10 have introduced, and instead look to those examples  
11 that would promote competitive districts and more  
12 fairly represent the voters that they are supposed to  
13 serve. Thank you.

14 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you. Are there any  
15 questions? Next witness.

16 LEADER SYKES: The next witness is Mary  
17 Kelsey, followed by Pam Massio via Virginia Weiss.

18 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness.

19 LEADER SYKES: The next witness is Anastasia  
20 Pantsios, followed by James Trutko.

21 CO-CHAIR SYKES: State and spell your name  
22 please.

23 VIRGINIA WEISS: Good evening, late evening.  
24 My name is Virginia Weiss, V-I-R-G-I-N-I-A W-E-I-S-S.  
25 And I'm presenting today, Pam Massio, a colleague of

1 mine. We work for Fair Voting in Cleveland. We work  
2 together closely as one of the things we do, and so I'm  
3 -- I've offered, since she's unable to be here, to read  
4 her testimony and I appreciate you being here.

5 And I also appreciate the members on this commission  
6 who chose to put their masks on.

7 I noticed that for a good portion, they were  
8 not on, and as our COVID numbers are skyrocketing yet  
9 again and we're going into the winter, I'm getting  
10 really nervous, as I know, a lot of Ohioans are, so I  
11 do appreciate you putting masks on. Thank you. I feel  
12 more comfortable.

13 Good evening. My thanks to Co-chair Sykes  
14 and Co-chair Cupp and the rest of the commission for  
15 hearing my comments on the proposed maps today. Her  
16 name is Pamela Massio and she lives in Aurora. in Ohio  
17 Senate District 18 and Ohio House District 76. And  
18 I'll read in her voice.

19 I testified at the first public hearing in  
20 Cleveland, but I could not be here today because with  
21 such short notice, she was unable to reschedule another  
22 meeting. I read this morning that out of the million  
23 dollars plus budgeted for redistricting, only \$173,000  
24 had been spent. And of that, majority party has spent  
25 only \$42,380. And that comes through loud and clear in

1 these abysmal maps presented last week.

2           You didn't even think it necessary to hire  
3 any outside consulting, but rather use Republican staff  
4 members, the same exact people who gerrymandered these  
5 maps in 2011 and gave Ohio the distinction, the state  
6 that I like to be proud of, which I'm not anymore, of  
7 being the fourth most gerrymandered state in the  
8 country.

9           You've heard by now loud and clear that  
10 Ohioans believe these maps presented are unlawful,  
11 unconstitutional, and they're not executed with a shred  
12 of good faith. Many Republicans call themselves people  
13 of faith. Like the children that we try to teach, I  
14 feel the same way; I don't believe it anymore. The  
15 maps were more gerrymandered than what we have now, but  
16 you know that. The maps ignore representational  
17 fairness, but you know that. The maps ignore the  
18 requirements of the voting rights act, but you know  
19 that too.

20           It is appalling that you would ignore two  
21 constitutional standards that require you to attempt,  
22 in good faith, to draw lines that do not favor one  
23 party over the other, and I've drawn so the districts  
24 represent statewide voting preferences. I think it's  
25 safe to say that anyone who has the most minimal

1 knowledge of these matters knows that the voting  
2 preference of Ohioans over the past 10 years is not 67  
3 percent Republican. In fact, you'd have to go back  
4 more than a hundred years to find a presidential  
5 election where 67 percent of Ohio voted Republican.

6 From the big picture down to the community  
7 level, these maps are unacceptable. Consider what  
8 you've done to Aurora. Currently her House District  
9 includes other similar suburban communities like  
10 Bainbridge and Chesterland. The proposed map for  
11 Aurora has been cut away from those communities and  
12 becoming part of a district that includes rural  
13 Trumbull County and Warren.

14 This is not our community, three exclamation  
15 points. We are a bedroom suburb of Cleveland and are  
16 just 10 minutes away from Chagrin Falls. I don't know  
17 that I've ever even been to Warren, but suffice it to  
18 say their needs and concerns don't remotely mirror  
19 ours.

20 Furthermore, Aurora is a growing area and is  
21 trending toward more competitiveness. That trend will  
22 most likely certainly be completely obliterated in our  
23 newly proposed district. Lumping Aurora in with Warren  
24 is just patently absurd. We all know and -- that good  
25 and fair maps can be drawn.

1           Community map-making competitions have  
2     resulted in numerous maps, all superior to what you've  
3     proposed when compared using the standard metrics.  
4     These maps fulfill all the requirements of the reforms  
5     with no partisan gerrymandering and more competitive  
6     districts. Have you guys looked at them?

7           How and when are you planning on making  
8     modification to these proposed maps? Will there be  
9     bipartisan negotiation? Will these meetings be  
10    transparent? I am embarrassed for you -- and I hate to  
11    read this, but -- the majority party, I'm embarrassed  
12    for you, that you have made a mockery of the  
13    redistricting process so far.

14           I cringed when I heard you debating the  
15    meaning of the words "shall attempt." Never in my  
16    wildest imagination would I have thought that you would  
17    try to weasel out of what is obviously intended and the  
18    reforms by debating common legal phraseology.

19           How you have conducted -- I'm almost done, I  
20    promise. How you have conducted yourselves throughout  
21    the past month flies in the face of the will of all  
22    Ohioans. You took an oath to support the Ohio  
23    constitution and to impartially perform all the duties  
24    incumbent upon you, but it's obvious your singular goal  
25    of maintaining super majority power by continuing to

1 rig the vote supersedes that oath.

2 This will not be over on Wednesday. If we do  
3 not get fair maps in accordance with constitutional  
4 reforms, we will continue to fight and we will exercise  
5 every option available to force you to do your jobs for  
6 which you were elected. And I asked just personally  
7 that, in good faith, check your oath. Check your oath.  
8 Thank you.

9 (Applause)

10 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you. Next witness.  
11 State and spell your name please.

12 ANASTASIA PANTSIOS: Hello, my name is  
13 Anastasia Pantsios (phonetic). I live in Cleveland  
14 Heights. I am in House District 9. That's Janine  
15 Boyd, and I am in Senate district 21, Sandra Williams.

16 I come from a family of activists. My mother  
17 was actually the president of the Chicago Legion League  
18 of Women Voters in the '70s, but I was not politically  
19 active at all, being more of an arts person, until  
20 2000, when the stopping of the counting the  
21 presidential votes in Florida made me aware that I  
22 needed to get out there and do something. And since  
23 then, fair elections has been my number one issue.

24 So naturally I was involved in the efforts to  
25 pass redistricting reform in Ohio in 2015 and 2018.

1 Some of you may recall that there were people who were  
2 pushing, at the time, for a bipartisan or nonpartisan  
3 commission to do the redistricting. Actually that was  
4 pushed earlier.

5 I think there were some measures on the  
6 ballot that failed in 2012. But there were a lot of  
7 people who said, well, okay, this isn't ideal, but  
8 there's a lot of guard rails in place and there's all  
9 these rules they have to follow, so it will be good,  
10 even though we don't have the bipartisan commission.

11 And I have to say I was one of those people.  
12 I thought, okay, you know, we have these rules, they're  
13 in the constitution. This is the law, they have to  
14 follow it. It's very disappointing to me to see that  
15 the Democrats released a map on August 31st; nine days  
16 later the Republicans released a map that was entirely  
17 created by Republicans. And the understanding, and I  
18 think most of us believe that any maps proposed were  
19 supposed to be created together and were supposed to be  
20 created with a transparent process instead of, oh,  
21 here's our map, here's your map?

22 For the Republicans to come out with a map as  
23 a starting point that is actually worse than the  
24 current map feels like giving the finger to the voters  
25 that worked so hard to pass this redistricting reform.

1 (Applause)

2 ANASTASIA PANTSIOS: Currently, we have a  
3 64/35 breakdown in the House, and to be fair to the  
4 voters, it should be 55/44. And the Senate 25/8. It  
5 should be about 19/14. I mean, obviously those aren't  
6 you know, specific figures. But, you know, you want  
7 competitive districts and you want a little bit of  
8 swing there.

9 These maps have just been released haphazard  
10 without the public having a chance to look at them. I  
11 shoot festivals for my publication, and I shot four  
12 festivals over the weekend and have 1,500 photos I  
13 should be editing at home. So no, I haven't had a  
14 chance to look at the map, but I've read a lot about  
15 what people have said.

16 People want a bipartisan, transparent process  
17 and I hope that's what you'll give them. Because if  
18 you don't, this state is going to go nowhere good.

19 Thank you so much.

20 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you. Next witness?

21 STAFF MEMBER: James Trutko.

22 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Please state and spell your  
23 name, please.

24 JAMES TRUTKO: Sure. My name is James  
25 Trutko, T-R-U-T-K-O. I'm a resident of Rocky River, in

1 Cuyahoga County. I'm a Republican but I'm here  
2 speaking on my own behalf today. Thank you for giving  
3 me the opportunity to speak to you today.

4 For years, Democrats and liberal supporter  
5 groups have complained about gerrymandered legislative  
6 districts. Blaming the legislative district boundaries  
7 for their failure is really a result of failing to win  
8 elections, and insulting the representatives here today  
9 is a mark of that frustration.

10 Let's remember today that the new fair  
11 redistricting process became a law under a Republican  
12 governor and Republican-controlled legislature. The  
13 new process was not the result of efforts by different  
14 voter rights groups to end the gerrymander. We now  
15 have a fair and bipartisan, but difficult process for  
16 drawing legislative districts. This process was  
17 validated by an overwhelming majority of Ohio voters in  
18 2015. And a -- when they approved this change.

19 We should all take a moment to pause and  
20 think about the practical implications of redistricting  
21 and redrawing lines. The basic problem is that  
22 Democrats are concentrated in predominantly urban areas  
23 and Republicans are spread out. This makes it very  
24 difficult to draw what everybody sees as fair  
25 districts.

1           I should mention, and compliment a number of  
2 people that have given presentations. The process of  
3 drawing these legislative boundaries is very -- is a  
4 very difficult one that involves many criteria, several  
5 of which are conflicting. I think fairness and the  
6 idea of people's perception of fairness and what is  
7 gerrymandering really depends on the eye of the  
8 beholder. When I look at your results on Cuyahoga  
9 County, I see that, you know, represent Districts 13  
10 and 18, in my opinion, could be improved.

11           It's in the interest of the public to have  
12 competitive races even when it's difficult to draw  
13 districts. The reason we have districts is that -- is  
14 to be able to hold individual representatives  
15 accountable for their actions.

16           When I looked at Dave's redistricting  
17 analysis on the two -- the Republican map and looked at  
18 the, briefly, the Democrat map, it was -- it said that  
19 the Republican map was twice as competitive. I think  
20 this is a good thing for the public. I've heard a lot  
21 of people talking about how the next election will come  
22 out for Republicans and Democrats, but we're voting for  
23 individuals, not Republican or House representation, in  
24 the Ohio House or Senate.

25           Let me ask a question about these partisan

1 forecasts. How will the maps come out for no party  
2 voters? In Rocky River, a fairly typical suburb, we  
3 have 16,000 registered voters. About 2,200  
4 Republicans, 3,900 Democrats and over 10,000 no-party  
5 voters. So nearly two-thirds of the voters are no  
6 party. Whether Democrats or Republicans win our  
7 district depends on how the candidates appeal to people  
8 without a party ID and how they represent us. Voters  
9 have a choice and a -- need to have a choice and a  
10 reason to vote with competitive districts, and that's  
11 the way it should be.

12 The results in Columbus in the next election  
13 will be determined not by a map, but I will -- how well  
14 the parties appeal to partisan Democrat and Republican  
15 voters, and to a large degree on how they appeal to the  
16 number of people that don't represent or don't pick  
17 either party right now.

18 Thank you for the opportunity to speak to  
19 you.

20 CO-CHAIR RUPP: Thank you. Next witness,  
21 please.

22 STAFF MEMBER: Dolores Gray, followed by Tim  
23 Clarke.

24 CO-CHAIR RUPP: State your name and spell it,  
25 please.

1 MS. GRAY: Dolores Gray, G-R-A-Y. Thank you,  
2 Commission, for allowing me to speak. And I want to  
3 just state a couple of facts which we have stated  
4 before.

5 Ohioans sent a clear message to the map  
6 drawers. We want fair maps drawn through a transparent  
7 redistricting process with lots of opportunity for  
8 people to engage on proposed maps. Ohioans demands  
9 (sic) to give voice to the needs of their communities  
10 in future maps.

11 No matter who we are or where we live, all of  
12 us deserve a fair shot at real political  
13 representation. We all deserve the power to vote  
14 politicians out of office that don't serve us well.  
15 Unfortunately, most Ohioans haven't had that power for  
16 the last decade because of our gerrymandered districts.

17 I come from the heart of the city in  
18 Cleveland, Ohio: Hough, MidTown, as well as AsianTown.  
19 And that's one of the main areas that are suffering  
20 from different types of problems that are going on.  
21 I'm an advocate and leader in the city of Cleveland,  
22 and I'm working for the betterment of women and  
23 children in the community, and the surrounding areas.

24 This decision of the proposed maps, in my  
25 opinion is unfair, and it's a divisive measure to

1 further marginalize a community of people, and in my  
2 opinion is bigoted, racist and ungodly. It will create  
3 even more problems.

4 As a resident of Cleveland, I understand what  
5 gerrymandering would do to our district, my city, my  
6 community. And it's an insult to voters that are  
7 looking for help within their communities. We want  
8 fair maps with fair districts.

9 I want to make this short but it's not sweet,  
10 because this is something that is necessary and it's --  
11 things should -- you should really take a look at these  
12 maps and how it will affect the community. Every day  
13 in my community, I work with women and children that  
14 are going through serious problems, and this map, it  
15 will not help at all.

16 I want to know, where are we at that live --  
17 we live in these areas. Where do we fit in with this  
18 process, with this decision? It sounds like we do not  
19 fit in at all. We're being ignored.

20 I ask this question because I feel that the  
21 commission doesn't care. It appears to me that they  
22 are only concerned with protecting partisan interests,  
23 only. The commission should be aware of how splitting  
24 the maps will affect the residents. Our governments  
25 needs to be working on helping all citizens, whether

1 you're rich, middle class, or poor.

2 I'm going to close this. Like I said, to me,  
3 it's not - it's simple and it's not sweet, but we  
4 really have to take a look at what's going on in all of  
5 our communities. I'm a concerned resident. I am a  
6 mother. I am a grandmother. And all of my family  
7 members live in the heart of the city. And this part,  
8 gerrymandering, it really needs to stop. All Ohioans  
9 should be thriving, not just the wealthy.

10 I urge you to please take consideration  
11 regarding the map. And with that said, I want you all  
12 to know, that everyone in this room and all the ones  
13 that was here before, we are a voice. We are not an  
14 echo. And we will continue until we get everything  
15 together in our communities, whether you are there or  
16 not. Thank you.

17 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness.

18 STAFF MEMBER: Tim Clarke, followed by Janice  
19 Simmons-Mortimer.

20 TIM CLARKE: My name is Tim Clarke. T-I-M  
21 C-L-A-R-K-E. Around August 31, I submitted a General  
22 Assembly redistricting proposal to the commission. I  
23 had hoped to discuss my proposal last Thursday, but I  
24 had a previous commitment which I could not reschedule  
25 on one day's notice.

1           When Ohio voters adopted the General assembly  
2 Redistricting Amendment in 2015, a number of changes  
3 were made. Some were technical or procedural in  
4 nature. But there was an important linchpin in the new  
5 scheme. For the first time in the state's history,  
6 there was an express obligation to create districts  
7 that fairly represented the voters of the state.  
8 Specifically, no plan could be drawn primarily to favor  
9 or disfavor a political party, and the statewide  
10 proportion of districts favoring each political party -  
11 - sorry. Favoring each political party must correspond  
12 closely to the statewide preferences of the voters of  
13 Ohio. What the majority of this commission has  
14 proposed does not come close to meeting these  
15 standards.

16           The Democratic share of the two-party vote is  
17 approximately 46 percent. To comply with Section 6(b)  
18 would require 45 of 99 state House districts and 15 of  
19 33 state Senate districts favoring Democrats. Instead,  
20 the commission's proposal includes only 32 Democratic  
21 leaning House districts and a mere 8 Democratic leaning  
22 Senate districts. This can only be described as a  
23 complete failure to comply with this provision.

24           It is not as if this was necessary. It is  
25 possible to draw 45 House districts favoring Democrats.

1 I know. I did it.

2 And it is possible to draw 15 Senate  
3 districts favoring Democrats or at least come very  
4 close. I know. I did it.

5 The commission's proposal may well meet the  
6 technical requirements of Sections 3 and 4. It follows  
7 the rules for the number of House and Senate districts  
8 in large counties. It does not divide any small county  
9 more than once. It does not divide the cities of  
10 Lorain, Parma, Canton, Youngstown, or Hamilton. I  
11 would expect nothing less. I followed these rules as  
12 well.

13 As for other municipalities and townships,  
14 the commission's proposal contains the same number of  
15 splits as in my proposal. None of this justifies the  
16 blatant violations of Section 6.

17 Whenever I have spoken to a redistricting  
18 panel, I have stressed how fundamental it is to our  
19 democracy that if a majority of the voters support a  
20 particular party in an election, that party should be  
21 given the opportunity to govern. After all, in  
22 elementary school, one of the first things we are  
23 taught about our government is that majority rules.  
24 And yet, the commission's proposal does all it can to  
25 subvert this principle, suggesting that the only

1 majority who should rule is the majority of this  
2 commission.

3 My proposal may not be perfect, but if I,  
4 working on my own, in two and a half weeks, can come up  
5 with a plan that complies with all of the sections of  
6 Article 11, in the spirit in which they were intended,  
7 then surely legislative staff with all of their  
8 resources, and four weeks, could do as well or better.  
9 The only conclusion is that there was no intention of  
10 complying with Section 6.

11 The commission's proposal is an insult to  
12 democracy, and an insult to those who supported the  
13 reform proposal six years ago. I urge this commission  
14 to reject this proposal and select another option.  
15 Naturally, I would recommend my own.

16 If I am unable to persuade the majority of  
17 this commission, or some reasonable compromise can be  
18 reached, then I would urge the Democratic members of  
19 this commission to reject the majority's proposal.  
20 After all, it is better to come back and revisit this  
21 in 2025 than to lock in a bad map for 10 years.

22 I thank the members for their time and  
23 attention.

24 CO-CHAIR SYKES: We'd like to thank you as  
25 well. The next witness?

1 STAFF MEMBER: Janice Simmons-Mortimer,  
2 followed by Jessica Epstein.

3 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Would you state and spell  
4 your name please?

5 MS. SIMMONS-MORTIMER: Sure. Good evening.  
6 I am Janice Simmons-Mortimer, J-A-N-I-C-E S-I-M-M-O-N-S  
7 hyphen M-O-R-T-I-M-E-R. I live in Ohio House District  
8 76, and Ohio Senate District 18.

9 If I asked you what did you think of  
10 Shalersville, you may have a glassy eyed look to you.  
11 Maybe you never thought you've been there, but if you  
12 traveled the Ohio Turnpike heading east, you have been.

13 What did you think of Mantua? Again, unless  
14 you went to the potato festival recently, or were there  
15 when they did the world's largest potato pierogi, you  
16 probably haven't been to Mantua, either.

17 How about Hiram? Well that one you might  
18 know. You know Hiram College where James A. Garfield  
19 got his start politically, and his formative years  
20 which ended up in the presidency. But all three of  
21 those communities comprise the Crestwood School  
22 District. We don't have a lot but we do have the Red  
23 Devils. We have Friday Night Lights. We have the  
24 Crestwood Scarlet Guard Band, where a community finally  
25 comes together.

1           But in every map, every map, we are divided,  
2 split into two. Whether it's the OCRC map, the  
3 original Democratic map, the Huffman map, the Wise map,  
4 or even the new map, we're split. But you know what?  
5 That can be okay if it's for the greater good. If the  
6 fact that our little community is split, which keeps  
7 other communities like Orange, Woodmere together, if  
8 it's for the greater good for a greater map, all right.  
9 It's kind of like Solomon. We're willing to do that.

10           But if it's just another way to gerrymander,  
11 then the small business owners like myself and my  
12 husband, the farmers who for generations have farmed  
13 Portage County, the blue collar workers, the white  
14 collar workers who are coming to our area, and the  
15 educators who dot our landscape, we work too darn hard  
16 for me to stay silent about that.

17           Now it's been a long night. Four and a half  
18 hours. I did not bring snacks. I don't know what I  
19 was thinking.

20           You had a long night last night, and a long  
21 night tonight as well, and you have another day  
22 tomorrow. It's easy to tune us out. But I appreciate  
23 the folks who are still sitting here. I appreciate you  
24 looking at the speakers.

25           Because you know what? This room and the

1 folks who have been up here, time after time, we are  
2 Ohio. It's not the extremes. It's the center. It's  
3 the people in the middle. It's the people who can  
4 disagree about what it really means for gerrymandering  
5 or why people are voting in. It's about our ability to  
6 have a conversation.

7           The only way Ohio is going to get through the  
8 challenges that are ahead is if we remember the middle.  
9 And if we remember to create districts where people  
10 have conversations again. Whether it's the pandemic,  
11 the ongoing pandemic, or public education, which I  
12 talked to you about in Youngstown, whether it's the  
13 opioid crisis which continues to ravage throughout our  
14 state, or social injustice reforms that are necessary  
15 not only in Ohio but across the United States, whether  
16 it's climate change or the toxic algae blooms of Lake  
17 Erie, no one party has all the answers. And it's only  
18 when we have both parties working together at a table  
19 where we have not the extremes in representatives, but  
20 people who know that they must be accountable to their  
21 constituents, there in Columbus, working together, that  
22 Ohio will succeed.

23           I'm a mom of two daughters. They are looking  
24 and love Ohio but they will be gone, and that means  
25 that I'll be gone as well. We don't want that. We

1 love Ohio. We want to be here in Ohio. Thank you for  
2 your time.

3 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you.

4 Next witness.

5 STAFF MEMBER: Jessica Epstein followed by  
6 Jim Thai (phonetic).

7 CO-CHAIR RUPP: Next witness?

8 STAFF MEMBER: Johnny Williams followed by  
9 James Jerome Bell.

10 CO-CHAIR RUPP: Next witness please.

11 STAFF MEMBER: Ray Freeman followed by  
12 Crystal Gnau.

13 UNIDENTIFIED: Do you want to talk, Crystal  
14 again? I'm not sure if you got that right.

15 MS. GNAU: They mispronounced my name wrong.  
16 Could it be G-N-A-U?

17 STAFF MEMBER: That's you.

18 MS. GNAU: Okay.

19 CO-CHAIR SYKES: We apologize. Could you  
20 state your name and spell it please?

21 MS. GNAU: No, that's fine. It's  
22 mispronounced all the time. It's actually pronounced  
23 Gnau. G-N-A-U. People mistake it for Gray all the  
24 time.

25 I'm Crystal. My first name, C-R-Y-S-T-A-L.

1 last name again, Gnau, G-N-A-U.

2 I'm from Clark County. I have a three-hour  
3 drive ahead of me.

4 First, I want to say that I am not a public  
5 speaker. I am not that eloquent. However I am very  
6 disappointed in the map that you have presented us.  
7 This is not bipartisan. This is not what we asked for.

8 When 70 plus percent of the voters of Ohio  
9 have come to you to say, this is what we want, they  
10 expect you to work for them. This is not working for  
11 them. This is working for you.

12 Gerrymandering not only disenfranchises  
13 minorities, women, people of color, people of the LGBT  
14 community, it sends a signal to anyone who lives here,  
15 graduates college, that they should leave. It doesn't  
16 bring good people and good jobs to Ohio, because why?  
17 No one wants to stay here.

18 What that does on a federal level, which I  
19 don't believe anyone has spoken to, is Ohio has been  
20 known as a purple state for many years. We benefit  
21 from being a purple state. We get federal contracts.  
22 Federal dollars to help us with education, building  
23 projects, and so forth.

24 We have been schmoozed by all of the  
25 presidential hopefuls. Presidents that are sitting and

1 reelected. We've had Obama come through. We've had  
2 Clinton come through. Biden came through. Trump came  
3 through. Many of our leaders in recent years have  
4 stopped and care about Ohio. But if we continue to do  
5 this, we're just going to become another red state that  
6 gets zero attention.

7 Our tax dollars that we contribute to the  
8 state of Ohio as well as federal, will be lost to  
9 another state. We will no longer be important and if  
10 we are no longer important, jobs won't come here.  
11 We'll be shipping manufacturing out once again, to  
12 Mexico, abroad, anywhere else.

13 I have children who have graduated college,  
14 One is seeking a Ph.D., and when he gets that, he'll  
15 move away because that's where his job will take him.  
16 I have a daughter that fears for her protection,  
17 because there is a war on our body and our rights. She  
18 begs me, daily, to leave Ohio.

19 No one in Ohio should grow up feeling safe  
20 and have that ripped away from them, whether you are a  
21 woman, a person of color, whether you are part of the  
22 LGBT community. No one in Ohio should feel unsafe.  
23 And I get emotional when I talk about my children just  
24 as any mother should and does.

25 I don't like speaking in public, but I'm here

1 because of them. I feel like what we've asked you to  
2 do is not that difficult. Many other states are asking  
3 the same. What you have presented us is very  
4 gerrymandered. It's still two-thirds Republican.  
5 That's not reflective of Ohio.

6 I've had great difficulty finding these maps.  
7 I've had a great difficulty trying to find my hometown  
8 on these maps, because it's not clearly written. And  
9 it was not until today that I actually find out another  
10 link that I could find a better map.

11 Seventy percent of the Ohio voters are not  
12 here today. There's a good possibility that they're  
13 not here because this process has not been transparent  
14 enough. The meetings haven't been conducive to their  
15 schedules, or to where they live. Again, I drove three  
16 hours today.

17 I appreciate your time, everyone sitting on  
18 this panel who has stayed to listen. But please  
19 understand, it is a waste of our time. It is a waste  
20 of our money to not vote on an appropriate map that we  
21 can all agree on.

22 I don't feel like that's too much to ask.  
23 Thank you for your time.

24 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you. Our next  
25 witness?

1 STAFF MEMBER: Carolyn Hardin-Levine followed  
2 by Linda Kohar.

3 MS. HARDIN-LEVINE: Hi. Thank you for this  
4 opportunity. MY name is Carolyn Hardin-Levine. It's  
5 C-A-R-O-L-Y-N. Last name is Hardin, H-A-R-D-I-N hyphen  
6 Levine, L-E-V-I-N-E.

7 CO-CHAIR RUPP: Thank you.

8 MS. HARDIN-LEVINE: Can you understand me  
9 with my mask?

10 CO-CHAIR RUPP: Yes.

11 MS. HARDIN-LEVINE: Good, because I had a  
12 sister pass away of COVID, so I appreciate everybody  
13 wearing their masks.

14 I'm sorry. That last woman got to me. I'm  
15 here today because I have registered Republican. I  
16 have registered Democrat. I have worked for both  
17 Republican and Democratic leaders.

18 I was a CEO of a data company. I am now  
19 retired. And for the last 25 years, I have spent every  
20 election day working voter protection.

21 I work it, not with a party in mind, but to  
22 ensure voters get their say at the poll. The one thing  
23 that I can tell you is I would have nine of my friends  
24 here with me today had there been better notice given,  
25 because they wanted to come, but they had people in

1 hospitals and sick, and other jobs that they have to  
2 attend to, so I'm speaking on all of our behalves.

3 As voters of the state of Ohio, we voted and  
4 asked you, to create a commission that followed three  
5 core principles, and I will not repeat them. You've  
6 heard them. You know what they are better than we do.

7 We also know that the map that has been  
8 presented is not only an elongation of a map that has  
9 brought us shame in Ohio for being highly  
10 gerrymandered, but it exacerbates it. So what I will  
11 ask of you, just very short and very sweet, is to hear  
12 our voice. Hear that we're asking for fairness.

13 I am a mother of five children, and three  
14 have left the state. One, because he is gay and does  
15 not feel safe here. A daughter who works in Boston  
16 because she too is a public servant, and then another  
17 that left for California.

18 I moved here from Texas 25 years ago. I'm  
19 embarrassed by my home state, but I want to be proud of  
20 Ohio. Ohio's where my home is. It's where I'll be  
21 until I die.

22 But what I would ask of you is just to bring  
23 fairness back to our elections, hear the people of  
24 color. Hear us when we say we want to vote and be  
25 heard as communities for which we live. And I ask that

1 you give serious consideration, because the first map  
2 that I saw of Cuyahoga County that looked anything  
3 representative of the districts that I have sat in, and  
4 I have worked voter protection for 25 years, is that  
5 closer to the Democrats and what they put forth.

6 I'm not saying that you intentionally put a  
7 bad map forth. I don't know your intentions. I can't  
8 look into your heart. But what I will tell you is we  
9 are better served when we have a fair and just system.  
10 Please do not turn Ohio like Texas, like the laughing  
11 stock of the country.

12 I want to be proud of my state. Thank you.

13 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you. Thank you very  
14 much.

15 UNIDENTIFIED: We have no questions for a  
16 middle-aged woman.

17 CO-CHAIR SYKES: But thank you very much.

18 Next witness?

19 STAFF MEMBER: Susan Lewis followed by  
20 Terrence Murphy.

21 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness.

22 STAFF MEMBER: Edward Neil followed by Scott  
23 Nichols.

24 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness.

25 STAFF MEMBER: Mimi Plevin-Foust followed by

1 Angela Shute-Woodson.

2 MIMI PLEVIN-FOUST: I'm taking my mask off.  
3 Thank you all so much. It's been a terribly long day  
4 and I really, really appreciate that you're hanging in  
5 there, and you're listening to us. It really means a  
6 lot to us.

7 CO-CHAIR SYKES: State and spell your name  
8 please?

9 MIMI PLEVIN-FOUST: Sure. It's Mimi Plevin-  
10 Foust. M-I-M-I P-L-E-V-I-N hyphen F-O-U-S-T. I want  
11 to say that I don't think the current map that was  
12 voted forward, should even be the basis of any changes  
13 because it's so slanted and it lacks consideration of  
14 so many important criteria. But what I would like to  
15 suggest is that you look closely at the three winners  
16 of the Ohio Fair Districts competition.

17 People have talked about Geoff Wise's map.  
18 While it does split some communities, he did count the  
19 communities and he actually splits less than some of  
20 the other known maps.

21 And then the other two people who won the  
22 competition along with Geoff, their maps are not on  
23 your website. But there are maps and with a narrative  
24 and explaining their maps are on the Fair Districts  
25 Ohio.org map. If you click on news and you, you know,

1 read about the competition, then you can find each of  
2 their maps along with their narrative.

3 I really highly recommend you look at them  
4 because they could really be a fantastic basis to just  
5 grab one of those maps and go forward with it. It's --  
6 they're so well thought out and so, so thoughtful.

7 I can tell you that the other first place  
8 winner, Pranav Padmanabhan, he really tried to keep  
9 communities together, working with keeping school  
10 districts together, which I think is a very useful way.  
11 He was really working on trying to keep communities of  
12 interest together, and yet still have fairness and  
13 still have a certain amount of competition.

14 The other winner is Paul Nieves. And he also  
15 was trying to work very hard to have compact  
16 communities. And anyhow, I think that those three maps  
17 are really worth looking at, even if you won't find  
18 them all on your own website.

19 I would just like to say that as a  
20 Clevelander, I grew up in Shaker Heights. I love  
21 living here, and I moved away. I was on the East Coast  
22 for a long time. I came back here 18 years ago, and  
23 it's a -- it's just a wonderful place to live.

24 But the hard part is that I feel that based  
25 on the policies and -- that are going on in Columbus,

1 that we are not -- our interests are not being  
2 considered in any way, as far as I can tell. I mean,  
3 we -- I live right near the border of Shaker and  
4 Cleveland. And literally over the weekend, seven  
5 people were shot in a 15-hour period. And you know,  
6 we're losing our kids. We're losing you know, our  
7 loved ones, and yet in Columbus, people are looking for  
8 more ways to spread more guns all around the state with  
9 no regard for this. And there's just so many issues  
10 where I, and pretty much everyone I know, feel that  
11 we're not being taken into consideration in any way.

12 I honestly kind of feel that Cleveland should  
13 secede from Ohio, because that's how little  
14 consideration we're getting. And I think we give a lot  
15 of money to Columbus so it would be nice if we got a  
16 little more weight in the maps and in the issues that  
17 are considered.

18 I will just say that the map that was  
19 proposed really shows a staggering level of contempt  
20 for Ohio voters, and it's kind of heartbreaking. I  
21 don't know what I've done to earn that kind of  
22 contempt. And I think as individuals, each of you want  
23 to treat people with respect and want to be good public  
24 servants. So please don't let the fact that you're  
25 partified people, you're in a majority, cover the fact

1 that how you vote, and which map you put forward within  
2 -- in this week is going to reflect personally on you.

3 You know, I know that Speaker Cupp, your sons  
4 were Eagle Scouts. And I'm sure that the Eagle Scouts  
5 don't believe that people should win races that have  
6 been rigged, you know, which is what a rigged map does.

7 And you've worked so hard, Secretary LaRose,  
8 to make sure that so many people got to vote in the  
9 last election, and overcame so many obstacles. Now  
10 please don't let your reputation be sullied by voting  
11 forward a tainted map.

12 And you know, the same for you, Auditor  
13 Faber, and I -- I just -- you know, think about it  
14 individually of what it means for your own legacy and  
15 your own children and grandchildren. Thank you.

16 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you very much.

17 State and spell your name, please.

18 MS. SHUTE-WOODSON: Sure. Good evening.

19 It's Angela Shute-Woodson. That's A-N-G-E-L-A. Shute  
20 is spelled S-H-U-T-E. And it's hyphenated. Woodson,  
21 W-O-O-D-S-O-N.

22 Thank you to the Chairs. Thank you to the  
23 commission. Thank you for everyone for staying late,  
24 and we appreciate that.

25 I come to you on behalf of wearing several

1 titles, but actually I'm here as Angela Shute-Woodson  
2 of South Euclid, Ohio, whose state rep is Kent Smith of  
3 House District 8, and State Senate District 25, which  
4 is Senator Kenny Yuko.

5 I live in what's called the West 5, when I  
6 look at this map, of South Euclid. Which you have us  
7 combined with East Cleveland, Cleveland Heights and  
8 University Heights.

9 Why are we called West Five? We are 90  
10 percent African-American. We're five streets. We  
11 share the University -- Cleveland Heights University  
12 High School District. Most of our children in this  
13 district are confused where they go to school because  
14 their friends, literally across Mooresvilleton  
15 (phonetic) Road go to the Lyndhurst South Euclid School  
16 District.

17 They get confused even who their reps are at  
18 times. Some people think their rep is Janine Boyd,  
19 because we are so close with Cleveland Heights, and a  
20 lot of them play in the Cleveland Heights rec center.  
21 So when I look at this particular map, you're going t  
22 confuse young people even more that sit on a border.  
23 And I would hope you would relook at this also as far  
24 as just income levels, school district levels, the fact  
25 that some municipalities are missing, such as Lyndhurst

1 I noticed on this map, as well as Pepper Pike is  
2 missing on this map. But I hope you would take all of  
3 that in consideration along with race as also the  
4 school districts that are involved. Because like I  
5 said, we're five streets in a pretty big municipality  
6 that, like I said, is 90 percent African-American.

7 And we're the only five streets that go to  
8 the Cleveland Heights University High School District.  
9 And now you're telling us, we will no longer be with a  
10 majority of South Euclid. We are looking to possibly  
11 have a new state rep and a new state senator the way  
12 these maps are looking right now.

13 So I would just hope you would again keep  
14 that in mind because as it was echoed from several  
15 people, when we talk about voter turnout and voter  
16 suppression, I am very passionate about young people.  
17 And we try very hard to get young people to vote and  
18 have confidence in this government. And so it's going  
19 to be very hard for me, who actually walks my block,  
20 every election cycle, along with participating in the  
21 City of Cleveland, because I do a lot of work in the  
22 city of Cleveland, try to convince them to have trust  
23 in this system, because I believe in this system. I  
24 believe in good government. I believe in public  
25 service.

1           But it's going to be hard, when I look at  
2 something like this, too try to go back to them, to try  
3 to explain the why.

4           They get the census situation. I don't want  
5 you to think they don't. But it's still going to be  
6 hard when you divide a community up, especially like I  
7 said, South Euclid, that has five streets, that's  
8 predominantly African-American. That's -- believe it  
9 or not, I'm probably one of the elders on the street,  
10 because it's very young. They're young families. To  
11 try to explain this.

12           So just take that into your consideration. I  
13 thank you.

14           CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you.

15           Speaker?

16           CO-CHAIR RUPP: Can you tell us what streets  
17 you're talking about?

18           MS. SHUTE-WOODSON: Sure. The streets are  
19 East Antisdale.

20           CO-CHAIR RUPP: Say that again, please.

21           MS. SHUTE-WOODSON: East Antisdale.

22           Grosvenor. Eastway. Colony. I'm missing one.

23           Can you hold on? Kate, who am I missing?

24           I'm missing somebody. East Antisdale. Grosvenor.

25           Warrendale Road. Did I say Grosvenor, my own street?

1 Grosvenor. I'm missing one. I can't -- forgive me  
2 because I can't think of the last one.

3 CO-CHAIR RUPP: Okay. That's fine.

4 MS. SHUTE-WOODSON: Yeah. But we sit in  
5 between kind of -- Cedar to explain it, in kind of this  
6 Wal-Mart development now. Half of Warrensville Center  
7 Road. But just like I said, please consider that  
8 because it's a lot of small pockets when you look at  
9 this map. And I'm just one example, like I said, of  
10 where I live. But when I look at this map and even  
11 look at Fairview Park where my son used to live, there  
12 are just small corridors within these different  
13 suburban municipalities, that, you know, you're going  
14 to divide us up tremendously, even more.

15 CO-CHAIR RUPP: All right. Thanks.

16 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you very much.

17 MS. SHUTE-WOODSON: Thank you.

18 AUDITOR FABER: I was just going to ask you  
19 another question. Who's your current representative?  
20 You said it was Smith?

21 MS. SHUTE-WOODSON: Yes. Right now we're in  
22 House District 8 with Kent Smith and right now, our  
23 Senator is Kenny Yuko in Senate District 25.

24 AUDITOR FABER: So currently you're all  
25 together?

1 MS. SHUTE-WOODSON: Currently we're all  
2 together. But if you do this particular map in front  
3 of me, we won't be.

4 AUDITOR FABER: Thank you for your testimony.

5 MS. SHUTE-WOODSON: Thank you.

6 AUDITOR FABER: Thank you for specifically  
7 telling us about what on the maps your streets are.

8 MS. SHUTE-WOODSON: Sure. Thank you.

9 CO-CHAIR SYKES: The next witness.

10 STAFF MEMBER: The next witness appears it's  
11 spelled L-O-R-L?

12 MS. LOH: L-O-H.

13 STAFF MEMBER: Followed by Eugene Ward.

14 MS. LOH: Good evening, everybody. Thank you  
15 for all of you still here. Today, I'm here. My name  
16 is L-O-H. It's pronounced Lu.

17 I have got the opportunity to meet a couple  
18 of you in the past, especially our budget process. So  
19 for me to come here to talk about this map, I can tell  
20 you honestly, today we see all kinds of talents here.  
21 Some of the people, they can draw a very good map.  
22 Some of them don't really know how to draw maps, but  
23 they understand that. So the map actually is a way to  
24 navigate.

25 What drives this country to navigate is the

1 so-called American Dream. This map represents many,  
2 many people's dreams. Some of the people's dreams will  
3 be drawing a better map, while some other people  
4 thinking about having a map to get reelected.

5 So let's get to the point. What kind of a  
6 map do we really want?

7 If we keep going this way, not just our  
8 children, not just our ancestors, well, I'm a tourist  
9 here. As all of you can see. Because all the problem  
10 here is the inequities. So as a tourist, you already  
11 heard one of my balloters saying, how we are in the  
12 community for a long time and we have not been treated  
13 fairly.

14 So in this case, think about very near  
15 future. We will have certain people coming here,  
16 dreaming drawing the map, to follow the step by well,  
17 you know, Texas always wants to be another country.  
18 California, people there, they always talk about they  
19 want to slip it into half or three. Virginia and West  
20 Virginia already separated before we were born. So the  
21 next map we will draw eventually will be the reason  
22 Ohio and rural Ohio maps, or Black Ohio maps and White  
23 Ohio maps, or based on the parties.

24 But please remember, the American Dream to  
25 build this country is from multi-parties. So if any

1 parties only think about its own survival instead of  
2 other people, that map would come up, sooner or later.  
3 Enjoy the evening. Thank you, everybody.

4 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you.

5 State and spell your name please.

6 EUGENE WARD: Thank you, Senator Sykes.

7 Thank you, Speaker Cupp. Thank you, Senator Sykes, for  
8 holding this meeting. My name is Eugene, E-U-G-E-N-E  
9 Ward, W-A-R-D. I'm pastor of the Greater Love Baptist  
10 Church here in the City of Cleveland. I'm also a vice  
11 president of the Mount Pleasant Ministerial Alliance.  
12 I am on the board of the Mount Pleasant Now Development  
13 Corporation. I'm Chairman of the Board of Bishops for  
14 Kingdom Connection International. Kingdom Connection  
15 International -- Fellowship International in Columbus,  
16 Ohio, where our bishop is our Presiding Prelate, Bishop  
17 Jerome H. Ross.

18 I came to talk with you today because of this  
19 map, and I want you to know that I got my appetite for  
20 politics back when I was a teenager with Carl Stokes  
21 and Louis Stokes were elected to office. Louis Stokes,  
22 when my dad died, became my godfather and helped to  
23 raise me. My best friend is Louis Chucky Stokes who  
24 lives in Detroit, Michigan.

25 This travesty of a map though, that has been

1 given to us, I do realize makes us distrust government  
2 even more. I realize also that our census numbers are  
3 down, so yes, it makes it necessary for you to do  
4 redistricting. But this looks like pure gerrymandering  
5 if I've never seen it before.

6 And I want you also to know that the  
7 redistricting really gives the fear that many people  
8 have of government and especially in the African-  
9 American community. This map speaks of racism. It  
10 speaks of the fear of gerrymandering. It speaks of  
11 white supremacy. It speaks of partyism, and it speaks  
12 of outright bigotry. It's an agenda for more  
13 individuals to become politicians, and make sure that  
14 their pockets are lined.

15 Mr. Glassburn showed us a map and he's  
16 already stated that the communities are divided even in  
17 the map that he is looking at, as well as that maps  
18 that you were looking at. But it is a time for us to  
19 also bring our communities together. Bring our  
20 politics together. Bring our issues together. Bring  
21 our programs together and especially bring our people  
22 together.

23 We're wondering if this coming together is  
24 just another futile effort, if this is going to be an  
25 exercise in futility. If you're just here to get it --

1 get to the point where you hear all of our gripes and  
2 complaints, but you're going to do whatever you want to  
3 do anyway. We cannot be a republic that is concerned  
4 with liberty and justice for all, if we're going to  
5 continue to design districts and legislation that strip  
6 and reduce liberty and justice for all.

7 For those who are concerned about just being  
8 in political office and making sure that they get  
9 taxpayer dollars, I remind you of what Psalm 62:11  
10 tells us. "God has spoken at once. This have I heard  
11 twice. Power belongs to God. It does not belong to  
12 man. It does not belong to people. It is delegated to  
13 us. It is loaned to us. He continues to rule. He  
14 continues to govern."

15 I am asking that you look at this map which  
16 is going to continue to divide this country and divide  
17 this people, and take your conscience home and go  
18 before the Lord and ask him, are you doing the right  
19 thing for yourselves, or are you doing the right things  
20 for the people of God? Thank you very much.

21 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you.

22 Next witness.

23 STAFF MEMBER: Carrie Kubicki (phonetic)  
24 followed by Justin Evaristo.

25 CO-CHAIR SYKES: State and spell your name,

1 please.

2 JUSTIN EVARISTO: My name is Justin Evaristo.  
3 Spelled J-U-S-T-I-N E-V-A-R-I-S-T-O.

4 Yeah, so I am from Cuyahoga County, Beechwood  
5 specifically. And like many of the people before me, I  
6 have concerns that I was hoping to voice about the  
7 district maps being drawn here in Ohio.

8 So over the past decade, Ohio voters have  
9 been pretty closely split between the two parties.  
10 Approximately 55 percent for Republicans and 45 percent  
11 for Democrats. It's a tight margin, as demonstrated  
12 most notably in our designation as a swing state in  
13 presidential elections.

14 However, if you were to look at our state  
15 government, you would be fooled into thinking that we  
16 have almost no Democratic voters and instead are a  
17 deeply red state.

18 In the General Assembly today, Republicans  
19 hold around double the number of seats compared to  
20 Democrats, and all the executive positions are also  
21 filled by Republicans. This has allowed Republican  
22 lawmakers to have complete control over the levers of  
23 power, with little concern of being replaced by the  
24 constituents if they do not represent their interests.

25 People Of Ohio voted overwhelmingly in favor

1 of amending our state constitution because we were  
2 tired of legislators diluting our votes, silencing our  
3 voices, all to maintain their own political power.

4 The people of Ohio demanded that fair maps be  
5 produced. Maps that would create a government that  
6 accurately reflects us as a state, reflects our  
7 diversity and our values.

8 Yet, it seems to me that a certain political  
9 party here has not been participating in this process  
10 in good faith. The Republican Party has been  
11 deliberately delaying the process by waiting to propose  
12 their version of the map until the last minute, giving  
13 little time for the voters to scrutinize and for their  
14 colleagues across the aisle to debate it. And after  
15 all this waiting, it presented us with another map that  
16 is skewed in their favor, albeit a little less  
17 brazenly.

18 Analysis shows that these -- this proposed  
19 map will decrease the disparity between the two parties  
20 but coincidentally, will allow Republicans to retain  
21 their veto-proof majority. And yet, you have the  
22 audacity to claim that this is not -- that you did not  
23 do party analysis -- partisan analysis, on this map.

24 The redistricting commission has held  
25 hearings on weekdays, often during business hours,

1 forcing concerned citizens like myself to take some  
2 time off of work, time that many do not have the luxury  
3 of spending, simply to -- for an opportunity to  
4 participate in this process -- participate in this  
5 process that has consequences that will affect them in  
6 the future, a thinly veiled attempt to hide their  
7 handiwork from Ohio voters.

8           Tactics like these are not new or unique.  
9 Administrative foot dragging and targeted exclusion  
10 have been a staple in not only our state's politics,  
11 but throughout the country for decades, the  
12 consequences of which have fallen squarely on the  
13 shoulders of the historically oppressed in our society:  
14 minorities, women, the LGBTQ community and he  
15 impoverished. Coincidentally, these communities often  
16 don't vote for Republicans as well.

17           The people of Ohio are tired of these  
18 political games. We're tired of the disconnect between  
19 the representatives and the represented. We demand  
20 that fair maps and transparency that we were promised.  
21 We demand fair representation in our government.

22           And also as a side note, I noticed that  
23 Secretary LaRose mentioned a number of times that --  
24 claimed that he had been acting in good faith, but to  
25 me, it seems that that has not borne out in the --

1     yeah, in what has happened, so.

2                   CO-CHAIR SYKES: Any questions?

3                   Thank you very much. Next witness.

4                   STAFF MEMBER: Chad Stevens followed by  
5     Michael Pellegrino.

6                   MICHAEL PELLEGRINO: Hello. I'm Michael  
7     Pellegrino, M-I-C-H-A-E-L P-E-L-L-E-G-R-I-N-O. It was  
8     very good to hear your name called after waiting for a  
9     while. I appreciate everyone who is still here and  
10    listening.

11                  I actually was not going to come tonight,  
12    even though I've been following the redistricting  
13    process for a very long time. My wife works in a  
14    hospital, and she has been having to get up early in  
15    the morning to go to work, and early before I even get  
16    out of bed in he morning. And I went down to breakfast  
17    this morning and she had put a pen on top of the  
18    witness form before she left for work, so that's why  
19    I'm here tonight, because she left that pen. That  
20    little message for me that she couldn't deliver in  
21    person.

22                  I am a huge fan. My hero is Abraham Lincoln.  
23    I have a big picture of him over my desk at work.  
24    Abraham Lincoln said, "Think nothing of me. Take no  
25    thought for the political fate of any man whatsoever,

1 but come back to the truths that are in the Declaration  
2 of Independence." Abraham Lincoln said that.

3 What are the truths? Equality, liberty,  
4 inalienable rights, and this one. Government derives  
5 its just power from the consent of the governed.

6 Government derives its just power from the consent of  
7 the governed. That's what Abraham Lincoln said.

8 You know, I woke up to really bad news this  
9 morning about how terrible all of our sports teams this  
10 week -- did this weekend. Reports from the meeting in  
11 Dayton that said that the -- all of the feedback that  
12 was to, and I think the headline was, to ensure a  
13 Republican majority, a supermajority in the  
14 redistricting process.

15 And you know, I have to tell you that people  
16 had asked me, because they knew I was following this  
17 process, what I thought about it and I said well, you  
18 know, the new process will eliminate the worst excesses  
19 by gerrymandering. I would never thought it would  
20 actually turbocharge the worst excesses of  
21 gerrymandering, but that seems to be what appeared,  
22 when those maps were produced.

23 I was going to go the county fair tonight --  
24 Wayne County Fair tonight with my wife. That's what we  
25 were going to do. It's a great county fair. I hope

1 people have been to it. It only costs \$2 to get in,  
2 and kids under 12 are free. It's a great county fair.

3 I imagine that everyone on this panel has  
4 been invited down to a county fair, or to a 4-H club,  
5 or to an Elks Club, or a high school, to award a prize  
6 to a first place winner, to a gold medal winner, to a  
7 gold -- best in show. And I imagine that you've told  
8 them about the importance of competition.

9 I don't think anyone would have ever said you  
10 know what? The real thing you need to do is learn how  
11 to game the system for partisan advantage. And I truly  
12 hope that as this process works out, no one's going to  
13 game this system for partisan advantage.

14 I agree with this gentleman right here. I'm  
15 all for competition. I didn't like the part of the  
16 redistricting reform that was going to say -- that  
17 talked about representational fairness. I don't think  
18 anyone should be guaranteed so many seats. I would  
19 have rather it said that they have to be drawn so the  
20 majority of seats are competitive. Are competitive.  
21 Because I think that's what it means when it says that  
22 government derives its just power from the consent of  
23 the governed. That when you have to earn votes, and  
24 not the votes that have been gamed, but actually earn  
25 votes, we're better served as the people of Ohio.

1 That's what I would like to see.

2 And then just one last thought.

3 Redistricting cannot make every seat in Ohio  
4 competitive. But having non-partisan primaries can.  
5 Having non-partisan top two primaries.

6 Ohioans would be better served if in parts of  
7 the state, two Republicans are running in the general  
8 election. And in other parts of the states, two  
9 Democrats are running in the general election. That  
10 doesn't require a constitutional amendment. That can  
11 be legislated. And I would encourage that if we really  
12 truly believe in competition, like Ohioans believe in  
13 competition. We love competition.

14 If we truly believe in competition, let's  
15 make our elections competitive. Let's not only make  
16 competitive maps the best we can, but let's also have  
17 non-partisan top two primaries so that the two best  
18 candidates for an area are going to face off against  
19 each other in the general election.

20 Thank you for your time. I appreciate it.

21 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you. You know, in  
22 addition to being a Senator, and thank you very much  
23 for allowing me to serve you, I'm also a professor  
24 emeritus of political science at Kent State University.  
25 And just listening to the testimony just reminded me of

1 the principles that this country was built upon, and  
2 even the oath of office that we take. It is -- it's  
3 inspiring to sit on this side of the table, to listen  
4 to you one at a time, just march up and just bleed your  
5 hearts out to us. And I want to let you know, it's  
6 just not -- we're listening. We're listening and we  
7 appreciate your sentiments.

8 Next witness.

9 STAFF MEMBER: Chad Stevens followed by Lori  
10 Kumler.

11 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Mr. Greg Moore, are you  
12 leaving? Come on back here. Yes, sit down. We're  
13 going to get to you. We're going to get to you.

14 Would you state your name and spell it  
15 please?

16 MS. KUMLER: Hi. My name is Lori Kumler,  
17 L-O-R-I K-U-M-L-E-R. Thank you for your work in public  
18 service and for being here this evening. I am amazed  
19 and overwhelmed and blown away by all the comments  
20 everyone has made. I'm just really impressed. I don't  
21 have a great deal to add, so I'll be short.

22 I currently live in Stark County, 50th Ohio  
23 House District the 29th Ohio Senate District. I feel  
24 that it doesn't matter where I live in Ohio because  
25 most districts are safe. I guess the question is safe

1 for whom? We know the answer, and it's not safe for  
2 any of us, for Ohio citizens.

3 Part of me feels like I have no business  
4 being here on a Monday evening during -- driving an  
5 hour each way, missing dinner with my family. There's  
6 nothing particularly complicated from my perspective  
7 about why the proposed districts are unsafe for  
8 democracy in Ohio. I'm here on behalf of my family, my  
9 children, who will vote within the next decade.

10 I care about this issue. Many others who  
11 could not make it here tonight also care about this  
12 issue. We want competitive elections. We want real  
13 choices. We voted to change Ohio's Constitution to  
14 achieve these aims. In my mind, gerrymandering is not  
15 in the eye of the beholder, just as two plus two equals  
16 four is not. The data, the numbers, the evidence are  
17 very clear, 67 percent does not equal 55 percent.

18 I earnestly ask you to carry out what Ohio  
19 voters have asked you to do to create competitive  
20 districts where everyone's vote matters. Thank you.

21 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you. Next witness.

22 STAFF MEMBER: Sue Dyke followed by  
23 Kristin -- Kristi Hadgigeorge.

24 SUE DYKE: (Indiscernible) but there were  
25 some points I wanted to make on my own. I'm Sue Dyke.

1 I live in Cleveland Heights. And, you know, I didn't  
2 know if you knew, but I'd like to give a shout out to  
3 all the people who were up in the three overflow  
4 classrooms here. I don't know if you know that there  
5 were that many people here, people who took time out of  
6 their day, and even the overflow rooms had overflow.

7 And, you know, you may -- I wanted to just  
8 tell you a little bit about me. Most people that know  
9 me think I'm pretty mild-mannered, that I'm a nice  
10 person, that I don't get angry very much. You bring  
11 out the worst in me. And why I'm angry, and there's  
12 many reasons, but first and foremost, you sent my kids  
13 away. I have a 22-year-old daughter who's gay who is a  
14 teacher now in Chicago. She went to college in  
15 Minnesota. My son is an accountant for one of the big  
16 -- it's a big four. Yeah, big four. And he lives in  
17 Richmond, Virginia. They're not coming back.

18 This is why I'm mad. People -- politicians  
19 have made it uninhabitable for young people. And so --  
20 and that is coming from a very blue part of the state,  
21 but they also see that their rights are being  
22 assaulted. And that's what gerrymandering brings, and  
23 this is why I am always looking for an opportunity to  
24 talk.

25 But anyway, I did just want to thank the

1 Senate Dems for offering a compromise map. I hope you  
2 take it very seriously, like meet together without us  
3 and talk to each other, maybe go out for dinner  
4 tonight. I know it's late, but, you know, I don't  
5 know, there's a lot of places open. Chipotle is always  
6 good.

7 But anyway, and thanks for pointing out that  
8 these are the -- Representative Sykes, or Leader Sykes,  
9 I'm sorry, that these are the Ohio -- the citizens of  
10 Ohio's maps, not Matt Huffman's map. And where is he  
11 by the way? Did he leave? He's -- again, he's running  
12 this process and he doesn't even bother to show up.  
13 This is really frustrating, but -- or stay.

14 And thank you for a viable ten-year map. We  
15 want a ten-year map. We don't want to do this in four  
16 years, and I don't think you do either. All right? So  
17 a reminder, congressional maps are due in 17 days, and  
18 we don't even know who the legislative committee is  
19 that will run the process. We don't have proposed  
20 maps, and we don't have any hearings scheduled.

21 This is my constructive feedback. All right?  
22 I hope you're hearing it. I know it's hard to work on  
23 two things at once, but we did suggest early on that  
24 these hearings, these processes be done concurrently,  
25 but they haven't been done. And I look forward to the

1 time when I don't feel like I need to keep coming up  
2 here and drawing your attention to my anger.

3 Okay. Thank you. Any questions? Thank you.

4 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you.

5 (Applause)

6 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Yes, go ahead.

7 AUDITOR FABER: (Indiscernible) you heard  
8 that we have been working behind the scenes kind of  
9 with and our staff, because there's a rule in Ohio  
10 called sunshining, which means the four of us can't get  
11 in a room and talk about -- three of us can -- talk  
12 about maps and redistricting because we would be  
13 violating (indiscernible). Our staff, on the other  
14 hand, can, and frankly have been all weekend long  
15 working --

16 SUE DYKE: And before that, I'm pretty sure.

17 AUDITOR FABER: Working together and talking  
18 about that. But we continued to have conversations  
19 back and forth and continue to work -- you know, this  
20 is one of those things I wish -- like you, I wish this  
21 had been done a long time ago, but the reality is we've  
22 got a Wednesday deadline that we're going to do our  
23 darnedest to hit, and we will continue to work on that.

24 And I will just extend to my colleagues what  
25 I've extended before. I'm happy to buy dinner or

1 whatever, so let's keep working, and I appreciate the  
2 leaders, both the Republican leaders and the Democrat  
3 leaders, who have worked with the Secretary and me and  
4 the Governor to figure out what we can do with our  
5 staff to see if we can't land this plane with a  
6 bipartisan, I agree, ten-year map.

7 SUE DYKE: And please -- you know, please  
8 make sure that you are not sacrificing the quality of  
9 the map. You don't have to. Lots of people have  
10 created great maps, all right? And you don't have to  
11 sacrifice quality or -- you know, or make them partisan  
12 even for that matter. Okay? And so I realize you're  
13 under a tight timeline, but, you know, this sucks for  
14 us too, and I don't want to have to do it again. I  
15 mean, if I feel like I'm being listened to, like, I  
16 think that that helps. All right.

17 By the way, I have snacks in a Dave's bag  
18 back here. If there's anybody who wants something,  
19 trail mix. Okay. You took off your mask. Were you  
20 going to ask me another statement?

21 AUDITOR FABER: No.

22 SUE DYKE: Okay. All right. Thank you.

23 STAFF MEMBER: Kristi Hadgigeorge followed by  
24 Jimmy Germalic.

25 KRISTI HADGIGEORGE: Good evening. My name

1 is Kristy Hadgigeorge, K-R-I-S-T-I, last name  
2 H-A-D-G-I-G-E-R-G-E. And that's it, I promise.

3 I live in Lakewood, House District 13, Senate  
4 District 23. I initially came to this hearing today as  
5 solely just a listener to feel energized by my fellow  
6 fed-up Ohio citizens. But as I listened in the  
7 overflow room down the hall, I heard a testimony that  
8 enraged me and it needs to be repeated, so I just  
9 whipped this up.

10 After promising countless times last week  
11 that the Commission would get all hands on deck and  
12 work tirelessly with one another and staff over the  
13 weekend and through the nights to fix these partisan  
14 maps, not one single meeting was held, not one hour did  
15 you spend together trying to right the wrongs of this  
16 pathetic map and focus on the will of the people. You  
17 heard hours of complaints. You gave us a lot of  
18 pacifying and condescending BS, and then you went home  
19 to dinner and went to sleep.

20 You woke up, you watched the Buckeyes lose,  
21 you went to sleep. You woke up, you watched the Browns  
22 lose, you went to bed. And today you woke up just to  
23 sit on your hands and watch the rest of your citizens  
24 lose. That's something. It's quite the statement, or  
25 non-statement.

1           We've been pleading with you. These maps are  
2 not the will of the people. I can't say I'm surprised  
3 any longer. The whole process has felt like a setup  
4 from the beginning, and feigning interest in specifics  
5 now feels very performative. There's a day and a half  
6 left until this is voted on. Do you think anything  
7 substantial will get done at this hour? No.

8           Instead the super-majority Republicans get  
9 exactly what they want, a slightly watered down version  
10 of their hyper-partisan map that is still gerrymandered  
11 to all hell. What a shame. What a shame for all of  
12 us.

13           Being here today, listening to the past three  
14 hours of testimony -- sorry, this was written hours ago  
15 -- I felt that energy I was hoping for, but hearing  
16 that not one iota of our energy was carried with you  
17 into our week -- your weekend plans, well, now this all  
18 feels like a waste. You're not even trying. You  
19 either have one final trick up your sleeves or you're  
20 just letting us air our grievances now to feel like,  
21 hey, at least we tried. You don't care.

22           One last comment. Governor DeWine is not  
23 here, so I'll speak to an empty seat. Keep our  
24 50 million. You're spending it in falsely advertising  
25 our state as progressive. One look at these maps and

1 the ever-growing extremism and people will see right  
2 through your expensive marketing ploy.

3 There was a previous speaker that was right  
4 to say that the young people are frustrated. Voices  
5 are diluted. It was Ms. Gelato. I'd like to reiterate  
6 what a fellow speaker in the beginning hour of this had  
7 mentioned, that we are leaving. The youth is leaving  
8 the state.

9 I bought a house in January. I'm going off  
10 script now. I bought a house in January. I thought it  
11 was going to be my pride and joy. The last nine months  
12 it's felt like a ball and chain. I feel stuck here. I  
13 feel stuck here because you guys don't represent my  
14 people. You don't represent me and you don't give a  
15 shit. You don't care. This was your map? This is  
16 what you came up with, to say, we'll figure it out,  
17 like this will be the starting point and then we'll go  
18 from there? That's embarrassing.

19 My partner and I have had several talks very  
20 recently, and specifically within the last two months,  
21 about selling the house and moving out of state, and  
22 it's gotten to be real conversations. And thankfully  
23 it's a sellers' market, so it could happen very  
24 quickly.

25 But the maps just solidify that decision if

1 these were to continue, for our household and for many  
2 others my age. So please hold yourselves accountable.  
3 Allow for competition. Please, please allow for  
4 competition on both -- in both parties. Listen to your  
5 constituents, do your job, and please don't let Ohio  
6 slide even further into extremism. It's dangerous for  
7 every one of us. That's all.

8 (Applause)

9 STAFF MEMBER: Jimmy Germalic followed by  
10 Emily Bacha.

11 JAMES GERMALIC: Yeah, okay. Do you want me  
12 to spell my name? G-E-R-M-A-L-I-C. I'd like to start  
13 out that people's hearts would be open to this message,  
14 a little prayer:

15 Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with  
16 thee. Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed the  
17 fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
18 pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.  
19 Amen.

20 Now, when I read this, don't think I'm  
21 getting off the topic because I came here for Governor  
22 DeWine, because I've been trying to get a meeting with  
23 him because in North Dakota and Ohio, I'm the only  
24 one -- I should be in the Guinness books of record --  
25 that is trying to run for Congress, and outside the two

1 party nominees.

2           And I wanted to say to him that I'd have to  
3 contact 30,000 people, when you have the Delta virus,  
4 to get on the ballot. And there's -- the ballot is  
5 still not in operation. But when I come to the end,  
6 you'll see I'm right on this, what I'm talking about,  
7 so that's why in the beginning it might seem like I'm  
8 varying or something.

9           I said, Dear Governor DeWine, I'm writing on  
10 behalf of James Germalic, to grant him a hearing. The  
11 humble talk to the humble. Lincoln would talk to the  
12 common people day in and day out. Thousands of people  
13 came in, and he listened to them and did what he could  
14 for them. The President's signature opened doors no  
15 one else could open.

16           When you were a U.S. Senator -- I'm talking  
17 about a Governor DeWine -- in Washington, DC, you said  
18 to James, me, keep on talking. Well, why don't you  
19 follow your words and let James talk to you? It's no  
20 good to say that if there's no one to talk to. A guy  
21 said to Lincoln, "Why do you waste your time with all  
22 these people when the great war is going on?" Lincoln,  
23 didn't get mad. He replied, "I have pondered this many  
24 times, but I've come to the conclusion that these are  
25 the people that put me here, and these are the people I

1 want to hear from. I am here for anyone that has need  
2 of me."

3 If Lincoln, the President, could talk to the  
4 common people, then you, Governor, sure could. James  
5 is a Christian, a Catholic, and pro-life. So are you,  
6 so why won't you talk to him? Even the Roman world let  
7 Saint Paul state his defense again and again. Saint  
8 Paul gave his defense to Governor Felix and then  
9 Governor Festus. Felix would call Paul up to hear him  
10 over a period of two years. When Governor Festus,  
11 replied -- replaced Governor Felix, he gave Paul a  
12 hearing. Then Festus and King Agrippa gave Paul a  
13 hearing.

14 Lincoln would see anybody. Lincoln was the  
15 guiding light of the Republican party, the best  
16 President. You're Republican, so why don't you follow  
17 his example? Plato and Socrates, Plato said in the  
18 republic, justice is the cement of a republic. We have  
19 a republic.

20 Okay. Lincoln said, "You want justice for  
21 yourself but deny it to your opponent. I give justice  
22 to friend and foe alike." A priest said, "Charity is  
23 optional, justice is an obligation." This is about the  
24 most unjust situation possible. James, me, not only  
25 has a compelling case, it's also a request for justice

1 to be done for him.

2 In this environment of a circulating virus  
3 that endangers people's health, it is a fact that  
4 Cuyahoga County throws out three out of four signatures  
5 handed in. James found this out in 2008 and 2016.  
6 Ralph Nader in 2004 in his run for President also  
7 encountered this.

8 The requirement of 2,566 signatures therefore  
9 would require up to 30,000 contacts to be made with  
10 people, since one out -- since one out of every three  
11 or four people you'll approach sign your petition, and  
12 three out of four are thrown out. With the Delta  
13 variant going around and being 1,000 times more  
14 virulent than the original coronavirus, it just does  
15 not make sense to contact that many people. That is  
16 why I'm asking you, Governor DeWine, to hear James out,  
17 to find a solution to this pressing problem before the  
18 ballots are printed, which is coming up.

19 James gathered about 600 signatures in the  
20 month of July. Since then the Delta variant has gotten  
21 worse. We would like to talk to you and see if  
22 something can be worked out to allow him to get on the  
23 ballot this time, given the unique circumstances of the  
24 virus, making it unwise to contact so many people.

25 One solution would be allow -- would be to

1 allow him to pay a fee in lieu of the remaining  
2 signatures not obtained due to the coronavirus and  
3 Delta variant. Now, I'm reading so fast because I  
4 wanted to get to this, which has to do with your  
5 problem.

6 Lincoln would not compromise on either the  
7 breakup of the Union, divorce, the South divorcing the  
8 North around slavery. The Peace Democrats would not  
9 compromise on the Union, but would let the South have  
10 their slaves. Lincoln would not compromise on a  
11 principle of morality. Republicans would like to give  
12 justice to the Democrats, but the Republicans cannot  
13 compromise on principle of morality.

14 When the Democrats took on a hundred million  
15 abortions, same-sex marriage, and Obamacare, whose  
16 first principle is euthanasia with death panels not  
17 under congressional or judicial review, they divorced  
18 the Republicans. The Republicans can no longer give  
19 them justice because they bring along with them  
20 abortion, same-sex marriage, and euthanasia.

21 The Republicans can't give them territory in  
22 which to extend their kingdom of evil. If the  
23 Republicans would make districts in a just way, they'd  
24 be giving up districts to Democrats who bring in the  
25 murder of a hundred million babies, same-sex marriage,

1 and Obamacare, whose first principle is euthanasia with  
2 death panels not under congressional judicial review on  
3 the people in their district. Just as Lincoln couldn't  
4 compromise on slavery, so the Republicans can't  
5 compromise on abortion, same-sex marriage, and  
6 euthanasia.

7 Now, here's the last thing.

8 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Can you wrap it up?

9 JAMES GERMALIC: Do I have a minute left?

10 CO CHAIR SYKES: Can you wrap it up, please?

11 JAMES GERMALIC: Okay, I'll read the last --  
12 this is the last paragraph. There is only one way for  
13 the Republicans to give justice to the Democrats. That  
14 is they give up abortion, same-sex marriage, and  
15 euthanasia. And as long as that divide, which nobody  
16 will bring up, nobody will speak on, that divide of  
17 immorality, there can't be no compromise, okay?

18 Because, as I said, Lincoln said -- he said,  
19 "You want justice for yourself but you deny it to your  
20 opponent. I give justice to friend and foe alike."  
21 But he couldn't give justice to the South and say, I'm  
22 going to let you have your slavery, and the Republicans  
23 can not give justice to the Democrats as long as they  
24 hold on to abortion, same-sex marriage, and euthanasia,  
25 and that is the core of it.

1 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Yes. Yeah, next witness.

2 STAFF MEMBER: Emily Bacha followed by  
3 Representative Stephanie Howse.

4 EMILY BACHA: Good evening. To the honorable  
5 members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission, thank you  
6 for the opportunity to submit testimony for your  
7 consideration. My name is Emily Bacha, B-A-C-H-A, and  
8 I'm providing the testimony today on behalf of the Ohio  
9 Environmental Council, the OEC, and myself as a  
10 concerned citizen.

11 I oppose the state legislative district map  
12 currently under consideration and support the map  
13 submitted to this Commission by the Ohio Citizens  
14 Redistricting Commission. I grew up in a Southeast  
15 suburb of Cuyahoga County and currently reside on the  
16 near west side of Cleveland. Over the past ten years,  
17 I have worked in a number of community-facing  
18 environmental education, advocacy, and engagement  
19 roles, which have taken me across Northeast Ohio. And  
20 through these experiences, I have seen the vastly  
21 different environments our residents call home.

22 In particular, my work in the city of  
23 Cleveland has illustrated a history of environmental  
24 injustice. The disproportionate exposure of  
25 communities of color and low-income communities to

1 environmental hazards such as air pollution, toxic  
2 wastewater, and lead exposure, that is the definition  
3 of environmental injustice.

4           Sorry, I've been so excited to speak all  
5 evening. Years of intentional disinvestment and  
6 formerly redlined Cleveland neighborhoods and nearby  
7 inner-ring suburbs on the east side have resulted in an  
8 aging housing stock riddled with lead paint and lead in  
9 water issues, declining tree canopy cover, proximity to  
10 legacy brownfields, as well as poor air quality that  
11 has been deemed failing year after year by the American  
12 Lung Association.

13           Climate change and impacts, especially more  
14 frequent heat waves and increased precipitation,  
15 exacerbate these environmental hazards. Without a  
16 functioning and fair democracy, Ohio will continue to  
17 perpetuate such environmental injustices. Under our  
18 current maps, Ohio has many districts that crack apart  
19 communities. Unfortunately, the map currently under  
20 consideration by the Ohio Redistricting Commission  
21 perpetuates the cracked and packed districts of the  
22 past.

23           Specifically, proposed House Districts 13,  
24 14, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22 crack apart Cleveland's east  
25 side communities, where the majority of Cleveland's

1 Black residents and residents of color call home.  
2 These communities also bear the highest environmental  
3 justice burden locally.

4 According to the U.S. EPA's EJSCREEN, an  
5 environmental justice mapping tool, these communities  
6 face the highest National Air Toxics Assessment cancer  
7 risk, highest lead paint indicators, and are in close  
8 proximity to hazardous waste sites. The deliberate  
9 cracking of these communities dilutes their voices and  
10 their power to advocate for a healthier environment for  
11 their families and their neighbors.

12 Ohioans deserve better. Ohioans want  
13 districts and representatives that reflect our  
14 perspectives, our lived experiences, and our  
15 communities. Representatives elected by and for  
16 communities will know the problems that they face,  
17 including these shared environmental injustices. When  
18 we have districts representative of communities and not  
19 partisan interests, our environment and our communities  
20 win.

21 Maps like the Ohio Citizens Redistricting  
22 Commission Unity Maps, which took seriously the  
23 constitutional requirements for drawing a map, are what  
24 Ohioans deserve. Thank you for your consideration of  
25 this critical perspective in this very, very important

1 process.

2 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you for your  
3 contribution. Appreciate it.

4 EMILY BACHA: Thank you.

5 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness.

6 (Applause)

7 STAFF MEMBER: Representative Stephanie Howse  
8 followed by Greg Moore.

9 REPRESENTATIVE HOWSE: Good evening to the  
10 Chairs of the Commission and Commissioner members.  
11 Again, my name is Stephanie Howse, S-T-E-P-H-A-N-I-E  
12 H-O-W-S-E, and I'm the current state representative in  
13 Ohio's 11th House District, which currently consists of  
14 Cleveland's parts of Ward 2, two precincts in Ward 4,  
15 Cleveland Ward 5, Ward 6, Ward 7, one precinct in  
16 Ward 9, one precinct in Ward 10, Cleveland Ward 12,  
17 Newburg Heights, and Garfield Heights.

18 In looking at this new proposed map, the  
19 first thing that I see is that the entire district is  
20 broken up, which, I mean, on the surface people are  
21 like, well, you've got to get fair districts. But then  
22 when you actually look at the demographics of things,  
23 so I'm just going to go quickly through these  
24 districts.

25 When you look at District 14, it takes

1 currently, on the east side of Cleveland, Wards 2, 4,  
2 and 12, merged them with the west side of Cleveland,  
3 Wards 11, 13, and 16, one west side suburb, Brooklyn,  
4 and one east side suburb, Garfield Heights. Which  
5 again, giving a suggestion, I really do believe that  
6 people who are drawing the maps need to look at the  
7 cultural context. The bridge that divides our east and  
8 west side can be very -- it could be a good start to  
9 beginning to use west side communities with east side  
10 communities, not doing the zigzagging which is  
11 currently being done.

12           When you see the new District 18, which has  
13 downtown Cleveland, one district, Ward 5, which is on  
14 the east side of Cleveland, and then the districts or  
15 Wards 11, 14, 16, and 17, which is on the west side,  
16 along with Fairview Park, which is on the west side.  
17 It's a west suburb of Cleveland. Looking at District  
18 20, you have Wards 4, 6, and 9. People talked about  
19 that one before. Going to District 13, again, you have  
20 part of downtown, you have Cleveland Ward 7, which is  
21 on the east side of Cleveland, Cleveland Ward 15, which  
22 is on the west side of Cleveland, along with Lakewood  
23 and Rocky River, which are west side suburbs.

24           We talked about earlier District 19, and then  
25 there's District 22, which basically has all of these

1 suburbs kind of on the south and east side of Cuyahoga  
2 County. Now, I'm bringing this up, and the reason why  
3 it compelled me to come and testify today is because I  
4 currently represent the largest concentration of  
5 African-Americans in this state. House District 11 has  
6 65 percent African-Americans, and when you look at how  
7 -- and it was told from the very beginning that race  
8 was not taken into consideration as a part of drawing  
9 this map.

10 I always like, okay, well, let me check on  
11 the other side, right? I wanted to look at the highest  
12 concentration of white people, and it's a lot of them,  
13 but the highest concentration is House District 84.  
14 House District 84 has 97.3 percent white Ohioans that  
15 live in there. And then I looked for it again and, oh,  
16 (indiscernible) it's still House District 84, and House  
17 District 84, which is right south of Lima is still  
18 basically intact.

19 And so I guess my question to the district is  
20 how is it that the highest concentration of African-  
21 Americans has been literally obliterated in these  
22 proposed maps? And when you look at the highest  
23 concentration of white Ohioans, they are kept intact.  
24 They are kept in whole. Their communities are kept  
25 whole, and we need to change that.

1           Getting into the last components of that,  
2    when we look at just what was presented to people,  
3    people cannot understand this. You don't know the  
4    cities, the communities. You are using -- and  
5    literally what I did as a full state representative is  
6    use what is known as Dave's Redistricting.

7           Who is Dave? I'm appreciative of it, but  
8    that is not -- I mean, seriously, like we have to treat  
9    the people's information better than this. We're  
10   talking about trying to communicate information.  
11   People learn very differently. Some people visually,  
12   they can get it, but other people need to read it. You  
13   should be able to have the written stuff, okay, and go  
14   from there. And that's basically it, in a nutshell.  
15   We can do better.

16           Ohio's African-American representation, it is  
17   very hard, you know, just to -- anybody to run, but if  
18   we are looking to have fairness, it must include the  
19   racial and cultural ethnicities and cultures when it  
20   looks at a map. This map does not do it, and it's  
21   going to be very problematic.

22           So thank you all so much for your time.

23           CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you.

24           REPRESENTATIVE HOWSE: Any questions?

25           CO-CHAIR SYKES: Secretary LaRose?

1           SECRETARY LAROSE: (Indiscernible) I agree  
2 with you that Dave's Redistricting sounds like  
3 something that Wendy's provides or something, but we're  
4 all trying to work with the tools that we've got.

5           You mentioned the concentration of minority  
6 Ohioans, African-American Ohioans in your district.  
7 One of the concerns with putting too many people  
8 together in one district is the packing problem, right?  
9 So you want to create the maximum number of minority  
10 opportunity districts and that kind of thing. I'd ask  
11 you to take a look on Dave's Redistricting and look at  
12 the Democratic proposal that they presented earlier,  
13 and I'd love to hear your comments on that. You can  
14 give me a call in the next day or two.

15           REPRESENTATIVE HOWSE: Absolutely. I will  
16 absolutely do that. And again, just giving things of  
17 if you wanted to look at, and it's not necessarily  
18 looking to break people up, but I think culturally, if  
19 you look at Cleveland, and you keep downtown -- as  
20 people said, downtown is currently split, keeping  
21 downtown whole. It is a community. I think even  
22 merging it with some of the communities on the east  
23 side of Cleveland, you can get to the numbers, right?

24           And that was the one thing with -- in my  
25 current district probably had the most population loss

1 of any place. So we need to ask some people, you have  
2 to go somewhere. If you had a choice, I think going  
3 south and east versus east and west would actually get  
4 us there and have the intent of the law.

5 SECRETARY LAROSE: Thank you, Representative.

6 REPRESENTATIVE HOWSE: You're welcome.

7 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Auditor Faber?

8 AUDITOR FABER: Thank you. Just to follow up  
9 on that, I agree that it's important that we try and  
10 keep communities together. And that also the -- where  
11 we can, we draw minority/majority and minority  
12 influence districts. And as somebody who represents  
13 one of those districts, based on your testimony, I  
14 assume you understand or you would agree with me that  
15 to hit that in an area like Cleveland, where there's a  
16 concentration of folks, it's going to be very difficult  
17 to draw districts that keep communities together and  
18 provide minority input in ways that don't get accused  
19 of packing individuals together in one area.

20 I mean, I just looked at some maps that were  
21 presented by frankly your leaders, and frankly I kind  
22 of like the maps better than what we're seeing, and  
23 we're having that conversation. But the concern could  
24 be that those tend to pack in ways that the Democrat  
25 indexes, particularly in certain areas of Cleveland,

1 are going to be really high compared to what would be  
2 considered a competitive 50/50 district.

3 REPRESENTATIVE HOWSE: Yeah. So through the  
4 Chair to the Auditor, when it comes to that, the  
5 real -- the reality is we're -- just Cleveland is a  
6 Democratic city. I mean, you're talking about  
7 currently right now I have a Democratic performance  
8 index of like 86, 87 percent, and that's literally --  
9 that's people -- like minds usually live together,  
10 right? So I think the reality is creating districts  
11 that are culturally -- yes, there is some  
12 competitiveness, but you can really get the  
13 competitiveness kind of in the outskirts where people  
14 are -- you know, I mean, that's where it happens,  
15 usually in the suburban areas.

16 Like some of these urban areas, you're not  
17 going to necessarily get that. And I think if you had  
18 a preference, you have to look at people culturally.  
19 And I will layer on top of, when you're dealing with  
20 people who are already a concentration of poverty, who  
21 are already dealing with transportation, housing  
22 issues, healthcare, and everything else, to just dilute  
23 that voice to everyone else I think is going to be very  
24 problematic.

25 And it will be diluted, and the issues that

1 are currently not being addressed from the state of  
2 Ohio will be further diminished with a map like that  
3 and having representation like this.

4 AUDITOR FABER: So, Mr. Chair, to the  
5 Representative, I don't want to say you and I are  
6 singing from the same hymnal, but the reality is, is  
7 there are going to be districts that you're going to  
8 have a representational index that in certain areas  
9 that tend one way or another. I look at --

10 REPRESENTATIVE HOWSE: I mean, that's going  
11 to be happening. I don't think that's necessarily the  
12 issue. I'm sorry.

13 AUDITOR FABER: Yeah. And I was going to  
14 say, look, the same thing in rural areas of the state,  
15 as well. You kind of mentioned over in Western Ohio  
16 where Representative Cupp and -- I'm sorry, Speaker  
17 Cupp and President Huffman come from, it's going to be  
18 real hard to draw a 50/50 district over there as well.

19 And so we know that's going to be a factor.  
20 We're going to have areas that we tend to see  
21 concentrations.

22 REPRESENTATIVE HOWSE: Right.

23 AUDITOR FABER: And frankly, in that  
24 capacity, I think you would probably agree with me  
25 keeping communities of interest together --

1 REPRESENTATIVE HOWSE: Right.

2 AUDITOR FABER: -- and like similar  
3 communities are at that point the priority in those  
4 areas --

5 REPRESENTATIVE HOWSE: Absolutely.

6 AUDITOR FABER: -- instead of diluting them  
7 to get some 50/50 competitors.

8 REPRESENTATIVE HOWSE: Absolutely. So the  
9 reason why that I brought that up was because of the  
10 district that I represented being the highest  
11 concentration of African-Americans. It just so happens  
12 to be when I looked at what was the highest  
13 concentration of white Ohioans, it's in House  
14 District 84. And what I was looking at as the goal of  
15 what we were presented is to try to look for that  
16 political fairness, that 50/50.

17 What I am saying is in this current map, when  
18 you look at House District 84, it is not broken up the  
19 way House District 11 and all these different -- it's  
20 split -- House District 11 is currently split in seven  
21 different ways, with the highest concentration of  
22 African-Americans. House District 84, with the highest  
23 concentration of white Ohioans, is not split at all.  
24 It's virtually the same district.

25 AUDITOR FABER: (Indiscernible.)

1           REPRESENTATIVE HOWSE: No, no, that -- well,  
2 I'm telling you. That's what I'm sharing with you.  
3 And it's still the same number. So the one that's  
4 House District 11, it doesn't have 11 in all these  
5 different new numbers, but 84 is consistently basically  
6 the same. And so if people did not look at it, I  
7 wouldn't put it on record and bring it to people's  
8 attention.

9           AUDITOR FABER: Thank you.

10          REPRESENTATIVE HOWSE: You're welcome.

11          CO-CHAIR SYKES: Representative Howse, I want  
12 to thank you for coming and sharing that information  
13 with us. As you know, I live around here and I've come  
14 over time to understand that there's dynamics, you  
15 know, here that you might not find many places. And  
16 the way that you've gone through this I think has been  
17 very helpful, and I just want to thank you for that.

18          REPRESENTATIVE HOWSE: You're welcome. All  
19 right. Thank you.

20          (Applause)

21          STAFF MEMBER: Greg Moore followed by Seth  
22 Bridger.

23          GREG MOORE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair  
24 and Co-Chairs and all the members who've been here  
25 since four o'clock at least.

1           And my name is Greg Moore, spelled G-R-E-G  
2 M-O-O-R-E. I had scheduled to testify tomorrow. I'm  
3 the Co-Chair of the Ohio Citizens Redistricting  
4 Commission, but because my leader asked me to come  
5 back, I decided to come back. And also I want to hear  
6 sort of where we were going towards the end.

7           I have a few comments to make, and they won't  
8 be a duplicate of what I'm going to say tomorrow, but  
9 it's just more about process. Tomorrow you'll hear  
10 some official comments about the maps that have been  
11 presented as well as some comments about the new maps  
12 that have been presented tonight.

13           First I want to ask my friend, Catherine is  
14 standing right there. She is what we call a long  
15 hauler. So I know there's a lot of frustrated people.  
16 You can sit down. There's a lot of frustrated people  
17 in the room tonight because of the process, but I have  
18 to say that she's my hero because she started working  
19 on this decades ago, not months ago or weeks ago, but  
20 decades ago.

21           And by the same token, I've been working as  
22 my background in voting rights for about 30 years.  
23 Started as an Ohio University student activist and  
24 student government president all the way through my  
25 work in Ohio registering voters, and then my 17 years

1 with the NAACP as the director of the national voter  
2 registration.

3 CO-CHAIR SYKES: We didn't want you to talk a  
4 long time. We just --

5 GREG MOORE: It's not long.

6 (Laughter)

7 GREG MOORE: I'm only making a comment about  
8 how long it takes to get stuff done. And my point to  
9 you is that I know there are two things we have going  
10 on in this room. One is a lot of pessimism, and then  
11 there's some optimism up front, and some in the back.  
12 And then there's hope and then there's the reality.  
13 The reality is that people have seen this before.  
14 They've seen it come crashing down, and they've seen  
15 this not work out. They've seen everybody revert back  
16 to the partisan nature of what has happened in this  
17 state for several cycles.

18 But everything I've heard tonight and you've  
19 heard tonight are the modifications among the people  
20 who know this area the best. I can't add anything to  
21 it or subtract from it. They know what needs to be  
22 done for these maps. I'm assuming what we're looking  
23 at now will be a part of our history of what was  
24 originally presented, but tomorrow and on Wednesday  
25 we'll come up with something that I'm -- I am

1 optimistic will be a modification of what you've done.

2           So I think that people in this room who are  
3 frustrated, I just want to say to you that I was  
4 frustrated when we were trying to collect signatures  
5 and we were running out of time, and we did get there.  
6 And we were frustrated when I was with, I guess, Matt  
7 Huffman and yourself, Mr. Co-Chair, when we were trying  
8 to negotiate this at the very end with (indiscernible)  
9 voters and common cause and others and the NAACP.

10           So the delays that we had with the census are  
11 real. The delays we've had with getting maps and data  
12 together is very real. But we have something that  
13 could be a model for the rest of the country. I don't  
14 think there's another model like this anywhere, so if  
15 this works, if this works, it will be something that  
16 other states will replicate. If it fails, I don't  
17 think we have to even have that conversation because if  
18 it fails, this would be reformed like it was before and  
19 a whole new system would be put in place that doesn't  
20 involve any elected officials.

21           So I think you've heard that tonight. I  
22 think that's a real possibility, so this would be the  
23 first time we have to do this, but I think it's also  
24 the last time we have to get it right. So that's my  
25 message tonight. Tomorrow we'll talk about the maps.

1           But I just wanted to talk about the long  
2 haulers and the importance of our keeping that little  
3 bit of optimism. Even if it's just a little mustard  
4 seed, as someone said, that's enough for me. Thank  
5 you.

6           CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you. Our last  
7 witness.

8           STAFF MEMBER: Reverend Seth Bridger.

9           SETH BRIDGER: Greetings and good evening to  
10 distinguished Chairpersons and the respective members  
11 of this Commission. My name is Seth Bridger, S-E-T-H,  
12 Bridger, B-R-I-D-G-E-R, bridge with an R on the end.  
13 And I appreciate the opportunity to stand before you  
14 tonight. I arrived a little after four o'clock this  
15 afternoon, and the three or four overflow rooms were  
16 lively and were well attended. You do need to know  
17 that.

18           I'm representing myself as a father of two  
19 boys growing up in this state and as a husband of a  
20 wife who is also clergy, and I represent a multitude of  
21 other people, people who are working right now, others  
22 who were taking care of their children right now,  
23 others with no reliable transportation to get here  
24 tonight to this wonderful Tri-C facility, others whose  
25 health is too diminished for them to attend such a

1 Commission meeting tonight, and still others who are  
2 voiceless, marginalized by the systems in place, and  
3 simply too tired of the process to care or give up  
4 their Monday evening or afternoon.

5 I believe, as I hope that each of you do,  
6 that this process is extremely important and essential  
7 to the future of Ohio and all Ohioans, extremely  
8 important to those that this process is done with  
9 integrity and an ethic which honors the human dignity  
10 of all people. It is therefore part of my ordination  
11 vows as a member of the clergy of the Evangelical  
12 Lutheran Church in America to speak, and to not speak  
13 for myself from the privileged position that I have had  
14 my entire life, but to use this voice in support of the  
15 marginalized, including people of color in our fine  
16 state.

17 I currently serve the people of Messiah  
18 Lutheran Church in Fairview Park, Ohio, a first  
19 (indiscernible) western suburb. I'm part of House  
20 District 16 and Senate District 24. I currently reside  
21 in beautiful North Olmsted, Ohio, yet I hail from the  
22 ZIP Code of 44691 in Wooster. The gentlemen referred  
23 to the Wayne County Fair. You've got to go.

24 I attended college in Springfield, Ohio,  
25 Clark County, the seat of Clark county. I served in

1 AmeriCorps in the Linden Avenue neighborhood in  
2 Columbus across the interstate from Ohio State's campus  
3 for ten months. My wife and I purchased our first home  
4 in the western hills of Cincinnati, lived in Green  
5 Township, and she and I resided in Bexley, Ohio, 43209,  
6 for several years during grad school and service in  
7 Bexley.

8 I say all this to say this: I know the state  
9 of Ohio. I love the state of Ohio. This is not the  
10 state of Ohio. We can do better. Listen to all the  
11 people. Listen, please. I speak from great privilege,  
12 but I want you to listen to those you've heard tonight,  
13 those that you've heard across this great state, listen  
14 to the people for what is fair and just.

15 I also represent the Laundry Love Ministry  
16 that we're part of that the church in Fairview Park,  
17 but the closest laundromat to us, we go as a  
18 congregation in love on the people at the laundromat,  
19 so I'm representing hundreds of people through Laundry  
20 Love Ministry that come the last Thursday of the month  
21 to clean their laundry, and we help with that. We  
22 don't do their laundry, but we help with that and help  
23 pay for their laundry. At the end of the month, you  
24 can imagine how tight it is.

25 Hundreds of people who are really struggling

1 and want better from their representatives. So I  
2 implore you, listen to the people, an extension.  
3 Listen to the people. Listen to the people you're  
4 hearing from this night and across Ohio. Listen to the  
5 citizens of your home district, yes, and listen to the  
6 citizens of the whole state beyond Akron in Lima, Ohio,  
7 and other places that you have loyalties.

8 Divest yourself, please, of party and  
9 corporations and interests. To the extent of your  
10 ability, divest yourself of your party affiliation,  
11 your corporate interest, and your racial biases.

12 I especially want to thank the lady who  
13 talked to you all down in Dayton, Ohio. I couldn't  
14 sleep last night. I was up praying for several people  
15 in our congregation, praying for this world that God so  
16 deeply loves, and I couldn't sleep. So I was up at  
17 3:15 and I found Idea Stream, and they broadcast the  
18 Commission meeting you had, I think on the 25th of  
19 August, down in the Dayton, Ohio area.

20 I'm talking about the lady who came as a  
21 realtor, gave up a showing. The African-American  
22 realtor mom who brought her recent high school graduate  
23 daughter to that hearing. Listen to her, and listen to  
24 countless others you've heard from today. Listen and  
25 then act, please.

1           And I realize this redistricting process will  
2 not satisfy a hundred percent of the people. However,  
3 we must do better, and it includes you, the honorable  
4 members of this Commission. Listen and act, please.  
5 Thank you. Peace be with you in this process. It's  
6 not an easy process. Thank you for giving up your time  
7 and your service.

8           I want to say one more thing about the  
9 districts. The congregation that I serve primarily  
10 pulls from Fairview Park and North Olmstead and Rocky  
11 River and Lakewood and beyond, several districts, so  
12 our congregation would represent about five or six of  
13 your districts here. Fairview Park and Rocky River are  
14 tied in a lot of ways. I'd like you to reconsider the  
15 way 13 and 18 are drawn up. Please take the testimony  
16 of the Representative just a little bit ago about this  
17 long, narrow, skinny distance in this map. Please look  
18 at 13 and 18, and specifically that's what I can speak  
19 to.

20           I'm open to any questions.

21           CO-CHAIR SYKES: Any questions? Thank you  
22 very much.

23           ELLIOTT FORHAN: May I approach?

24           CO-CHAIR SYKES: Yeah, certainly.

25           ELLIOTT FORHAN: Thank you.

1 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you.

2 ELLIOTT FORHAN: I got here at 4:30

3 (indiscernible).

4 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Okay. Go ahead. Just give  
5 your name and spell it, please.

6 ELLIOTT FORHAN: I will. My name is Elliot  
7 Forhan. It's spelled F-O-R-H-A-N. I live on the east  
8 side of Cuyahoga County. And thank you very much to  
9 the Chair. I've been here since 4:30, but I guess,  
10 according to Representative Smith, my name was called  
11 before then, so thank you.

12 Competitive districts are a bedrock of good  
13 government. When districts are competitive, elected  
14 officials are accountable to the voters because the  
15 threat of losing an election is real. A competitive  
16 district map means that the elected officials and the  
17 political parties to which they belong are accountable.  
18 That accountability is the best guarantee of good  
19 government.

20 On the other hand, uncompetitive districts  
21 corrupt our government. Lack of competition destroys  
22 the accountability to the voters of elected officials  
23 and their parties. What incentive do government  
24 officials and their political parties have to deliver  
25 to the voters when they know that they will never lose

1 an election? Uncompetitive districts are anathema to  
2 good government and to democracy.

3 Incumbents in Ohio's redistricting process  
4 ten years ago avoided competition for themselves and  
5 enacted uncompetitive district maps. And the elected  
6 institutions of government in our state controlled by  
7 incumbents unchallenged in uncompetitive districts have  
8 been dysfunctional and corrupt during the past decade.  
9 Ohio voters, by large margins in 2015 and 2018, took  
10 action and changed the redistricting process.

11 Notwithstanding the express will of the Ohio  
12 voters, the incumbents in our state are doing it again.  
13 The district maps that this Commission adopted last  
14 week are similarly uncompetitive compared to the  
15 existing maps. This is an outrage and it should  
16 outrage every Ohioan. These incumbents, leaders of our  
17 state government, are granting to themselves gold-  
18 plated job tenure. Congratulations to them. It must  
19 be nice.

20 How can you tell that the district maps that  
21 the Commission adopted are bad? According to the  
22 analytic software of the website Dave's Redistricting,  
23 the partisan lean of the proposed districts exceeds ten  
24 percentage points with respect to approximately  
25 83 percent of the districts of the proposed House map

1 and 80 percent of the districts of the proposed Senate  
2 map.

3 So only 17 percent of the districts of the  
4 proposed House map and only 20 percent of the district  
5 of the proposed Senate map are competitive. Again,  
6 17 and 20 percent competitive proposed districts;  
7 83 and 80 percent uncompetitive. Outrageous.

8 It's even worse when you consider how easy it  
9 is to create much better, more competitive maps, not to  
10 mention the maps that Mr. Glassburn introduced today.  
11 Users on Dave's Redistricting can submit their own  
12 district maps, and the website software analyzes those  
13 user-submitted maps automatically.

14 Right now on the website, user-submitted maps  
15 are publicly available that, compared to the maps that  
16 the Commission adopted, improve on the number of  
17 competitive districts by more than 80 percent with  
18 respect to the House map and by more than 125 percent  
19 with respect to the Senate map. The users who  
20 submitted these maps likely do not have the resources  
21 available to them that the Commission does, yet they  
22 produced far superior maps.

23 I'm almost finished. Ohio voters deserve so  
24 much better. They deserve a redistricting commission  
25 that enacts district maps that promote competition, not

1 maps that insulate, protect, and coddle the incumbent  
2 politicians. Members of the Commission, please rise to  
3 the moment, reject the district maps that you adopted,  
4 and introduce new maps with far more competitive  
5 districts. Examples of superior maps are available to  
6 you right now.

7 Thank you very much.

8 (Applause)

9 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you. That was our  
10 last witness left. I am afraid to ask if there's  
11 anyone else, but I'm obligated in this position to --

12 UNIDENTIFIED: I'll be a witness, but only if  
13 we change the (indiscernible).

14 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Is there anyone else who  
15 would like to speak tonight? Is there anyone else?

16 JOHN PATTERSON: John Patterson.

17 CO-CHAIR SYKES: John Patterson?

18 JOHN PATTERSON: I wasn't going to speak.

19 J-O-H-N P-A-T-T-E-R-S-O-N. Former state representative  
20 and the Patterson of Cupp-Patterson School -- Fair  
21 School Funding Plan.

22 Now, why do I bring that up? It took over  
23 200 years for us as a nation to eliminate the scourge  
24 of slavery. It took well over a hundred years to give  
25 women the right to vote. And on both of those issues,

1 we are still struggling to get it right. For 30 years,  
2 almost 30 years, we have struggled to get a fair school  
3 funding formula, and we still have a long way to go to  
4 get it right.

5 And when I think about the future, and I  
6 don't know if you notice, but there were two young boys  
7 sitting out here for over four hours. You fed them.  
8 Thank you. So well-behaved. I couldn't think about  
9 the world that they are going to inherit from us.

10 And I want you to look around this room now  
11 and think about who will still be here 50 years from  
12 now. There won't be many. Fifty years from now, maybe  
13 the time it takes to address some of the pressing  
14 problems we face in Ohio, things like climate change,  
15 like a 21st century -- excuse me, 22nd century  
16 workforce. How will we continue to mobilize and get  
17 along as a people? Those are long-term problems that  
18 deserve the very talented people working together.

19 And there are two parts of that that I want  
20 to address in a little bit greater detail. As many of  
21 you know, I spent more time working with my dear friend  
22 Bob Cupp across the aisle -- excuse me, Speaker Cupp --  
23 than I did with any other member in my own caucus, just  
24 working on school funding in the last term.

25 Same for John Rogers, my roommate, because

1 that's what it took to get this done. It takes that  
2 trust, it takes that commitment, and this is where term  
3 limits hurt us as well. We don't have time to build  
4 the trust. But the other factor is this: When we have  
5 non-competitive districts, talented people who we need  
6 who are not politicians but statesmen and stateswomen  
7 sometimes don't run for office. They don't have the  
8 stomach for it. They know they don't have a chance to  
9 win. And we need all the talent we can muster to face  
10 these problems.

11 You as a Commission, we as a people, are  
12 standing on the threshold of a tomorrow for those two  
13 little boys. The decisions you make are going to  
14 impact Ohio for decades. But it rests on competitive  
15 districts, so I implore you to think about your legacy,  
16 Ohio's future, and the work that we can accomplish when  
17 we work together for the greater good regardless of  
18 party affiliation.

19 Thank you, and thank you for all your service  
20 and your time spent here.

21 (Applause)

22 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Well, thank you,  
23 Representative Patterson. When I asked, I really  
24 didn't mean it. And then you gave us a whole  
25 (indiscernible) you know. I'm going to ask one more

1 time, do we have anyone else that would like to speak?

2 Any members of the Commission have any comments that

3 they would like to make?

4 UNIDENTIFIED: Going once? Going twice?

5 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Hearing none, no further

6 business, we will now adjourn.

7 (Recording ends)

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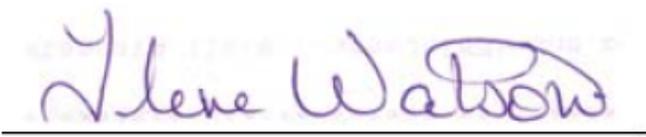
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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, Ilene Watson, court-approved transcriber, hereby certify that the foregoing is a correct transcript from the official electronic sound recording of the proceedings in the above-entitled matter.



ILENE WATSON, AAERT NO. 447      DATE: September 20, 2021