**TESTIMONY OF:**

**Crystal Lett**

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**Columbus, OH 43235**

**IN SUPPORT OF:**

**OCRC Maps**

**Ohio Redistricting Commission**

Columbus, OH

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I’m Crystal Lett, the Ohio Program Director of Red Wine & Blue – a group of thousands of suburban women. At Red Wine & Blue, we seek to bring new people, specifically suburban women, into the political space.

As a suburban mom with three young children, I can often be seen attending a little league game. While watching these games, we the parents bear witness as our kids learn how to play on a team, work together, agree to disagree, face an opponent, and play by the rules of the game – with sportsmanlike conduct. Sometimes I am still astounded by how much better our society would be if we followed the simple lessons we all learned as children in little league.

One of our primary goals at Red Wine & Blue is to build the team – to encourage women from around Ohio to engage on political issues, to volunteer, to support, and even to run for office themselves. But how do we bring people into this space and keep them engaged, if they know from day 1 that the game is rigged? Good politics depends on teams playing, at times against each other, but with profound respect for the rules and regulations that are what make the game worth playing.

Our current maps run completely contrary to fair play. Not only is that a direct insult to Ohioans who voted twice for constitutional amendments regarding more representative maps, but leaders in our state are now blatantly disregarding the constitution – the very constitution they swore to uphold and protect when they took their oath of office.

One of the best ways we can level the playing field is by ensuring Ohioans have fair maps. The average statewide vote split over the past decade has been about 46% Democratic and 54% Republican. We must stick to these proportions, as defined in the recent decision of the Ohio Supreme Court. Dividing the suburbs and diluting votes in the areas of our state that are growing and becoming more politically engaged is a grave mistake if democracy is going to thrive here. We MUST do better to restore people’s faith in democracy by guaranteeing that the system works for ALL of us.

When Ohioans have fair districts, we create the opportunity for more people to engage in the democratic process. Not only that, but we ensure that those who are ultimately chosen to do the

job are beholden to the people that put them there. *That* is what makes Ohio great, and *that* is worth playing for.