

TESTIMONY OF:
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I'm very disappointed in the way the redistricting commission has conducted itself in the last year. In 2015 and 2018 Ohioans overwhelmingly voted for and supported a transparent, people-powered process to drawing fair maps. But to date, our state redistricting process has failed to live up to the promise and demands of our reform measure. Previous public hearings held around the state were held with very little advanced notice, mostly on weekdays, during business hours, and in-person, making them inaccessible to many people, especially for working families. The GOP-proposed state legislative maps, which were voted for on a partisan 5-2 basis, failed to uphold even the most basic tenets of a fair map. Instead they split communities of interest, diluted the political power of communities of color, and are not representative of the state as a whole. The Ohio Supreme Court also agrees with this assessment, based on their ruling this month.

There are many important issues Ohioans care about and can agree on and would like to address on a state level such as climate change, gun control reforms, abortion rights, voting rights, etc. We cannot currently do this with a highly partisan and gerrymandered state political system.

I'm a physician that works in the hospital setting admitting and taking care of Covid-19 patients daily. Unfortunately our community has received inaccurate information from our state leaders regarding public health measures that would help our community to battle Covid-19 pandemic, and this misinformation is repeatedly leading to overwhelmed hospitals and unnecessary deaths. In fact, our state leaders have actually holding back the scientists and public health professionals who are trying to do their jobs to keep us, our children, and our communities safe. This would be less likely to happen if we were able to fairly elect leaders that represent our interests. No matter who we are or where we live, we all deserve a fair shot at real political representation. We all deserve the power to vote politicians out of office when they don't serve us well.

Unfortunately, most Ohioans haven't had that power for the last decade, because of our gerrymandered districts. Across the last decade, Republicans won just 55% of the statewide vote, but walked away with supermajorities in both state legislative chambers. This is neither fair nor reasonable, and now the Ohio Supreme Court agrees with us. At the state legislative level, maps must include at least 44 Democratic House seats (out of 99 seats) and 15 Democratic Senate seats (out of 33 seats). We want a transparent process we can trust, where communities remain whole and where voters' representational power hasn't been diluted.

Thank you.