

Written Testimony – Kristin McNamara  
Ohio Redistricting Commission  
Public Input Meeting, Akron OH – August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Co-Chair Cupp and Co-Chair Sykes, members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission, thank you for allowing me to submit testimony asking for a transparent process and ultimately, fair state legislative and congressional maps.

I am a 20-year resident of Summit County, and I very much love the W. Akron community where I live. Work takes me around both Ohio and the US, and although I enjoy the travel, I am always glad to return. No doubt about it, W. Akron is home. Spending time in other places makes clear three things that reflect the importance of fair representation:

1. **Community is Strong.** We're all proud to be from somewhere. People I've just met will soon know I'm from the polymer capital as well as LeBron's hometown. City and state PR initiatives have helped built that feeling, but ultimately it is the shared experience that bonds us. We all remember when, we all know that person or place... and we all look out for each other. That doesn't mean we agree on everything, but it does mean that the perspectives that come from shared location shape our priorities and opinions.
2. **Maps Make a Place Relevant.** Whether rural Texas or Atlanta, the local weather map puts that location right in the center. It's why Youngstown news looks different than Columbus news. It's actually the same across the globe – a world map looks very different when Italy is at the center. Ultimately, we want to see ourselves in the middle and know that everything is orientated around where we are – to know where we are is a priority beyond just us.
3. **Ohioans Want the Same Things.** Yes, there is a lot of diversity across Ohio – socioeconomic, racial, geographical, religious, and political. Yet Ohioans always find common ground as hard workers who want a fair chance. A fair chance for good jobs, for a better future for the next generation, and for feeling like the needs of their community and neighbors is a priority.

Ohioans have overwhelmingly shown they want fairer districts with the passage of 2 redistricting reform constitutional amendments in 2015 and 2018. These issues received over 70% approval and received a majority of votes in every county. This is because voters above all want to feel like their community matters, that where they are from is relevant to others, and that above all, that they are represented fairly and are a priority to those elected in our Ohio and US government

Voters understand the importance of representation and relevance, and that the development of fair (and common sense) legislative maps supports that. I am asking you to act as Ohioans have asked, to undertake a transparent and non-partisan process to redraw legislative maps, and to prioritize community, relevance, and fair representation above all.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony and for your consideration.  
Kristin McNamara