

Fair Districts Testimony

Friday, August 27, 2021

University of Akron

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you today through my representative, Amie Cajka. My name is Deborah Barber. I vote in the 75th Ohio House District in Kent, Ohio

The overarching issue that I believe needs to be addressed is the illegality of the gerrymandering of our districts and the suppression of the rights of voters to choose the best candidates to represent them.

In my county, 43.5% of voters voted Democratic in the last presidential election and 55% voted republican. Our legislators (house districts 75, 76 and senate district 18) are all republicans. In Ohio, 42% of registered voters are republican and 40% are Democrats. However, Democrats in Ohio are represented by (34+8) 42 legislators while republicans are represented by (64+25) 89. That translates to 32% Democratic legislators vs. 68% republicans statewide.

This essentially means that voters cannot choose their representatives based upon their merits, but they are chosen for us based upon gerrymandering, which often leads to election of the most extreme candidate who does not need to be accountable to the electorate.

The greater Kent community brings a wonderful diversity of residents, a wealth of cultural and educational opportunities, and we place value on human liberty, social justice, and our natural surroundings. We work to preserve the environment. There are many organizations that support our parks and trails, help keep our river clean, and emphasize using alternative sources of energy. We need our elected officials to support our values and goals.

The consequences of not repairing our gerrymandered districts is that voters will continue to not be represented, their voices will not be heard and our democracy will continue to be sidelined because of partisanship.

I beg you to let the people vote, not the salamander.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Deborah Barber, dbarber@kent.edu

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