



Rev. Derrick Holmes

TESTIMONY OF:

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IN SUPPORT OF:

Maps proposed by the Ohio Citizens' Redistricting Commission
submitted to the Ohio Redistricting Commission

[Columbus, Ohio] Good afternoon Co-Chair Cupp, Co-Chair Sykes and members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission. I am Rev. Derrick Holmes, Faith Organizer of the Amos Project here in Columbus. I am a Columbus resident and have been for thirty years. I also pastor a church just south of the city in Circleville Ohio.

When I think of the condition of my community, the communities in which my congregants reside in, and many of the communities in this city and state (communities, by the way that are populated by poor people & persons of color), I can't help but think about the ways in which gerrymandering has crippled them.

The ways in which our communities have been inequitably districted cripples the ability of our neighborhoods to elevate their station. Unfair districting mutes the voices of our citizens, in that we do not have adequate representation to voice our needs. The absence of those political voices leads to an absence of resources. Limited resources lead to limited choices and limited choices point to poor ones being made.

Just because the way that these maps have been drawn have no affect on your community does not mean that it doesn't affect ours. Redistricting our neighborhoods in a more fair and equitable way, positions us to have the political power required to address the issues on our streets. Issues that have race and class at the center of them. Better communities begin with better maps. To have elected leadership support and condone this type of abuse is insidious. And another decade of maps that signify where prosperity starts and where poverty ends is intolerable.

We demand better service from our public servants. Children who end up with substandard schools demand better. Families who live in fear because they are overpoliced demand better. Black, Brown and

Poor people who deserve all of the same first class living conditions their counterparts have demand better. The God of Justice and Righteousness for all people demands better. Doing what is fair is not an act of favoritism. Rather, it is the radical act of just doing what is right. The first step towards making long term improvements in our communities is to change the way in which our communities are districted