



Maki Somosot

TESTIMONY OF:

Maki B. Somosot
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IN SUPPORT OF:

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

[Cincinnati, OH] My name is Maki Somosot (pronouns: she/her) and I am the Communications and Narrative Director for the Ohio Organizing Collaborative. We are a statewide grassroots advocacy organization focused on building power for everyday Ohioans.

I am a recent transplant to Ohio. While my husband and I have lived and worked all over the country, we were drawn to Ohio because of its people. Over the last two years or so that we have lived here, we've grown to love the Cincinnati community: our friends, our neighbors, our coworkers, and pretty much everyone that we've met so far. Ohioans are some of the most welcoming, accepting, and true-hearted people that we have ever met.

Although the national narrative says otherwise, Ohio is **not** a red state. We are a **rigged** state. When we look at congressional districts like Steve Chabot's in Cincinnati, a city which is over 50% African-American, it's obvious that gerrymandering has cracked apart Cincinnati's Black community and severely diluted the power of their vote. This does not just apply to Cincinnati: it applies to other major metropolitan areas like Akron, Cleveland, and Toledo as well - all cities that have majority Black, brown and immigrant communities.

Gerrymandering impacts all of us. It is a deliberate political decision to disempower Black and brown

Ohioans and Ohioans of color who live in urban areas, which are often already segregated and under-resourced. Gerrymandering makes it even worse.

We need maps that fairly and equitably represent all Ohioans - regardless of race, neighborhood, or income. We need fair maps that keep our communities whole and intact - not ones that have been gerrymandered into oblivion to prevent equal representation.

Fair, representative maps reflect how Ohioans actually vote. That means our maps must include **at least 44 Democratic House seats** (out of 99 seats) and **15 Democratic Senate seats** (out of 33 seats).

To ensure fair representation for Black voters, our map should also have **15 minority representation districts** in the Ohio House and **6 minority representation districts** in the Ohio Senate.

We demand fair maps. We should heed the advice of regular Ohioans, who have already developed their own unity maps in direct response to the extreme partisan gerrymandering that Ohio has experienced for decades. We commend the fair, constitutional, and equally representative maps that the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission has developed. Please visit their website at www.ohredistrict.org to see these unity maps.

We need fair maps that work all of us, not just the privileged and wealthy few.

Thank you.