



**Colleen Craig**

**TESTIMONY OF:**

Colleen Craig

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**IN SUPPORT OF:**

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

**[Columbus, Ohio]** Good morning, Co-Chair Cupp, Co-Chair Sykes and members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission. My name is Colleen Craig and I am a lifelong Ohio resident. I grew up in Youngstown, Ohio and moved to Columbus in 2013 to attend the Ohio State University where I studied public policy at the John Glenn College of Public Affairs.

Regardless of our skin color, zip code, or how much money we make, most people would agree that voters should pick our leaders, leaders should not get to pick their voters. All of us deserve a fair shot at real political representation and the power to vote politicians out of office when they don't serve us well. However, our gerrymandered maps have locked ordinary folks out of the democratic process in Ohio. By carving up our communities, you have stripped the people of our collective voice. For the past decade, Ohio has lived under some of the most gerrymandered maps in the country. Yet the Republican-proposed maps before us are even worse. The men who drew our current maps back in 2011 smothered our freedom to choose our leaders and the Republican-proposed maps before us today, if passed, would continue that legacy for another decade. This manipulation of our political maps is not just unfair, it's killing American democracy and it is shameful.

These maps violate both the Voting Rights Act and the Ohio Constitution. Firstly, the maps proposed by the GOP crack and pack Ohio's communities of color, diluting the voting power of Black and brown Ohioans and denying them adequate representation. The proposed maps also split apart communities

unnecessarily. For example, despite their proximity and similar interests, Warren and Youngstown are drawn into separate districts in the Senate and House maps.

Finally, maps that reflect how Ohioans actually vote should include at least 44 Democratic House seats and 15 Democratic Senate seats. The GOP map would give a whopping 66% of our Statehouse seats to their own party. That doesn't meet the requirement for fair maps. Meanwhile the maps produced by the Ohio Citizens' Redistricting Commission not only keep communities together but provide this representational fairness (and they met the September 1st deadline that this commission blew past with little regard).

Ohioans voted in overwhelming numbers -- twice-- for fair maps and yet the Republican members of this commission continue to support proposed maps that fail to attain the spirit of these reforms. The people of Ohio deserve better. Despite the major short-comings of this commission's official process that have precluded many parents and working people from participating, what gives me hope is what these public hearings and the large volume of testimony you have received makes clear; Ohioans know we have been cheated out of the fair representation we deserve and we will not stand for it any longer.

Thank you.