

OHIO REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

TESTIMONY OF GARY GALE

AUGUST 27, 2021

My name is Gary Gale, I am a Stark County Democrat, and am appearing on behalf of the Stark County Democratic Party's leadership team.

I have come to present a map created in consultation with my Democratic Party County, Sam Ferruccio, and his leadership team. That team includes two former Stark Democratic County Party Chairs and one former member of the Democratic State Central Committee for State Senate District 29.

We are proposing a Congressional District that includes three counties which right now are all partially, but none of which are completely in the current 13th Congressional District -- Mahoning, Trumbull, and Stark Counties.

The map follows the footprint of the current 13th district in Trumbull and Mahoning counties; adds in the remainder of Mahoning County, adds in One Township in Trumbull County and then adds in the remainder of Stark County that wasn't already in the current 13th District for the past decade.

The Constitutional amendments that were passed in 2015 and 2018 put a premium on keeping counties whole. As a result the 13th Congressional District is almost certain not to have any of the 173 precincts it had in Summit County last election. Given the way the numbers work out and given its location as one of the counties bordering Summit County it is likely that all of Portage County is going to be in a District with all of Summit County, so those 75 precincts in the present 13th CD are also likely not to be in a District with the Valley.

Without those 248 precincts there are only a few things that can happen to Mahoning, Trumbull, and Stark Counties in the map drawing. The people drawing the lines could make all of Mahoning County part of Bill Johnson's Appalachian District in Southeast Ohio and put all of Trumbull

County into Dave Joyce's largely suburban District. They have partially done that already in the 2011 Congressional map that we have now; where 51 of Mahoning's 212 precincts are already in the 6th District and in Trumbull County where 11 Townships are already in the 14th Congressional District. Under that scenario Stark would most likely spend another decade in a primarily rural district with Bob Gibbs or someone like him; and essentially we would again have no effective representation.

The proposed Congressional District map that we are presenting includes all of Stark County, all of Mahoning County, and more than 90% of Trumbull County's voters. All of the Townships and Cities in Trumbull County that are in the current 13th Congressional District are included in the proposed new 13th Congressional District, with the exception of Fowler Township that was previously in the 14th Congressional District.

As the proposed 13th Congressional District is 57% in Mahoning and Trumbull, this is not an instance where we are asking them to join us, but rather we are asking you to help us join them.

The district has 786,164 residents, only 466 (0.0006%) fewer people than the ideal 786,630 population for a district after Ohio lost a seat in Congress following the 2020 census. It is 46.70% Democratic and 51.89% Republican. The proposed District is 82.94% White and 17.06% minority. It is what the experts call a competitive district.

The people in these 3 counties share a common heritage. All 3 of the counties have their largest ancestry from Germany with Irish, Italian and English ancestry being the next 3 groups in different orders in all of them.

We have similar educational backgrounds with between 89.4% and 91.6% of those over 25 being high school graduates, but only 18.7% to 24.2% having a Bachelor's degree or higher. In 2019 the national average was 29.9%

The per capita income in 2019 ranged for the 3 counties ranged from \$26,935 to \$29,945. Nationally the per capita income in past 12 months (in 2019 dollars), 2015-2019 was \$34,103.

Most significantly, while in recent decades Ohio overall has gained population and increased job opportunities, these three counties have suffered from a loss of both people and jobs. Just look at what GM's abandoning Lordstown has done. There are many similarities in job loss in all 3 Counties like the closing of the former Hoover Company, Ford Motors, Republic Steel and numerous other steel mills. Also, consider the outsourcing of jobs from major companies such as Timken Bearing and Diebold to name a few along with all the companies that were selling and servicing these plants. Thousands of good paying jobs that provided enough to raise families were lost for good. These 3 Counties deserve representation that understands and can deal with this major problem.

We think that it is highly important that given the wording in the enabling legislation for the redistricting that, "**The general assembly shall not unduly split governmental units, giving preference to keeping whole, in the order named, counties, then townships and municipal corporations.**," that as drawn, there are no split townships or municipalities in the proposed District.. The district includes all of the cities of Youngstown and Alliance, even if they each cross County lines.

We also want to stress that in these counties **70.7% of these counties' total populations live in townships, not municipalities.** This is in comparison to Summit where only 14.7% of the population is in townships and in Cuyahoga in 2010 where it was a miniscule 17,746 people living in Townships.

To people who live in larger counties this may be no big deal. However, to the 70.7% of us in these three counties who live in the townships it is a very big deal.

For example, township governmental units lost out in the last round of federal stimulus funding.

There are also differences in taxation that makes our local governments far more reliant on property taxes than municipalities.

Those of us who live in these three counties govern ourselves differently than the large counties north of us. In Stark, Mahoning, and Trumbull there is not one township of more than 52,540 people. We like to know our local elected officials instead of having to watch them on TV.

We have different concerns. We have issues involving fracking in Trumbull and Mahoning counties. There are no fracking sites in Cuyahoga and only four in Summit.

Following the murder of George Floyd there was civil unrest and looting in Cuyahoga; in Stark, Mahoning, and Trumbull there were only peaceful demonstrations.

Due to poor air quality vehicle emissions testing is required in Cuyahoga, Summit and five other counties near Cuyahoga, but that is not required in Stark, Mahoning, and Trumbull.

According to the Ohio Attorney General's Office this past January Mahoning and Trumbull were among the 10 counties that had the highest rate of opioid overdose deaths in the last quarter of 2020, Cuyahoga and Summit were not.

The people in Stark, Mahoning, and Trumbull statistically are essentially the same; and at the same time are dissimilar to the people in the larger counties to the North. We should be together in one district not divvied up like jigsaw puzzle pieces to meet population requirements of other areas. We don't belong in a district where the vote is substantially in the Cleveland suburbs or one that includes 7 rural counties and the rural parts of three others. The Federal OMB does not consider Trumbull, Mahoning or Stark counties to be rural.

Having a Congressman who understands and has lived his constituents' life experiences and understands the issues and concerns of the people in their districts is important.

In Stark County except for 21 of our 274 precincts we currently do not have that. Despite the fact that the U. S. OMB does not consider Stark a rural county, in 171 of our 274 precincts our Congressman is a farmer from

Holmes County who used to be President of the Ohio Farm Bureau; and is seeking to impeach President Biden over the eviction moratorium. He represents us in name only.

In the other 91 precincts, only three of which are in a city, we have the former pro football player from Rocky River (67 miles away) ,who is the privileged son of a multimillionaire owner of 7 companies in the steel industry. The fact that according to the SBA the Gonzalez family businesses took \$5,925,543 in PPP Stimulus money speaks volumes. Again, we are represented in name only.

In redistricting if you don't speak up for yourself, no one is going to do it for you and you will get butchered just like Stark County did 10 years ago.

We don't want to be jigsaw puzzle pieces to make up population for districts in the Cleveland suburbs; or in farm country; or in the poorest part of the State where the mines have played out. We don't share the same problems that those other areas have. .

Instead we want a Congressman who understands our lives and will actually represent the people of Stark, Mahoning, and Trumbull Counties in Congress.

Please give us that opportunity.

Thank you