

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 V**

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# **Exhibit 28**

Ohio Redistricting Commission  
Audio Transcription  
September 14, 2021

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1 (Recording begins)

2 CO-CHAIR CUPP: Good morning, everyone.  
3 Before we begin our official business today, I'd like  
4 to thank the Washington State Community College for  
5 hosting our remote site today. So we are also taking  
6 testimony from Marietta at the Washington State  
7 Community College as part of our hearing today.

8 I would also like to let the audience here  
9 know that there are overflow rooms, and they -- here in  
10 the Statehouse, and they're Room 311, 114, and 116.

11 We'll now call to order this regional hearing  
12 of the Ohio Redistricting Commission. As people arrive  
13 and would like to testify, we ask that you fill out a  
14 witness slip on the table and provide them to our staff  
15 so that we know that you are here and can put you in --  
16 on the list to be able to testify.

17 We'll now take attendance and ask the staff  
18 to please call the roll.

19 STAFF MEMBER: Co-Chair Senator Sykes.

20 CO-CHAIR SENATOR SYKES: Present.

21 STAFF MEMBER: Co-Chair Speaker Cupp.

22 CO-CHAIR SPEAKER CUPP: Present.

23 STAFF MEMBER: Governor DeWine.

24 GOVERNOR DEWINE: Here.

25 STAFF MEMBER: Auditor Faber.

1 AUDITOR FABER: Here.

2 STAFF MEMBER: President Huffman.

3 SENATE PRESIDENT HUFFMAN: Here.

4 STAFF MEMBER: Secretary LaRose.

5 SECRETARY LAROSE: Here.

6 STAFF MEMBER: Leader Sykes. Checked in.

7 CO-CHAIR CUPP: All right. The quorum  
8 present, we'll be meeting as a full commission. Excuse  
9 me.

10 At this time, the Commission will hear public  
11 testimony on the Commission plan that was introduced on  
12 September 9th, 2021, in accordance with the Commission  
13 rules and Article XI of the Ohio Constitution.

14 These proceedings will be recorded and  
15 broadcast by the Ohio Channel so the Commission in its  
16 deliberation may consider things that are said here  
17 today. It also serves as an informal record of the  
18 proceedings.

19 We ask our audience today, again, to refrain  
20 from clapping or other loud noises. Whichever side --  
21 whether you agree or disagree with whoever's talking,  
22 we'd like to exercise the most respectful decorum here  
23 for everyone. And that's out of respect for both the  
24 witnesses and the persons that are watching the  
25 proceedings remotely. And I was also advised last

1 evening that those who have hearing assisted devices,  
2 that the loud noise and the clapping interferes with  
3 their ability to hear all that's being said.

4 If you are here to testify, please complete a  
5 witness slip and give it to one of our staff, as I  
6 mentioned previously. If you have written testimony,  
7 please submit a copy to our staff so it can be included  
8 in the official record of the proceedings.

9 All right. A member of the public may  
10 testify on the Commission's introduced plan before the  
11 Commission for up to -- we're going to ask for three  
12 minutes. We have 90 witnesses scheduled. And so, in  
13 order to get everybody to have an opportunity to at  
14 least say something, we'll limit the testimony to three  
15 minutes. We will have somebody that is doing the time,  
16 and you'll be notified when you have one minute left.

17 So witnesses should limit their testimony to  
18 comments on the introduced Commission plan. And I  
19 would just add that I think what is most helpful in  
20 this is if you have specific changes in the plan that  
21 you wish to recommend, those are most helpful to us.

22 I would also ask that we avoid repetitive  
23 testimony, that is multiple witnesses saying the same  
24 thing, because all that does is sort of limit people  
25 who want to testify further down the list.

1           We will be taking testimony both from onsite  
2 Columbus and remotely from Marietta, as I mentioned  
3 previously, so please be patient as we give witnesses  
4 from each location the opportunity to speak.

5           We will now begin with our first witness here  
6 today. And who is our first witness?

7           STAFF MEMBER: Our first witness is Nazeena  
8 Alvi, followed by Dean Barbo.

9           All right. Who are the next witnesses?

10          STAFF MEMBER: The next witness is Amina  
11 Barhumi, followed by Katie Barnes.

12          DEAN BARBO: I'm Dean Barbo.

13          THE COURT: Oh, please come forward, and  
14 state your name and spell your name for the record.

15          DEAN BARBO: Hi. My name is -- I'll take the  
16 mask down. My name is Dean Barbo, B-A-R-B-O. So I  
17 wanted to testify here today so -- first off -- first  
18 out of the gate, which is fun.

19                 So I came out -- I got off of work to come  
20 here today, because I think of the importance of this  
21 issue to everybody and what's been done over the past  
22 30 years with the districting in this state. And that,  
23 you know, the new districts, I guess, just came out on,  
24 like, Thursday. I haven't really had a chance to look  
25 at them in depth. But, you know, it comes down to one

1 of philosophy, I think. To create non-competitive  
2 districts is undemocratic, and I think that, as a  
3 representative of the people of Ohio, that you need to  
4 be making these districts competitive.

5 And I know, according to the demographics and  
6 the racial demographics, that it's impossible in some  
7 places to make districts 50/50 or competitive. But,  
8 you know, there's a lot of room within the current  
9 rules of the redistricting to -- for more  
10 gerrymandering, and I want to impress upon all of you  
11 the need to have competitive districts in this state.  
12 When, you know, 54 percent of the people vote for one  
13 party in the last election, but yet 78 or 9 percent of  
14 the publicly held seats go to one party, that's not  
15 very representative of the people of Ohio.

16 So I don't want to take up a lot of time,  
17 especially with the new districts coming out and not  
18 knowing exactly where those lines are drawn at this  
19 point. But I want to impress upon you the need to  
20 fairly represent the people of Ohio in these districts.  
21 And I think it's of utmost important to democracy here  
22 in this state, and to prevent the state from becoming,  
23 you know, a one-party rule, which will serve nobody in  
24 the end. So that's about all I got.

25 CO-CHAIR CUPP: Any questions for the

1 witness?

2 Seeing none, thank you. Thank you for your  
3 concise testimony. We appreciate that.

4 Next witnesses?

5 STAFF MEMBER: Amina Barhumi, followed by  
6 Katie Barnes.

7 CO-CHAIR CUPP: Welcome. Please state your  
8 name and spell it for the record please.

9 AMINA BARHUMI: Good morning. My name is  
10 Amina Barhumi. Good morning, Co-Chair Cupp, Co-Chair  
11 Sykes, and members of the Ohio Redistricting  
12 Commission.

13 CO-CHAIR CUPP: Would you spell your name for  
14 the record, please.

15 AMINA BARHUMI: Absolutely. It's A-M as in  
16 Mary, I-N as in Nancy, A. Barhumi. B as in boy, A-R-  
17 H-U-M-I.

18 CO-CHAIR CUPP: Thank you.

19 AMINA BARHUMI: Of course. Thank you again.  
20 I'm here to testify on behalf of the Ohio Chapter of  
21 the Council on American-Islamic Relations, known as  
22 CAIR-Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to appear  
23 before you. I'm also a member of the Ohio Citizens  
24 Redistricting Commission, and I am here to present  
25 testimony in support of those proposed unity maps.

1           As a civil rights and advocacy organization  
2 for Ohio Muslims, CAIR-Ohio has been working for  
3 several months to fight for fair maps. Muslims, who  
4 are often the subject of political discourse, rarely  
5 have the opportunity to advocate for themselves. As it  
6 stands, Islamophobia, racism, and xenophobia pervades  
7 our political system, leading to the creation of  
8 discriminatory policies and laws.

9           This particularly emphasizes the need for  
10 diverse representation amongst elected officials. At  
11 the very least, Muslims should have adequate  
12 representation in government that will be both  
13 accessible and responsive, let alone and much less  
14 advocate for their needs. The redistricting process is  
15 crucial to establishing proportional representation, as  
16 it is commonly known, and ensuring that all Ohioans  
17 have a voice in their government.

18           This is why Ohioans overwhelmingly voted for  
19 these reforms. Also part of this -- part of these  
20 reforms was that the process be fair, be transparent,  
21 and provide ample opportunity for public input. Thus  
22 far, we have seen that this Commission seriously  
23 challenges the spirit of the redistricting reforms  
24 Ohioans were promised.

25           The Ohio Redistricting -- Citizens

1 Redistricting Commission has accomplished all this in a  
2 timely fashion with ample opportunity for public  
3 testimony. And with that, I'd like to offer an example  
4 of how that has happened.

5 One of our Muslim community members, Hadiya  
6 Akhtar, who could not be here today -- she's a first-  
7 year Ohio State University student, had testified as  
8 part of the OCRC about her residential community around  
9 the Noor Islamic Cultural Center, one of the largest  
10 mosques, also a polling location in Central Ohio.

11 She testified about how her neighbors are  
12 split between two Congressional and two State House  
13 districts, therefore diluting her and her neighbors'  
14 and community's collective voting power. The OCRC was  
15 able to take Hadiya's testimony into account when  
16 drawing the proposed maps and remedy the issue with  
17 constitutional requirements.

18 And such an important task implicates all of  
19 Ohioans, and it is really critical that these hearings  
20 are announced in time, and that there are virtual  
21 options, all of which the Redistricting Commission has  
22 been able to accomplish.

23 And so we need to ensure that the Ohio voters  
24 are fairly represented, as these maps shaped our lives,  
25 our laws, and our policies for at least the last

1 decade. We need to make sure that these maps,  
2 especially like -- immigrant community, like mine, and  
3 other communities of color, are fairly and equitably  
4 represented with no exceptions. And with that, I  
5 complete my testimony.

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

8 Seeing none, thank you.

9 AMINA BARHUMI: Of course.

10 CO-CHAIR CUPP: Next witness.

11 STAFF MEMBER: Katie Barnes, followed by Nick  
12 Bates.

13 CO-CHAIR CUPP: Is Nick -- I don't see Katie.  
14 Is Nick here? Please come forward.

15 NICK BATES: Good morning, Co-Chair Sykes,  
16 Speaker Cupp, members the Ohio Redistricting Committee.  
17 Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I made  
18 sure to wear both blue and red as a person of faith.  
19 We are nonpartisan in our work.

20 My name is Nick Bates. I'm a deacon in the  
21 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and serve as  
22 director of The Hunger Network in Ohio, but today I'm  
23 here speaking on behalf of myself and my neighborhood,  
24 the Hilltop in Columbus, Ohio.

25 I'm connected to my neighborhood in many

1 ways. I'm a volunteer soccer coach for my daughter  
2 through Westgate Recreation Center, and I've  
3 volunteered there for many seasons. I'm an active  
4 member of the Westgate Elementary School PTA, where my  
5 wife is currently serving as PTA president. And I'm  
6 advisory board member on the Hilltop YMCA.

7 So, as clergy, we are called not just to a  
8 congregation or a specific ministry, but to serve our  
9 community. And as a member of the Hilltop, I've been  
10 doing this work since about 2007 when my wife and I  
11 purchased a house in the Westgate neighborhood there.

12 We believe districts should represent  
13 communities. The political boundaries that you draw  
14 should correlate to natural communities that exist.  
15 You can look at neighborhood schools. Who attends that  
16 school? Where do people shop? Who shops at that  
17 Kroger or that Giant Eagle? Or where do people go for  
18 swim lessons or soccer games?

19 Many of us are very concerned that the  
20 proposed map divides up the Hilltop in unnatural ways.  
21 That will be a long-term barrier to success of the west  
22 side of Columbus. Proposed House Districts 1, 6, 7,  
23 and 10, and Senate Districts 3, 15, 25, and 16 divide  
24 the west side like a turkey on Thanksgiving Day.

25 (Laughter)

1           NICK BATES: The Reverend Kevin Orr of the  
2 Hilltop Shalom Zone told me recently, "As the pastor of  
3 two United Methodist Churches in Westgate, but who  
4 serves the people of the Hilltop, this configuration  
5 that removes Westgate from the Hilltop is deeply  
6 offensive. This map mutes the voices of Hilltop  
7 families and squanders the great potential of our  
8 community by dividing us into four separate House and  
9 four separate Senate districts, and are unlikely to  
10 produce any state senator from the west side  
11 neighborhoods. While the Hilltop contains great  
12 diversity, we are one Hilltop and west side community.  
13 Our political districts should reflect that."

14           For example, Westgate rec center, where I  
15 serve as a volunteer soccer coach for my daughter's  
16 Pee Wee soccer team -- that's six and seven-year-olds,  
17 by the way, we are the Fire Breathing Dragons this  
18 year. We have 13 players on our team and they attend  
19 eight separate elementary schools. Kids that live  
20 throughout the Hilltop go to that one rec center.  
21 That's a natural community that exists.

22           Similarly, as an advisory board member at the  
23 Hilltop YMCA, I've met people from various  
24 neighborhoods in the Hilltop and on the west side,  
25 including places in between the Hilltop and Hilliard,

1 Grandview, Upper Arlington come to our YMCA because we  
2 are one west side community.

3           These maps also don't respect our businesses.  
4 There is a business enterprise that has started up --  
5 small businesses come together to invest in our  
6 community at 13 North Westmoor, just north of Broad  
7 Street, called the Westgate BusinessWorks. Yet it is  
8 divided politically from the actual neighborhood of  
9 Westgate.

10           A local leader who is involved with Westgate,  
11 who is involved -- who lives in Westgate involved in  
12 Summer Jam West and the farmers market, said, "The  
13 Westgate neighborhood is part of the Hilltop and should  
14 not be placed in a different district from the rest of  
15 the neighborhoods that comprise the Greater Hilltop  
16 area."

17           I was looking at the maps and I noticed that  
18 as -- a child who wanted to walk from one -- from their  
19 house to the park could have to walk through, over the  
20 course of four or five blocks, through three separate  
21 Senate districts in the proposed map. That does not  
22 make sense. That is unconscionable. And I encourage  
23 this committee to make sure that we keep communities  
24 together. The Hilltop neighborhood is one community.  
25 And when divisions have to be made, make sure that they

1 are as minimal as possible so that we can have good  
2 west side representation. Thank you. And I'd be happy  
3 to answer any questions.

4 CO-CHAIR CUPP: Any questions for the  
5 witnesses?

6 Thank you.

7 NICK BATES: Thank you.

8 CO-CHAIR CUPP: Next witness.

9 STAFF MEMBER: Lonnie Bowling, followed by  
10 Rachel Bowman.

11 Next witness, please.

12 STAFF MEMBER: Jeniece Brock, followed by  
13 Kathryn Brown.

14 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Can you state your name and  
15 spell it, please, for the record.

16 RACHEL BOWMAN: Rachel Bowman, R-A-C-H-E-L  
17 B-O-W-M-A-N.

18 CO-CHAIR SYKES: One thing to be clear. I  
19 just want to make sure -- there's a question being  
20 raised about whether or not you could speak to both the  
21 Commission map and the proposed amendment to the map.  
22 You could speak to both of those.

23 RACHEL BOWMAN: I have not had the time yet  
24 to refer to the proposed amendments in detail. So I'm  
25 sorry to say I cannot speak to those --

1 CO-CHAIR SYKES: That's just general  
2 information. I just want to make sure that --

3 RACHEL BOWMAN: Okay.

4 CO-CHAIR SYKES: -- you had that information,  
5 too, as well.

6 RACHEL BOWMAN: Thank you. Co-Chair Sykes,  
7 Co-Chair Cupp, and members of the Redistricting  
8 Commission, thank you for holding this public hearing  
9 today. My name is Rachel Bowman. I'm here  
10 representing For Our Future Ohio, a member of the Equal  
11 Districts Coalition.

12 I live in Columbus. I moved to Ohio four  
13 years ago. Two years ago, I decided I wanted to make  
14 Columbus my home and I bought a house here on the south  
15 side on Lockbourne Road. I've noticed in my four years  
16 in Columbus that our legislature often is taking  
17 actions not in line with the will of the majority of  
18 Ohioans. That's because our districts are not drawn to  
19 represent the voters, but instead to help the  
20 Republican Party maintain as much political control as  
21 possible.

22 I, along with the majority of Ohioans in all  
23 88 counties, voted for the redistricting reforms in  
24 2018. As this year started, I was cautiously  
25 optimistic that this committee would have the best

1 interest of Ohioans in mind while undertaking this  
2 important task.

3 Unfortunately, between not meeting deadlines  
4 and the maps now under consideration, that has not been  
5 demonstrated to me. If anything, the maps under  
6 consideration are worse than what we have been living  
7 under.

8 Ohio's Constitution requires map drawers to  
9 aim for maps that reflect the voters' preferences over  
10 the past decade, commonly known as "representational  
11 fairness." But the proposed maps clearly make no  
12 attempt to meet this constitutional obligation. Over  
13 the last ten years, Ohioans have voted Republican 55  
14 percent of the time, but these maps would give the  
15 Republicans 66 percent of Ohio House and Senate seats.  
16 That does not serve the people of Ohio.

17 I'm sure that mapmaking is not an easy task,  
18 but it is both possible and constitutionally required  
19 to be done fairly. As another testifier from CAIR  
20 mentioned, the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission  
21 has been able to do that. The Senate Democratic Caucus  
22 has been able to do that. And even citizens  
23 participating in a mapmaking contest were able to keep  
24 communities of interest together, while crafting maps  
25 that reflect Ohio's statewide vote share over the past

1 decade.

2 I ask that you reject the Commission's draft  
3 maps and adopt one of the many fairly drawn proposals  
4 instead. Thank you for your time today.

5 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Are there any questions?

6 Seeing none, thank you very much.

7 The next witness. Will you state and spell  
8 your name, please?

9 JENIECE BROCK: Yes, my name is Jeniece  
10 Brock. That's J-E-N-I-E-C-E, and that's Brock, B-R-O-  
11 C-K.

12 Co-Chair Sykes, Co-Chair Cupp, and members  
13 of the Ohio Redistricting Commission, thank you so much  
14 for allowing me to have the opportunity to be here  
15 today. My name is Jeniece Brock. My pronouns are  
16 she/her. I'm the Policy and Advocacy Director at The  
17 Ohio Organizing Collaborative. I'm a health scientist,  
18 and I am also -- I also serve as the Vice Chair of the  
19 Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission.

20 This testimony is offered in support of the  
21 map submitted to you by the Ohio Citizens Redistricting  
22 Commission, an independent, diverse, nonpartisan  
23 commission that's made up of 16 volunteer members,  
24 including academics, community leaders, current and  
25 former elected officials, attorneys, and more.

1           In our maps, each district keeps communities  
2 together, meeting the constitutional requirement,  
3 minimizing splitting of counties, townships, and  
4 cities. Our maps reflect the true diversity of Ohio.  
5 There are almost 2 million Black and brown Ohioans who  
6 are often -- are too often left disaffected and  
7 apathetic about the political process because they  
8 don't see themselves represented.

9           In Akron, Ohio, where I'm from, there over 30  
10 percent -- over 30 percent of the population is Black,  
11 and the Ohio Redistricting Commission needs to include  
12 and uplift their voices when drawing the maps. With  
13 fair maps, we can make sure that folks from Akron,  
14 Toledo, Columbus, and Dayton have fully-funded schools,  
15 vibrant neighborhoods, excellent public transit, and  
16 quality health care that they deserve.

17           Over and over again during the hearings of  
18 the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission, we heard  
19 constituents from every corner of this state,  
20 frustrated with the unreasonable district lines  
21 splitting apart their neighborhoods, campuses, and  
22 communities; community leaders in Columbus and  
23 Cincinnati whose next-door neighbors live in different  
24 Senate districts. There are countless families across  
25 Ohio who have trouble knowing who to call for help when

1 they have critical constituent services.

2 As community members engaged in the process  
3 of mapping their communities of interest, you can hear  
4 the joy and the passion -- and the passion for the  
5 people and places that make up their community. Our  
6 lives are shaped by our everyday interactions with  
7 schools, libraries, places of worship, breakfast  
8 centers, and corner stores, post offices, and things  
9 alike.

10 The Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission  
11 was able to hear from those communities. They were  
12 able to incorporate those -- that information into the  
13 communities that are in the map, and making sure that  
14 everyone felt like they were represented fairly.

15 The Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission  
16 modeled an open, transparent, and inclusive process  
17 that drew maps that met the constitutional  
18 requirements, kept communities together, and consider  
19 the extent to which minorities can meaningfully  
20 influence elections. We are calling on the Ohio  
21 Citizens Redistricting Commission to do the same.  
22 Thank you.

23 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you. Any questions?  
24 Seeing none, thank you very much.

25 JENIECE BROCK: Okay.

1 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness.

2 STAFF MEMBER: Maria Bruno, followed  
3 by Akii Butler.

4 CO-CHAIR SYKES: State and spell your name,  
5 please.

6 MARIA BRUNO: Maria Bruno. And I did bring  
7 hard copies. I don't know who I'm supposed to give  
8 these to, but they're here.

9 CO-CHAIR SYKES: (Indiscernible).

10 MARIA BRUNO: My name is Maria Bruno,  
11 M-A-R-I-A B-R-U-N-O, and I'm the Public Policy Director  
12 of Equality Ohio, a nonpartisan, statewide LGBTQ+  
13 education and advocacy organization.

14 First, I just have to point out I've  
15 rewritten this testimony three times in four days. And  
16 I've tried to adjust my feedback based on some of the  
17 comments of this Commission, and do my best to  
18 reiterate -- to not reiterate arguments that I  
19 wholeheartedly agree with, but have already been  
20 hammered home by other wonderful testimonies.

21 But, first of all, the time limit changed, so  
22 I'll do my best to talk fast; but a frequent demand  
23 that I've heard from all of you is to keep this  
24 feedback narrowly focused on the lines of the map. And  
25 I feel obligated to point out the absurdity of that

1 demand.

2 Process and methodology, how these lines were  
3 decided on in the first place, is the whole ball game  
4 here. Despite not meet -- despite no meaningful public  
5 dialogue, where you all explain with specificity how  
6 these lines were drawn, we're expected to take you all  
7 at your word that these maps were drafted purely in  
8 good faith.

9 When we've been denied the opportunity to see  
10 the sausage get made, that's a big ask. No one saw any  
11 of these maps before last Thursday, nine days after the  
12 constitutional deadline for this Commission. No rough  
13 drafts. No public debate among the Commissioners.  
14 We've seen proposed amendments, in fact, as recently as  
15 last night.

16 And as I understand it, these maps will  
17 likely pass tomorrow regardless of what is said today.  
18 These hearings are going several hours because this is  
19 not a sufficient forum that creates a meaningful  
20 opportunity to participate in this process.

21 Advocacy is my full-time job. And even I  
22 don't have the time and expertise to dig deep on each  
23 line of these maps in that turnaround time. To expect  
24 this of the general public seems out of touch, at best.

25 That all said, let me get into the meat of

1 it. While Equality Ohio might not seem like the most  
2 obvious interested party in the district line drawing,  
3 the interests of our communities we serve very much  
4 hang in the balance of what you all do today. LGBTQ+  
5 people are in every single one of our Ohio communities  
6 with a wide range of political ideologies; and  
7 gerrymandered maps fail all of us.

8           Gerrymandering results in an increased  
9 incentive to villainize the other political party along  
10 with anyone who disagrees with you, but also those who  
11 simply live differently than you do. LGBTQ+ people are  
12 often the first in the line of fire during that  
13 mudslinging.

14           Gerrymandering is a main contributing factor  
15 to the polarization and culture wars that have taken  
16 over our state's political discourse. Gerrymandering  
17 is why, instead of passing the Ohio Fairness Act, a  
18 bill that has been introduced every General Assembly  
19 for more than a decade and has the wide support of Ohio  
20 businesses, Chamber of Commerce, and public opinion,  
21 this legislature instead spent this spring attempting  
22 -- and thankfully failing -- to sneak through a bill  
23 that not only lacks broad public support, but that  
24 villainizes trans girls simply trying to play on a team  
25 with their friends.

1           While I haven't been in my current role long,  
2 I previously coordinated the Ohio Votes program, a  
3 statewide, nonpartisan, get out the vote initiative  
4 targeting underserved and low propensity Ohio voters.  
5 If you've ever seen a voter registration opportunity at  
6 a food bank or a library or your local YMCA, you are  
7 likely seeing an Ohio Votes partner at work.

8           So, needless to say, I've spent a lot of time  
9 studying how best to engage disillusioned Ohioans  
10 without relying on demonizing other people or playing  
11 party politics. And let me tell you, there are a lot  
12 of them. I regularly hear things like, "Why bother to  
13 vote? Politicians don't care what we think." And "I  
14 try not to get worked up about things I can't do  
15 anything about."

16           I don't hear people that are so satisfied  
17 with their government that they don't feel a need to  
18 participate in elections. I hear people who are  
19 completely resigned themselves from ever feeling that  
20 they would be heard, even if they bothered to speak up.

21           We've talked a lot about fairness and  
22 competitiveness and proportionality. but I think  
23 there's a more obvious point to be made as well.  
24 Complicated districts like -- that unnecessarily look  
25 like Rorschach tests confuse voters, all voters of all

1 political persuasions.

2           So every time that I see a teeny tiny sliver  
3 on a single district, I think of all of the confused  
4 voters who won't know which district they live in, and  
5 who will -- and how that will become one more reason  
6 that they don't feel heard.

7           I know, regardless of what is said today, you  
8 will likely pass these maps unmoved. I'm under no  
9 illusion that one testimony could do what two  
10 constitutional amendments approved overwhelmingly by  
11 Ohio voters has not. I am begging you to prove me  
12 wrong. I hope that you all will take these impassioned  
13 pleas for fairness and representation seriously and  
14 honor what remains of the constitutional process  
15 Ohioans voted for.

16           I promise you, the people of Ohio are  
17 watching. And as is evident by the many, many  
18 passionate testimonies we've seen just in the last few  
19 days, they're not looking away anytime soon. We were  
20 here yesterday. We're here today. We'll be here  
21 tomorrow, and the day after that. And no matter how  
22 squiggly these districts become, no matter how many  
23 constitutional provisions requiring transparency and  
24 accountability go ignored, we will still be here,  
25 getting in the way, every single time.

1 Thank you, and I'll be happy to answer any  
2 questions.

3 (Applause)

4 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Are there any questions?  
5 Seeing none, the next witness, please.

6 STAFF MEMBER: Kathryn Brown, followed by  
7 Akii Butler.

8 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness please.

9 STAFF MEMBER: Brian Campbell, followed by  
10 Juliette Cattaneo (phonetic).

11 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness please.

12 STAFF MEMBER: Susan Cavanaugh, followed by  
13 Kobie Christian.

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

16 SUSAN CAVANAUGH: Yes. My name is Susan  
17 Cavanaugh, C-A-V-A-N-A-U-G-H. Thank you, Co-Chairs and  
18 Members of the Commission. Today I want to talk about  
19 the Republican map introduced last Thursday, especially  
20 in relation to Section 6 and 6(B) of the citizens'  
21 constitutional amendment.

22 There seems to be confusion on the Commission  
23 about Section 6(B), so I'd like to break it down. It  
24 tells us the proportion of districts that favor one  
25 party or the other, quote, "shall correspond closely to

1 the statewide preferences of the voters of Ohio," end  
2 quote.

3 It tells us clearly how to determine those  
4 preferences. It tells you to use, quote, "statewide  
5 state and federal partisan election results," end  
6 quote. And it tells us what time period to use.  
7 Quote, "during the last ten years," end quote.

8 I think the citizens' wishes are clear. So  
9 let's move on to the introduction of Section 6 that  
10 addresses additional standards. Quote, "The Ohio  
11 Redistricting Commission shall attempt to draw a  
12 general assembly district plan that meets all of the  
13 following standards," end quote.

14 Let's break it down. Who should do this?  
15 You, the Commission. Then we again have that pesky  
16 word "shall," which I continue to understand as a  
17 directive in the biblical sense.

18 (Laughter)

19 SUSAN CAVANAUGH: Which of the standards  
20 should be met? It says all of the following.

21 Now, I read over the weekend that a member of  
22 the Commission was focusing on the word "attempt," and  
23 thought that that meant that 6(B) was aspirational.  
24 Now aspirational has to do with a strong desire. We  
25 the citizens do have a strong desire. We are -- but

1 we're not naive. We understand that 6(B) is not in  
2 your political interests. We're not asking you to  
3 develop a strong desire to do this. It says you shall  
4 attempt, and attempt means to try.

5 Growing up in rural Ohio, one of my mother's  
6 rules was you have to try. Something important  
7 required 100 percent effort. Doing something poorly  
8 due to lack of care or effort was not tolerated. And I  
9 don't expect less than 100 percent effort from you.

10 I'm going to move ahead just a bit because my  
11 time's running out, but I want -- well, I wanted to say  
12 that you don't have to do this alone, and citizens  
13 uploaded plans that meet all of those requirements, all  
14 of those standards. My -- but you didn't choose to  
15 start with one of those, especially like to get Geoff  
16 Wise's.

17 My only hope at this point is that there are  
18 people already working on the next constitutional  
19 amendment that will remove the responsibility for  
20 redistricting from the Governor, the Legislature,  
21 elected officials, politicians, lobbyists, and  
22 political parties. It's time to end government of the  
23 politicians by the politicians for the politicians.  
24 Thank you.

25 (Applause)

1 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Are there any questions?

2 Thank you. Next witness, please.

3 STAFF MEMBER: Kobie Christian, followed by  
4 Janet Ciccone.

5 KOBIE CHRISTIAN: My name is Kobie Christian,  
6 K-O-B-I-E C-H-R-I-S-T-I-A-N. Good morning, Co-chair  
7 Sykes, Co-chair Cupp, and members of the Redistricting  
8 Commission. Thank you for allowing public testimony  
9 today. As I said, my name is Kobie Christian. I'm  
10 here representing For Our Future Ohio, a member of the  
11 Equal Districts Coalition.

12 I've lived in Ohio my entire life. I was  
13 born and grew up in Tiffin, went to school, began my  
14 career, and cast my first ballots in Cincinnati and the  
15 surrounding suburbs. And I now live here in the heart  
16 of the state, Columbus. In my life and in my work,  
17 I've seen that many communities in Ohio have a unique  
18 set of needs, but share an unfortunately similar  
19 problem. We're denied what's known as  
20 "representational fairness."

21 The number of Democratic and Republican  
22 legislators does not reflect the will of the votes over  
23 the past several elections. Far too many Ohioans,  
24 therefore, are represented by legislators who do not  
25 share our values.

1           If we are able to gain our representations  
2   (sic) attention on a particular topic, we can rarely  
3   expect solutions. It's almost as though some of the  
4   elected officials aren't worried about being held  
5   accountable to their voters.

6           Ohioans overwhelmingly passed two ballot  
7   measures to bring transparency and fairness to the  
8   redistricting process. That's why this year's process  
9   has been so frustrating.

10           The maps presented by Republicans on the  
11   Commission last week would give Republicans 66 percent  
12   of seats, even though they only win about 55 percent of  
13   Ohio's vote. This is unacceptable. It blatantly  
14   ignores the constitutional requirement that map drawers  
15   attempt to reflect Ohio voters' political interests and  
16   preferences over the past decade.

17           We had the opportunity for the redistricting  
18   process to be done in a transparent, bipartisan manner.  
19   Much of the process could have begun even before census  
20   data had arrived. But I see no indication that this  
21   option was even considered.

22           Aiming for maps that represent the statewide  
23   vote share isn't an aspirational, it's a constitutional  
24   requirement. I don't think that the Governor or his  
25   party can claim that they attempted to meet the

1 standard, not when they've been presented with examples  
2 of maps like the Senate Democratic Caucus, or Ohio  
3 Citizens Redistricting Commission maps that put forth  
4 -- reflect truly how Ohioans vote. They keep  
5 communities together and provide pathways to minority  
6 representation.

7 The Commission's proposed maps don't  
8 represent the people and they're not fair to Ohio's  
9 communities. Thank you.

10 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Are there any questions?  
11 Seeing none, thank you very much.

12 The next witness please.

13 STAFF MEMBER: Dick Gunther and Greg Moore.

14 GREG MOORE: Good morning. Am I allowed to  
15 take this off here?

16 CO-CHAIR SYKES: You can take it off, if  
17 you'd like.

18 GREG MOORE: Okay. I was able to say a few  
19 words -- Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee, I had  
20 a few words I was able to say about 9:30 last night.  
21 So I'll give some brief remarks and I have a written  
22 statement we can submit for the record.

23 CO-CHAIR SYKES: And to let you know, this is  
24 a group, and you're allowed ten minutes.

25 GREG MOORE: Okay, great. Thank you for

1 that. Co-Chair Cupp and Sykes, and Members of  
2 Committee, my name is Greg Moore. G-R-E-G M-O-O-R-E.  
3 I have the honor of serving as the Co-Chair of the Ohio  
4 Citizens Redistricting Commission.

5 I'm also president of two organizations, the  
6 Promise of Democracy Foundation and the Ohio Voter  
7 Fund. We've been active in the issue of redistricting  
8 reform and voting rights for several years, and today  
9 we're here to offer testimony on behalf of the Ohio  
10 Citizens Redistricting Commission, which is an  
11 independent, diverse, nonpartisan commission made up of  
12 16 volunteer members, including academics, community  
13 leaders, current and former elected officials,  
14 attorneys, and more.

15 This group was formed through the  
16 collaboration of the Ohio Organizers Collaborative, the  
17 Ohio Conference of the NAACP, and the A. Philip  
18 Randolph Institute of Ohio. Members were invited to  
19 apply to be representatives of organizations and were  
20 deliberately chosen to reflect the diversity of Ohio,  
21 including people from diverse ages, races, regions, and  
22 backgrounds.

23 Many of these members help sign petitions.  
24 They also, in the case of Dick Gunther and others,  
25 helped draft parts of the constitutional language. And

1 in some instances, we were involved in many of the  
2 negotiations to try to help get the legislation passed  
3 back in 2016 on the congressional end.

4 So the amendments spell out a criteria upon  
5 which the OCRC unity maps are based, and many of them  
6 are here today and will be offering their own  
7 testimony.

8 We began our first hearings on May 12, with  
9 three main goals: Model a thorough and robust  
10 engagement process for developing legislative  
11 districts, including reaching out specifically to  
12 minority and under-represented communities; and to  
13 develop demonstrated citizen-derived principles of  
14 redistricting; and three, to draw unity maps, displayed  
15 here today, based on Ohio's constitutional  
16 requirements.

17 Our citizens derived principles of  
18 redistricting and an aggregation of a wide variety of  
19 preferences that came out of public input. In  
20 addition, our maps we have submitted through a report  
21 outline the work and process of our citizens'  
22 commission, and the maps we produced.

23 We've held nine public hearings and numerous  
24 work meetings. Every effort was made to make the  
25 hearings safe and accessible, including honing them

1 after business hours and virtually. A total of 494  
2 Ohio citizens registered to attend these public  
3 meetings. Many of these citizens came representing  
4 diverse communities and large membership organizations.  
5 Attendees offered testimony about what they would like  
6 to see happen in the 2021 redistricting process.

7 We partnered with academic institutions  
8 including the Kirwan Institute for the Race and Study  
9 -- for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at Ohio State  
10 University, MGGG Redistricting Lab at Tufts University  
11 for data collection, analysis and community of interest  
12 mapping.

13 The team used Districtr, a free, community,  
14 web-based tool that was used to create communities of  
15 interest, regions, and points of interest. This was  
16 paired with narratives about community issues and the  
17 needs. All in all, over 2,350 submissions were  
18 received through this portal.

19 Prioritizing communities of interest is  
20 generally considered to be essentially to drawing fair  
21 districts. But in practice, local community knowledge  
22 is necessary to give a full picture of what is and what  
23 is not someone's community. What is their work, their  
24 place of worship, their school, their recreational  
25 destinations.

1           The OCRC's community mapping project  
2 collected testimony from the public which featured not  
3 only narrative descriptions of these communities, but  
4 mapping describing their geography.

5           So this broad set of qualitative and  
6 quantitative spatial data was utilized to inform  
7 mapping choices after the constitutional requirements  
8 that we met.

9           On August 25th, we released these proposed  
10 unity maps to the Ohio House and Senate via statewide  
11 media and social media and public comment and input.  
12 And I'm happy to say today that we were also able to  
13 submit an op ed to the Dispatch that is running today.

14           The unity maps were based on constitutional  
15 requirements, citizens' derived principles of  
16 redistricting, and an aggregation of a wide variety of  
17 preferences that out in this public input. The maps  
18 incorporate the Census '22 data that was released on  
19 August 12th, and many of our staff and supporters  
20 worked around the clock to make sure we were able to  
21 have this input in time for the constitutional  
22 deadline.

23           Input was requested in two public hearings  
24 over email, and we submitted the final test -- final  
25 report and unity maps as you that are now seeing, on

1 September 1st. I'm incredibly proud of the work the  
2 Commission undertook, and I'm sure everyone's voice is  
3 heard.

4 Today is the final deadline, and I hope that  
5 the members of this Commission -- or tomorrow's the  
6 final deadline, and I hope members of this Commission  
7 will come together after all the testimony and realize  
8 that Ohio is virtually unanimous in its belief that we  
9 must follow the constitution and follow the wishes of  
10 the citizens of Ohio. We should expect nothing less  
11 from our governmental leaders as it is prescribed and  
12 now enshrined in the Ohio Constitution.

13 Finally, as I said in my brief remarks last  
14 night in Cleveland, if we fail to get this right, it  
15 will more than likely be the first and the last  
16 opportunity to get this right. The voters of Ohio will  
17 see, remember, and vote more than probably any of --  
18 they will watch this vote more than probably any other  
19 vote you will cast because it will be a direct  
20 reflection on you and your relationship with them.

21 I have -- still have faith that after the  
22 hearing from your constituents today and across the  
23 state, you -- that you may do what is right and embrace  
24 the spirit of these maps and revise consensus map based  
25 on what was presented last night. At the end of the

1 day, it is not a request. This is a political -- this  
2 is not a political, rather a moral obligation that you  
3 have to the oath that you have taken and the very  
4 people who sent you to represent them. So all we're  
5 asking you to do is represent us. Thank you.

6 I would now like to ask my colleague,  
7 Dick Gunther, who's been our champion on this, to come  
8 and make presentation. Thank you.

9 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Dr. Gunther. Thank you for  
10 coming forward. I'd like to thank you all for your  
11 participation and input in this process. You have  
12 three minutes, sir.

13 RICHARD GUNTHER: Good morning. I'm Richard  
14 Gunther, Professor Emeritus, Political Science, at Ohio  
15 State University. I'm also one of the five negotiators  
16 who produced the draft what is now Article XI of the  
17 Constitution which sets forth the rules that we should  
18 be following in drawing these district lines.

19 I'm here today to speak out in favor of these  
20 two maps submitted by the Ohio Citizens Redistricting  
21 Commission. And what I'd like to do is point out that  
22 these maps meet every one of the criteria set forth in  
23 the Ohio Constitution, since it was revised in 2015.

24 First, as required in Section 3(B), the  
25 districts for both the House and the Senate are roughly

1 equal in population and size. None of them deviates  
2 from the relevant ratio of representation by more than  
3 5 -- than the 5 percent allowed by the Constitution.

4 Second, in compliance with the rules relating  
5 to the splitting of counties, townships, and  
6 municipalities, as set forth in Sections 3(C) and 3(D),  
7 considerable effort went into the preservation of  
8 political subdivisions and communities of interest. As  
9 Greg pointed out, this entailed nine public meetings  
10 involving 494 Ohio citizens, and the submission of  
11 2,350 maps.

12 While it was not always possible to reconcile  
13 those preferences with the requirements of the Ohio  
14 Constitution, we certainly made more of an effort to  
15 respect these wishes and is characteristic of most  
16 other redistricting processes.

17 Moreover, we strictly adhered to all of the  
18 rules relating to the splitting of counties, townships,  
19 and municipalities that are set forth in Sections 3(C)  
20 and 3(D) of Article XI. These splitting decisions are  
21 described in considerable detail in the report that has  
22 been circulated to you.

23 Third, we strictly adhered to the  
24 requirements set forth in Section 6(B), which states  
25 that "The statewide proportion of districts whose

1 voters, based on statewide state and federal partisan  
2 general election results during the past ten years,  
3 favor each political party shall correspond closely to  
4 the statewide preferences of the voters of Ohio."

5 As I pointed out in my last testimony, that  
6 would mean that voters cast 54.2 percent of their  
7 ballots in favor of Republican candidates for those  
8 offices, and 45.8 percent of the two-vote share for  
9 Democratic candidates.

10 How does our map stack up against this  
11 requirement? Among the 99 House districts, 55 included  
12 voters who have supported Republican candidates over  
13 the past decade, while 44 have leaned Democratic.

14 With regard to Senate districts, 18 lean  
15 Republican and 15 lean Democratic, which is exactly in  
16 conformity with the constitutional standard.

17 Accordingly, this map does not favor one  
18 party over the other, and we are in full compliance  
19 with the Section 6(A), which states, "No general  
20 assembly district plan shall be drawn primarily to  
21 favor or disfavor a political party."

22 The merits of our plan with regard to  
23 minority representation will be discussed more  
24 extensively by my OCRC colleague Tom Roberts, President  
25 of the Ohio State Conference of the NAACP. But at this

1 point, let me summarize by pointing out that in drawing  
2 district boundaries, considerable effort was made in  
3 locating communities of color in districts that avoid  
4 packing and cracking.

5 The final section, the final criterion in  
6 Section 6(C) calls for the creation of compact  
7 districts. Given the absence of agreed upon indicators  
8 of compactness, we rely upon the eyeball test and  
9 common sense in judging these maps. And as you can  
10 see, virtually all of these districts are quite  
11 compact.

12 Overall, our map does an excellent job of  
13 complying with each and every criterion set forth in  
14 the Ohio Constitution. This is not a Democratic map.  
15 This is not a Republican map. This is a fair map that  
16 will allow the voters of Ohio to elect representatives  
17 who accurately reflect their political preferences. We  
18 urge you to adopt this as the institutional framework  
19 for electoral competition over the next decade. Thank  
20 you.

21 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Are there any questions for  
22 Dr. Gunther?

23 Seeing none, thank you very much.

24 Is there another witness from your  
25 organization or is that it?

1 UNIDENTIFIED: Yeah, all the rest are  
2 commissioners. Can you guys come up to the front  
3 (indiscernible)?

4 CO-CHAIR SYKES: You each have three minutes.  
5 We would ask you please to adhere to the time frame.  
6 Because you're submitting a plan, you are extended this  
7 time, but please don't go above -- beyond it.

8 TOM ROBERTS: Co-Chair Sykes and Co-Chair  
9 Cupp, and Members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission,  
10 thank you for this opportunity here today. My name is  
11 Tom Roberts. I am the President of the Ohio Conference  
12 of Branches of the NAACP, and I serve on the Ohio  
13 Citizens Redistricting Commission. This testimony is  
14 offered in support of the maps submitted to you by the  
15 Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission.

16 The mission of the NAACP is to ensure  
17 political, educational, social and economic equality of  
18 rights of all persons, and to eliminate racial hatred  
19 and racial discrimination. When legislative maps are  
20 not fair, communities of color don't have a real  
21 pathway to representation. This means that Black  
22 political power is diluted, adequate political  
23 representation is denied.

24 I participate in OCRC to give our units and  
25 the broader community opportunity to make our voices

1 heard in the accessible process and that took into  
2 account the interests of the Black community and the  
3 underlying served populations.

4 After a year of unprecedented global calls  
5 for racial justice, it is time the leadership of Ohio  
6 rise to the promise of equal opportunity for all. Our  
7 OCRC maps districts were reviewed and understanding the  
8 extent to which minority voices can meaningfully  
9 influence the elections, adhering to rules about  
10 keeping counties and political subdivisions together,  
11 largely allowing communities of color's voices to be  
12 drawn into the compact districts, and the same --  
13 avoiding packing and cracking.

14 Packing and cracking is a practice which has  
15 been used historically across the country and right  
16 here in the state of Ohio to dilute the voices of  
17 people -- of Black people and other minority groups and  
18 weaken our overall election influence.

19 The NAACP has fought for over a century to  
20 end the practice of these which seek to place a ceiling  
21 on our hopes, dreams, abilities, in minority  
22 communities. We must continue to fight against these  
23 practices today with the Ohio Redistricting Commission.  
24 We need fair state legislative maps to give Black  
25 communities a fair chance for our voices to be heard,

1 and to remove the gerrymandering that has silenced our  
2 voices.

3 Fair maps give Black communities the power to  
4 choose representatives that speak to our interests,  
5 concerns, jobs, education, justice, health care, and  
6 safety. We are calling upon the members of the Ohio  
7 Redistricting Commission to draw fair maps and to give  
8 Black communities the opportunity to meaningfully  
9 influence the political process.

10 Andre Washington will now testify.

11 ANDRE WASHINGTON: Thank you, President  
12 Roberts. To Co-Chair Sykes, Co-Chair Cupps, and to  
13 members of the Redistricting Committee, I stand before  
14 you as the proud State President of the historic A.  
15 Philip Randolph Institute.

16 A. Philip Randolph was considered the  
17 godfather of the Civil Rights revolution. A. Philip  
18 Randolph who won on executive order in 1948, from  
19 President Truman, to ban discrimination in federal  
20 hiring practices and in the Armed Forces.

21 Asa Philip Randolph organized marches in the  
22 '50s and '60s to desegregate public schools. Asa  
23 Philip Randolph organized marches. In 1963, he  
24 organized the march in Washington D.C. for jobs and  
25 justice where Dr. King gave his "I Have a Dream"

1 speech.

2           And in 1965, we formed the A. Philip Randolph  
3 Institute that does voter registration and voter  
4 education programs in the urban community. Asa Philip  
5 Randolph, a great American, a great humanitarian, a  
6 great man.

7           In 2015, Ohioans voted for a constitutional  
8 amendment that offered a fair and transparent process  
9 that we can trust, where communities remain whole and  
10 voters' power isn't diluted by packing and cracking  
11 voters, especially Black and brown voters.

12           Packing is when minorities are concentrated  
13 into a small number of districts. Cracking is where  
14 minority communities are split and minority voters are  
15 spread into many districts.

16           Our citizens commission did not wait until  
17 last month to begin the conversation about  
18 redistricting. We brought redistricting to the  
19 communities with public hearings, community mapmaking  
20 sessions, and with public education beginning back in  
21 May.

22           As a citizen's commissioner, I heard over and  
23 over from the Black and brown community members about  
24 how it feels when our voices are unheard in the  
25 political process. As a civil rights leader, as a

1 labor leader, as a father, and as a man of faith, I  
2 know that it is critical that we need good jobs, safe  
3 communities, and healthy families. The Black and brown  
4 community cannot afford for our voices to be silenced  
5 and unheard.

6 I urge the Redistricting Committee that has  
7 the power to ensure that Black and brown communities in  
8 this redistricting process and in their government,  
9 that their voice is heard and that their districts are  
10 not cracked and packed, and their voices not silenced.  
11 I urge you to uphold democracy and draw maps that are  
12 fair and they represent all -- all of Ohioans.

13 Like the A. Philip Randolph Institute, we are  
14 nonpartisan, but we're very particular about our  
15 politics. Thank you.

16 (Applause)

17 CO-CHAIR SYKES: The next speaker.

18 CHRIS TAVENOR: Co-Chair Cupp, Co-Chair  
19 Sykes, and all Honorable Members of the Ohio  
20 Redistricting Commission, thank you for the opportunity  
21 to submit testimony for your consideration. I am  
22 Chris Tavenor, staff attorney for the Ohio  
23 Environmental Council. I also had the opportunity to  
24 be a member of the OCRC over the past few months.

25 Ten years ago, when Ohio last considered its

1 legislative district maps, I wasn't even yet old enough  
2 to vote. I came of age during the tumultuous economic  
3 recession, watching the impacts of perpetual war  
4 overseas, while becoming increasingly worried about the  
5 looming threat of the climate crisis.

6 The OEC opposes the current map under  
7 consideration by the Ohio Redistricting Commission as  
8 originally proposed by the Ohio Senate President.  
9 Instead, we urge this Commission to adopt the Ohio  
10 Citizens Redistricting Commission unity maps.

11 The OEC opposes any form of gerrymandering  
12 designed to support particular political parties.  
13 Ohio's legislative maps must represent communities'  
14 lived experiences and geographies, while also creating  
15 a legislature that does not favor one party over  
16 another through district design. The maps currently  
17 under consideration violate these principles, as well  
18 as Article XI, Section 6. You have heard the math  
19 plenty of times.

20 In contrast, the OCRC's maps uphold the  
21 constitutional requirements of proportional  
22 representation. You've also heard that math plenty of  
23 times.

24 It's worth noting -- here's the math I've not  
25 heard mentioned often about the map considered by this

1 Commission. It's worth noting which districts have  
2 more or less than 119,186, the number it would take to  
3 have every Ohio district precisely equal. That's not  
4 strictly possible, but it's a constitutional  
5 requirement to get close.

6 16 Democratic-leaning districts have more  
7 than 119,186, while 36 Republican districts, more than  
8 the total number of Democratic-leaning districts in the  
9 entire map have less than 119,186. With 14 Republican  
10 districts having populations 4 percent less or more  
11 than 4 percent less than that 119,186 number.

12 This is almost as many districts that have  
13 been given to the Democrats with greater than 119,186.  
14 By creating more Republican-leaning districts with less  
15 population, gerrymandering has been made to be much  
16 easier.

17 The map currently under consideration also  
18 fails to maintain compact districts. I live in  
19 Columbus. Central Ohio and Franklin County have plenty  
20 of examples illustrating how the proposed map fails the  
21 compactness requirement of Article XI, Section 6. For  
22 instance, the Senate district proposed to be made up of  
23 Districts 4, 5, and 6, loops from the Hilltop area all  
24 the way through Groveport up to New Albany and  
25 eventually ends in Westerville.

1           Similarly, the Senate district composed of  
2   Districts 10, 11, and 12, and covers Grove City and  
3   Darbydale, scoops up Hilliard, upper Arlington and  
4   Dublin, and stretches all the way to Marysville.

5           The OCRC's map makes much more sense for  
6   Franklin County when considering how the people who  
7   live here actually define our communities.

8           Similar communities like Hilliard and Dublin,  
9   where my wife and I grew up, are included in one House  
10   district, alongside Upper Arlington and Worthington in  
11   their own House district.

12          As the Speaker noted in their testimony on  
13   Thursday, the OCRC districts are mathematically more  
14   compact than the map currently under consideration by a  
15   significant degree.

16          Ohio voters deserve an explanation from the  
17   supporters of the map currently under consideration by  
18   this Commission. Section by section, we need to see  
19   the math and work done that shows how it satisfies the  
20   requirements of the Ohio Constitution.

21          The unity map of the OCRC upholds the spirit  
22   and the literal language of the 2015 constitutional  
23   amendment, creating a district map furthering the will  
24   of Ohio voters. And the OCRC also submitted a report  
25   outlining specifically how it satisfies the

1 constitutional requirement of Article XI. Thus, the  
2 OEC urges the Commissioners to reject the map under  
3 consideration and adopt the OCRC maps. Thank you.

4 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you.

5 (Applause)

6 SAMUEL GRESHAM: Chairman Cupp and Senator  
7 Sykes and Members of the Redistricting Commission --

8 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Could you state and spell  
9 your name please?

10 SAMUEL GRESHAM: Yes, sir. My name is Samuel  
11 Gresham, S-A-M-U-E-L. The last name Gresham, G-R-E-S-  
12 H-A-M. I serve as Chairman of Common Cause, and I've  
13 served on this Ohio Citizen Redistricting Commission.  
14 We've done the work for you. You don't --

15 (Laughter and applause)

16 SAMUEL GRESHAM: -- have to go any further.  
17 And I want to let you know that if you draw another  
18 map, and we have to go to court, we're going to use our  
19 map to show the difference.

20 I was born in Greenwood, Mississippi, and I  
21 was raised in Chicago. And I serve in Columbus, Ohio,  
22 where the Black community has to fight for its right to  
23 hear -- for its voice to be heard. I've dedicated my  
24 life to that cause.

25 I remember my father crying as he told the

1 story of the jelly bean jar in Mississippi. I remember  
2 persons personally threatening me and Chicago. I will  
3 never forget the "snake on the lake," the packed and  
4 cracked Third Congressional District, and the 15th  
5 District -- the elongated 15th District, which extended  
6 from Upper Arlington to Athens County. That's a big  
7 jump.

8           These congressional districts in Ohio made  
9 Ohio famous; however, they were unfair and ruthless.  
10 They denied citizens an opportunity of fair  
11 representation. I was there in 2010 when these  
12 districts were created, and I believe we set out a set  
13 of rules and this new process of creating such  
14 districts.

15           History will tell a story whether you  
16 followed that or not. I will paraphrase now, because  
17 initially we had five and now I'm down to three, but  
18 I'll work on making that.

19           I have worked on both reform issues, 2015,  
20 2018. American democracy is based on the principle  
21 that representation and -- a fundamental notion that  
22 government should be responsive and accountable to the  
23 citizens.

24           The story I was told, that this  
25 representation was a fundamental foundation of our

1 country. Later I learned that was a lie. Our  
2 established process did not adhere to the rule of law.  
3 It did not create a representation district for all  
4 citizens to participate.

5           During the course of the next process, if we  
6 do -- if we have to stay with a four-year map, I want  
7 you to remember that will be two elections in that  
8 four-year period. And we're going to remind the  
9 citizens of Ohio of your negligence in being able to  
10 construct a ten-year map. Imagine starting the whole  
11 process over and public input into developing the maps.  
12 We're going to make so much noise at those meetings,  
13 you won't be able to hear anything.

14           Thank you for your time. And this concludes  
15 the testimony on the behalf of the Ohio Citizens  
16 Redistricting Commission. We hope you have questions  
17 and we stand forth to answer them.

18           (Applause)

19           CO-CHAIR SYKES: We'd like to -- on behalf of  
20 the Commission, we'd like to thank you for your  
21 diligence and your work. And we benefit from your  
22 presentation and information that you extended. By  
23 starting in May, it gave you ample time -- more time  
24 than we've taken, to do a good job, and we certainly  
25 appreciate it.

1           At this time are the questions to the  
2 presenters? Leader Sykes.

3           LEADER SYKES: Thank you, Mr. Co-Chair. And  
4 to the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission, thank  
5 you for presenting today and sharing your work and  
6 showing what was possible had we started earlier.

7           UNIDENTIFIED: Is your mic on?

8           LEADER SYKES: It is. I'm probably just not  
9 speaking loud enough. But thank you for letting me  
10 know.

11           My question is specifically about the  
12 population variances. And to whomever is available to  
13 answer this question. You mentioned that in most of  
14 the -- in the -- I know you're presenting on your map,  
15 but this was a very interesting perspective on the map  
16 that the Commission adopted last week, that the  
17 Democratic-leaning districts seem to be overpopulated  
18 upwards to 4 percent or more.

19           Could you tell us any more about any trends  
20 that you found in that, whether they were the districts  
21 that had a significant Black voting age population?  
22 Were they concentrated around the three C's? Were they  
23 mostly suburban? Were they mostly in -- any other,  
24 northern, central, southern, of the state? Is there  
25 any other trends that you noticed in where that map is

1 overly populated in certain districts?

2 CHRIS TAVENOR: Unfortunately, I did not have  
3 the time to do that deep of an analysis. I only had --  
4 I mean, we've only had these maps for a few days, and I  
5 was looking at as many metrics as I could. But I think  
6 that illustrates that it requires further analysis to  
7 really look at how, you know, certain districts have  
8 been given a lot less people and certain districts have  
9 been given a lot more people.

10 LEADER SYKES: May I follow up --

11 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Please.

12 LEADER SYKES: Thank you. And so the maps  
13 that you all made, could you talk about how you all  
14 made the decision to spread out or disperse the  
15 population within the 99 districts that the OCRC  
16 commission put forward?

17 UNIDENTIFIED: Through the Chairs to Leader  
18 Sykes? First, I think that some of those packed  
19 districts fall in major metropolitan areas. So, of  
20 course, that's an area of concern.

21 I know, specifically, from an article that  
22 Jessie Balmert wrote in The Cincinnati Enquirer that  
23 one of those is a Cincinnati anchor district. But of  
24 course, we can do more analysis about where those are  
25 and send them to your office.

1           But more broadly speaking, the OCRC tried to  
2 undo sort of the typical gerrymandering that we see in  
3 our current map by uncracking and unpacking  
4 communities, particularly in our major metropolitan  
5 areas, which is where we see a lot of Democratic but  
6 also voters of color being either crammed into as few  
7 districts as possible or cracked apart into districts  
8 that further dilute their vote. So we tried to reverse  
9 that, particularly in all of Ohio's major cities.

10           LEADER SYKES: May I follow up?

11           CO-CHAIR SYKES: Yes.

12           LEADER SYKES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And to  
13 the Chair -- excuse me -- and members of the OCRC,  
14 thank you for that response. And so if I can be  
15 totally honest with you, I think it would be unlikely  
16 that this Commission would take up the maps from the  
17 OCRC and -- but, nonetheless, your work is appreciated  
18 and very much considered. And I'm only speaking for  
19 myself here. And maybe other members of the Commission  
20 are willing to do something different. But, based on  
21 my understanding of how things have worked, probably  
22 not.

23           But with that being said, is there a map  
24 that's been put out by any member of the Commission  
25 that you feel is more closely aligned with the proof of

1 concept that you've put forth, that we could look to,  
2 to alter and maybe work from in the next 24 hours or  
3 so?

4 (Laughter)

5 UNIDENTIFIED: Sure.

6 UNIDENTIFIED: No.

7 (Laughter and applause)

8 UNIDENTIFIED: No. More questions?

9 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Are there any other  
10 questions?

11 Thank you very much. Appreciate it. Thank  
12 you.

13 (Applause)

14 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness please.

15 STAFF MEMBER: Janet Ciccone, followed by  
16 Terrilyn Copeland. Again, Janet Ciccone, followed by  
17 Terrilyn Copeland.

18 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness, please.

19 STAFF MEMBER: Tony D'Ambrosio, followed by  
20 Talla DeBoer (phonetic).

21 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness please.

22 STAFF MEMBER: Scott DiMauro, followed by  
23 Mary Earl (phonetic).

24 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Will you state and spell  
25 your name, please.

1           SCOTT DIMAURO: Thank you. My name is Scott  
2 DiMauro, S-C-O-T-T. Last name DiMauro, D-I- capital  
3 M-A-U-R-O. Co-Chairs Cupp and Sykes, Members of the  
4 Ohio Redistricting Commission, my name is Scott  
5 DiMauro. I am a high school social studies teacher  
6 from Worthington.

7           It is also my honor to serve as the President  
8 of the Ohio Education Association. On behalf of OEA  
9 and our 120,000 members, thank you for the opportunity  
10 to address you today. I'd like to address the maps  
11 adopted by the Commission for consideration and the  
12 process thus far.

13           When I testified in Dayton last month, I had  
14 a spirit of cautious optimism. I said that through  
15 this redistricting process. Ohio has a chance to serve  
16 as an example to the country. You can put partisanship  
17 aside and listen to the will of the people. By working  
18 together in compromise, you could rise to the occasion  
19 and produce fair, representative districts.

20           I don't have that same sense of optimism  
21 today. Last Thursday, you adopted the maps under  
22 consideration on a party line vote. They were unveiled  
23 earlier that day produced by legislative staffers of  
24 the majority party. There was no bipartisan  
25 engagement. The maps heavily favor the party in power.

1 It was as if 71 percent of Ohio voters hadn't supported  
2 a change in the Constitution. It was business as  
3 usual, and wholly unacceptable.

4 The voters of Ohio have given you an  
5 assignment. The constitutional amendment calls for the  
6 statewide proportion of districts favoring each  
7 political party correspond closely with the statewide  
8 preferences of the voters. It also requires that the  
9 plan comply with federal laws such as the Voting Rights  
10 Act. These provisions of the constitutional -- of the  
11 Constitution are not aspirational. They are not  
12 optional. They're not for extra credit. They are  
13 fundamental to the change that we voted for. This  
14 feels like a bait and switch.

15 As others have noted, the citizen-produced  
16 maps that won the Fair District mapping competition  
17 outperformed the maps being considered on key metrics  
18 of limiting the number of splits of political  
19 subdivisions, compactness, competitiveness, and  
20 minority representation. They merit the consideration  
21 of this Commission.

22 I particularly appreciate that Pranav  
23 Padmanabhan's proposed attempted proposal attempted to  
24 keep school districts intact as a way of prioritizing  
25 keeping communities of interest within legislative

1 districts.

2           When voters approved Issue 1 in 2015, one of  
3 the Committee Co-Chairs said obviously there's a lot of  
4 skepticism about government; but if you work these  
5 issues through and get everybody involved, you can  
6 solve some of these issues.

7           That bright-eyed optimist was none other than  
8 current Commission Member Senator Matt Huffman. At  
9 Thursday's hearing, several members of the Commission  
10 stated they wanted a ten-year bipartisan agreement.  
11 They were willing to put in the work to make it happen.

12           As I stated, when I last testified, anything  
13 less than a bipartisan agreement and a ten-year map  
14 would it be a failure of leadership. The voters of  
15 Ohio voted for change. We want an end to partisan  
16 gerrymandering and business as usual. We demand fair  
17 maps. As you know, time is running out. Thank you for  
18 your attention.

19           (Applause)

20           CO-CHAIR SYKES: Are there any questions?

21           Thank you very much. Next witness.

22           STAFF MEMBER: Mary Earl, followed by Pamela  
23 Easterday.

24           CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness.

25           STAFF MEMBER: Karen Elliott, followed by

1 Kristina English.

2 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness.

3 STAFF MEMBER: Josh Flory, followed by Kelley  
4 Freeman.

5 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Would you state and spell  
6 your name, please.

7 KELLEY FREEMAN: Certainly. My name is Kelly  
8 Freeman, K-E-L-L-E-Y F-R-E-E-M-A-N. First, I would  
9 like to thank Co-Chairs Cupp and Sykes and the members  
10 of the Ohio Redistricting Commission for the  
11 opportunity to testify in support of Ohio's  
12 redistricting process and in the hopes that these  
13 community hearings result in the fair maps that Ohio  
14 voters need and deserve.

15 My name is Kelley Freeman. I'm the State  
16 Field Manager of NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio. I'm also a  
17 small business owner and a parent. I moved from -- I  
18 moved to Ohio from South Carolina in 2014 with the  
19 assumption that I was moving from a red state to a  
20 purple state, and was very excited to get involved in  
21 the political process where I feel like I could be  
22 represented.

23 It took a single lobby day, which felt like a  
24 crash course in Ohio politics, to find that I was  
25 sorely mistaken in the assumption of purple statehood.

1 But thing is I wasn't actually mistaken. Ohio is a  
2 purple state with a split of 56/44 of Republican to  
3 Democratic votes in the last election.

4 While the electorate in Ohio is a fairly  
5 balanced blend, the map absolutely does not reflect  
6 that. And if we want Ohio to move -- to be able to  
7 move forward and to be a state where people want to  
8 move to and raise their families, a decision I  
9 sometimes wonder was -- whether or not it was the right  
10 one for me to make, our future must include  
11 representational maps.

12 Ohio is not yet using losing population, but  
13 it did lose a federal House seat. We aren't growing as  
14 fast as other states, and I think it could be because  
15 of gerrymandered maps, and abortion bans. But that's  
16 another conversation -- but also -- is it really?  
17 Gerrymandering has a tendency to drive elections to the  
18 extremes. When the real competition is during the  
19 primary, we don't see the balance of the communities  
20 would like. Instead, we get the folks who can shout  
21 the loudest and be the most divisive. Districts are  
22 drawn like that.

23 All Republicans are grouped together, even if  
24 they're not from similar communities, and Democrats  
25 accept it because they get safe seats out of it as

1 well. I would wager that at least a third of the  
2 Republicans in the State House aren't specifically  
3 anti-abortion, but vote that way because they aren't  
4 given any other options in gerrymandered districts.

5           Rather than addressing the needs of  
6 constituents, anti-choice legislators have been  
7 implementing their own agenda. When primaries are the  
8 only competitive part of an election, it dilutes the  
9 power of more centrist voters who may skip the primary  
10 entirely in favor of general elections. And they, in  
11 turn, find the only options are candidates who were  
12 chosen by the most extreme elements of each political  
13 party.

14           Gerrymandered maps are erasing where there  
15 once was common ground between political parties. I  
16 don't think most of the legislators actually hold  
17 anti-abortion beliefs or convictions, but they do have  
18 fundraising goals, and it's an easy target.

19           Gerrymandered maps make it all the easier to  
20 use being anti-abortion as an extreme view to prove  
21 they're more conservative than the other Republicans in  
22 the race.

23           We need fair districts because my  
24 neighborhood and downtown Columbus shouldn't be split  
25 in half. Since I moved to Columbus, I've lived at four

1 addresses, all within six miles of each other, and I've  
2 lived in three different State House districts. I do  
3 recognize that Republicans would still have the  
4 majority in both the House and Senate under a fair map;  
5 but either party holding 75 percent of the seats is  
6 absurd given the makeup of the Ohio electorate. And to  
7 suggest a map that makes it even more slanted in favor  
8 of the Republican Party is frankly insulting.

9 Ohio voters deserve and democracy demands  
10 representational maps. Voters must be able to choose  
11 the representatives, not the other way around. We  
12 deserve to have an actual voice in the Ohio legislature  
13 instead of screaming into the wind, as they have for  
14 the last ten years.

15 Regardless of this Commission's personal  
16 beliefs on policy issues -- policy-based issues in the  
17 state, I hope you'll take into consideration that fair  
18 maps, districts drawn with community input, will  
19 represent Ohioans more equally, and will be a benefit  
20 for all going forward. Thank you.

21 (Applause)

22 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you. Are there any  
23 questions?

24 Thank you very much.

25 Next witness.

1 STAFF MEMBER: Ismael Gad, followed by  
2 Carolyn Gunchar (phonetic).

3 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness.

4 STAFF MEMBER: Ruth Hardy, followed by Brad  
5 Henry.

6 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness, please.

7 STAFF MEMBER: Donna Hermann, followed by  
8 Jona Hilario.

9 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness.

10 STAFF MEMBER: Derrick Holmes, followed by  
11 Caitlin Johnson.

12 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness.

13 STAFF MEMBER: Laura Joseph, followed by Joel  
14 King.

15 JOEL KING: Good morning, Commissioners. I'm  
16 Reverend Joel King, J-O-E-L K-I-N-G. I vote in House  
17 District 19, Senate District 3, and Congressional  
18 District 3. The reason I'm here is to demand fair  
19 voting districts for my community and his entire state.

20 I serve as a leader of the Columbus -- 3177  
21 Chapter here in Columbus of the NAACP. Member of the  
22 Baptist Pastors Conference, Baptist Ministry Alliance,  
23 and member of the Interdenominational Ministry Alliance  
24 here in Columbus. I'm a lifelong member and an  
25 advocate for all citizens' basic right to vote in this

1 state and vote their conscience. The unfairness of our  
2 current Ohio House, Senate and Congressional districts  
3 is (indiscernible) vote because it's discriminating  
4 against minority and vulnerable citizens of our state.

5 Our history of unfairness and lack of access  
6 to the vote as far -- is not a new story in this  
7 country. We've been talking about it for years, and  
8 can't get it right yet. We fought a war for 20 years  
9 in Afghanistan to give those citizens the right to  
10 vote. And here we are, already in 2021, to get fair  
11 districts in Ohio. Something's wrong with that  
12 picture.

13 This has been a blatant unfairness for  
14 generations. Ohioans want to see the Commission  
15 approve a bipartisan ten-year map that keeps our  
16 community together and allow for representational  
17 fairness for all of our citizens. The present  
18 Republican map as drafted fails to meet the basic  
19 requirements for representational fairness, and even  
20 take the Voting Rights Act into consideration. So  
21 we're already on the wrong track.

22 We need to push -- stop pushing partisan  
23 gerrymandering here in 2021, for all of our districts,  
24 and make them fair for all of our citizens. We need  
25 this Commission to listen to the voters and work

1 together to deliver our promises of fair maps the  
2 voters had intended when they passed your right to be  
3 in session to make this opportunity fair in Ohio.

4 We can make history in Ohio, or we can go  
5 backwards 200 years of our history. Let's make fair  
6 maps for all of our citizens. Thank you.

7 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you. Are there any  
8 questions?

9 (Applause)

10 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you very much.

11 The next witness,

12 STAFF MEMBER: Representative Thomas West,  
13 followed by Mitchell Kingsley.

14 CO-CHAIR SYKES: You have three minutes.

15 REPRESENTATIVE WEST: Thank you, Co-Chair.

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

18 REPRESENTATIVE WEST: Yes, my name is  
19 Representative Thomas West.

20 CO-CHAIR SYKES: With these legislators, you  
21 have to be very -- you know.

22 (Laughter)

23 REPRESENTATIVE WEST: Okay. He's going to  
24 start already.

25 (Laughter)

1           REPRESENTATIVE WEST: Well, thank you, Co-  
2 Chair. My name is Thomas West, T-H-O-M-A-S, Edward,  
3 E-D-W-A-R-D, West, W-E-S-T. And today I'm here to  
4 speak on behalf of the 49th House District. The  
5 grinding -- the Grind 49. But more importantly, I'm  
6 also here to speak on behalf of the President of the  
7 Ohio Legislative Black Caucus. And since this is a  
8 historic moment in time, I felt that I wanted to bring  
9 forth a little bit of history of the Ohio Legislative  
10 Black Caucus.

11           But before I do that, I wanted to add with  
12 regards to the maps. In the Grind 49, I represent  
13 Massillon and Canton. And as you guys know, we've  
14 passed a resolution last year honoring the historic  
15 game between Massillon and Canton, the football  
16 heritage corridor, which is a street between Massillon  
17 and Canton.

18           Both maps eliminate Massillon from the  
19 Grind 49. And today, I'm asking that we make certain  
20 that we be very intentional about keeping those two  
21 together, not only for historical purposes, but because  
22 that's what makes the Grind 49.

23           So I say that, but let me now talk to you a  
24 little bit about the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus.  
25 The Ohio Legislative Black Caucus, formerly known as

1 the Black Elected Officials of Ohio, BEDO, was founded  
2 in 1967 by African-American state legislator, the  
3 leadership of State Representative C.J. McLin of  
4 Dayton, Ohio.

5 OLBC was created during the time of the Civil  
6 Rights era. Well, you guys say, well, what does this  
7 all got to do with redistricting? It has a lot to do  
8 with redistricting. Because during this time, several  
9 things happened that led up to the founding of the Ohio  
10 Legislative Black Caucus. We had the Brown -- the 1954  
11 Brown -- the Board Of Education Supreme Court ruling  
12 that outlawed segregation in public schools, the Civil  
13 Rights of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

14 Well, get to the point. I'm going to get  
15 there. The 1962 U.S. ruling, Baker vs. Carr that  
16 further provided the basis for fair elections and  
17 redistricting practices, that opened the door for more  
18 African Americans to be elected to the General Assembly  
19 and the statehouse across the country. Prior to that  
20 ruling, we only had three African Americans that  
21 represented the state -- in the state of Ohio.

22 But after that ruling, they had a historic  
23 win of 12 African Americans to serve in this  
24 legislature, C.J. McLin, Carl Stokes, William Mallory,  
25 on some of the names that was in that 12, who created

1 the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus, that went on to do  
2 major things in our state and our community. They made  
3 us proud.

4 And it's very important for us to look at  
5 this time in history and make certain that we're very  
6 intentional about drawing these lines. I'm here today  
7 to express the serious concerns with the opposition of  
8 the Commission's current proposal. That current Sykes  
9 on Thursday afternoon meeting that said, these maps  
10 would likely result in an even greater advantage to the  
11 majority party than the current state legislative maps,  
12 which are already some of the worst maps --  
13 gerrymandered maps in the country, taken a step further  
14 in direction -- completely disregards the spirit of the  
15 reforms voted in 2015.

16 Now you heard that, so I'm not going to go  
17 over that anymore. But I still have hope that this  
18 Commission can come together. Not talking about red  
19 and blue -- and I know that we talked about that. We  
20 didn't look at the demographics of race. Well, let me  
21 tell you what. We did look at color. We looked at red  
22 and blue, and we forgot about Black and brown. And  
23 that's not okay.

24 We need to make certain that we're very  
25 intentional about looking at these districts and making

1 certain that the African American communities that had  
2 fair representation -- that finally had a  
3 representation that they can start working together in  
4 unity. Areas like Trumbull, areas all across the state  
5 of Ohio. I just ask that you -- I implore you to work  
6 these lines and make certain that you're very  
7 intentional about understanding who's in whose district  
8 and who can serve them best. Why? Because we don't  
9 have to work on red and blue. We can work on red,  
10 white, and blue.

11 This is about the United States. This is a  
12 historical moment, and you have the call. I call it  
13 the Grind 49 because I know that Stark County, when it  
14 comes down to that last inch, we're going to get there.  
15 When it comes down to that yard -- we know football,  
16 we're going to get there.

17 We're asking you to do the same thing. Come  
18 together with the seven. Look at both maps. The first  
19 map -- I'm going to tell you, just throw it out the  
20 door. Let's start working on a map that matters.  
21 Let's work on a map that works for Ohio, that leads  
22 this nation so that in the future, your child, your  
23 grandchild, your cousin, your brother, whatever  
24 district or whatever party he's in, he has a shot to  
25 win, he has a shot to make it. And thus, we will be

1 happy about that.

2 Now this is the final round, and all I ask  
3 you don't forget about Black and brown. Thank you.

4 (Applause)

5 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Any questions?

6 Seeing none, thank you.

7 Next witness, please.

8 STAFF MEMBER: Mitchell Kingsley, followed by  
9 Michael and Connie Kline.

10 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness please.

11 STAFF MEMBER: Richard Kongel (phonetic),  
12 followed by Mia Lewis.

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

15 MIA LEWIS: Yes, my name is Mia Lewis, M-I-A  
16 L-E-W-I-S. Co-Chair Speaker Cupp and Senator Sykes,  
17 members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission, thank you  
18 for the opportunity to testify. My name is Mia Lewis.  
19 I'm here on behalf of Common Cause Ohio.

20 When looking at the officially proposed maps,  
21 we have heard numerous specific examples where the  
22 lines have been drawn in ways that divide communities,  
23 particularly communities of color, thus undermining  
24 their ability to elect the representatives of their  
25 choice, and also examples of packing and cracking.

1           The updated map submitted by the Senate --  
2 Ohio Senate Democratic caucus is an improvement, but  
3 there is still work to do. Fulfilling the requirement  
4 for representational fairness is non-negotiable.

5           Auditor Faber -- I'm sorry he's not with us,  
6 but Auditor Faber made a good point last night about  
7 how we need to keep communities together, but we don't  
8 want to overpack them. It's important for mapmakers to  
9 understand what communities want. Yesterday, we heard  
10 directly from Cuyahoga County residents about how they  
11 see their county as divided east and west.

12           Public testimony also suggests that splitting  
13 school districts divides communities. That's an  
14 important thing to consider. Some of the maps have  
15 taken that into consideration. The officially proposed  
16 one apparently has not.

17           Public hearings are a good way to hear what  
18 people want, but you can also look at many community  
19 maps that were created with fair districts in community  
20 conversations at our landing page, which is  
21 [Districtr.org/event/fairdistrictsohio](https://Districtr.org/event/fairdistrictsohio). And also the  
22 Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission unity map offers  
23 excellent examples of constitutionally-compliant maps  
24 that take the wishes of communities into consideration.

25           Drawing new voting district lines is the most

1 significant public act that you will do for or against  
2 the people of Ohio in your lifetimes, most likely,  
3 certainly, at least for a decade. Please look to the  
4 future. Look to posterity. Look to your better  
5 angels.

6 Yes, you should have started this process  
7 earlier, spread these hearings out over five months so  
8 we didn't get six-hour hearings, and heard from all the  
9 people. But here we are. Let's all acknowledge really  
10 a very obvious thing. This is too important a task to  
11 be rushed. Deadlines are important, but sometimes they  
12 simply can't be met. It is not unheard of for the Ohio  
13 General Assembly to miss a deadline here and there by a  
14 few days. And you did get your census data four months  
15 after you were originally expecting it.

16 The people of Ohio fought for a good process  
17 and for fair maps. They didn't fight for maps by  
18 Wednesday, September 15th. This is not a magical date.  
19 We urge you to seriously consider taking another week  
20 to truly consider each district and the placement of  
21 each line. Just seven more days. What a difference  
22 that could make for the next ten years.

23 We call for a public, transparent, bipartisan  
24 review of the submitted maps, county by county.  
25 Ohioans want to see your deliberation in public so that

1 they can understand and see the choices being made.

2 Thank you.

3 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Are there any questions?

4 Leader Sykes.

5 LEADER SYKES: Thank you, Mr. Co-Chair. And  
6 to the witness, thank you for your testimony today.

7 So I just want to be clear about your  
8 statement about perhaps not making the deadline  
9 tomorrow. Is that on behalf of you as a citizen or you  
10 on behalf of an organization?

11 MIA LEWIS: As an organization, Common Cause  
12 Ohio.

13 LEADER SYKES: Follow up, Mr. Chair?

14 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Yes.

15 LEADER SYKES: And so, again, just to  
16 clarify, your suggestion is to take an additional week  
17 to figure this all out. And that is the position of  
18 Common Cause Ohio.

19 MIA LEWIS: Yes. Through the Chair.

20 Yes, I just think this is too -- we think  
21 this is too important a process to be rushed. And yes,  
22 deadlines are important. But this has been a very time  
23 -- a very serious time crunch.

24 And we've made a lot of progress here.

25 People have come up with specific suggestions of where

1 they feel -- the previous speaker, representative who  
2 spoke about a line being drawn in a certain place.  
3 Let's go look at that line. Let's go see what happens  
4 when we move it to put it back where it ought to be.  
5 And let's do it county by county, district by district,  
6 and make sure that we get this right.

7           You guys have done, you know, these heroic  
8 hours. But we're using up a lot of your time just  
9 telling you how frustrated we are with the process and  
10 with the outcome. And, you know, if we actually went  
11 through district by district, and you discussed the map  
12 and took into consideration the testimony that's  
13 already been given, and that's been submitted, then we  
14 could make real improvements. These maps are going to  
15 last, we hope, for ten years. So it's of enormous  
16 significance.

17           CO-CHAIR SYKES: Any additional questions?

18           Thank you very much.

19           MIA LEWIS: Thank you.

20           (Applause)

21           CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness.

22           STAFF MEMBER: The next witness -- the next  
23 witness is Zaiba Malik, followed by Carolyn Manda.

24           CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness.

25           STAFF MEMBER: The next witness is Kevin

1 Maywood followed by Wendy Mizanin.

2 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness.

3 STAFF MEMBER: Meryl Neiman, followed by  
4 David Niven.

5 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Would you state and spell  
6 your name, please.

7 DAVID NIVEN: Certainly. David Niven,  
8 D-A-V-I-D N-I-V-E-N. I'm a political science professor  
9 at the University of Cincinnati.

10 Appreciate the opportunity to speak to the  
11 Commission here today. I'll note that Speaker Cupp  
12 suggested that he didn't want to hear the same thing  
13 from every speaker over and over again. And I'll say  
14 to that, if you don't want to hear the same thing from  
15 every speaker, don't draw the same map every time.

16 (Laughter)

17 DAVID NIVEN: And of course, he achieved the  
18 goal of not hearing the same thing from every speaker  
19 by leaving the meeting.

20 Let me say for a moment here, we know what  
21 gerrymandering is. And there's a fascinating dialogue  
22 going on right now. It's almost the reverse Potter  
23 Stewart here. Gerrymandering is all around us. And  
24 yet some members of Commission seem to suggest that  
25 they won't know it when they see it.

1 Well, we know what it is. We know what it  
2 is. We know it is the dilution of the value of a vote.  
3 It is taking one vote and treating it as inferior to  
4 another, for the purposes, obviously, of achieving  
5 greater political power, of achieving more seats in the  
6 process.

7 The map that's been proposed, the draft map  
8 of the Commission, fails every gerrymandering test  
9 that's ever been created. It fails the efficiency gap  
10 test. It fails the partisan bias test. It fails the  
11 proportion test. It fails every test those who study  
12 this for a living have ever devised. I study this as  
13 part of the work that I do.

14 Here's the bottom line. The map as drawn, as  
15 proposed to this Commission, gives Republicans the  
16 power to win a majority on the strength of a minority  
17 of the votes. There is no system where that is  
18 considered fair. There is no system where that is  
19 considered anything but the definition of  
20 gerrymandering.

21 Here's your bottom line. That map is more  
22 biased than 80 percent of all the maps drawn and put  
23 into effect across the nation for the last 20 years.  
24 That is not the reform that Ohio voters have asked for.

25 Now, with respect, there's an alternate map

1 that's been proposed by the Democrats. It's better.  
2 It's better. But it's still favors Republicans. It's  
3 more biased than about 40 percent of the maps out there  
4 over the last 20 years. So it's a step in the right  
5 direction. But voters didn't ask for a mildly less  
6 unfair map when they passed a new system here in Ohio.

7 Let me just close briefly with this. As a  
8 classroom exercise, I've asked my students to draw maps  
9 -- to draw up a map of Ohio in a redistricting lesson.  
10 And here's a shocking fact. Fair maps can be drawn  
11 quite quickly. It's easy. You keep communities  
12 together, and it happens. You see natural shapes and  
13 you get a fair map that looks like Ohio.

14 It's the unfair map that keeps folks up all  
15 night. It's the unfair map that requires the secret  
16 hotel rooms and the massive expenditures. We all -- we  
17 don't just ask for the fair map. We demand a fair map  
18 that Ohioans have voted for and the Constitution  
19 requires. Thank you.

20 (Applause)

21 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Are there any questions?

22 Leader Sykes.

23 There's a question for you.

24 LEADER SYKES: Thank you to the Co-Chair.

25 And Dr. Niven, thank you so much for your

1 presentation. So you mentioned the maps that the  
2 Democrats put forth, the amendment was better, but not  
3 as good as you'd like.

4 DAVID NIVEN: Right.

5 LEADER SYKES: Could you provide us a couple  
6 of examples or suggestions to make it -- to get more  
7 along the lines that could be what you imagine --

8 DAVID NIVEN: Sure.

9 LEADER SYKES: -- or say that Ohioans wanted.

10 DAVID NIVEN: Sure. You know, the bottom  
11 line -- and I don't want to get too far into the weeds  
12 of political science jargon here, but the alternate map  
13 continues to waste more Democratic votes than  
14 Republican votes. So the alternate map is better in  
15 terms of wasting fewer votes than the main proposal,  
16 but you're still talking about -- about a 3 to 4  
17 percent sort of discount rate on the value of a  
18 Democratic vote.

19 And the ideal, of course, is to strive for  
20 zero, that the votes of all Ohioans be equal. To put  
21 this in simple terms, the alternate map is likely to  
22 result in Republicans getting about 7 percent more  
23 seats than they get votes. So it makes, you know, it  
24 starts the process with Republicans in the lead, and  
25 they can still, with the alternate map, win by losing.

1           And then just to give you a couple of  
2 examples, there are some spots -- I know, on the south  
3 side of Cleveland, I know there's one in Columbus,  
4 where the district lines seem to be drawn without  
5 regard for keeping neighborhoods intact, and without  
6 regard to following the prescriptions of the state  
7 constitution. And as I said, it is a less biased map,  
8 but it remains tilted in the Republican direction.

9           CO-CHAIR SYKES: Leader Sykes.

10          LEADER SYKES: Thank you.

11          Thank you so much for that. That's very  
12 helpful. So the -- so I believe I got this correctly.  
13 7 percent more seats than votes.

14          DAVID NIVEN: Right.

15          LEADER SYKES: How -- how did you find that?  
16 Is there an equation or formula that you're looking at?  
17 And is it concentrated in one particular area of the  
18 state or particular areas of the state? And how can  
19 that be undone?

20          DAVID NIVEN: Sure. Sure. I mean, that's a  
21 cumulative effect. So where does that come from? It  
22 comes from Democratic districts where there are  
23 essentially wasted votes, you know. So it comes from,  
24 you know, from a district where, you know, you put,  
25 say, high 50 percent Democratic vote -- you know, those

1 are votes, you know, from a statistical perspective  
2 that are wasted. Past that point, those votes aren't  
3 going to affect the outcome.

4 So, without getting too far in the jargon,  
5 the short answer to your question is that's a number  
6 that reflects statewide trends. And the way to address  
7 that is to reduce the number of districts that are  
8 overwhelmingly democratic, you know, is essentially the  
9 quick answer to fixing that.

10 LEADER SYKES: Follow-up?

11 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Yes.

12 LEADER SYKES: Thank you.

13 Thank you very much, because we're -- I think  
14 we're getting to something here.

15 So is any of that, that you see with the  
16 Democrat wasted votes, part of -- well, I guess, at  
17 least in your analysis, let me put it that way. In  
18 your analysis, could some of that lead towards  
19 protecting Black voting age population in certain  
20 communities that is increasing that, and then thus  
21 moving that out could release some of those wasted  
22 votes, but then dilute the ability of Black voting age  
23 population?

24 DAVID NIVEN: Well, that's an excellent  
25 question. And the answer is no, that's not the answer.

1 For example, in the Senate map, there's only three  
2 Senate districts where the minority population reaches  
3 40 percent, which is actually an extraordinarily low  
4 number and lower than the Republican map. So it is not  
5 in service of minority opportunity that this partisan  
6 bias arises; but rather, it's actually in defiance of  
7 minority opportunity that the bias arises.

8 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Are there any additional  
9 questions?

10 Auditor Faber.

11 AUDITOR FABER: Thank you, Dr. Niven. It's  
12 interesting that you point out -- essentially, you're  
13 modeling seems to try and approach a statewide without  
14 boundaries, without regard to where people tend to  
15 live, goal. The problem is that's not Ohio. Ohioans  
16 tend to cluster around people that vote like them. And  
17 so, in order to achieve your idealized approach, unless  
18 we just have statewide elections, the reality is -- and  
19 by the way, in the last, I just did the math using the  
20 wonderful chart we had here. And here, out of the last  
21 15 statewide elections, Republicans have won 13 of them  
22 during that time period.

23 Unless I'm going to do a statewide without  
24 boundaries, I'm going to have to either -- to achieve  
25 your goal -- fracture counties, cities, communities of

1 interest to achieve anything approaching an equal  
2 number.

3 And so the question that we've been trying to  
4 wrestle with is, what is the goal? Keeping communities  
5 together, or competitiveness? And while I will freely  
6 admit, I want to do more competitiveness as we're  
7 trying to go through this, aren't I correct in saying  
8 that, at some point, you're going to have a limitation  
9 on your ability to hit the competitiveness if you're  
10 going to keep communities together?

11 DAVID NIVEN: The short answer to your  
12 question is the fact that Ohioans naturally disperse --  
13 and you're quite right, a lot of folks like to live, or  
14 their social and political views lead them to cluster  
15 -- that's worth about 3 percent. Bottom line.

16 There's a geographic bias that -- and you're  
17 right. If you and I created a totally impartial,  
18 random, district drawing process, it would give  
19 Republicans a modest bonus because of that cluster.  
20 And that's worth about 3 percent. The Democratic  
21 alternative map is a Republican bias of 7 percent. The  
22 Republican-drawn map is a bias of 14 to 16 percent.

23 So yes, there is clustering. Clustering is a  
24 tiny fraction of the effect that we're seeing in the  
25 Republican map. And it's less than half of what we're

1 seeing in the Democratic map. So when you suggest  
2 certainly -- and you're right, that Republicans have  
3 had an extraordinary run of success, winning statewide  
4 elections.

5 But many of you got to office with, you know,  
6 51, 52, 53 percent of the vote. You didn't get to  
7 office with 65, 66, 70 percent of the vote. And our  
8 state districts, you know, naturally drawn would  
9 reflect much more those statewide results where you're  
10 winning 52 percent of the vote, then, you know, winning  
11 two thirds of the seats.

12 AUDITOR FABER: I would -- Mr. Chairman.

13 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Yes.

14 AUDITOR FABER: I would be willing to -- and,  
15 frankly, eager to see your research on that as to how  
16 that 3 percent is calculated.

17 DAVID NIVEN: Sure.

18 AUDITOR FABER: And frankly, I think it's  
19 very enlightening to hear that discussion. So thank  
20 you for that.

21 DAVID NIVEN: My pleasure.

22 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Lieutenant Governor Husted.

23 LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR HUSTED: Thank you,  
24 Mr. Chairman.

25 I'm interested in your answer to this

1 question in terms of our goal, what our goals should  
2 be. Let's say, hypothetically, that we drew districts  
3 of 90 -- in 99 seats where -- and House seats, that 51  
4 of them were Republican leaning and 48 of them were  
5 leaning toward the Democrats, to guarantee a  
6 representational fairness, to guarantee that hey, 55  
7 index for Republican seats, 45 index for Democratic  
8 seats, which, if that were possible, would lead to  
9 primary voters making the decision about who represents  
10 them in the legislature with really no regard to what  
11 the general election voter might think. And  
12 practically would lead to very partisan ideological  
13 views in the governance of Ohio, where other votes  
14 occur on the House floor or the Senate floor, versus a  
15 goal of having 99 districts that are 50/50, where the  
16 general election voter had a greater say in who made  
17 decisions about their election. So which goal is more  
18 admirable?

19 DAVID NIVEN: Well, I think that's a  
20 fascinating question, and I appreciate it. And the  
21 reality is in Ohio, we don't have either. We have  
22 neither the competitiveness nor districts that  
23 fairly --

24 LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR HUSTED: Yeah, but what  
25 should be our goal?

1           DAVID NIVEN: I think that the bottom line is  
2 the goal, as a practical reality, is a mix of those  
3 things, that -- you know, that you're correct in  
4 saying, if you could magically draw districts that were  
5 each, let's say, 90 percent in favor of a political of  
6 Republicans or 90 percent favor of Democrats, and then  
7 it was just a matter of deciding how many of each, that  
8 would not be the ideal.

9           Certainly, I think as a practical reality,  
10 the fairest map you can draw in Ohio is going to have  
11 many very strong Republican districts, it's going to  
12 have many very strong Democratic districts, as a  
13 practical reality, as Auditor Faber pointed out.

14           So then the question then is, is the mix.  
15 The question then is how do you balance that with the  
16 preferences of Ohioans. And I think that bottom line  
17 is if you create too many districts tilted in one  
18 direction, you know, which is what we have -- we have  
19 here in Ohio, right now, the current legislative map,  
20 it's not the most biased map in the nation. It's the  
21 second most biased map in terms of Republicans' ability  
22 to win State House and State Senate seats without  
23 winning a majority.

24           So the system that we have now -- and this is  
25 echoed in the proposed map -- fails either of the two

1 goals that you've spoken of.

2 LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR HUSTED: Mr. Chairman.

3 I appreciate that. I still -- as I'm looking  
4 at this and I'm trying to think through, you know, a  
5 better approach, the fundamental question, for example  
6 -- I look at one map, and I see that Franklin County  
7 has no Republican members in one map that I saw. That  
8 means that that county, largest county in the state, by  
9 the admission of the map drawer, would be not  
10 represented in the majority caucus in policymaking.

11 There are just these other factors of making  
12 sure that people have a voice, and making sure that  
13 perhaps they have a moderate voice that represents the  
14 views of the collective majority rather than the views  
15 of a specific partisan-drawn district. It's finding  
16 the balance and -- and appreciate your reflections on  
17 that. Thank you.

18 DAVID NIVEN: Thank you.

19 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Secretary LaRose.

20 SECRETARY LAROSE: Thank you, Co-Chairman.

21 And if I may, maybe a corollary to the  
22 Lieutenant Governor's question, because this is  
23 something I've been ruminating for a while.

24 So if, in theory, the target proportionality  
25 is 44/55. And we know you can't draw 99 competitive

1 seats without grossly gerrymandering the state to do  
2 so. So say you got to a place where there were 25  
3 competitive seats. And we can define that different  
4 ways, 45 to 55, 48 to 52, whatever the competitive --  
5 so take those 25 off the table, for this  
6 proportionality conversation. We'll just say those are  
7 competitive. Go get 'em. Go win 'em. Leaves us with  
8 74.

9           And then that's when we start to consider  
10 that proportionality that's contained in the  
11 Constitution. And so then just a -- you know, 44  
12 percent of 74 gives you 32 Democrat districts --  
13 Democratic districts, and then 55 percent of 74 gives  
14 you 41 Republican districts.

15           So what you're essentially dividing up among  
16 the partisan conversation here is who gets what safe  
17 seats, and then we maximize competitive seats to the  
18 extent possible. Would that be a more practicable  
19 approach to achieving the dual goals of creating as  
20 many competitive districts as we can while, at the same  
21 time, creating that proportionality that's called for  
22 in the Constitution?

23           DAVID NIVEN: Yes, and this reflects, you  
24 know, the Lieutenant Governor's question, as well,  
25 that, as a practical matter, you can't draw, you know,

1 99 safe seats, you know, without, you know, God-awful  
2 shapes. And as a practical matter, you can't draw 99  
3 competitive seats, again, without God-awful shapes.

4 So I think you're right to suggest that if  
5 you draw proportionally those seats that have a lean --  
6 and then, of course, the key, the devil in the details,  
7 that those competitive seats are, in fact, truly  
8 competitive; that they can't -- they can't all be  
9 leaning to one party, you know, in the system.

10 But I think if you do that, yes, you get, you  
11 get an outcome that's responsive. So there's no  
12 realistic reason to think that if we draw these maps,  
13 and we do it fairly, that the outcome necessarily will  
14 be 55 percent Republican, 45 percent Democratic. There  
15 should be good years and bad years. You know, there  
16 should be a responsiveness where things favor a party,  
17 the quality of its candidates is particularly good.  
18 And you see that.

19 And that -- you know, just to bring in, for  
20 example, the Ohio congressional map for a moment, you  
21 know, it was in place for ten years. That's 16  
22 elections times 5, 80 times, and there was never once a  
23 seat turnover. So that's the opposite of what we're  
24 talking about in terms of responsiveness. It didn't  
25 matter whether it was a good Democratic year, or a good

1 Republican year. Nothing changed.

2 So I think what you and I are talking about  
3 here is a system that allows for responsiveness, which  
4 is never going to produce a precise, you know, 55  
5 percent/45 percent outcome necessarily, but it allows  
6 for that to be possible. And it doesn't start with  
7 knowing that one party is going to win a majority, even  
8 with a minority of the vote.

9 SECRETARY LAROSE: And Co-Chairman, as a  
10 follow-up, that 45/55 construct is, at its essence, a  
11 fiction, right? It would be the ultimate arrogance for  
12 us to think that we can create this thing where it's --  
13 the state's just going to divide 55/45.

14 I come from a district when I served here in  
15 the State Senate where I won in 46 index district that  
16 nobody thought I could win way back in 2010, and that  
17 shows you candidates -- campaigns matter. And they do  
18 over and over again. We need to acknowledge that.

19 DAVID NIVEN: Well, I wouldn't use the word  
20 "fiction." I would use the word "foundation," that  
21 it's the point that we build from.

22 Now, you know, if the Republicans should  
23 happen to field 99 of the most extraordinary leaders in  
24 the state, and they're able to succeed and win more  
25 than 55 seats, that's perfectly natural. If the

1 Democrats should do the same, and they should happen to  
2 have a good year, that's perfectly natural.

3 But what we have -- you know, this is the  
4 fundamental situation that we have. It's one in which  
5 the quality of the candidates and the quality of their  
6 ideas matters a whole heck of a lot -- than the quality  
7 of the mapmaking. And that is not responsive in any  
8 way.

9 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Any additional questions?  
10 Seeing none, thank you very much.

11 DAVID NIVEN: Thank you.

12 (Applause)

13 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Next witness.

14 STAFF MEMBER: The next witness is  
15 David Pepper, followed by Donna Peterson.

16 DAVID PEPPER: Thank you very much,  
17 Mr. Chairman, other officials.

18 The man who spoke before Lincoln at  
19 Gettysburg said -- he spoke for two hours and almost  
20 none of it was remembered. But he said, "In grave  
21 matters, it is best to call things by their right  
22 names." And I think that's the best thing we do here,  
23 is just be very clear about what's happening.

24 I want to address a little bit what Mr. Niven  
25 just discussed. You know, there's a -- I appreciate

1 the discussion from Secretary LaRose and Lieutenant  
2 Governor Husted about this academic discussion about  
3 what the ideal is. But we can't ignore what David  
4 Niven said, which is, the maps that we're talking about  
5 from 2011 to 2020 weren't some effort to get close to  
6 that. They were the worst maps proposed.

7 There were like 54 maps put forward in 2011  
8 by citizens. The average score based on the criteria  
9 that we were just discussing, was -- it was like 84.  
10 The highest score was 222, balancing competitiveness,  
11 or representational fairness. You can do this stuff.

12 The map that was approved was the last map on  
13 the list, averaging 38.5. So we can discuss the ideal  
14 and the academic; but the truth is, most of the maps  
15 are coming forward, and that we've lived with, and that  
16 we've seen so far from one side, aren't even close to  
17 what we're talking about.

18 I just want to -- I won't talk for too long,  
19 we have a tight limit here. A lot of times in con law,  
20 the challenge is we have to go back 200 years to figure  
21 out what the founders meant, right? Originalism.

22 The founders of this language are sitting in  
23 this room. The founders were 70 percent of the voters  
24 who voted for this language. So this isn't that hard.  
25 We don't have to go through some deep dive into the

1 history.

2           And one of the things the founders did, in  
3 this case, was say we want some balance in drawing  
4 these districts. That's why we have two Democratic  
5 State House members and two Republican State House  
6 members. You know, most states -- and Secretary  
7 LaRose, you may know this, only the legislature draws  
8 their own maps.

9           Ohio decided that's a terrible idea. There's  
10 too much of a conflict of interest if only Speaker Cupp  
11 and President Faber are drawing their own maps.  
12 They're obviously going to be pounded by their members,  
13 right, to only draw maps and help their members.  
14 That's why we have two and two.

15           But that's also why we have three statewide  
16 officials. And what I'm asking today is for those  
17 three statewide officials to see that they have a  
18 unique role here. They're not part of the statehouse.

19           Secretary LaRose and Lieutenant Governor  
20 Husted knows this, and Keith Faber, if he's still here.  
21 You guys had to campaign a different way than Matt  
22 Huffman and Speaker Cupp. You had to talk to everybody  
23 to win the races you won. You bring a statewide  
24 perspective. You are as much a check and a balance on  
25 the statehouse majority as the two Democrats are.

1 That's why voters have you sitting up there. You ran  
2 for these offices to do this.

3 So in the final days or day, I'd ask you  
4 remember that role you have.

5 The same way, Auditor Faber, if you get a  
6 bunch of audits to help only one party cities and not  
7 the others, you'd be in big trouble. You wouldn't be  
8 doing your job.

9 Secretary LaRose, if you ran elections to  
10 only help one party, you wouldn't be doing your job.

11 And on this committee, your job is -- again,  
12 it's not an accident it's the Secretary of State and  
13 the Auditor. Those are positions that we expect to  
14 rise above party. And so you have a role here not to  
15 just do what the statehouse majority wants you to do,  
16 but to actually be the balance that was put in place.

17 And I'll simply close -- and I appreciate it.  
18 I know how busy Governor DeWine is. He was here longer  
19 anybody statewide. He's a busy man. But I think you  
20 all have experienced, especially Secretary LaRose and  
21 Governor DeWine, what happens in a gerrymandered  
22 legislature.

23 Governor DeWine was working so hard. We all  
24 watched and cheered and unified as he tried to deal  
25 with the pandemic. What happened? An out of touch,

1 anti-science legislature ran him over again and again  
2 and again.

3 Secretary LaRose, he tried to have postage  
4 paid in the November -- what happened? He got run over  
5 by a gerrymandered legislature.

6 If you statewide officials can't get through  
7 a gerrymandered legislature, what about the rest of us?  
8 What are we supposed to do with no choice or no voice?

9 And we're all here because we love Ohio,  
10 right? That's why people are coming to these all over  
11 the state. And we love democracy. Don't we?

12 IN UNISON: Yes.

13 DAVID PEPPER: And we know that the best Ohio  
14 comes from the most robust democracy. And the three  
15 statewide officials here, I think, are the key, working  
16 with Democrats, working with Republicans if they're  
17 willing to put aside the narrow interests of their  
18 members, to build the best democracy in Ohio. And that  
19 means fair districts for once and for all. Thank you  
20 all very much. I appreciate it.

21 (Applause)

22 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Are there any questions?

23 DAVID PEPPER: Questions? Thank you.

24 CO-CHAIR SYKES: Thank you very much.

25 DAVID PEPPER: Good luck.

1 CO-CHAIR SYKES: At this time. we've gone  
2 through 60 witnesses, and I believe it's time for us to  
3 take a break. So we'll take a 45-minute lunch break.  
4 We'll reconvene at one o'clock.

5 (Recording ends)

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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, Michelle Costantino, court-approved transcriber, hereby certify that the foregoing is a correct transcript from the electronic sound recording provided for transcription and prepared to the best of my ability.

Michelle Costantino

DATE: September 23, 2021

MICHELLE COSTANTINO

AAERT NO. 589

# **Exhibit 29**

When is the commission going to take this process seriously? As a concerned Ohioan, I am reaching out today to urge you to vote against the state legislative maps proposed and passed for consideration on a party line vote by Ohio Republicans. This is a joke and a fraud. The Ohio Constitution has already been violated with the improper scheduling of citizen feedback. That in itself makes anything the commission does invalid.

I have several other significant concerns about these maps. These maps are more gerrymandered than the previous. First, in their testimony to the Commission, the Republicans' mappers admitted that their leadership instructed them to ignore demographic and racial data. Ohio's map drawers are obligated to ensure that communities of color have adequate and real pathways to political representation -- yet it appears that the Republicans on the Commission are not even going to try to meet this obligation. This violates the Civil Rights Act.

Second, these maps would give Republicans a supermajority in the House and Senate -- with as many as 66% of the districts drawn to favor Republicans. This does not reflect our electorate. In recent statewide elections, only 55% of Ohioan voters supported Republicans. A fair map would show a 55-45 split amongst districts.

Additionally, these maps carve up communities of interest -- dividing our neighborhoods and pulling together parts of the state that don't belong in the same districts. Notably, these maps crack and pack Ohio's communities of color.

These proposed maps -- and the process to date - fail to meet the promise of our reform measures passed by Ohio's voters and the demands of our constitution.

I urge you to please vote NO on these proposed legislative maps.

# **Exhibit 30**

The Ohio Redistricting Committee  
Testimony of Richard D. Topper  
Columbus, OH 9/14/2021

Good morning, Members of the Ohio Redistricting Committee. My name is Richard Topper and I am presenting testimony for fair and credible districts.

I am a lawyer as many of you are. When we were sworn in by the Chief Justice of the Ohio Supreme Court, we agreed to support the US and Ohio Constitutions. Not just to aspire, not just to follow, but to support the Constitution. This includes the 15th, 19th, and 26<sup>th</sup> Amendments which command that the right to vote shall not be denied or abridged on the basis of race or color, sex and to anyone over the age of 18. For the lawyers on the Commission, I trust that you will support the US and Ohio Constitution and for those of you on this Commission who are not lawyers but whom I know to be extremely well-educated and respected, I also trust that you will protect the rights to vote of all Ohioans and not be driven by what your parties may dictate.

The map submitted by my colleague Senator Huffman gives one party the advantage over another. In no way does it support the US or Ohio Constitution and our citizens' right to vote, nor would it be a map that this esteemed committee should adopt or come close to emulating.

Although the Supreme Court refused to address partisan gerrymandering in *Rucho vs. Common Cause*, Justice Roberts condemned partisan district maps. He went on to say, “Excessive partisanship in districting leads to results that reasonably seem unjust.”

Ohio has adopted a plan which Justice Roberts commends. As you are aware, Article 11, Section 6 states specifically that “no General Assembly district plan shall be drawn to favor or disfavor a political party.” The Ohio Constitution not just “aspirational” as Republican party leaders stated to Columbus Dispatch reporters. This is a requirement.

Since 2004, I’ve been volunteering in voter protection. I’ve spent countless hours at the Franklin County early vote center and voting locations on primary and general election days. The four words I’ve heard voters speak that distress me more than any others are, “My vote doesn’t count.” If you adopt the Republican map, I guarantee you that you will hear that over and over again.

Everyone in this room knows that Ohio statewide and federal elections since 2006 have been won by Republicans, by Democrats, and that they have been close. The people of this state deserve maps that reflect this. That was not the case in 2011 when 75% of Ohio state senators and representatives and 65% of Ohio state

representatives are Republican. These numbers are a direct result of partisan redistricting. Ohio voters would never accept such a result from this Commission.

Let me tell you how the Republican map effects my neighbors and me personally. The neighborhood I live in now and the neighborhood my wife and I raised our two children are located in the City of Columbus right off of Olentangy River Road north of the Ohio State Campus by about 5 miles. On the Republican map, our neighborhoods occupy a tiny peninsula in the Ohio 16<sup>th</sup> Senate District. The map splits our precinct, Columbus 60-F, in half. The Republican map puts our our neighbors to the north, south and east with whom we share parks, roads, schools, schools and facilities and Next-Door app in the 25<sup>th</sup> Senate District. Not only that, the entirety of Union County is in our district. We know why the 16<sup>th</sup> was drawn this way. Union County residents voted 2-1 Republican in 2020 and the map would give the Republicans a 12-point swing in a previously competitive district. Both the citizens of Union County and our neighborhood deserve better from you.

The 2011 districts gave our neighborhoods Congressman Troy Balderson. His district, the Ohio 12<sup>th</sup>, also includes 5 smaller Republican voting counties. This prompted then-Congressional candidate, Troy Balderson to tell folks in Muskingum County, “We don’t want someone from Franklin County representing us.” This is despite the fact that 34.5% of his constituency is in Franklin County.

Candidate Balderson's statement and his election margin were not only an indictment of the 2011 redistricting process, it showed that the Zanesville voter would feel disconnected to a Congressional rep from Columbus. People in Zanesville, Mt Gilead, Mount Vernon, Delaware, Newark, and Columbus deserved better, and they certainly are not getting it with the Republican drawn maps.

The 2011 Districts leave many Ohioans feeling that their rights and interests are not being protected by the majority of state law makers. With regard to health care. With the response to Covid. With women's rights and LGBT equality. With other social and environmental issues.

Ninety percent of Ohioans believe in reasonable firearm registration laws, but we have yet to pass Governor DeWine's gun-control legislation despite the mass shooting and murder in the city of Dayton. If you adopt the Republican map or anything close to it, the only conclusion to be drawn is that you do not want a debate on issues that affect everyday Ohioans, that you don't care about Democrats, Independents and socially liberal Republicans, and that you would rather Ohioans accept the ultraconservative views of a minority.

As a member of the 2021 Ohio Redistricting Commission and as lawyers, you have a great opportunity and a responsibility to show Ohioans that we can draw fair boundaries to protect voting rights and to support the US and Ohio

Constitution. It is your job to pay attention to what the voters asked you in 2015 and 2018 to accomplish and bring back faith, credibility and fairness to our government, so we never again hear those four words, “My Vote Doesn’t Count.” I have faith that you can rise to this task and accomplish this.

Thank you for your time and I’d be happy to answer any questions.

# **Exhibit 31**

**TESTIMONY OF:**

Zaiba Malik  
7836 Spring Garden Ct  
West Chester, OH 45069

**IN OPPOSITION OF:**

Proposed State Legislative Maps  
Ohio Redistricting Commission

**West Chester, OH, 09/14/2021**

*Dear Commission,*

*I submitted testimony last month describing my community and how it has been impacted by gerrymandering. Today, I am writing to oppose the proposed state legislative maps.*

*I am a resident of Butler County for the past 16 years and choose to live in West Chester to be close to my extended family and the Muslim community. In addition, I own two businesses in West Chester. I define my community as the schools, shopping, and cultural centers near and around me. These are the people I share coffee with, my kids go to school and play sports with, and go to the mosque with. I am disappointed to see how my current districts do not include my next-door communities that I share life experiences with.*

*Gerrymandering has disenfranchised our community from seeing an impact of our vote for local elections as well as community funding. As I wrote (along with many others who spoke to the Commission in person) in my previous testimony: We need fair redistricting to encourage everyone to have a voice and to ensure politicians are actually representing and speaking for the districts they are elected to.*

*However, the proposed state House and Senate district maps do not deliver on this. These maps are unfair and unacceptable, especially in light of the constitutional reforms for redistricting Ohioans overwhelmingly voted for. We the voters passed these reforms because we were tired of gerrymandering, but map drawers have used the same strategies once again.*

*These constitutional reforms direct you to draw districts that “correspond closely to the statewide preferences of the voters.” Yet, the proposed maps do not reflect Ohio voting preferences, which are around 55 percent Republican and 45 percent Democrat.*

*The proposed maps were clearly drawn to ensure the power of one political party over the next for the next decade, which goes against constitutional requirements. They split communities of color, dividing Ohio neighborhoods and connecting together parts of our state that simply don't belong in the same districts.*

*I oppose these proposed maps and instead support maps that reflect the voting preferences of Ohioans, comply with the Voting Rights Act, and keep minority and marginalized communities together.*

*Additionally, citizens can hardly tell where exactly we fall within these proposed districts because the Commission has not made clear, detailed versions of these maps available to the public. The process itself must be fair and transparent to ensure fair maps.*

*Thank you for your time and counting my voice in the process for fair district maps that actually represent the people.*

***Sincerely,***

***Zaiba Malik, M.D.***

# **Exhibit 32**

# Redistricting talks go into the last minute



Jim Provance, The Blade, Toledo, Ohio

September 15, 2021 · 4 min read



Sep. 15—COLUMBUS — Last-minute talks in hopes of getting bipartisan agreement on maps for state legislative districts continued into Wednesday's constitutional deadline for a vote.

The 5-2 Republican-majority Ohio Redistricting Commission recessed its meeting until 3 p.m. while Republicans met behind closed doors. A second GOP-drawn map offered Tuesday was a "non-starter," said one of the Democratic commissioners, House Minority Leader Emilia Sykes, of Akron.

Ms. Sykes said she had not been invited to participate in Wednesday's talks.

"I do think there are some things that (Republicans) need to work out amongst themselves for sure," she said. "We attempted late into yesterday evening to find a pathway forward, and ultimately we asked the Republicans to meet amongst themselves because that seemed to be the biggest sticking point."

The commission met briefly Wednesday morning before recessing. It consists of Gov. Mike DeWine, Secretary of State Frank LaRose, Auditor Keith Faber, Senate President Matt Huffman (R., Lima), and House Speaker Bob Cupp (R., Lima), all Republicans, and Ms. Sykes and her father, Sen. Vernon Sykes, both Democrats.

"We will be recessing so that we can continue some consultations that are going on, some work that is being done on the map...," Mr. Cupp said.

Under a constitutional amendment adopted by voters in 2015, the commission has until midnight to adopt a map that has the backing of both Democrats on the panel that would last the full 10 years until after the next U.S. Census in 2030. Failing that, the commission could pass a map along party lines that would last just four years before the process would have to start over again.

Republicans currently hold veto-proof majorities of 64-39 and 25-8 in the House and Senate, respectively. The only official proposal on the table that was submitted by Republicans less than a week ago would be expected to lock in GOP super-majorities for the next decade.

The two Democrats have talked with Mr. Faber and Mr. LaRose, who've expressed some interest in aspects of Democratic proposed maps.

"We left it yesterday with a request to Auditor Faber and Secretary LaRose to convene with the Republican members, come up with a consensus because we're not seeing consensus on their side, and then come to us and figure out how we can move forward," Ms. Sykes said.

That GOP proposal largely maintains the partisan makeup of northwest Ohio, keeping three Democratic-held House districts and one Senate seat centered on the city of Toledo while the rest of the largely suburban and rural region would lean or be reliably Republican.

It would move the district now held by Rep. Lisa Sobecki (D., Toledo) westward enough to shift her Point Place home into the eastern Lucas County district now held by Rep. Mike Sheehy (D., Oregon). Mr. Sheehy is term-limited, so Ms. Sobecki could run as the incumbent in that district if she chooses not to physically relocate.

Because of its population growth over the last decade, Wood County, currently a stand-alone House district, would split nearly down the middle the two districts currently held by Reps. Haraz Ghanbari (R., Perrysburg) and Derek Merrin (R., Monclova Township). A proposal from commission Democrats also would have split the county in half.

In addition to Lucas and Wood, the House proposal would divide Hancock, Defiance, and Wyandot counties between districts.

Allen County no longer has enough population to warrant a stand-alone House district, the one currently held by term-limited Speaker Bob Cupp (R., Lima). That district would pick up Auglaize County territory to meet its population target of roughly 120,000 under the GOP proposal.

The Senate map also sets up a potential Republican primary election showdown in 2024 in the revised 26th District between Sens. Bill Reineke (R., Tiffin) and Mark Romanchuk (R., Mansfield). The largely rural district would still hold Sandusky, Seneca, and all or part of three more counties now represented by Mr. Reineke but would also pick up Mr. Romanchuk's home county of Richland.

In addition to adjusting for population shifts over the last decade, the new constitutional rules require the commission to draw districts that are geographically compact, split fewer counties and other political subdivisions, and generally reflect the political preferences of the state as a whole.

First Published September 15, 2021, 12:01pm

# **Exhibit 33**



## OHIO REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

### **Minority Report**

September 15, 2021

Senator Vernon Sykes, Co-Chair

House Minority Leader Emilia Strong Sykes, Commissioner

The state legislative district plan adopted by the Republican members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission egregiously violates the anti-gerrymandering provisions of the Ohio Constitution. These anti-gerrymandering provisions were enshrined in the Ohio Constitution just six years ago for state legislative districts by the overwhelming majority of Ohio voters. Gerrymandering is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as “the practice of dividing or arranging a territorial unit into election districts in a way that gives one political party an unfair advantage in elections.” Simply put, gerrymandering is partisan unfairness. The Ohio Constitution requires partisan fairness.

Article XI of the Ohio Constitution is clear in its provisions that dictate the drawing of our state legislative maps. It requires that the maps respect the existing boundaries of counties, townships, and municipalities. It also requires that the maps reflect the statewide political preferences of Ohio voters over the previous decade of partisan statewide elections. Unfortunately, the maps adopted by the Commission’s Republican majority today do neither.

Voters never intended for Republicans to draw themselves another ten years of gerrymandered districts and give themselves another decade of unchecked power.

Article XI, Section 6 of the Ohio Constitution contains two new elements not met by the Republican drawn district maps. Part (A) and Part (B) of Section 6 are important guardrails, not aspirational goals, which ensure that the main purpose of the reform effort in 2015 is met by the Commission's majority. Districts must be drawn to meet the requirements of the Constitution – taking into account compactness and contiguousness – including the fairness concept demanded by voters that is enshrined and enforced in Subsections (A) and (B) of Section 6. Subsection (A) of Section 6 states that “No general assembly district plan shall be drawn primarily to favor or disfavor a political party.” In contrast, the maps adopted today go to absurd lengths to create a Republican monopoly on legislative power that they have not earned at the ballot box.

Subsection (B) of Section 6 also states that “the statewide proportion of districts whose voters, based on statewide state and federal partisan general election results during the last ten years, favor each political party shall correspond closely to the statewide preferences of the voters of Ohio.” The district maps adopted by Republicans today in no way reflect the statewide preferences of voters in Ohio and do not closely correspond to the statewide election results of the last ten years. Subsections (A) and (B) cannot be read separately. Subsection (B) is important because it creates the litmus test for what constitutes primarily favoring or disfavoring a political party. No reasonable person would interpret the maps adopted by the Commission today as reflecting the will of Ohioans and not primarily favoring one party over another, as required in Section 6, Subsections (A) and (B).

In Ohio, over the past decade, the Republican Party won 54% of the statewide partisan general election votes, while Democrats won 46%. See Appendix A. These calculations were

presented to the Commission in extensive witness testimony as well as by researchers at Ohio University (OU) as part of the contract between the Legislative Task Force on Redistricting and OU to produce the Ohio Common Unified Redistricting Database. The election results are not in dispute. They are also publicly available on the Ohio Secretary of State's website. One does not need to be as expert to know the statewide partisan election results. Hundreds of Ohioans were able to draw maps in the constitutionally appropriate timeframe.

Legislative maps would closely correspond with these statewide voter preferences. If they yielded close to 45 House districts that would likely be won by Democratic candidates, 54 House districts that would likely be won by Republican candidates, 15 Senate districts that would likely be won by Democratic candidates, and 18 Senate districts that would likely be won by Republican candidates. The Republicans on the Commission, in a naked attempt to maintain a gerrymandered, unearned supermajority, drew and adopted districts that would likely yield 34 Democratic House districts, 65 Republican House districts, 8 Democratic Senate districts, and 25 Republican Senate districts. The Senate district numbers in the map approved today are even worse than under the current maps approved in 2011, which were so egregiously gerrymandered that they inspired voters to go to the polls twice to put fairness and equity in our redistricting process via constitutional amendments.

In the interest of fairness, bipartisanship, and the realities of geography, demography, and politics, the Democratic members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission produced maps that followed the constitutional demands of proper district drawing, including Art. XI, Section 6 (A) and (B), which were ignored by Republicans. These three maps, respectively, produced 14 likely Democratic Senate seats and 44 likely Democratic House seats, 13 likely Democratic Senate seats and 42 likely Democratic House seats, and 13 likely Democratic Senate seats and 42 likely

Democratic House seats. These correspond closely to the ratio of proportionality that the Ohio Constitution prescribes in Art. XI, Section 6. The Democratic members of the Commission and their staff worked tirelessly to incorporate Republican feedback into the mapmaking process while also drawing maps that adhere to the requirements of the Ohio Constitution in Art. XI, Section 6. The Democratic members of the Commission produced three separate map plans that did not disproportionately favor either party, that did represent the will of voters demonstrated over the previous decade of statewide partisan elections, and met the criteria of limiting splits of communities.

Throughout the process, Republicans appeared to follow a playbook of delay and deflection. They used as much time as possible before deadlines, skipped deadlines, and then offered unconstitutional map plans and unacceptable ultimatums to Democratic members of the legislature and the Commission. Their actions included a last-minute attempt this spring to change the Constitution to give themselves control of the process; delaying the convening of the Commission until early August; dragging their feet on approving the Commission's rules; blaming the census data delay for not convening the Commission before August 6; purposely missing the September 1 constitutional deadline for releasing a plan, holding hearings, and adopting a plan; and feigning interest in a compromise before the September 15 deadline but only offering gerrymandered maps. See Appendix B. Republicans did not demonstrate good faith participation in the process. Democratic solutions went unheeded while the Republicans made only token changes to their maps that appeared designed to protect their incumbents. This culminated again in heavily gerrymandered maps, in their second offering, sent to Democratic Commission members and staff late on September 14, the night before the constitutional deadline.

Their latest maps would produce 9 likely Democratic Senate districts and a single, additional 50-50 toss-up Republican-leaning Senate district. The remaining 23 Senate districts were drawn clearly to favor the Republican Party. It would produce 32 likely Democratic House districts and 5 toss-up Democratic-leaning House seats. This plan, like the first plan put forward by Republican map drawers, does not reflect the statewide political preferences of Ohio voters because it creates a higher proportion of Republican districts than the proportion of votes they earn in Ohio.

The GOP-adopted map lays out an absurd description of how it allegedly meets the requirements of Section 6(B). The voters of Ohio do not favor Republicans in a range of 54% to 81%.

We, the two members of the minority party, could not in good conscience violate the voters' will as expressed by the redistricting reforms approved in 2015 and 2018, nor could we ignore the Ohio Constitution's clear language that legislative district maps must correspond closely to the statewide preferences of voters as measured by the statewide partisan general election results over the past ten years. The plan adopted by the majority violates that requirement. In fact, the Republican members did not demonstrate any attempt to meet the requirements. For these reasons, we are voting against the maps the majority of the Commission is choosing to adopt.



## APPENDIX B

Ohio House of Representatives  
Representative Emilia Sykes  
Minority Leader



Ohio Senate  
Senator Kenny Yuko  
Minority Leader

June 11, 2021

Governor Mike DeWine  
Vern Riffe Center  
77 S. High St, 30<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Governor DeWine,

We write to urge you to convene the Ohio Redistricting Commission and call its first meeting so that work can begin immediately to prepare for the drawing of fair districts for the next decade. Under Ohio Constitution, Article XI, Section 3(C), the Redistricting Commission must be convened by the Governor. As you know, the Redistricting Commission has the responsibility for determining boundaries of the 99 House of Representatives districts and the 33 Ohio Senate districts. The Commission also must plan for its possible role in the creation of congressional districts. This will set the foundation for our state's form of democratic government for the next 10 years.

The final round of census enumeration and demographic data will be delivered in mid-August and there is much preparation to do over the next two months. Legislative leaders will need to appoint members to the commission and name co-chairs. The commission must adopt rules, hire staff, create a budget, and plan and build a system that allows the public to submit district plans. All of this work, which requires time and significant deliberation, must take place before the Commission begins its task of drawing and adopting maps. We also must provide adequate information and notice to allow for full public participation in the process as required by the constitution.

So that we can begin the work of creating fair districts for our state, we ask you to convene the Redistricting Commission and set its first meeting as soon as possible. We do not want this important work to be conducted at the last minute behind closed doors. Thank you for your time and urgent attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Emilia Sykes in black ink.

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Emilia Sykes  
Minority Leader  
Ohio House of Representatives

Handwritten signature of Kenny Yuko in blue ink.

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Kenny Yuko  
Minority Leader  
Ohio Senate