

PROPONENT/OPPONENT TESTIMONY OF:

Amina Barhumi

4985 Cemetery Rd. Hilliard, OH 43026

IN SUPPORT OF:

Constitutional State Legislative Maps

Ohio Redistricting Commission

[Columbus, OH, 1/21/22] — Co-Chair Cupp, Co-Chair Sykes, and members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission: my name is Amina Barhumi, and I am testifying on behalf of the Ohio Chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, known as CAIR-Ohio, and as a member of the Ohio Citizens' Redistricting Commission (OCRC).

CAIR is America's largest civil liberties and advocacy organization for American Muslims. At CAIR-Ohio, we've been working since May to fight for fair district maps here in Ohio. It is critical – as a community that so often experiences institutional discrimination, is so often either ignored or vilified by elected officials – that we have access to fair representation—that our votes are not diluted through gerrymandering.

The redistricting process is crucial to establishing **proportional representation** and ensuring that all Ohioans have a voice at the ballot box. This is why Ohioans overwhelmingly voted for reforms. And this is why, when the reforms were ignored and the concerns of voters – especially marginalized voters – were disregarded, CAIR-Ohio joined other plaintiffs in filing suit against the maps adopted in September.

The Ohio Supreme Court's ruling affirmed what your constituents have been saying for months. The ruling sends a clear signal: democracy demands that voters pick their leaders, not the other way around. With this redraw, the Ohio Redistricting Commission has another chance to do right by Ohioans and deliver us the fair maps that we deserve.

To reach representational fairness, Democrats should receive about 45% and Republicans will end up with about 55% of Ohio's Statehouse seats, reflecting the average statewide vote over the past decade. There should be no cracking or packing to favor political parties, especially around major metropolitan areas with substantial Muslim communities and communities of color such as Cincinnati, Columbus, Toledo, Cleveland, and Dayton.

While fair maps will be significantly different than the ones previously adopted, the good news is that you have what you need to get this done right. The Ohio Citizens' Redistricting Commission has submitted maps to this Commission that take into account the collective public input from minority groups, such as our Muslim community, from across Ohio. These maps meet all of the relevant constitutional requirements and, most importantly, reflect representational fairness. I urge you to also consider the hundreds of testimonials submitted directly to this Commission. You have the data, input, and now the Ohio Supreme Court verdict.

These maps shape our lives, laws, and communities. I've said it before and I will say it again: we need fair maps to make sure all of us, especially immigrant communities like mine and other communities of color, are fairly and equitably represented, no exceptions.