

**Written Testimony Presented to the Ohio Redistricting Commission**  
**August 27, 2021 at the University of Akron**  
**By Sheryl McMillen, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio**

My name is Sheryl McMillen. I live in Cuyahoga Falls and vote in Ohio House District 36, Ohio Senate District 28 and U.S. Congressional District 13. I am testifying on why the Ohio 2021 redistricting process needs to be fair and transparent.

How districts are drawn affects every political and social issue, from the economy to healthcare to public education. State and congressional lawmakers make decisions that affect every aspect of our lives.

Purposefully breaking up communities takes away the community's ability to come together and advocate for important issues. For example, the town that I live in, Cuyahoga Falls is artificially broken up into 3 Ohio House districts extending way off in every direction. This means that no Representative is fully committed to listening to the concerns of my community. I care about issues like healthcare, the environment, and public schools. When politicians from either party manipulate voting maps so that they can remain in power, you end up seeing a legislature that represents special interests and politicians, instead of representing people.

In previous Ohio redistricting cycles, maps were introduced and passed before the public had any chance to comment on them. In order for our democracy to function, the public needs to have a voice in the process. Therefore, I am asking that you commit to holding a public hearing with public testimony on any maps before they are passed. And I urge you to give the public sufficient notice, the opportunity to review the maps, and a chance to submit maps of their own before the hearing.

Ohio voters overwhelmingly supported redistricting reforms in 2015 and in 2018. The reforms were approved in the range of 70 percent, and in all 88 counties. These reforms focus on bipartisan map-making, keeping communities together, public participation and more transparency. As someone who collected signatures for the Fair Districts ballot initiative in 2017-2018, and voted for the reforms in 2015 and 2018, I ask that you follow through on the voters' decisive mandate and keep the mapmaking process fair, transparent and politically impartial.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.