**Ohio Redistricting Commission - 8-27-2021- Akron**

<https://www.ohiochannel.org/video/ohio-redistricting-commission-8-27-2021-akron>

**Gary Miller, University of Akron** [00:00:00] NSF is a high research university with one hundred and fifty year history in this part of Akron, in this part of Ohio. As a public university, of course, Mr. Chair. We're obligated to promote the democracy transparency in government and civil civil discourse and participation, and so we're very excited to have you here. I hope most of you know we have one of the most unique ways of doing that with the Ray C. Bliss Institute, a bipartisan research, teaching and experimental learning institute on campus that promotes understanding and government. And we also promote understanding in the judicial process through our school of law. And just to let you know this coming year will be hosting the, in the Brennan courtroom, the US Army Court of Criminal Appeals and the Supreme Court of Ohio in late October working on campus. We're very excited about that. Our students are very much involved- I just want to take a minute, Mr. Chair, to introduce Grace Kucinich and J.P. Garcher. These are our president and vice president of our Student Government Association over here, here and learning about the the way government works and they're getting it demonstrated today. Very pleased, Senator, that you're here and Leader Sykes. We're very, always a great pleasure to work with you. I want to also thank Representative Roemer for his attendance and Senator Schuring from down in Canton, who we hope to work with closely. And of course, Casey Weinstein, Representative Weinstein is back here, he's back in the back there somewhere. So we're very proud to have you on campus. Please let us know if you need anything and thank you all for your commitment to the state of Ohio and to this great democracy. Thank you.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [00:01:51] Thank you, Mr. President. Again, thank you for the university of Akron. In addition to Representative Casey Weinstein, who's in the back, who's already been recognized, we also have the Senate Minority Leader Kenny Yuko. And State Representative Tavia Galonski. If you would like to testify today before this panel, if you would please complete a witness slip. The witness slips are at the front door so that we could record your presentation. Thank you so much. Will the staff please call the roll?

**Staff** [00:02:41] Yes, sir. Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [00:02:43] Present.

**Staff** [00:02:44] Representative Bill Roemer, designee for Speaker Cupp.

**Representative Bill Roemer** [00:02:47] Here.

**Staff** [00:02:48] Matt Donahue, designee for Governor Mike DeWine.

**Matt Donahue** [00:02:51] Present.

**Staff** [00:02:52] Alex Bilchak, designee for Auditor Keith Faber.

**Alex Bilchak** [00:02:54] Here.

**Staff** [00:02:56] Jeanne Chadley, designee for secretary Frank LaRose.

**???** [00:02:59] Present.

**Staff** [00:03:00] Akron's very own, Leader Emilia Sykes.

**Representative Emilia Sykes** [00:03:02] Here.

**Staff** [00:03:03] And last but not least, Senator Kirk Schuring, designee for President Matt Huffman.

**Senator Kirk Schuring** [00:03:06] Here.

**Staff** [00:03:08] Thank you. That completes the roll.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [00:03:11] Quorum being present, we will proceed. As you know, in November 2015, Ohio voters approved a constitutional amendment which implemented a new General Assembly redistricting process and established the Ohio Redistricting Commission. The commission consists of the Governor, State Auditor, Secretary of State, and one commission- commissioner appointed by each of the legislative leaders of the two largest political parties of the Ohio House in the House Senate, four in total, one from each of the caucuses. The commission has the, has until September the 1st to pass a plan with the votes of at least two members affiliated with each majority party. If that fails, the commission has until September 15th to pass a plan by majority vote. Maps that are passed with the votes of two members affiliated with each majority party are valid for 10 years, and maps that pass with a simple majority are valid for two general assemblies, four year period. The redistricting process is done in conjunction with the United States Census, conducted by the Department of Commerce at the national level and for the 2020 Census, Ohio has 11,799,448 people, a 2.3 percent increase over 2010. That would indicate that for all of the 99 house districts, we would have 119,186 persons, and for each of the 33 Senate districts, we will have 357,559 people. As you know, redistricting is more than just portion. The numbers, certain number of people into a certain certain number of districts. It requires a lot of details and requirements. We've outlined those requirements on our website and they would include things like representational fairness, district population requirements and permissible population deviations. Rules on how to prioritize splits of political subdivisions and additional district standards regarding favoring or disfavor on political parties and compactness of districts. Again, that information is available on the website. Additionally, the board must comply with the Ohio Constitution and any applicable federal laws, including the Voting Rights Act. We have, the commission has a website at www.redistricting.ohio.gov, where you can get information about this process or about any future hearings. You can also submit your written testimony if you'd like or even submit a plan. The meeting is live streamed and will be recorded by the Ohio Channel. Since we have deadlines upon us, September 1st and September 15th for the state legislative districts, we'd like to ask you to limit your comments as much as possible to focus on the state legislative districts. However, if you have other comments, we're open to that as well. We've got a lot of people to testify today. It will be important, so we can be courteous, we ask that you limit your comments to four minutes. And we have a timekeeper, my aide Traevon Leak, senior aide, and he will notify you when you have one minute left and when your time is up. We won't be a hard cutoff, but please adhere to these requirements. The first witness we have- Are there any comments that any members would like to make at this? Thanks a lot. Betty Doney. Beth Doney? Please forgive me if I struggle with any names. It's not on purpose.

**Doney** [00:07:42] Beth Doney.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [00:07:43] Doney.

**Doney** [00:07:48] Definition- definition of leadership in the Merriam-Webster dictionary, "a person who has authority or influence." Leaders motivate. Leadership is doing the right thing.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [00:08:04] Thank you.

**Doney** [00:08:05] Leaders are confident. Leaders influence. Leaders innovate. Leaders get results. This commission has been tasked with drawing districts for the Ohio House and Senate. We cannot have this commission or the Ohio General Assembly create maps that are rigged for a particular candidate or partisan outcomes. Summit County has been divided into four districts, does that make sense? The answer is no. We need to be represented as one congressional district so that our particular interests and issues are represented and heard in Columbus. Surely, surely, more logical and less political maps can be created. We expect better maps to better represent our community. Constitutional amendments approved by voters in 2015 and 2018 indicate voter support for fair, transparent decisions that encourage a more competitive, encourage more competitive elections, by limiting gerrymandering. Again, a leader motivates, influences, is confident, innovates and does the right thing. This is your opportunity to be the true leaders of all Ohioans to create fair and equitable districts. We expect and deserve your best nonpartisan efforts. Thank you.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [00:09:59] Thank you. [Applause] Are there any questions? Thank you very much. Kelly Goshe.

**Goshe** [00:10:26] Members of the commission, and those sitting in for members of the commission, thank you for allowing me to speak today. My name is Kelly Goshe, and I reside in Ohio Senate District 24 and Ohio House District 6. I believe that most of what needs to be known about the effect of Ohio's gerrymandered districts can be summed up in a statement made by my own state senator. In a 2019 interview on WCPN, my senator was asked why he had not proposed a certain policy, which was supported by 80 to 90 percent of Ohioans. He said simply, "I didn't propose it because that policy is a nonstarter with the Legislature. They won't support it." Let me say that again. My state senator admitted loudly, publicly and perhaps inadvertently, that the Ohio Legislature would not vote on, debate, or even get a committee hearing, to legislation supported by 80 to 90 percent of Ohioans. We do not live in a representative democracy if our representatives don't have to represent us. Now, most witnesses today will ask that you create balanced districts in the interest of fairness so that all Ohioans are represented. That is democracy, and I support that wholeheartedly. But as my father loved to tell me growing up, life isn't fair. So I am not asking you to create balanced districts for the sake of fairness. But I am asking you to create balanced districts for the sake of our economy and for the sake of competition. The biotech and health care industries are hugely important for our state. But when Ohio makes national headlines for a bill that would force its citizens to re-implant ectopic pregnancies, which is a medical impossibility, the doctors and researchers that the health care and biotech industries need don't want to move here. When Ohio makes national headlines again, because an expert witness, invited by our legislators, testifies that vaccines make us magnetic, the scientists and engineers needed by our aerospace and defense industries don't want to move here. When H. B. 6 cripples investment in the development of renewable energies, companies that could bring thousands of jobs to our state don't want to move here. Ohio has struggled with the brain drain for as long as I can remember. And it's not hard to see why. So how do we fix it? How do we create a legislature that will represent its citizens and that puts forth legislation to propel our economy? Well, we could spend $50 million on another new marketing campaign. Or we could simply start by making districts that are balanced and competitive. Competition drives innovation, competition drives growth and adaptation. If our representatives actually have to compete for their positions, then we will get better representatives. [Applause] We will get better ideas. We will get better laws. And we will get a better Ohio. Thank you for your time. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [00:14:13] Are there any questions? Thank you very much. The next presenter is Julia Studd-Adair. And on deck, we would have Brian Saxe. Saxe.

**Studd-Adair** [00:14:42] Hello. Thank you to everyone here for taking the time to listen to me. My name is Julia Studd-Adair, and I'm about to start my sophomore year at Twinsburg High School. Although I'm only 15, I have a keen interest in the American political system. I started college early, so I've had the benefit of learning about the U.S. government, American politics, the role of the census, the drawing of district lines and gerrymandering. The current congressional district map is clearly gerrymandered. Specifically, one party has drawn the map in such a way that has asserted a supermajority in the state legislature and the House of Representatives. This is unethical. Over the last 10 years, a troubling pattern has emerged. In 2012, Republicans received 51 percent of votes that controlled 75 percent of U.S. House seats. In 2014, Republicans received 60 percent of votes and continued to control 75 percent of U.S. House seats. In 2016, Republicans earned 58 percent of votes and again controlled 75 percent of U.S. House seats. In 2018, Republicans only earned 52.3 Percent of votes, but still controlled 75 percent of U.S. House seats. And in 2020, Republicans earned only 56.5 Percent of votes, but still controlled 75 percent of U.S. House seats. To be clear, while Republicans have only obtained 52 to 60 percent of votes in the last 10 years, they control 75 percent of U.S. House districts. This is antithetical to the spirit of American democracy. A fundamental foundation of American democracy is free and fair elections. Elections in Ohio have been tainted because elected officials have chosen their voters instead of voters choosing their elected officials. This is corruption of the most sacred aspect of American democracy. We need to restore the integrity of our elections, and the first step of that is drawing fair district lines. I'm a proud member of Gen Z, and while I can't vote yet, many of us are paying significantly more attention, than policymakers may realize. It is easy to identify the manipulation that has taken place. Indeed, when looking at congressional districts, there is no other rational explanation for why the district maps look the way they do. Policymakers need to keep in mind that people like me can vote soon, and we're looking for elected officials who practice integrity. [Applause] In conclusion, I implore you to advocate for the drawing of congressional maps that fairly represent the residents of Ohio. Once again, thank you for listening to my concerns and have a nice day. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [00:17:09] The school [indecipherable]. [Applause] Thank you. Brian Saxe. Saxe. And Kristin McNamara on deck.

**Saxe** [00:17:34] So I'll keep it short, which is hard because I'm a minister, so I like to go on. But as a minister, I know what it's like to have a job where everyone has an opinion on how you do it, whether it's "Minister, I want to hear new hymns. Why aren't we getting the old hymns? I really like that sermon. That sermon was too political. It's not why you come to church. It was perfect, tt's exactly why I come to church." But at the end of my day, at the end of the day, my job isn't to keep people happy. It's to a higher responsibility. To bring the wisdom of the past into the present day, no matter how much that wisdom might clash with modern ideas, concepts or what people want to hear. Right now, you all are working for a higher purpose. And I ask you to take it seriously. In our democracy, there's no higher purpose than ensuring people are represented in government. I know you're being bombarded publicly, which is ironic because that's what I'm doing right now, and privately, with people trying to steer you one way or the other. I would ask you to take time to discern who is asking you to serve your higher purpose and who is merely out for personal gain. What does a map that serves your higher purpose look like? And most importantly, what does a map look like that you can be proud of? And that all of Ohio can be proud of. Thank you. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [00:19:25] Thank you. Kristin McNamara. OK. Kyle Herman. And on deck, Amy Chaika.

**Herman** [00:19:52] My name is Kyle Herman, and I'm from Stow, Ohio, just northeast of Akron. I'm so glad that Ohioans passed constitutional amendments for nonpartisan districts that don't break up cities and counties, so that we won't have these confusing maps in Summit County that make us feel detached from our representatives. I'm a former high school history and civics teacher, and it's hard to teach when our system of government doesn't work the way it's supposed to in the textbooks, or the way our founders intended, because of partisan gerrymandering. Young people like my former students are disillusioned and giving up on democracy because our system is rigged. I'm a poll worker and I can testify that votes in Ohio are counted accurately. But that doesn't change the fact that our elections are already rigged, by partisan districts. When [Applause] When, the outcome is predetermined by a pre-selected voter pool, the whole process loses integrity. I currently work on pro-democracy programs in Iraq and Lebanon for an international nonprofit, and I'm taking time off from my job to testify today. In my professional experience, I've seen how politicians in other countries learn from the United States to create their own rigged districts to maintain power. And this leads to further corruption and a lack of accountability. Over the past decade, democracy has been backsliding globally, including here in the United States. The Economist's Global Democracy Index downgraded the United States from a full democracy to a flawed democracy, and one of the major flaws is our gerrymandered districts. Similarly, Freedom House recently warned of a crisis of confidence in our system, with fifty five percent of Americans seeing democracy as weak. And one of the top concerns was gerrymandering of legislative districts to protect parties. Democracy professionals can't do our jobs providing assistance abroad if a rigged maps here in Ohio make us a global laughingstock for failing to uphold democracy at home. Our veterans served in places like Iraq and Afghanistan in order to give them a fighting chance at democracy, and we do them and ourselves a disservice by undermining democracy with rigged maps. [Applause] Rather than spread democracy abroad, we're putting ourselves at risk of losing democracy at home when so many votes are rendered meaningless that Ohioans, especially the next generation of young people, feel like it's pointless to participate. Fair maps in Ohio are essential to make us a shining city on a hill that other countries want to emulate, rather than as a blueprint for corruption or as an example of what not to do. Ending gerrymandering is the first step toward more competitive elections and more accurate representation to restore faith in our system. Earlier this month, a candidate won a primary in a gerrymandered district with only 37 percent of the vote. Even though 63 percent voted against him, Ohio doesn't require a majority to win, and we don't have runoffs, which leads along with gerrymandering to more extreme polarization. But Ohio could change that by following the example of Maine and Alaska, by switching to instant runoff elections or ranked choice voting. [Applause] With a ranked choice voting, all districts could become more competitive because more candidates can run when they don't have to worry about splitting votes or the spoiler effect. So when you're drawing the maps, please keep in mind that the political landscape can change over the next decade, so you might as well let voters actually determine the outcome instead of drawing lines with the intention of limiting choices in order to install one party or the other. I'm sure you're tired of hearing what gerrymandering is bad, but we wouldn't have to remind you if we could trust that you and your bosses would just do the right thing. [Applause] Just a couple of days ago, a party chair from one of Ohio's largest counties said the quiet part out loud, that his party should look out for its own members and rig the maps because voters value a spine. You know which voters really value a spine? The 70 percent of us who passed constitutional amendments to require fair, nonpartisan districts. [Applause] So please earn our trust and follow the letter and the spirit of the law. Thank you. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [00:24:29] Thank you. Amy Chaika. Chaika.

**Chaika** [00:24:36] Chaika, you got it. You got it, thank you.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [00:24:40] And Anastasia Birosh, on deck.

**Chaika** [00:24:46] Thank you to the commission members and alternates for being here, and thank you for this opportunity to speak. My name is Amy Chaika. I'm from Stow. I'm here today to present the statement of citizen and voter Deborah Barber of Kent, who is passionate that her testimony be part of the spoken record of these critical commission hearings. And she was unable to be here today. She says thank you for allowing me to speak today through my representative, Amy Chaika. 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 gerrymandering of our districts and the suppression of the rights of voters to choose the best candidates to represent them. In my county, which is Portage, 43.5 Percent of voters voted Democratic in the last presidential election and 55 percent voted Republican. Our legislators, House District 75, 76 and Senate District 18 are all Republicans, in Ohio, 42 percent of registered voters are Republican and 40 percent are Democrats. However, Democrats in Ohio are represented by 42 legislators, while Republicans are represented by 89. That translates to 32 percent Democratic legislators versus 68 percent Republicans statewide. This essentially means that voters cannot choose their representative based on their merits, but they are chosen for us based upon gerrymandering, which often leads to elections 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 energy sources, 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. Be bold and realize the voters constitutional mandate for fair districts in the great state of Ohio. Thank you.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [00:27:15] Thank you. Anastasia. Anastasia Birosh. And on deck, Rosanne Winter.

**Birosh** [00:27:35] To the Ohio Redistricting Commission members and co-chairs, Senator Vernon Sykes and Ohio House Speaker Robert Cupp, who I guess isn't here today, I want to say Senator Sykes, Representative Sykes, thank you, first, for showing up. Because to me, [Applause] to me, that means that you take the work of this commission, requested by 70 percent of voters, seriously. It tells me that the Governor and his cronies don't. So thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony, and verbal, to how Ohio Redistricting Commission. My name is Anastasia Brosh. My pronouns are ze, zir and zirs. And yes, we exist. I currently vote in Ohio House District 70, Ohio Senate District 22, and Ohio Congressional District 16, in Brunswick City. Brunswick is divided between two Ohio House districts, 69 and 70, and two congressional districts, 70 and 16, 7 rather, and 16. I think, just in my opinion, it's time that Brunswick be in one Ohio House district and one congressional district. We don't even have 40,000 people in the city, and yet it's meticulously divided. You know, I'll say, Representative Darrell Kick planted the seed for this testimony five years ago in 2016. I drove down to Ashland from Brunswick to attend a listening session that newly elected Representative Kick was happening at various locations throughout the district. I asked what his thoughts were on gerrymandering and how Ohio could avoid it going forward. Well, he punted the question to a more seasoned aide, and, sorry, more seasoned aide who assured me that Ohio's districts, as they were, where as fair as they could be. I then asked why Brunswick was in two Ohio House districts. The aide's answer centered primarily on population equity and very little else. I left that listening session feeling unheard and ignored. The feelings of being unheard and ignored are more significant now in 2021 than in 2016. I feel that Representative Kick doesn't take redistricting seriously. One case in point involves the Medina Gazette article dated August 4th, 2021. In that article, Representative Kick is quoted mentioning that redistricting was an important item on his agenda, saying they're going through the census data now. But sadly, the US Census Bureau didn't release the redistricting data until August 12th. Hmm. Leaves a question in my little mind. Nine days after he made the comment at the Medina County Commissioners meeting on August 3rd. I, along with many Ohioans, supported redistricting reforms in 2015 and again in 2018. Please, please, when this commission begins redistricting, I ask that the process is fair, transparent, nondiscriminatory and politically impartial. I also ask that Brunswick City be allocated to one Ohio House district and one congressional district. Finally, I have hope that this process will be open and bipartisan, as mandated in the Ohio Constitution. In closing, it gives me great pause when my representative is more beholden to his political party than the people he is supposed to represent. It also gives me pause when the Governor chooses to attend a Bengals, a Bengals photo op, rather than attending to the serious business of this commission. I fear that no one in power in this state cares about the fairness, transparency and bipartisan work continued to create districts that provide fair representation. Thank you.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [00:32:46] Thank you. Next, we have Rosanne Winter and Thomas Hack on deck.

**Winter** [00:32:59] Good morning. I am Dr. Rosanne Winter, and I'm the president of the League of Women Voters of the Akron area. The League of Women Voters of the Akron area has served the citizens of the Akron area and most of Summit County, in which Akron is located, for more than 80 years. We know the area's people, issues and assets well. The Akron area is anchored by the city of Akron population just under 200,000. The surrounding area relies on and shares numerous assets with the city, including medical, commercial, educational and recreational facilities. Our community is striving to thrive amidst a host of difficult to solve circumstances. Loss of corporate headquarters impacting support of community development. Rising costs due to aging infrastructure. The continuing struggle to address the effects of prescription drug and other addictions. Increasing gun violence and pandemic related educational setbacks for students, among others. While well understood by our city and county leaders, these issues need attention and support at the highest levels of government. The ability to address these needs adequately has been deluded by the current dissection of Summit County into four U.S. congressional districts. Think about it. Out of sixteen Ohio congressional districts we are in four. With more than 540 residents, all of Summit County could be encompassed in just one district. And with a population of just under 200,000 citizens, Akron City would certainly not need to be divided into more than one district. [Applause] However, not only is it divided, it is split by another district right down the middle. As a result of this division, the 11th Congressional District splits not only Summit County, but the city of Akron as well. Wandering from Euclid through Cleveland, East Cleveland, Bedford, south through Seven Hills, Broadview Heights in Richfield, finally entering the Akron area and the city of Akron, parts of the city are in two different districts. This strange configuration was by design, by packing black and other minority voters from Cleveland and Akron together in one district, the only minority majority district in Ohio, was formed. Voters are confused as to who their representative is. In the latest special election primary to fill the seat vacated by Marcia Fudge, many citizens citizens showed up at the polls, only to find that they were ineligible to vote. Why? Because they live in a district different from that of their neighbors across the street and different from where the ads were coming from, cleveland. Marcia Fudge's seat, like all 16 in Ohio U.S. congressional seats, was constructed to be a safe district. These safe seats were designed to yield a predictable outcome. Twelve Republican and four Democratic representatives. As a result, most Ohioans have been represented by the same congressional representative for the last nine plus years. And yet, for many in Summit County, it took this primary to learn in which district they live. These voters and their community are easily forgotten by those elected to represent them. This point is driven home by the fact that not one of the four representatives in Summit County lives in Summit County. Members [Applause] members of the redistricting committee, those of you who are actually here, what we are asking of you is to keep the Akron area whole. Give us a chance to elect one representative who thoroughly understands our people, issues and assets. Thank you. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [00:37:33] Thank you. Thomas Hack. Then on deck, Georgina Carson.

**Hack** [00:37:52] Members of the commission, my name is Tom Hack. I live in the 14th Congressional District and I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today. I'm going to read from an article which I believe illustrates really what's going on today and through the process and how things are laying out with regard to the redistricting. This is from August 13th and it is "Eric Holder refuses to join non-partisan gerrymandering reform effort." Former Attorney General Eric Holder has refused to work on a bi-partisan gerrymandering reform in Maryland, and Maryland is kind of the reverse of Ohio. It says "eight districts, seven of them Democrats, one of them is Republic, Republican. Even though he runs an advocacy group that calls for an end to bi-partisan redistricting. Maryland Republican Governor Larry Hogan appointed a bipartisan redistricting commission in January to address the state's bizarrely shaped congressional districts, which he called the most gerrymandered in the nation. Hogan's office confirmed to the Washington Free Beacon that the governors asked for Holder to coordinate on a bipartisan redistricting reform in recent years, but that the former attorney general declined to help. Holder's Chairman of the National Democratic Redistricting Committee, lobbying, a lobbying organization he founded with former President Barack Obama that opposes Republican redistricting efforts across the country. Holder, who in 2019 wrote a letter to the Wall Street Journal that he advocates for citizens or nonpartisan commissions to redraw electoral lines so neither party benefits has remained silent on on gerrymandering efforts from Democrat states such as Maryland, while he has criticized what's going on in Republican states. What's going on is that the Democrats understand better at least, than I perceive most Republicans, this is about power. And when they have the advantage, they want to, they want to ice people out who disagree with them. In our situation, we need to support the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of Ohio, and we need to support people who actually believe in those, in the founding that America is good, America's Judeo-Christian values, private property, the freedom of speech and things along those lines. It is our obligation to preserve those things as much as possible. Do not be naive, what the, what is, what they're trying to do is to take our electoral damage that we have achieved by because we have gotten more votes and also through redistricting, redistricting because of the migration of population from blue states to red states. They want us to give up our advantage. They want us to pretend that it's about fairness and in being right when in reality, if they had the opportunity, they would do exactly the opposite, as demonstrated by Attorney General Holder, not representing, not really being for redistricting in a fair way in Maryland, where he'd be there, if the shoe were on the other foot, there would be no question in my mind they would arrange things so that we would, that would minimize our representation. It is it critical, is absolutely critical that we maintain the foundations of America, that we recognize what's going on. And I am OK if we end up with two four year redistricting maps because of the process that we currently are in and that represents America, the Constitution and our way forward. Thank you very much for your time. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [00:41:35] Thank you. I want to make note of please allow, give common courtesy to all of the witnesses, even though they may not agree with your opinion. Everyone deserves an opportunity to express themselves. Thank you. [Applause] Georgina Carson. On deck, Tara Mosely-Samples.

**Carson** [00:42:08] Good morning, thank you for giving me the opportunity to talk. This opportunity for redistricting is a win that we, the people of Ohio, gave Republicans. Ohio and spoke and voted red. As President Obama once said to Republicans, actually in 2009, shortly after his inauguration, elections have consequences. In this case, the consequences are that Democrats have not earned more representation via the ballot box. What they want is disproportionate representation. This is not about equity and equal outcome. This is about fairness and equal opportunity. But most of the Democrats you're hearing from here don't want fairness, they want an advantage because they lost. If the roles were reversed, you can bet that Democrats would use the redistricting process to their full advantage, as Republicans should. The reality is that Ohio is much more red than it was in 2010. Ohio is now dominated by Republicans, and this needs to be reflected in the redistricting. If it isn't, you're telling your constituents that elections are meaningless and our votes don't matter. Caving to the mob isn't the right thing to do. I keep hearing people use the word democracy. We aren't a democracy. We're Republic, if we can keep it. May God bless you and give you the strength to do the right thing despite tremendous pressure not to. Thank you. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [00:43:37] Thank you. Councilwoman Tara Mosely-Samples. And on deck we have Julie Ward, Julie Ward.

**Mosely-Samples** [00:43:56] Good morning. What is the definition of fair? Well, the adverb is "without cheating or trying to achieve an unjust advantage." Similar words of fair: fair minded, open minded, honest, upright, honorable, trustworthy, impartial and unbiased. Good morning, I'm Councilwoman Tara Mosely-Samples, the proud councilwoman for Ward 5 for the City of Akron. I'm here today to speak to this body about fair redistricting in the state of Ohio, but more specifically as it relates to Summit county. Currently, Summit County has four congressional districts. For those who don't know, many in this room pobably already do, our breakdown: the 11th Congressional District is currently vacant with no current representation at all. The 11th Congressional District represents portions of Cuyahoga County and Summit County. The 13th Congressional District, who is represented by our congressman, Tim Ryan, represents portions of Mahoning, Portage, Stark, Trumble and Summit County. The 14th Congressional District, Representative Dave Joyce, represents portions of Cuyahog County, Portage, Trumble and Summit County. Do you see where I'm going? 16th Congressional District, represented by Anthony Gonzalez, represents portions of Cuyahoga, Medina, Stark and Summit County. Why is that? Howis that fair to the residents who live in these respective counties? Let me give you a brief example of how we here in Summit County have been affected by gerrymandering and why fair redistricting in Summit County is crucial. August 3rd, special election for the 11th Congressional District to fill the vacancy of now HUD Secretary Fudge. Not only is Summit County part of a district that runs through Akron, depending on what Ward, or what street you live on, it covers hairline portions of the Bath, Bath Township, Richfield, Richfield Township. Again, depending on where you live, literally, there are residents of Summit County who live homes or even streets in or out the district. True story. Ward 5, Precinct J. Depending on what part of the precinct you reside in, determines who your congressperson is. Example, If you live on the 700 block of Beardsley, you are in the 11th Congressional District. If you live on the 1,000 block of Kling Street, you are in the 13th Congressional District. These streets are 0.9 miles, less than a three minute drive from one another. Again, they are both in Ward 5, Precinct J. Further parts of 6, F are going to the 11th Congressional District. Out of 100 eligible voters for the special election, zero people showed up in that precinct to vote. Why is that? Because they didn't even though they were in the district. Summit County deserves fair and equitable representation. Summit County deserves someone who knows the community, someone has been here putting in the work. Someone who is accessible and available to the residents in Summit County. I would like to close by saying the numbers support us having fair and equitable representation of our own, fair and equitable representation decided by the people, by the people, not by whichever party is in control. Thank you. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [00:47:55] Julie Ward. And on deck, Gary Gale.

**Ward** [00:48:01] Thank you for allowing everybody to speak today. I will say before I start, I'm very new at this. I'm not very eloquent, so please excuse my lack of, well, just my lack in doing this. One question I would like answered, and this just may be my lack of being able to find out information. Is how long has the legacy format that was used or is being used for these redistricting meetings? How long? How old is that information? Because we're obviously not using up to date information because it's not available yet. So nobody has asked how old that is, how old the information is. Just something that I think might be nice to know. Something else that I think is important is equal outcome makes a voting process null and void because it has who already decided what the outcome should be before it starts. Equal opportunity to vote allows the people to have a choice. So although people don't often define the difference, we need to make sure that people understand the difference between equal outcome and equal opportunity. In many situations, the differentiation is never made. The Constitution of the United States is an incredible document. You don't know what you have. I didn't grow up in this sort of country, the same thing for, the Constitution for Ohio is an incredible document and should be adhered to by everybody in a position of power. I will quote again, as Miss Carson did, that President Obama said elections have consequences. So, the fact that that works for some people who are in power, but may not work when somebody else is in power, is concerning to me. It is about power. It shouldn't be about power, it should be about the will of the people and their ability to vote. You are lucky to have your votes. You are lucky to represent the people you represent. My husband has given up making phone calls over things that concern him in Ohio because often when he calls our representatives, they just say, no, that's not what we're doing, we're not interested. He's given up calling. Please represent the people. And remember that the Constitution is important. If getting a better Ohio just means making ways for the Democratic Party to speak louder and yell louder than it's not right. If getting a better Ohio means the same for the other side, that's not right. The one thing I will say is that these hearings have been ridiculous. They've all being held on college campuses. What sort of people do you find on college campuses? None of them has been held in community centers. None of them have been held in career centers. None of them have been held in a situation or an environment where the audience is not predominantly Democrat. Please don't forget the giftings that you have here in America. They are wonderful and you're losing your Democratic Republic. You don't have a democracy. You have a democratic republic. But you're losing it. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [00:52:52] Thank you. Gary Gale. And Sarah Badawi on deck. Can you set it toward that screen over there? Yes. We appreciate it.

**Audience** [00:53:38] Can you tell him to speak into the mic?

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [00:53:40] Can you speak into the microphone, please?

**Gale** [00:53:47] Chairman Sykes, members of the commission, three of which I've met before, I'm going to make some comments, I may be doing something relatively historic today. I'm representing the Democratic Party in Stark County and we have a map that is majority Republican because we believe that communities, not parties, are what you determine what you do. In 2011, congressional redistricting, Stark County was butchered. We were put into three separate pieces. We were actually, on a per capita basis, more butchered than some of us. None of this would have happened, had Senator Schuring won in 2008. We would still all be together. And for that, we are sorry. Right now, Sixty percent of our district is the district where it's majority farm country. Thirty percent of our county is in a district that goes all the way up to Lake Erie. It has Mr. Gonzales. You only, the remaining five or six percent is in a district with people who are like us. We believe they should be rectified by appointing Stark County into a congressional district with Mahoning and Trumbull, where we share a common ancestry, common life experiences, common economic status, and most importantly, common problems. In these three counties, the college education rate for those over 25 years in 2019 figures was only 18.7 percent to 22.2 percent, whereas the national average was 29.9 Percent. Also in 2019, while the national per capita income was $35,977, the per capita income in these counties ranged from $26,935 to $29,945. While in recent decades, Ohio overall has gained population and increased job opportunities, that is not what's been happening in these counties. I think about what happened is Lordstown and Hoover and Ford Motors and Republic Steele and numerous other companies in these three Counties. That does not include the outsourcing of jobs for local companies such as Timken Bearings and in DBO. So we have places now where we have fewer residents making less money, and Kirk, you can maybe explain this to them because you live it every day. These three counties deserve representation, that understands and can deal with our problems. And the hypothetical district that we've drawn, it includes all of Stark, all of Mahoning, and more than 90 percent of Trumbull County. If we were to attribute all of Trumbull County, we would have been eight, eight or nine thousand or with a maximum limit for an ideal district. This district has 786,640- 786,164 residents based on the 2020 census. So it's only 466 fewer than the ideal. All of these counties are contiguous. We did not split a single township or a single municipality. We had, we strictly adhered to what's in Senate Joint Resolution 5. Unlike most of the maps I saw in your website, it's a competitive district. The district is 46.7 percent district democratic and 41.89 percent Republican. Either party can win in that district if they run a good candidate and a good campaign. We would ask that you give careful consideration to putting these three counties, which have joint ancestry, joint economics, join education, together and we'll have someone who undersrands our problems. Thank you very much. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [00:58:16] Thank you. Sara Badawi, and Cazzell M. Smith on deck.

**Badawi** [00:58:33] Good morning. My name is Sara Daboll Badawi. I live in Akron and I vote in the 34th Ohio House district and Ohio's Senate District 28, so I'm especially glad to see my representatives, Minority Leader Emilia Sykes and Senator Vernon Sykes here today. My representative in the U.S. House for Ohio's 13th Congressional District is Congressman Tim Ryan. Though I live and vote in overwhelmingly Democratic Akron today, I graduated from high school in overwhelmingly Republican Findlay in Hancock County, so I know that the Buckeye State truly contains multitudes, and fair redistricting is essential for making sure all those voices are truly heard. I'm here today as a voter, but especially as an educator. I taught middle and high school history, civics and government for 15 years in the United States and overseas. Now I work with students and teachers across the country in my job with a national, nonpartisan civic education nonprofit. Before becoming a teacher, I worked as an organizer and policy advocate in Washington, D.C., challenging U.S. foreign policy to better protect human rights and sustainable development. All of that to say I have spent my entire professional life actively believing in, engaging with, teaching about, and encouraging others to participate in democracy in the United States. Today, I want to focus on addressing how partisan redistricting, or gerrymandering, by any political party, undermines my work and any teacher's work with and for our students. A few days ago, I was working with colleagues on revising a lesson plan by our organization, to be shared with teachers nationwide, that give students the opportunity to analyze public policy using a case study. They're asked to examine the goal of the policy, consider its opponents and supporters, evaluate its advantages, spot its disadvantages and evaluate whether or not it's likely to be effective. It's a really smart lesson that stretches kids critical thinking in meaningful ways. But as I reviewed some of its introductory language with these hearings on my mind, the message of the lesson felt problematic at best and disingenuous at worst. Here's what it says, "Government policies can profoundly affect our nation and your life. In a democracy, you have a say in government policies and proposed policies. It's important that you take a critical look at them." I think it's safe to say that a voter from any party can agree with the gist of that introduction. And we know that voters across party lines in Ohio have repeatedly called on our elected officials to make that statement less aspirational than it is today. Ohio voters overwhelmingly supported redistricting reforms in 2015 and again in 2018. Both reform efforts won in all 88 Ohio counties and by more than 70 percent of the vote. Anything that passes with that kind of majority in both Hancock County and Summit County is nothing short of an unequivocal call and a resounding, powerful directive to this commission. [Applause] That might be the only thing that many Ohioans agree on besides beat Michigan. But what about the part of the lesson that says in a democracy you have a say in government policies and proposed policies? In the context of eye-popping partisan gerrymandering in Ohio, that claim is a myth for millions of people in this state. For us educators who want our students to be able to believe and participate in the promise of democracy, unfairly drawn districts make liars of us. Because no matter what the policy issue is, whether it's vaccination mandates, school funding, talking about racism, protecting the right to vote or protest, grappling with the fallout of a public utility bribery scandal, dealing with the opioid crisis or safeguarding the waters of Lake Erie, in a state so marked by partisan gerrymandering, only very, very few people actually have a say. [Applause] I'm asking you to follow through on the mandate you have been given by Ohioans of all political stripes, so that educators like me can talk to our students about participatory democracy with a straight face and a clear conscience. This goes for this commission, and I would send the same message to the Legislature as they draw Ohio's U.S. congressional districts. It's an often repeated truism in conversations about partisan redistricting, that in a democracy, voters are supposed to choose their representatives, representatives are not supposed to choose their voters. Voters in Ohio know this, and I'm asking you please to follow through on their calls to you. Keep redistricting fair and transparent, nondiscriminatory and politically impartial. Let all of our voices be heard in hearings like this one. Please ensure those voices are included in the process. Fulfill the promise of the redistricting reforms placed in the Ohio Constitution. On behalf of me, all my students over the years, and kids and teachers in Ohio classrooms today, thank you for providing the opportunity to address you today. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [01:03:46] Cazzell Smith. And Joseph Blubaugh on deck.

**Smith** [01:03:54] Thanks to allowing the public a chance to weigh in on the process of redistricting. It is important to hear from experts as well as citizens. We truly want transparent map making, a transparent map making process. We know that drawing redistricting maps must deal with the challenge of being in compliance with the Voting Rights Act and the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment, which prohibits states from drawing district lines in a way that dilutes the voting power of minority groups or powerbrokers pass redistricting reform to get rid of gerrymandering. The resounding cry is we won't accept gerrymandered maps. The maps that will be drawn should reflect the spirit of redistricting reforms in two thousand, in 2015 and 2018. Ohio deserves fair maps that keep communities together. In conclusion, just want to remind everyone that redistricting reform received over 70 percent of the vote statewide and passed in all 88 counties. The people have spoken. We want our voices heard. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [01:05:04] Thank you. Joseph Blubaugh, and on deck, Michael Blinkhorn.

**Blubaugh** [01:05:15] Thank you. And I know my last name difficult to pronounce, you pronounce it correctly. Thank you very much. My name is Joseph Blubaugh. I live in North Canton. I live in Senator Schuring's District and I also lived in his House district when he was in the House. I'm here just to ask you basically to do what you've been constitutionally told to do by the voters in 2015 and 2018. As other people have mentioned, you know, a vast majority of Ohio voters want redistricting. And I'm just asking, want fair redistricting, and I'm asking you to follow through with their desires. You know, my calculations, although they're not scientific, I come up with right now Ohio's about 52 percent Republican and 46 percent Democrat. And, but the State House is 71 to 29, so that's like a 20 percent variation from what Ohio is. And our congressional districts are even worse. So I'm just asking you to challenge yourselves to make districts that will, as closely as possible, follow the population of Ohio. Don't challenge yourselves to try to skirt the rules and make, you know, negotiate, you know, different ways to to continue gerrymandering. Challenge yourself to, after the elections next year, they will, the State House and our congressional district representatives will be as close as possible to what the population is. And if you do that, you will have done your job well and you will have, you know, done what the voters asked you to do in 2015 and 2018. And you will make Ohio a model in the country for listening to the voters. Thank you. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [01:07:11] Thank you. Michael Blinkhorn. And Jessica Epstein on deck.

**Blinkhorn** [01:07:34] Good morning, and I thank you for this opportunity to speak before the commission. I wanted to say that the lovely lady with the English or British accent sort of stole my thunder with her comments. My name's Mike Blinkhorn. I'm a Summit County resident, Copley Township. Been here all my life. U.S. Navy veteran and I've retired having worked 42 years for the Akron public schools. After hearing all, all the talk this morning of gerrymandering and such, I decided to get up and throw my two cents in. One minute here. I was going to talk about the, where these meetings have been held, at the universities. I feel that there could have been a more neutral place for you to hold these. But such is life. Life isn't fair. I'd like to urge the committee to support, and it's my understanding that a redistricting plan or map has not yet been brought up, correct me if I'm wrong, but to support the current Ohio legislatures, whatever they decide to bring forth for adoption. Ohio is a majority Republican state. Voters in the state elected state Republican House for the Governor, Secretary of State, Supreme Court. Majority of the county local government is a clear majority, with county commissioners being Republican and even down to the local level with mayors and local courts, majority of Ohio is conservative. I feel it is being disingenuous, the talk of gerrymandering, when in fact it's just that Ohio has a majority Republican state. As one person quoted earlier, if it was a Democratic state with Democratic leaders, I really feel that most of the people wouldn't be here because their side's in control. That's just a fact of politics, you know? You know, and they took my thunder here, too, but it's been said by a great politician, once uttered, elections have consequences. And right now, Ohioans have spoken in a more conservative tone. And I just hope you take that into consideration with your deliberations on redistricting Ohio. We've lost his seat, so that makes it even harder for you guys. You got a tough job and you can't make everybody happy. So I thank you for your time.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [01:11:28] Thank you very much. Appreciate it. [Applause] Jessica Epstein. And Karen Leith on deck.

**Epstein** [01:11:52] Good morning. My name is Jessica Epstein. I am a constituent of Tallmadge, which is part of Ohio House District 36 and Senate District 28. I was raised in Green and I have lived in the 330 all my life. I am here today out of privilege because my career as an I.T. professional for an affordable housing developer has allowed me to be here on such short notice. I also intended on bringing my young daughter today with me so that she could have a chance to be a part of this process. I wanted her to see her mom engage in a democratic process that will impact her school and her community for the rest of her childhood. But without a vaccination available to her yet bringing her to a crowded room didn't feel like a safe choice. And unfortunately, there's no virtual testimony option for her to participate today. I'd like to start by telling a story about an experience my family had looking for affordable housing and relocating my grandmother back from Florida to Ohio. My family quickly learned that someone on a fixed income making 30 percent of the area's median income is going to have a very difficult time finding affordable housing. Waitlists to get into LIHTC communities like the kind my company provides can be years long and tax credits available for this housing is limited. At the same time, we were desperately trying to find a place that is affordable for my grandmother to live, Senate President Matt Huffman was inserting components into the budget bill that would significantly increase property tax valuations for subsidized housing. Tax valuations are needed to ensure housing is affordable for people like my grandmother. In a discussion with my mom about this through tears, she's asking me, "What am I supposed to do?" Where is my mom supposed to live? I told her call your representatives, your House representative, your state representative. I've told her this before. And her answer is always the same. "Year, right, what's that going to do? They're not going to listen to me." My mom is a lifelong Republican who lives in Green. Her Ohio House district representative is a Republican whose hometown is Green. If she doesn't feel represented and she hasn't for years, who does? No one. Because when we have gerrymandered districts, we don't have checks and balances. Our voting power is diluted and we are left with unaccountable politicians running in uncompetitive elections who freely enact laws that don't serve all Ohioans. Now is the chance to draw new maps, fair maps, that will increase voter turnout, encourage bipartisanship and better ideas, maps that show we can be a true democracy that represent the will of Ohio people. Senator Sykes, you said in a hearing earlier this week that it is the commission's intention to draw fair maps. But intention is not action and so far we've seen little action. Action should have been taken months ago to convene these hearings, convene this commission and host these hearings at times and locations that are accessible to working people. Front line workers. [Applause] Front line workers like my husband, who was an educator, is unable to be here today, deserve to be represented in these hearings. They deserve inclusive access to the ballot box and they deserve to be represented in our districts. Every person that has shown up at these hearings is taking action to ensure maps are drawn that represent our communities. Some members of this commission could not be bothered to show up this week. Members and substitutes have asked speakers few to no questions. The lack of engagement in this process is disheartening and unacceptable. I took action today because I am taking this redistricting process seriously, and my question to the commission is, will you please take this seriously and draw fair maps? Thank you. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [01:17:14] Thank you. Karen Leith.

**Leith** [01:17:16] I think she left her mask, you might want to come get that.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [01:17:22] The previous speaker. I think you left your mask. And Angie Aurent is up on deck.

**Leith** [01:17:43] Good morning, and thank you for this opportunity. To the members and their substitutes of the redistricting commission, I am Dr. Karen Leith. I reside in House District 37 and Senate District 27. I am a Hudson resident. My comments are based on two broad experiences. First, I have been a League of Women Voters member for 41 years. I have been part of the campaigns to put the issue of drawing maps on the ballot and even locally cheering our last effort in 2018. It's been an important part of my membership of the League of Women Voters. Currently, I work on advocacy, especially issues that allow every voice to be heard and respected. Second, I am a retiree from the Catholic Mission of Summit County, one of the five social justice offices of the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland. I spent 30 years affiliated with the Catholic Commission, the last seven years as executive director, bringing the most vulnerable voices in Summit County to the table. Our mission was making sure that all voices were heard and respected. Both of these organizations operate totally in a nonpartisan venue, so I'm on those two experiences, these are my observations and comments. As a resident of House District 37, I know the benefits of a fair and compact district based on the importance of issues at the time. Our district keeps flipping back and forth between Republicans and the Democrats. As a result, over the years, our representatives and our candidates have been very responsive to the people of the district. Basically, anytime we've called for dialog, they have been there. We don't always agree and you can look at our history that there isn't always going to be agreement. But we do come away with a better understanding of the issues and what's happening, why people are saying what they are and why our representative is voting the way he or she does. I want fair districts because I want every single Ohioan to have that exact same experience. [Applause' That's what it means to be in a representative Democratic Republic. Now with Senate District 27. My response is the same; we are grouped with a rural section of Wayne County instead of our county seat, which is Akron. We have a council form of government in a unified park system. We belong together, not separate. We shouldn't be pulled out of Summit County. And having worked with and for people of Summit County, I know the importance of keeping communities together. As someone who has worked over the years to help people find their voice, I too, am very disappointed in this commission, in the process that's been used. We have been calling since April for these hearings to start and this was really important [Applause] in terms of making sure every voice has been heard. You had not allowed for working people; I know a lot of professionals who are not here, I know a lot of hourly workers who can't jeopardize their jobs and be here. And not everyone, and thank you to the University of Akron for free parking. [Applause] That not everyone has discretionary income to even come to a hearing and pay parking. You know, if all representation truly understood the people of Ohio, these hearings would have been very, done very differently and at many times. So I hope this commission takes seriously the fact that over 70 percent of the people in 88 counties voted for a new process, and I hope this commission starts representing those voices. Thank you. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [01:22:45] Thank you. Angie Aurent. And Mary Kenley on deck.

**Aurent** [01:22:58] That was close. My name is Angie Aurent, and thank you for allowing me to speak to you. I vote in David Joyce's district, in Hudson, Ohio, and I'm represented by Kristina Roegner. Is Kristina here? Sad. I have lived in Ohio for over 50 years and have watched as politics have become more divisive, more disrespectful and especially more partisan. Sadly, I and many of my friends and family feel more and more disgusted by our politicians and are outraged by the corruption, lies and lack of transparency. This effectively means that it is up to you, you that the committee to restore our faith in democracy. You can do this by please, please, simply just doing your job. This means listening to your voters, the same people who put you in office. These voters, in all 88 counties of Ohio, voted in favor of Issue 1, fair districting, three years ago. 75 percent of the voters, a huge majority, voted for fair districting. You need to listen to their voice and their vote. This country, this state needs to trust their elected officials. To earn that trust, you need to be far more transparent. Please do not hide in closed meeting rooms. Please don't drag your feet. Please listen to the people that you voted, that voted you into office. And please don't just bow down to your party's interest. As Americans, we are so tired of partisanship. Research shows that both Democrats and Republicans in office spoke more often in line with their party's goals than what their own constituents want. This is a slap in the face of those who voted for you. Show your constituents that you care about their opinion and their desire to restore fair voting in Ohio. You can do this by getting to work, even pulling all nighters if you have to. We are counting on you to do the right thing. Please do your job. Thank you for your time and consideration. [Applause].

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [01:25:42] Thank you.

**Aurent** [01:25:47] I would also like to ask the people in this room who are not wearing their masks to put their masks on. [Applause] If the Republicans had gotten behind vaccines and masking this COVID 19 would be gone. Thank you. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [01:26:12] Mary Kenley. And Richard Beck on deck.

**Kenley** [01:26:24] Good morning, my name is Mary Kenley. I appreciate the opportunity to speak. Just briefly, speaking of fair. First of all, why are all these meetings only at colleges and universites where most of the people that are there are Democrats? How was that decision made? I'm just throwing that question out. Secondly, Ohio is considered a Republican state, yet Ohio voted for Obama in 2008 and 2012. How would you explain that? Again, that, just addressing the fact of fairness. So how would we explain that? And that's, and I appreciate the opportunity to say those two things, and that's all I have to say. Thank you.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [01:27:25] Thank you. Richard Beck. Then Casey Boyd-Swan on deck.

**Beck** [01:27:37] Hi, I'm Dick Beck, and I'm pleased to be here. Kirk, I've met you before in a rotary meeting and I appreciate your being on this commission. Bob Cupp, I've seen you and I appreciate you being on this commission because of what you've tried to do with public schools and all that. And I do think that it's nice to have Frank LaRose represented too. I'm now a Democrat. When Ohio was gerrymandered Democratic, I was a Republican. So I really am a retired United Church of Christ pastor. And I've always been, I've been in Ohio much of my life. I've usually been happy to be in Ohio, and I still think from the point of view of the environment that it's good to live in Ohio right near the lake. But I'm embarrassed right now to be a citizen of Ohio because of the gerrymandering that's going on in the ways in which it's rigged. [Applause] And I'm embarrassed as a pastor, too, for that. That's just, I imagine that you were all embarrassed sometimes to be in your political parties. I know you have a very difficult job. I'm trying to figure out how it works for you, especially you Republicans. Do you get a map that's given to you by those powers that be that are like AlEC and the legislative thing and just give you what you are almost required to pass? Or do you, are you really allowed to change it? I don't know. But I'm hoping that that you will work at it. I'm sure, largely because I chair the Portage Trail Group at the Sierra Club, which is an environmental group which cares about the future of the planet. I have five grandsons, ten, eight, six, four, two and one on the way. And I'm concerned about the future of the planet, and I do think that gerrymandering has really hurt, in Ohio, the environmental issues. So I'm hoping that we can get some representation of people who care. Speaking of all of that, I know that the Republicans used to be the party of conservation, and now they're opposed to it, and I don't understand that completely. So it's very disappointing to me, and I know that Democrats don't always support the environment, either. Enough. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [01:30:16] Casey Boyd-Swan. And Deborah Shankland on deck.

**Boyd-Swan** [01:30:35] Thanks so much for allowing all of us to speak here to you today. I'm going to keep it a little long because I'm a professor, so that's easy for me. I also brought printouts, though, just like when they bring syllabi to you so, that you can read it yourself if I don't finish. So I'm the Associate Professor of Economics at Kent State University and I really wanted to come here today to talk to you about math, because who doesn't love math, right? This commission is tasked with an important job drawing Ohio's House and Senate districts. While this job is one which must be completed every 10 years, yours is a particularly unique one, as this is the first redistricting to take place under new legislation approved by the people of Ohio. The language of this legislation appears relatively straightforward. I'm going to read now from Article 11, Section six. The Ohio Redistricting Commission shall attempt to draw a General Assembly district plan that meets all of the following standards. Part A, no General Assembly district plan shall be drawn primarily to favor or disfavor a political party. Part C, I missed B there on purpose, General Assembly districts shall be compact. Part B of this legislation is what my comments today will focus on interpreting from the perspective of an econometrition analyst. B, the statewide proportion of districts whose voters based on state wide state and federal partisan general election results during the last ten years favor each political party shall correspond closely to the statewide preferences of the voters of Ohio. Developing an analytic strategy as it pertains to determining the proportion of districts which correspond to each political party requires several decisions regarding the use of statewide state and federal partisan general election results from the previous 10 years. There are three strategies which I'm going to explore for you today. One strategy would be to use the population of eligible elections. More specifically, you examine the proportion of voters which correspond to each political party across all statewide state and federal parties in general elections, and then create a General Assembly district plan which aligns with these proportions. The proportion of voters aligning with each political party can be calculated, well really, in a variety of ways. A simple approach would be to average the proportions across all individual observations, which are eligible elections. One drawback to this approach might be that it assigns equal weight to each election distribution, regardless of, for instance, proximity to the present. This could be problematic if there were a significant shift in the state population in more recent years, which alters the proportion of voter preferences by political party. There are two ways that you could address something like that. The first approach would be to narrow down your case selection to only those elections which most closely reflect current voter preferences. This approach could entail inclusion of only the most recent statewide state and federal partisan election distributions when you calculate voting party preferences. In other words, instead of including all statewide state elections in the calculation of your proportions, only those recent elections for each office would be used. This is relatively easy to calculate. The following estimates are calculated to only include the most recent statewide state and federal partisan election for each office. This reduces our sample from 16 elections, which occurred between 2011 and 2020, to 7. One for Governor, one for Attorney General, one for Auditor of State, one for Secretary of State, one for Treasurer, one for President and one for U.S. Senate. The party level average, using this reduced sample, estimates that about 47.59 percent of voters indicate a preference for the Democratic Party candidate, while 50.88 percent of voters indicate a preference for the Republican Party. You might notice that that doesn't sum to one hundred percent. A more complicated approach would be that you could weight the elections based on time proximity to the most recent census. This calculation approach could be legitimized as being more reflective of the current state population. However, determining the most accurate reading strategy would be relatively difficult to do and would require the use of samples from, for instance, American Community Survey to use during non census years. This is a problem because data from non census years is drawn from a sample, not from a population, so it may not represent population shifts correctly. While presently the legislative language doesn't really indicate that proximity to the current time is a criterion for data weighting or for sample selection, so specifically, the legislation stipulates based on statewide state and federal partisan general election results during the last 10 years. Nothing to say that more current elections should be weighted more favorably. A second strategy would be to randomly sample the population of eligible elections. Random sampling strategies are typically used under the following circumstances when you're performing any sort of analytic analysis. One, when collection of data on the population of interest is just not possible. Oftentimes, this is due to an inability to accurately identify the individual members of the population of interest. The second circumstance's collection of data on the population of interest just isn't feasible, right? So oftentimes this can be cost prohibitive and the nature of collecting data on all available individuals of interest just, you can't capture all of it. Neither of these circumstances [indecipherable] in the current case. The population of eligible elections is already observed and it's already very small. Your and is 16. So relying on random samples from the population, meaning just picking up at will elections to decide your proportions, doesn't really make a lot of sense, and it runs the risk of creating significant bias in your estimated distributions. So, for example, in two random samples where I selected 4 of the 16 elections for use in calculating party proportions, significantly different part party averages were estimated. In the first random draw, the Democratic candidates average voter percentage was 42.63 percent, while the Republican candidates as average voter percentage was 54.63 percent. In the second random draw for the Democratic candidates, average voting percentage It was 47.23, while the Republican candidates was 50.24. So you can see through random draws, you can get very, very different results. A third strategy would be just to target specific elections to include the calculation of voter party preferences. So, for example, to use gubernatorial elections as indicators of voter party preference. This is similar to a sampling approach that I discussed before, where the goal was to narrow the sample down. Justifying a targeted sample approach would be really quite difficult to do. First, the legislative language doesn't indicate that that's what you should be doing. It says, based on statewide state and federal partisan general elections results during the last 10 years. It doesn't say the gubernatorial elections or Secretary of state. All of the 16 elections that I use, my calculations are statewide state or federal partisan elections. Now it may be the case that some of these were left out. I went back through and looked at all of the elections that occurred between 2011 and 2020 to make sure that in fact, there were only 16 that could be qualified a statewide state and federal partisan elections. In 2011- I got all of this information off of the Secretary of State's website. I have a link that is in the online version I submitted. In 2011, there were statewide elections, but none were explicitly partisan in nature. All were state issues that were up for consideration, so there's no way to really indicate party preference from voters. In 2012, there were two federal partisan elections, one for president and one for U.S. Senate, both of which are currently in the analytic sample. In 2013, there were no statewide state elections. In 2014 were five statewide state elections, gubernatorial, Attorney General, Auditor of State, Secretary of State, and State Treasurer. All of those are included in my current sample of 16. In 2015, there were no explicitly partisan elections. In 2016, there were two federal partisan elections, one for president and one for U.S. Senate. Both of those are currently in the sample. 2017, again, no statewide state or federal partisan elections. In 2018, there were five statewide state elections- Governor, Attorney General, Auditor of State, Secretary of State, State Treasurer and then one federal partisan election, U.S. Senate. All of those are included in the analytic sample. And then, finally, 2019, no elections, 2020, one federal partisan election, president, and that's currently in the analytic sample. This indicates that these 16 [indecipherable] of 16, our observations, our analytic sample of 16 is in fact the correct sample that aligns with this legislative language. Given the above outlined considerations, a relatively straightforward determination of voter preferences by political party can be concluded by using all eligible elections between 2011 and 2020 and calculating averages based on individual election distributions. I've done that in the handout that I've given you, you can work on Table 1. There are five different calculations. Calculation 1 is the most simple. This is just using all of your observations and what are the averages by party. This approach might be problematic in that for this one, it actually sums the total count of voters, not the proportion of voters that was won. And in doing so, it essentially ignores any voters that did not vote for main party candidates. It may be the case, though, given language in the legislation regarding redistricting, that could be deemed appropriate to calculate percentages because right, you are only looking at the two parties, according to the legislative language and in the case could be argued otherwise. Either way, regardless of which method of calculating it, it's all fairly close to the same. You're all right around 45ish percent for Democrats and 53 percent for Republican parties. In conclusion, I would like to offer some words of caution regarding the use of data and statistics as pieces of evidence for those making decisions on behalf of the public. Mark Twain popularized the phrase "There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies and statistics." Data and statistics, in and of themselves, are important tools for public policymakers to be able to make decisions which have a positive impact on the lives of those they were charged with serving. However, those same tools can be wielded in a nontransparent and improper way. Academics producing research, which is often used by policymakers to aid in decision making, understand the importance of this and it's one driving force behind the peer review process. As you can probably discern from my testimony, and abundance of analytic choices sit behind any statistics that you encounter. The legitimacy of these rests on whether or not those in a lot of choices were made explicit or were justifiable. Hopefully, I've demonstrated both of these characteristics in my discussion and analysis for you today. Thank you. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [01:43:01] Any questions? Deborah Shankland.

**Shankland** [01:43:11] My name is Deborah Shankland and I live in Brecksville, a city suburb south of Cleveland. I'm grateful to be able to address the commission today. I would have preferred to attend the Monday hearing in Cleveland, but I couldn't make the last-minute arrangements to do it. I don't think I'd be wrong to estimate that at least five times as many citizens would participate in these hearings if we were notified sooner and more opportunities were given to accommodate individuals who work standard hours. So I'm honored to speak for at least some of those individuals, as well. Members of the commission, we are in crisis. All of us here and our children and grandchildren are under existential threat of climate catastrophe, as well as a global pandemic. These crises demand not just individual actions, such as changing light bulbs and washing hands, but also strong actions and policies at all levels of government. What is our leadership at the Ohio Statehouse doing to address the climate crisis? They passed, and still have not repealed, House Bill 6, a gift to the fossil fuel industry, which is being paid for by every one of us in this room. To avoid the worst effects of climate change, some of which are evident today, we should have decreased and then ended our reliance on fossil fuels decades ago. We should have done everything possible to scale up renewable and clean energy sources like solar and wind, instead of doing everything possible to quash those positive job creating industries with bills like the recently introduced Senate Bill 52 and House Bill 118, as well as House Bill 6. I'm a scientist. And trust me, the worst is yet to come. As a single woman living alone, I'm also very concerned about the exponential increase in mass shootings, domestic terrorism and the proliferation of guns in our communities. More guns do not make us safer. The majority of Ohioans of all political affiliations want common sense gun laws, like those proposed by Governor DeWine, which include background checks, red flags and secure storage of guns in homes occupied by minors. What did our Statehouse pass instead? Open carry on without a license or training, concealed carry of any deadly weapon and stand your ground, which passed on April6th this year. These laws, and abortion restrictions, are the priority of our legislators. But clean air, protecting our natural resources, allowing virtual testimony during a pandemic? Our elected officials have no time for those. They've been very busy putting together the state's budget, a budget in which a policy and a new commission were created to promote fossil fuel extraction in our state parks, forests and wildlife areas. Will the royalties from extraction help to fund needed maintenance of our state parks? No. They're going to be used to promote further oil and gas leasing on our public lands. How does our Statehouse so brazenly ignore the wishes of the people and further actively promote policies and laws that damage our health and well-being? It's simply and effectively done through gerrymandering, and if that doesn't work to maintain their grip on power, they impose voting restrictions. When our representatives are not beholden to the people, they are open to the forces of corruption. Now, I know that there are many good and hardworking legislators that want to see Ohioans thrive for generations. They are why I'm here today. I imploy you to use fairness in redistricting, to make the process transparent and to give the people time and ample opportunity to review and comment on the maps that are yet to be proposed. We know what has happened in the past, and we are watching you today. Thank you. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [01:47:40] Thank you. Mary Robbins. And Sarah Yuronka, on deck.

**Robbins** [01:48:06] Greetings to the committee and to everyone here, it's so exciting. I appreciate the opportunity to be heard today and the self-inflicted compressed schedule that the committee had to keep during this period of gathering testimony from the voters. I thank you all who have gathered here today, but I'm so disappointed by the lack of committee members and, you know, having designated representation. Will they hear our voices? I am Mary Robbins, a long, lifelong resident of Summit County, mother of five grown children. I am here because I love my Highland Square neighborhood. I love the city of Akron, Summit County, my state of Ohio, and our magnificent Democratic Republic of the United States. Ohioans mandated an improved system as we have heard over and over, in 2015 and 2018. The critical deadlines have been crunched because of the pandemic, making this a more difficult process, and aggravated by the lack of action by our public officials to get the ball rolling in a more timely manner. It could be thought that maybe people are dragging their feet. You know, maybe they don't want this to work. I know, it could happen. I'm fairly new to Ohio politics. I'm a newbie, sort of. I always voted and so forth, but I've been rather traumatized by what I find happening at our state capitol. OK. For example, these public hearings, of course, should have been scheduled a long time before and not during business hours. How can we shut out so many educators and professionals and people that just can't get away that have, you know, daytime responsibilities? The redistricting commission was not even appointed by the governor until very late in the timeline, when it could have been working all summer gathering public testimony. The desks- this is all happening despite Ohio's pleas to get started on the public commentary, as well as other important pre-work to ensure a fair process. I know, many times I called the governor's office and the voicemail was full, so I couldn't say anything to him. And it's not that I don't like our governor. I've admired many things he's done, but it upsets me that we're not having this public discourse. As a result, more citizen participation is being curtailed. And, I know this, you know, even the redistricting committee members have had trouble fitting it into their schedules. And the fact that Governor Devine was at the Bengals training camp is not a good look. So hear in Summit County we're broken into four congressional districts, thereby diluting our regional voice to make known our wants and needs. Our map is a total travesty, and many citizens are confused about who our representatives actually are. I know I was. Some county has no singular voice. Lawmakers have consistently avoided tackling our gun violence issues when we have overwhelmingly pleaded with them to please, please do background checks, and the things that the other people have mentioned today. And the first energy thing, I mean, there's nothing more you can say about that. I don't want to go into it even. It's maddening to the voter to see nothing down on important issues. And over and over, these are not decided by common sense of the majority rule, but decided instead by representatives elected in gerrymandered districts and party bigwigs. The United States was founded on citizen voice and involvement. Gerrymandering is an insidious attack on our principles of democracy, which have disastrous effects on a country's future. Ohio votes 55 percent Republican OK, but they get 75 percent of the vote, or seats. Is this fair or rigged? We must get back to debating and coming to solutions together. We'll get a better example. So we're demanding a place at the table of government and please see that every effort is made to fulfill the spirit and letter of the referendums. Do not fall back to that four year fallback positions, where then everything goes to litigation and another election cycle happens, nothing is changed. That would be really aggravating. As our representatives, we expect no less from you. Just please do your jobs, I implore you. Thank you so much.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [01:53:35] Thank you. Sarah Yuronka. And Daniel Suvak on deck.

**Yuronka** [01:53:51] The perils of mask. Good morning. I appreciate the committee being here in Akron today, and I especially appreciate that we have two of the representatives of the committee here. House House Minority Leader Sykes and Senator Sykes, the rest of them proxy. That is also very disturbing because this is a very heated issue, and I believe that every person on this committee should hear the voices of Ohioans. This has not been transparent, even though that we voted for it to be transparent. Have there been things done behind the scenes? Senator Sykes? We don't even know if there have been maps already drawn or if if there have not been. There has not been transparency. As everyone has said, all Ohioans have voted that they want transparency, they want fair districts, they want it to represent us as Ohioans. I have worked in politics in Ohio for over 30 years and I have heard the voters many times. I have canvased, I have walked, I have called, I have been at rallies. And over those 30 plus years that I have been doing politics, I will tell you that the voters are more and more and more disengaged because they do not feel that they have a voice. As many have said here. They do not even know their representatives and not because they don't want to know, but because they, because it is so confusing. We have to look it up and they don't even know. And as people have said, they went to vote and they thought that they were going to be voting and they weren't. This process has not been, as we have heard over and over, has not been fair and transparent. There are people that are not able to come to any of these hearings, anywhere across the state, because of it being between 9:00 and 5:00. When people work 9:00 to 5:00, they can't come to these hearings. Some of our employees are allowing us to come and some of us are just taking the day off to come. [Applause] So it is, it is deplorable that you, that the committee, has not had meetings up until this point. We have no virtual options. We have everything that's been crammed into one week and we found out at the end of last week that these were were happening. So I want you to know that we, as Ohioans, want fair and equal districts. We want them for every Ohioan, Republicans and Democrats and independents so that we have a voice in every election. I understand that power begets power and people want to stay in power when they are in power, and I understand that from a political standpoint. But Ohioans have told you they want to be better representative, better represented. Please take that into consideration when you're drawing the maps. Thank you.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [01:56:53] Thank you. Daniel Suvak. Jim Teague on deck.

**Suvak** [01:57:07] Good morning, thank you. And logistically, it might have been advantageous to give us such late notice and limited time because if more people knew in advance, you might have had to rent First Energy Stadium for all the people who are interested in this issue. And thinking about the importance of the redistricting process, I was struck by the words of John Adams in 1774, who I think was anticipating some of the abuses our other speakers already talked about today. He said, "Representative government and trial by jury are the heart and lungs of liberty. Without them, we have no fortification against being ridden like horses, fleeced like sheep, worked like cattle and fed and clothed like swine and hogs." [Applause] Fairly drawn districts are essential to representative government, so I plead with members of all parties to draw on your patriotism to enable us to continue the democratic experiment. It is true that skewing district boundaries have led to electoral advantages. But voters also respect honest and impartial leadership. In this petition, and ballot initiatives have shown, there is enormous voter interest in redistricting. Why not choose to be elected based on merit rather than cartographic trickery? [Applause] We heard a very erudite testimony from the economics professor at Kent State, getting down to drawing the actual lines. I would urge the commission to rely on the work of political scientists who have spent years refining the tools used to create fair districts, including our own Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Service at Ohio University, which was funded with the $478,000 contract from the Ohio Legislative Services Commission, to crunch data into a database useful for drawing fair maps. And I wouldn't just trust the data crunching, though, as my fellow Stark Countian showed there are other overriding issues, cultural issues, economic issues, that really require you to look beyond the numbers. Although the people who have developed these models have spent a great deal of time and I think will lend a real aura of objectivity to the process, something we desperately need. Thank you again. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [02:00:10] Thank you. Jim Teague. And Arrye Rosser.

**Teague** [02:00:23] Good morning, Commission, I want to thank the members for giving me this opportunity to speak. I'm from House District 76, you're the representative of the District, and Senate District 18 in Portage County near Mann Way. I live in the country in Charlottesville Township. One of the previous speakers gave us some excellent reasons why gerrymandering needs to be done away with. She made the point that it was good for the economy and it was good for competition. I agree with that. Those are excellent reasons. But I'm going to give you one that has been touched upon, I think a little bit, that's even stronger, in my view, the most important. Our democracy is in grave danger. What we saw on January 6th in the capital is something I never thought in my lifetime, and I've lived a few years in this country, I never thought I would see an attempted coup. And that's what it was. A group that was trying to install a candidate that was not reelected, and they were trying to install him or the candidate was that was elected. That's a coup in the United States. We read about those around the world. We see governments overturn. We just saw the one in Afghanistan tragically, and we don't think it can happen here, but it can happen here and that danger is not over. And what does gerrymandering have to do? Well, it doesn't cause that solely, but it plays a part because it promotes extremism. If you're in a district that's that's Democrat or Republican, your competition is not on the other side. And with ideas, your competition is on your own party. And what's tended to happen, at least, that I focus on the Republicans, but it could happen in the Democratic district, they keep going far to the left or farther to the right. And you get these people in office that have really proposals that make no sense. People trying to ban schools from from requiring masks, for example, in a pandemic when masks save lives. Our children's, our children under 12, our grandchildren, who can't get vaccinated. Now they're going to be put at risk because of so-called personal freedom. You don't have the freedom to spread disease. No rational society can [Applause] can allow citizens to say, I have the freedom to infect someone else. It's like saying I have the right to drive drunk because I might kill myself. I have the right to do that. But you don't have the right to kill someone else. And that's what these are doing. You don't have that. You cannot [Applause] We cannot run a society like that. We've gone, we've gone off the rails. We've lost our mind. So anyway, I think gerrymandering is so important to get rid of because it would be a step to getting really extremism that we have and starting us put back on a course of sanity for all, for Democrats and Republicans. You know the point, I'm not sure what the point was, but they were saying that several speakers that you know, this state is mostly Republican now. And why go away with gerrymandering, the Democrats would do it. Well, that was the whole point of why the voters over 70 percent adopted these constitutional amendments of the congressional level and for the state level. To get rid of it. And if it was over 70 percent, there had to be many Republicans that voted for it, just as well as Democrats. [Applause] So this is a bipartisan process, the voters are saying on both sides, we don't want gerrymandering anymore. Again, I thank you for your time. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [02:04:06] Thank you. Arrye Rosser. And Iris Meltzer.

**Rosser** [02:04:17] Hi there, thank you for this time. My name is Arrye Rosser. So good try on the name but not quite. I am a career civil servant. I'm not here representing the government, but I've served my country for 28 years. I care very passionately about their government. I do. I own my own house. I live a 3536 Homewood Avenue. Please don't come visit me. But I own my own house for about twenty five years. It's located in Ohio's 14th Congressional District, near the borders of Stowe, Cuyahoga Falls and Hudson. I'm actually a Stowe resident. It takes me about 15 minutes to drive to Akron or Kent, 30 minutes to get to Fairlawn or Montrose, and about 45 minutes to get to Cleveland. And that's pretty much the radius that my family spends most of its time. Cuyahoga Falls, which is largely in District 13, is six houses away from me, six houses away at the end of my street. My mail and my electricity go through Cuyahoga Falls, even though I live in Stowe. I go to the grocery store in Cuyahoga Falls. I walk the dog. I use the library. I see the doctor. I visit parks. I attend events. I eat out there. My son ran cross-country when he was in high school and we'd go to meets there. This is pretty much like where my family's daily life has played out. In contrast, Conneaut, Ohio, and I had to really get out the map last night to see about my district, but Conneaut, Ohio, is an hour and a half away from me. And in a quarter of a century of living here, I have trouble recalling even ever going to Ashtabula County, other than to pass through on the highway. I have rarely visited anywhere east of Kirtland, which is the area that is the majority of Ohio District 14. And yet I vote with these people and not the people on the other side of [Indecipherable] with me. Representative Dave Joyce, and perhaps a deep love of the great Lake Erie, are maybe the only thing we have in common. My husband, John Fitzpatrick, and I are both involved in civic life. We're both board members of the League of Women Voters of the Akron area. He's on the board of Summit Arts Space. I volunteered to write for a park related column for the Devil Strip newspaper. John works in Cleveland, I work in Brecksville, but we're mostly oriented to the concerns of Akron. We care about Summit County's economic prosperity, social justice, land use, water issues, hospitals, arts community, library system and culture. We pay special attention to things that impact the Cuyahoga River, Cuyahoga Valley National Park and Summit Metro Parks. I want to be part of a congressional district that represents all or most of Summit County and perhaps includes Kent and parts of southern Cuyahoga County. But I really feel like the integrity of Summit County is important to me. And it's nonsense, really, to think that if I diove to the mall, now that Chapel Hill is going downhill and I go to Summit Mall occasionally, I have to drive through three congressional districts just to do that. There's only one reason in my mind of why Summit County has been divided up, and that's to dilute our voice. And it's offensive and it's wrong. And at the state level [Applause] Thank you. I want to see U.S. and Ohio State districts as competitive as possible, and I want politicians who have to work for their votes and are motivated to make compromises. I want to see districts that results in a ratio of Republicans to Democratic seats that's proportional to how the electorate voted. And I originally thought maybe in the last election, but I heard that Professor, I defer to her math, and this is just, this is supposed to be a representative democracy, and I just want to be fairly represented. Thank you.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [02:08:15] Thank you. Iris Meltzer. And Martin Belsky on deck.

**Meltzer** [02:08:25] Thank you. Please know that there are many people here today who will not be testifying, although they too seek fair maps. As you can see from the signs that they are holding up. [Applause] My name is Iris Meltzer, and I live in Kent, which is in House District 75 and Senate District 18. However, today I am speaking from the vantage point of being the president of the League of Women Voters of Ohio. The Ohio league has been working against partisan gerrymandering for nearly 50 years. First against the unfair maps drawn by Ohio Democrats and most recently against maps drawn to create an unfair advantage for Republicans, because it is human impulse to manipulate maps to maintain power. That's why nonpartisan groups like the League of Women Voters are critical to this process. League of Women Voters' members from across Ohio played a key role in collecting signatures for the ballot initiatives in 2015 and 2018 in support of fair maps. We educated voters on the impact of gerrymandering in our state and the initiative was passed, as you have heard, overwhelmingly in all of our 88 counties. As a venerable, nonpartisan organization, we want to create a democracy where everyone's voice is heard equally and equitably. Our democracy is hurt when politicians of any party manipulate voting maps to keep themselves and their party in power. Simply put, partisan gerrymandering takes away voter choice and fuels partisan polarization. When incumbents are all but assured of their reelection, they do not need to serve their voters and instead play to party extremes and big donors. First, we call upon you to uphold the letter and the spirit of reform by creating a transparent, bipartisan and open process. And we want the outcome of this process to be new maps drawn in a way that residents are represented fairly regardless of race, background, zip code or income. Despite delays in the census results caused by the global pandemic, this much shorter window to draw maps cannot be used as an excuse to shortcut the public's expectation for transparency and robust public engagement. [Applause] A transparent and open process with at least three public hearings on draft maps, before they're adopted, allows for a more honest and fairer outcome, because it provides an opportunity for map makers to learn the wishes and needs of voters across the state. An open process also requires officials to publicly explain the basis for their decisions and allows the public the opportunity to hold their elected officials accountable. The lines drawn this year will determine how communities are divided, how resources are allocated and how voters are represented for up to the next 10 years. The League of Women Voters of Ohio asks that you respect not only the letter, but the spirit of the constitutional amendments for both the drawing of our legislative maps, but for our congressional maps as well. We want maps that are compact, respect local government subdivisions as much as possible and are not drawn to favor one political party or candidate over another. We ask you to put democracy above your personal or partisan interests and bring fair legislative maps to the people. Thank you for your time.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [02:13:09] Thank you very much. Martin Belsky. And Karen [Indecipherable] on deck.

**Belsky** [02:13:21] Good morning. My name is Marty Belsky, and I'm Randolph Baxter Professor of Law at the law School here, and the former Dean. First of all, I have a lot of colleagues and students for the comment that this is a predominantly democratic group of people, the University of Akron, [Indecipherable]. But let me sort of move on and indicate more my background. In the 1970s, yes, I am ancient, in the 1970s I represented a Republican district attorney, Arlen Specter, who challenged the democratically created legislature. In the 1980, I represented a Republican legislator who, I'm sorry, a Democratic legislator who is challenging Republican apportionment procedure in Florida. I want to convey something completely different with you, then you've heard so far. It's a little thing called the law. Yes. Elections have consequences. But elections have consequences unless they violate the law. And that's what I'm here to talk about. Way back in the late 18th century, the governor of Massachusetts decided that he wanted to district his state in a kind of a strange way. So he created a number of districts which looked like snakes, very much like my congressional district, which was lead by now Secretary Fuge. He, his name was Elbridge Gerry. The snake was a salamander. Hence, gerrymandering. But what I'm saying to you now is even though at the federal level, the Supreme Court has determined that gerrymandering is not justiciable, cannot be heard, you have a thing called the Ohio Constitution, you have a thing called the Ohio legislation, and you have other requirements set out by the Constitution, by legislation and by case law. Straightforwardly, the Supreme Court of Ohio will look to see what you're doing. And what are the standards that are going to apply, compactness, contiguity, keeping communities together. In each of those situations, those specific provisions, those specific ideas, were put into legislation or the constitution or case law to minimize the impact of partisan gerrymandering. If you do your job, and follow the specific dictates of the legislation, of the Constitution, and case law, you're doing your job well. It will not be challenged in court or if it is challenged, you'll easily win. But if you don't do your job well, there'll be chaos. Thank you for your attention. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [02:16:00] Thank you. Karen [indecipherable]. And on deck, Rajyalakshmi Alladi.

**Alladi** [02:16:41] Since Karen is not here, I'm going ahead.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [02:16:45] Yes, thank you.

**Alladi** [02:16:46] Yeah. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you. My name is Rajyalakshmi Alladi. I live in Aurora and work in the 76th Statehouse district and 18th Senate district. Today's the last day of the hearing and my testimony is not going to be any different than the others. I'm here because I want my voice, too, to be heard on this issue. America is supposed to be the role model of democracy to the world. Even the fact that I can stand here and present this testimony is a testament to the fact of democracy operating as it should. But what bothers me is that why is it that all of us have to turn up and present testimony at all, saying we need fair distracting? Why do politicians need prompting to make this all a fair process? What are they afraid of? [Applause] Is it that if districting is done fairly, they will lose? I suppose it is naivety to assume the politicians would have faith in their own policies and let that speak for themselves instead of rigging the districts. Unfair maps, weird shapes, packing and cracking the districts, end up giving power to those who are overriding the wise ambitions of their constituents. It ends up serving the special needs of only those few. The legislators effectively do their well as they're are all in safe districts. For my part, I care deeply about making voting accessible to all, which is the bedrock of democracy, women's reproductive freedom, guns sense laws, and allowing science to rule in matters of public health. Right now, it appalls me that the so-called policy makers are furthering bogus science and putting at risk people's health and lives. There is not enough opposition to this taking over in the Statehouse. I know most people are also interested in seeing changes. This will, however, not see the light of day if the districts maintain the way they are now. As we all know, it's the wish of the people of Ohio that the maps be drawn fairly. I was one of the many, many people who worked hard to collect those petition signatures that made this into a reality. Now that we here, I would ask that please show up, please play fair and do the right thing and shape history in the right direction. Thank you for your time.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [02:19:20] Thank you. David Guran. David Guran. John Beatty.

**Guran** [02:20:03] Hello, my name is David Guran. I live here in Akron, northwest side. I don't live on campus, I'm not a student and another employee at the university. I will begin my testimony with five technical issues, then I'll discuss the process as it is, and finally, the likely outcome of this commission. First, the goal of district maps ought to be to form competitive districts. Two, these hearings ought to be held an evening. There'll be further hearings as required. Three, there needs to be transparency of the process. All communications between members of the commission need to be released to the public. And, excuse me, four, this needs to the disclosure and consulting firms and individuals and campaign staffers that will be working on the maps for the commission. All of those people need to disclose their identities and their relationships with the commission. Five, we need to make available to the public the mapping software that is used by the commission, for the public to make their own maps and to check the maps of this commission. The commission must include analysis of the maps by demographics, by race and ethnicity, by age, especially for children between y and 17, because they will be voters within the next 10 years. Now first, I want to thank Representative Sykes and Senator Sykes. After hearing ,at the end of the hearing in Lima, they pushed Co-Chair Cupp to finalize the rules of this commission. However, he declined to finalize those rules. He keeps keeps pushing those off to another day. When the last maps were made in 2011, they were the second most gerrymandered maps in the US. People in gerrymandered maps who support the out party in a particular district, those voters of the out party often consider not to vote because it just doesn't matter. Then potential candidates of the out party, either party, often consider not to bother to run for office. For a it doesn't matter. For districts like, for example, disgraced former Speaker of the House Larry Householder, he only had a write in candidates running against him in 2020. Unfortunately, the Republicans have an, still have an opportunity to continue the [indecipherable gerrymandering maps because the commission will miss the September 1st deadline, which is this Wednesday. Within the amendments of, the members of the Republicans can vote for four year maps that will just continue gerrymandered districts. And the governor, who's missing in action, remember him? Yeah, and has not been in any of these hearings. Therefore he's not demonstrating leadership, on this issue. And like voters who don't show up for =elections for over six years, they get removed from the rolls, and then they can only submit a provisional ballot. Well, I suggest that Governor DeWine's vote be provisional and [Applause] decided by the state Supreme Court, whether it's should count or not. But most likely, Secretary LaRose, Auditor Faber will fall in line with Republicans, Huffman and Cupp, to pass a four year gerrymandered map. Throughout the years that, I believe the Republicans already have planned to do this four your map. In addition, in the past, there have been sweetheart deals between Democrats and Republicans that have occurred to protect their incumbents districts. Let's not do that, please. It's sad to say that the four Republicans that will produce a gerrymandered map for the next four years are likely to do that. I'm trying to reduce my speech here. But I wish you prove me wrong. But the likely outcome is we're going to get a four year map that's going to continue to be gerrymandered. Thank you.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [02:25:54] Thank you. John Beatty. And on deck, Eric Brown.

**Beatty** [02:26:06] Good afternoon, commission members and representatives of those who are not here. My name is Reverend John Beatty. I'm a United Methodist clergyman retired, but my calling from God was not just for the time that I was a pastor, but for my life. So I remain involved in serving people. I happened to be a citizen of Congressman Tim Ryan's District, Congressional District 13. My state senator is Senator Sykes and my zHouse representative is Representative Emilia Sykes. I appreciate their service to our folks here. However, Representative Ryan lives in Youngstown. Marcia Fudge, our previous person for congressional, well, for congressional seat, lives in Cleveland. Anthony Gonzales, I think lives in Hudson, I think. And David Joyce, I don't know where he lives, way out, out in Trumpland. I want to say a couple of things about why I'm here. I was a Republican for 18 years. And then I went to college, and as a representative in Congress would say, I was brainwashed. I think I was enlightened. Because [Applause] because the Christian organization on campus had four deputations. The first one was to Washington, D.C.. The second one was to New York City to study the UN and world problems. The third was sent to Atlanta to study segregation. And I remember the group having to sit out on the curb because the black member of our group was not allowed to eat in the restaurant where people were at. And the fourth was a visit out West, where we heard that there were problems with my church's American Indian School. We are beginning to find out the genocidal results of Indian schools in Canada. And those schools were also here in the U.S.. So I come knowing that God's love, when it becomes public, becomes justice. God's law is that you cannot put your thumb on justice to create corruption. We've been through the worst example of corruption in the history of Ohio. And Senate Bill 6 is the perfect example of ungodly corruption. And that has come directly from gerrymandered districts, in my opinion. [Applause] Thank you.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [02:30:22] Thank you. Eric Brown. And on deck, Mimi Hanlon, Hanlon, Hanlon

**Brown** [02:30:41] All right, good afternoon. My name is Eric Brown. I live in Bath Township and I will keep my comments very brief because I want to talk specifically about the U.S. congressional districts. As many people have said here in Summit County, Akron, Ohio, we are touched by four congressional districts. This is your opportunity to right the wrong that was done 10 years ago. Living in Bath Township, I reside in the 11th District. I am unrepresented. That is my feeling. And I think it's time for this commission to recognize Summit COunty, to recognize the city of Akron, as critical to the process. Thank you.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [02:31:32] Thank you. Mimi Hanlon. And on deck, [Indecipherable] Matthews.

**Hanlon** [02:31:45] Thank you. I'm Mimi Hanlon. I am representing myself, but I am a poll worker and want to talk to you about the results of the 11th U.S. congressional primary that I witnessed just a few weeks ago. I grew up in Columbus, Ohio, and then moved to Hudson when I was 14, lived in other states for years,came back here and have lived in the Stowe-Monroe Falls area for 22 years. I became a poll worker when the powers that be decided to save money by combining voting locations. The end result was my children were in school, I waited an hour and a half to vote in Stowe at the Silver Springs Lodge, ran out when I realized I would not get to the front of the line before they were out of school, got them moved to a babysitter and came back to vote. I called the Board of Elections the next day and said, I can do better than this. So I've been volunteering as a poll worker ever since. [Applause] Let me tell you something, and I'm sure there's a lot of other poll workers here. Out of 88 counties in Ohio, you have a group of people that come together every time that there is a vote in Ohio, and we put aside our Republican and Democratic ideologies to work together to make voting an exquisitely wonderful experience for every person who walks in the door, every Ohioan. We try our darndest to make sure that they're happy. I will tell you what happened in the primary voting a few weeks ago. I rotate around, the Summit County Board of Elections tend to send me wherever they need workers. And I was assigned to a spot that I had never been before. And in, during the course of the day, we had probably two to three times as many people trying to vote as were eligible to vote. Why is that? Gerrymandering. They came in and said things like my relative, my neighbor, my friend, my coworker, they all said to vote today and what I'm trying to explain to them, or all of us try to explain to them, that they weren't eligible to vote because of where they lived. We didn't have maps of Summit County's four way division of US congressional districts. We had to keep saying things like Marcia Fudge's District is the one that's voting today, but you maybe you live in Anthony Gonzalez, maybe you live in Dave Joyce's, maybe you live. They didn't know and they got mad. They got mad at us, but they're going to be mad at you. OK. Down the road, if you don't do the right thing and get this fixed. We are the fourth most populous county in Ohio. We're divided four ways. And you heard someone earlier in this group of very, very engaged voters who erroneously thought that Anthony Gonzalez represents Hudson. He does not. It's Dave Joyce, and Dave Joyce is not here. He doesn't come here. I'll tell you one little personal story. A few, a few years ago, I ended up at a building that's just a few blocks from here. It's the federal courthouse. It houses also an IRS office that used to be able to give help to people. You could walk in and take a number, wait your turn, get it questions answered. I was there as a small business person,sole proprietor, can't afford fancy schmancy tax advice. And they were telling me, you've got to file these forms, these forms, these forms, these forms. I said, Is there anyone I can complain to about doing this? And they said, yes, we used to have our own congressperson here in Akron, and I used to send everybody in your situation right upstairs to see her in her office. But no such luck when our congresspeople are all over northeast Ohio. It's not fair to us, and the voters may be upset with us and saying things like, you're preventing us from voting, and we're having to explain, we're not preventing you from voting, believe me, call the board of elections. Call your representative. We're bending over backwards to tell us who you are, but they're going to turn their anger on you, if this is not fixed. So word of advice. Thank you so much for your time, and I wish everyone was here.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [02:37:16] Thank you. [Indecipherable] Banks Matthews. Laura Jachs.

**Jachs** [02:37:41] Hi, good afternoon. My name is Laura Jachs. And I'd like to start with the concept that a picture is worth a thousand words. And if you take the picture of our currently districted map and you show it to a small child, maybe around kindergarten age and you say, does this look like a normal, fair way to split up this puzzle? And they will fall over giggling. Now, I love the sound of children's laughter, but not when it comes to a reflection of our current redistricted maps of Ohio. Several speakers previously have said that, I guess, people here today who may be representing the Democratic side of this debate are just here because they want power. You know, they're not here for fair districts. They want, they want power. And that doesn't make sense to me because of course, it's about power. The biggest power that an American citizen has is the right to vote. [Applause] And if we live in a district where our vote doesn't count because it's been so gerrymandered that there is no way to be fairly represented, then we are powerless. Our power has been taken away from us. Also, I've heard that, you know, as several speakers today have said that Ohio is now dominated by Republicans, and the view on that seems to be so why bother changing the districts. You know? And of course, the logical argument to that is, well, if that's true, then why not change the districts? The districts clearly need to be drawn. I mean, I don't think anybody could logically disagree with the fact that the districts clearly need to be drawn in a, you know, non divided, cohesive map. And if the majority of voters are Republican, the Republican politicians will keep their power. It's no big deal, you know? So the only reason to continue with the gerrymandered district is if somebody is afraid that maybe that's not so. And maybe we're going to lose our power if we have evenly split districts and fairly divided districts. I have to say, right now it feels a bit like screaming into the wind to come here and to have any discussion on this. The saying that we want to have fairly districting maps. And it feels like screaming into the wind because essentially we are asking those people in power to prioritize democracy over personal gain, over personal power. And in some cases, over greed. But that is what we're asking. We're asking for every politician in Ohio to dig deep. And to ask themselves, what is their legacy going to be? Is their legacy going to be standing up for democracy, which is a very long term gain and something to be proud of, or is their legacy going to be the short term gain of a few more years for their personal power? So I ask you ,and those that you are representing, to please follow the mandate given you by Ohio voters. We want fair districts where the politicians don't choose their voters, but where the voters choose their politicians. Thank you. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [02:41:45] Thank you. Elliot Forheim. And on deck, Tristain Cain.

**Forheim** [02:42:19] Competitive district maps are a bedrock of good government. When district maps are competitive, elected officials are accountable to the voters because the threat of losing an election is real. A competitive district map means that the elected officials are accountable and that accountability is the best guarantee of good government. On the other hand, gerrymandered uncompetitive district maps corrupt our government. Gerrymandering makes districts uncompetitive, and the lack of competition destroys the accountability of elected officials to the voters. What incentive to government officials have to deliver to the voters when they know that they will never lose an election? As everyone knows, incumbent politicians and the political party in control immediately after the completion of the Federal Census, when the district maps are scheduled to be redrawn, have an incentive to gerrymander. We here in Ohio know this because it happened in our state 10 years ago. The maps that the redistricting is produced in 2011 were, according to prominent US election law experts, the most effectively gerrymandered partisan biased district maps in the country during the past 10 years. Ohio voters, however, don't need any experts to tell them that the government in their state has been partisan, biased and corrupt during the past 10 years. They know. Those voters acted in 2018 and 2015 on that view and passed both Issues 1 by, in at least the case in 2018, a 50 percentage point margin, 75 percent to 25 percent. As a result of those amendments, Articles 11 and 19 of the constitution of our state prohibit any district map that favors or dis favors either political party. The voters of Ohio demand, deserve and require good government. As such, members of this commission, please do your jobs and produce competitive district maps. Thank you.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [02:45:05] Tristan Cain. And Soloman Frielich, on deck. We are, we are winding down. I'd like to thank everyone for their attendance on this case. [Indecipherable].

**Audience** [02:45:25] I don't get to talk?

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [02:45:26] Yes, we have [Indecipherable] with anybody that wants to speak will have an opportunity to speak.

**Mullins** [02:45:32] Greetings, commissioner, actually Towanda Mullins of Copley Township. Tristan was to represent our organization, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated. I am also a proud Army veteran. As a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated, First Vice President of the Akron chapter, also a proud member of the women's, the League of Women Voters for Akron chapter, and other advocacy is here in this city. Political awareness and involvement is very vital to our organization as we were there in 1913, for the women's right to vote march down Pennsylvania Avenue. Our organization. Our founders, told to get in the back, what are we doing here? Uninvited, unwanted. But we stayed. This is another vital point in which we will continue to utilize the power in our voice, and the service within our hearts. As a member of Copley Township, with sons that graduated from Copley High School, college graduates as well, along with my husband, it is imperative that I speak to you today. And I will shorten this because I do concur with everyone that's been at the mic this morning, and I think you fellow residents. Ohioans did vote twice to approve the process of drawing the district lines, both for Ohio legislation districts and the U.S. Congress, in overwhelming numbers. We know that. Years ago, the average majority of Ohioans didn't even know about gerrymandering. Our organization is working hard, because I'll tell you, our culture and a lot of the members in this community, don't even know what it is. We're highly embarrassed at the District 11 vote. It was echoed earlier by a poll worker - didn't even understand because signs were playing it with the certain zip codes within this community. That is embarrassing. We know it's hard to draw a gerrymandered map, we get that, tailored to produce particular outcomes. We are demanding a fair map. The current 12 to 4 U.S. congressional map is the product of a lot of hard work to manipulate. A lot of us are speaking to manipulation this morning. This year, we're taking part in mapmaking competitions. We will not be silenced. The competition will produce fair maps to be drawn in accordance with the new redistricting rules. The Legislature can no longer pretend that the maps they produce are the best and possible reasons for residents in our communities. I want to leave you with this: we know democracy is not a spectator sport, and you know what? It works well when we all participate. That is how you really win. Thank you

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [02:48:59] Thank you. Soloman Frielich. And Michael Abrams on deck.

**Frielich** [02:49:17] Good afternoon, my name is Solomon Frielich. I'm a 28 year old climate change activist, nature photographer and member of Sunrise Movement, Cleveland. I'm speaking today on behalf of Sunrise Movement, Cleveland. Sunrise Movement, Cleveland is part of the Sunrise Movement, a youth led movement to stop climate change and create millions of good paying jobs in the process. The recently released Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report tells governments that the only way to avoid the worst case scenario for global heating is by ending fossil fuel extraction, dramatically reducing methane emissions, quadrupling solar and wind capacity and tripling renewable energy investments all by 2030. More than 6 in 10 Ohio voters support climate action. More than 6 in 10 Ohio voters believe expanding renewable energy should be Ohio's number one energy priority. However, in 2019, the Ohio Legislature passed HB 6, making Ohio a leader among governments that are supercharging the climate crisis instead of ending it. "On July 21st, 2020, the FBI unveiled charges against the former Speaker of the Ohio House, Larry Householder, and four political operatives for racketeering and bribery related to the passage of HB 6 and the effort to block citizens access to the ballot, ensuring a referendum to repeal HB 6 would fail." 133rd, end quote, and 133rd Ohio General Assembly Scorecard, Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund 2021. "According to federal prosecutors, the scandal was likely the largest bribery money laundering scheme ever perpetrated against the people of the state of Ohio." A majority of Ohio voters oppose HB 6. We know that every political decision not only determines the conditions of our day to day reality, but whether we will have a livable future on a planet that's already in peril. For too long, Ohio's elected leaders have stolen our power to choose who best represents us. We do not have a democracy without it. The Republican Party's leaders have gerrymandered their way out of having to prove themselves capable to voters. They know they only have to prove themselves capable of taking extreme positions, like denying climate change, lest they lose elections to challengers from their own party. There is proof that in the last thirty nine years, Ohio has been gerrymandered. There's statistical techniques for demonstrating the probability that a district map was drawn to gerrymander. Some of the techniques that test for unequal opportunity that are now applied to gerrymandering were invented in the 19th and early 20th centuries, such as mean minus median in 1895 and T Test in 1908. It seems that what scientists and engineers accomplished in the second half of the 19th century and first two decades of the 20th century, like experimentally demonstrating the greenhouse effect in 1859, suggesting a link between carbon dioxide levels and temperature in 1896 and suggesting that burning coal will cause the atmosphere to heat up in 1912, could benefit us all if we, if only we could see it. In Ohio, in 2018, the median Democratic vote share was 41.7 Percent. This is a quote sorry, "In Ohio, in 2018, the median Democratic vote share was 41.7 Percent. The average Democratic vote share was 47.7 Percent and the difference was 6.0 percent. The chance that this difference would have arisen by nonpartisan processes alone is 1 in 212,105." Princeton Gerrymandering Project. The Ohio Constitution states General Assembly districts shall be compact. I looked at the current General Assembly district maps, and it seemed to me that at least six House districts and six Senate districts were not particularly compact. They are, there are statistical methods for determining compactness, and these can be applied to individual districts. I obtained calculations using methods for every current district of the Ohio General Assembly from geospatial software company Azavea. One method is called Polsby-Popper, which calculates the ratio of the area of the district to the area of a circle whose circumference is equal to the perimeter of the district. A value of zero is the least compact, whereas one is the most. Confirming my hunch, House District 78, 72, 57, 81 and 91 have Polsby- Popper values of .16, .17, .2 .2, .29, .33, respectively. For comparison, the 10 most compact Ohio House districts, based on this measure, all have values exceeding .48 and all Ohio House districts range from .07 to .78. Also confirming my hunch, Senate districts 2, 20, 27, 19, 30, and 26 have Polsby-Popper values of .8, .19, .21, .22, .22, .32, respectively. For comparison, the 10 most compact Ohio Senate districts, based on this measure, all have values exceeding .27, and all Ohio Senate districts range from point .08 to .66. The representatives of these districts have all contributed to our water being contaminated, our air being toxic and our jobs being dangerous. Because they have all locked climate action. They have halted wind and solar development, increased fossil fuel extraction, increased utility rates, forced communities to build new construction with dangerous gas lines, deregulated all polluting industries and made voting a lot harder for people who might take issue with their leaders taking $60 million in bribes to allow corporations to continue heating the Earth for profit. [Applause] The following are bills and laws they supported. In the 133rd General Assembly, HB 6. In a June 2019 letter to the Ohio Senate Energy and Utilities Committee, Andrea Chu, Regional Organizer with Food and Water Watch, wrote "I urge you to oppose House Bill 6. As it stands now, it is a heinous piece of legislation that moves Ohio into the past rather than the future." While other states like Illinois are embracing renewables, Ohio is being peddled a coal and nuclear bailout bill poised as a clean energy bill. HB 6 eliminated Ohio standards for clean energy and efficiency that Chu described as having, quote, "saved Ohioans millions of dollars in energy, reduce energy waste and carbon emissions and provided many green jobs across the state." HB 798 would have delayed HB 6 provisions, but wouldn't have repealed HB 6. This doesn't fix any of the problems caused by HB 6. The only way to do that is to repeal HB 6. HB 680, at least as initially conceived, would have made it more inconvenient, more confusing and more expensive to vote. SB 1 would have required that agencies reduce the regulations in the Ohio Administrative Code, which includes environmental regulation by 30 percent. We believe that forcing government to eliminate 30 percent of governing hurts Ohioans. SB 234 would probably have ended wind energy development in Ohio, by giving townships the power to prohibit wind farms. In the 1334th General Assembly, HB 201 is a ban on municipal natural gas bans. It's terrible that Ohioans are being forced to continue using a fossil fuel that is making them ill and making their houses and buildings susceptible to fires. SB 52 would probably end wind and solar development in Ohio by giving local governments the power to prohibit new solar wind projects. No such power exists for fossil fuel projects. Just including the legislators representing the 12 districts I identified as noncompact, yes voters and sponsors on these bills include Larry Householder, Ron Hood, Dick Stein, James Hoops, Darryl Kick, Brian Stewart, Kevin Miller, Shane Wilkin, Theresa Gavarone, Tim Schaffer, Frank Hoagland, Dave Burke, Kristina Roegner and Andrew Brenner. Redistricting, if abused, threatens to destroy the foundation of democracy, the power of the people to choose their leaders and advance their principles. Can the people choose leaders who are able to put those principles into action? It depends on who's, it depends on whether those leaders can govern based on those principles. It depends on to whom those leaders will listen. A powerful donor class or the people. We are faced with a climate emergency that we must act on today. But instead of adopting this mantle, our leaders are choosing to take actions with lifelong negative consequences for us all. Why? How can we ensure that the people's voice can echo through the halls of power? How can we ensure that when the people send leaders to Columbus to fight for them, these leaders don't fight for donors and extremists instead? How can we ensure that when the people send leaders to Columbus to deliver justice to keep fossil fuels in the ground, to end lead pollution, to hold corporations accountable for violations where ecological rights, to hold police accountable for brutality against black people, to protect workers rights, to give land back to indigenous earth protectors, to end utility shutoffs, to stop evictions, to house the unhoused, to guarantee free health care to every resident.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [02:58:03] Sir, excuse me.

**Frielich** [02:58:03] To heal the planet and to protect our vote, those, our right to vote. Those leaders don't build walls, blocking every path to justice instead. We think this commission starting today can lay the groundwork for achieving these goals, this is the last paragraph, excuse me. They should follow the new constitutional requirements without any intent to retain or gain partisan advantage. They should make districts a lot more compact than they are in the current map. They should draw maps in such a way that the statewide preferences for political parties of Ohio voters should be fully apparent from who occupies the Ohio Statehouse. They should draw maps in such a way that elections for General Assembly seats can be competitive once again. Voters, not First Energy and not legislators who don't care what Ohioans think, need to be in charge of Ohio so they can set a course for a future of justice and peace. Thank you. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [02:58:56] Michael Abrams.

**Abrams** [02:59:09] Good afternoon, Commissioner, thank you very much for having this meeting here today. I drove up from Bolivar, Ohio, to talk to you. I'm not as eloquent as a lot of people I've heard today. They've brought up some very good points. My perspective is it's all about partisanship. And there was too much of that going around. I'm a fan of Ralph Regular, he has done so much for this country, let's say years ago, because he did so well working with both sides of the aisle. With the gerrymandered maps we have now, we have less of that. We need people working together on both sides of the aisle. I don't- [Applause] It's just, yeah. I'm done. Thank you very much.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [02:59:59] Thank you. Was there anyone else who would like to testify today? Please come forward and make sure we get a witness slip.

**Rubin** [03:00:08] I turned in my testimony to the website and I was one of the first ones to give my witness slip to your helper today.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [03:00:20] Thank you. Please go forward.

**Rubin** [03:00:22] Senator Sykes, Senate Schuringg, and the members of the Redistricting Commission. My name is Connie Rubin. I reside in North Canton, in House District 50, Senate District 29, and Congressional District 16. I voted in Ohio for 48 years and druing that time I've registered voters, served as a poll worker, testified, written hundreds of letters to my legislators and congressmen, and have run for office. I wear this white outfit today in honor of Ohio and American suffragists. Yesterday marked the anniversary of adoption of the 19th Amendment, which allowed women to vote. [Applause] One hundred and one years later, you hold in your hands the ability to make our vote reflective of the public will, or to make our votes meaningless. In 2011, you chose the latter. As you know, in 2015 and 2018, Ohio Republicans, Democrats and independents rebelled against the rigged system you created, and supported a new process which we hope will force you to adopt fair new districts reflective of the moderate political views of the majority of Ohioans and of our statewide voting patterns. I commend you for having these hearings around the state and would encourage you to begin providing additional such opportunities for a citizen input on legislative issues, at least twice a year. Not everyone can come to you in Columbus on weekdays. Another 21st century alternative would, of course, be to allow online testimong via Zoom. But I digress. We're here to talk about fair, legislative and congressional districts. Today I would like to share with you how I will judge the fairness of districts you ultimately draw and adopt. Fair legislative districts should no longer result in a veto proof supermajority in either the House or the Senate. This state is much more evenly divided. In House, districts should reflect our 54, 45, whatever it is, Republican Democratic divide. Fair districts will be ones which allow for a change in party, especially when incumbents are term limited out of office. Given the political makeup of the state wide electorate, House districts should probably be 30 percent safe Republican, 30 percent safe Democratic and at least 30 percent that could go to either party, depending upon the abilities of the candidates. Ideally, no district would be a safe district for any incumbent. [Applause] It is my opinion the districts favoring either party by 10 percentage points or more are inherently unfair. When dividing counties, please use major arteries as dividing lines so that districts can be easily described and identified by their voters. Whenever possible, don't divide townships, cities or villages, and keep whole school districts or keep school districts whole. The Ohio Department of Development has applicable statistics regarding Ohio's population, and I'm not sure that anyone's talked about this today. Eighty percent of us live in metropolitan areas. A fair legislative map would mean that eighty House votes come from those metropolitan areas. A fair map would also assure that at least 20 House members and 6 Senate members are minorities, reflecting the 21 percent of their population in our state. With regard to congressional districts, 8 districts should be Republican and 7 districts, Democratic. Any other result will be patently unfair and subject to lawsuit. Because this hearing is your next to the last, it's worth repeating some of the admonitions of previous Ohio voters who have testified. Not here, but in other hearings. Gerrymandering is disenfranchisement. Please keep Elbridge Gerry in his tomb. The gerrymandering of 2011 has created polarization that is tearing us apart. This new process offers the opportunity to create districts that will encourage cooperation and dialog to revitalize our communities, not tear us apart. The polarization created by our current districts has left both urban voters and rural voters feeling unheard and disrespected, the drawing of legislative and congressional districts are a process which deserves to be done in public, subject to our state's strong sunshine laws. And, last but not least, creating fair maps is a matter of your will, and a matter of your integrity. We hope you will demonstrate both.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [03:06:27] Thank you very much. You can step forward please and give your name.

**Woods** [03:06:31] My name is Dennis Woods. And thank you, Senator Sykes, for the work you've done to address the problem of gerrymandering. The party in power should be embarrassed to gerrymander because it's an admission that you can't win on your own merits. Gerrymandering is also a blaring and arrogant declaration that you intend to ignore or even work against Ohioans, and you expect to get away with it. Nowhere is that more evident than in the shameful passage of House Bill6 in 2019n that handed out financial favors to two of the most polluting coal fired energy plants in the nation. I know my representative, Mr. Roemer, explained to me that he voted for House Bill 6 because he didn't want Ohio to be an energy importing state. I now purchase my electricity from Indiana, where I can get wind powered energy. This year, House Bill, 201 and Senate Bill 52, protected the methane industry in the face of Ohioans objections and thwarted the development of clean energy, which Ohioans and Ohio industries say they want. These bills are in direct opposition to what Ohioans want. A survey by the Yale School of the Environment showed a majority of Ohioans want Congress to do more to address climate change. Two thirds want strict limits on carbon dioxide emissions. Two thirds want utilities to be required to generate more energy from clean sources. Two thirds want fossil fuel companies to pay a carbon tax. Three quarters of Ohioans want carbon dioxide regulated as a pollutant, and 82 percent want financial supports for solar energy. And yet, year after year, Ohio government ignores our wishes and needs. Ohio falls further and further behind their neighbors in the development of clean energy, worsening air quality and water safety, and producing the affordable electricity manufacturers want. How did Ohio end up with irresponsible, unresponsive and corrupt officials who vote against our interests? Because elected officials are beyond our reach, unaccountable, protected behind gerrymandered district lines that assure their reelection, despite voter disapproval. Clearly political gerrymandering has allowed those officials to trash our state and threaten our future and remain in office to do it again and again. The new congressional and state legislative district lines should be drawn so that every candidate must win votes by appealing to voters, representing their opinions and respecting their wishes. Otherwise you are putting your voters in danger and our voting rights are a sham. Thank you. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [03:10:25] Thank you. Please state your name.

**Cochran** [03:10:31] I'm Dr. Steve Cochran. I'm impressed you're still awake. Maybe a little dazed, but awake. I'm a primary care physician, practicing medicine in Ohio for 40 years. No news to anybody, we're in a pandemic. The virus we call COVID-19 is both highly contagious and is often fatal. It has severely disrupted both our economy and our social well-being. It has caused intense grief for a large number of Ohioans due to loss of loved ones. And what is really sad about all of this is a lot of these deaths were totally avoidable. The pandemic continues to place huge demands on the medical system. Our hospitals are sometimes so overcrowded that doctors have been placed in the position of having to decide who gets critical care and who doesn't. You could show up at a hospital suffering a heart attack or having suffered severe injury, and you may not get into the intensive care unit. We know from a large number of scientific studies, we can normalize our lives. We can protect the health and lives of fellow Ohioans, if we can get enough people vaccinated, if we all wear masks in public settings, if we maintain social distancing. We have miserably failed to do this. And a lot of this is because, as you've been hearing and hearing, some of our state legislators seem to be isolated from the needs and desires of their constituents, because of gerrymandering. They seem to be beholden to cranks and conspiracists who want to peddle unfounded misinformation over rational scientific recommendations. I'm proposing that we consider gerrymandering as a disease on our society, and it's time to cure it. Thank you.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [03:13:00] Thank you very much.

**Wagner** [03:13:16] Good afternoon.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [03:13:17] Good afternoon, make sure you state your name, please.

**Wagner** [03:13:19] OK, sorry, I submitted a slip, but that must have got lost in the shuffle. So. Chairman Sykes, members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission and their representatives, not good morning, it is now afternoon. My name is Mandy Wagner. I am from Canton, Ohio, and am a constituent of Representative Oelslager and Senator Schuring. Some of you may also be familiar with me as I have lobbied members of this body many times over the past decade. I am a 20 year veteran public school teacher and an administrative leader of the grassroots organization Action Together Stark. But today I'm speaking as an individual. Why I'm here today is why we're all here today. Ohio's district lines are a mess. Ranked second worst in the country. Woohoo, right? We're not number one. Obviously, this is a problem and needs to be fixed. Ohio citizens spoke loudly about this very matter in 2015 and in 2018, taking a stand against gerrymandering by overwhelmingly supporting two redistricting reform measures. And it's no mystery why that is. When it comes to who represents me in the Ohio House, in a half mile radius from where I live, my neighborhood has three different representatives. If I walk two tenths of a mile north, my neighbors are represented by Reggie Stolzfus. If I walked two tenths of a mile south, those neighbors are represented by Thomas West. Every morning on my five mile jog around the neighborhood, I literally run through three Ohio House districts. That's ridiculous. It's clear what the political agenda was when drawing these maps. Representatives picked their voters. That, however, is not how it's supposed to be. Voters should get to pick their representatives, officeholders shouldn't pick their voters. So what does this mean? The lines are drawn. There's no question it's wildly unfair. But how does that affect Ohioans? How has that affected me in those I care about? As I mentioned earlier, I am a public school teacher. I also mentioned that I may look familiar because I've been advocating for education issues for the past decade. According to an article published in The Columbus Dispatch, in 2010, Ohio ranked 5th in the nation for education. In 2016, you're 23rd, among 50 states and the District of Columbia. Currently, according to a recent report in U.S. news, Ohio ranks 31st in the country for education. So how does that happen? Well, in 10 years, this body has ratified policies that were proven disastrous. And now we are fighting to undo all of that. State testing? It's a mess. State report cards? A mess. And that's why you see my face all the time. We must fix this. And even school funding is a mess. In 1997, in DeRolph vs. State, the Ohio Supreme Court declared the state school system unconstitutional. Specifically citing four major flaws in the system. That was twenty four years ago, almost a quarter of a century, and only this year has there been an inch of progress to fix this broken system. Folks, this is what happens when there is no accountability. Our districts are too safe for our politicians. Therefore, they have little incentive to listen and be responsive to the needs of the state, the needs of our community. For those that live in my community and send their children to Plain Local Schools, if we have a need or a concern, we have to lobby three different representatives for our voices to be heard, for our needs to be met, ranked, or met. Ranked 5th in the nation in 2010, 31st in the nation now. The evidence is there in how effective this system has been. School funding hits especially hard for me personally, and I'll try to cut, make this short, because of school funding and the budgets, I've been laid off two times in the past seven years. And so imagine, pounding the pavement with 20 years teaching experience, a master's degree, working on my second masters, looking for work in a pandemic, in a profession that isn't adequately funded. Needless to say, finding permanent work is impossible. Last year, I worked a one year contract while a teacher was out on leave. And this year I am working a year long sub position in another county, an hour and a half on the road each day in attempt, I'm sorry, a twenty thousand dollar pay cut. I suppose I can always find a second job so that I can afford to work my first job, though, right? Seems to be the American way these days. Teachers are fleeing this profession and it's no wonder why. You're funding and your policies make it impossible to do our jobs, even to keep our jobs. In fact, our system would not function at all if not for the overtime of our teachers, administrators, bus drivers and other staff. But I'm not here today to convince the members of this committee to do the right thing. We all know by tweets from a Republican lawmaker who shall not be named what their agenda is. It's the same agenda they had 10 years ago, evidenced by the way this process is running. Our elected officials knew this job was in front of them. They knew what had to be done. They should have been planning on getting out in front of this most important issue facing our state. These district lines will most assuredly determine the state of our state for the next ten years. And what do we have? The governor dragging his feet to convene the committee, committee hearings scheduled during the workday, making it impossible for working individuals to attend and have their voices heard. And where are the drafts of the maps? We know they're out there and yet we have nothing to speak to today other than hypotheticals. So we stand here and just beg and plead for you to do the right thing. What we want, what the Ohio voters said, is that we want a bipartisan process. We want you to work together and end the partisan gerrymandering. We want a transparent process. We want fair maps. We want you to live up to the promise of redistricting reform. Voters want and expect a 10 year bipartisan agreement. But I fear that won't happen. So my appeal now is to the audience, both here and those tuning in remotely. Pay attention. Show up. Keep speaking up. The process isn't over. So be ready. I'm ready. Thank you.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [03:19:46] Thank you.

**Schufar (?)** [03:19:56] Good afternoon, Commission, my name is Thomas Shufar. I, like her, I'm a Canton resident of nowhere but well spoken, well said by her. Real quick, my points are going to be tightened. Hopefully accurate. Yes, we do have election integrity issues. We do have situations where we have gerrymandering, as it is seen by some, others see it not as such. We do have boundaries. Boundaries are not walls. Boundaries are not walls. Anybody that is a citizen in our state can vote. They don't know who they need to vote for, who their representative is. It's as easy as ordering a pizza pie or getting anything from Grubhub. You can go online, you can even make a phone call. We're all aware of this. It's not rocket science. You can find out who your representatives are. People have some soft excuses that they're using as rocks against their fellow citizens. Don't do that. You're responsible for yourself, as the commission is trying to be responsible and responsive to the people. Thank you very much for having this hearing. It's important. We appreciate your time. We appreciate the integrity that you do have. Broad brushes have been used against you. I'd like to put a broad brush out there for you. We do thank you for your time, your service. You have people that work with you. With you. People do not work for you. If they're working for you, we're in the wrong era. We're going to be working with each other to make this state even better than it's ever been. We have people that are voting in their districts that vote. We have people living in their districts that don't vote, that can vote. Nobody's telling them that they cannot vote. They're not informed, that's not on you commission, that's not on me, Mr. Citizen, it's on that person's own responsibility. So I would just like to thank you once again to know that laws are to be followed. The Board of Election is there for these people to find out whom they're supposed to be voting for. Because once again, boundaries are not walls. They're not preventing anybody from voting. Their own ignorance may be, but that's not on you and that's not on me. And for the gentleman that says, yes, you know, we're saving lots of lives and all this COVID stuff, and I will jump on that. I've got news for everybody: at some point in our life; it is going to end. We are responsible for that. And we have to be mindful to ourselves, wherever you are in your life and in your walk, Christ died for you. That's the Lord Jesus Christ. We're going to be responsible and we're going to find him. So to anybody that's out there, find your way, get out and vote, do your job. Your responsible for you.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [03:23:30] Thank you. [Applause]

**Wen** [03:23:45] Good afternoon, my name is Xao Wen. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson and Commission, I'm here today on behalf of a 501C3 nonprofit organization based in Akron, Ohio, as well as Asian Services in Action or ASIA for short. ASIA strives to empower and advocate for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and to provide AAPIs and other newly arrived immigrant and refugee communities access to culturally and linguistically central information, health and social services. I have lived and worked in Akron, Ohio, for six years. Today, I'm urging you to do everything you can to keep Asian American and Pacific Islander, AAPI, communities in the North Hill neighborhood together during this year's redistricting process. Our community is the fastest growing major racial group in the United States. The U.S. Census Bureau's new demographic data confirms that what already know to be true, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are growing in size all across the nation and are driving our country's population growth. In Ohio, specifically, the Asian American population has grown by 55.3 percent since the 2010 census and 160,000 more people. Asian-Americans now comprise almost three percent of the total population of the state of Ohio. It is important to state that Asian community in the North Hill neighborhood is diverse in terms of its culture, culture and languages. In this district, the top countries of origin include Bhutan, Nepal, Burma, Thailand, Afghanistan and my community, the Korea community. Each of our languages and culture is unique, in the specific community of North Hill where I live. Asian-Americans comprise at least 26.2 percent of the total population of the area. The African-American community comprised about 2.3 percent, and the Hispanic community comprised about 6 percent. If the commission will like I have a copy, I have created a map in [indecipherable] showed the geographic boundaries of this community and I can give it to you. It is also important to say how - thank you - how the Asian community ensured that essential food and supplies were available for all of us throughout the pandemic. Almost all of the Asian Americans that live in the North Hill work in food production facilities and/or factories that produce a majority of the food and supplies that kept all of us safe and supported during the pandemic. Our population growth needs the opportunity to increase our political voice and power. The Asian [indecipherable] populations in this community is 23.1 percent, so we need to make sure that this neighborhood stays together. Elected officials cannot afford to ignore us. They need to engage our communities to be able to address the policy and allocate their resources to dismantle systemic inequities, to add anti-Asian hate. Thank you for your time, and thank you so very much for considering the shared needs and interests of our community. Have a good day. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [03:28:04] Thank you very much.

**Fante** [03:28:15] Morning. Or good afternoon, members of the commission and the fill ins. My name is Dan Fante. What we have here, in my opinion today, is a classic failure to communicate, as they said in 'Cool Hand Luke'. I submitted my testimony online. I submitted my witness slip online, but I had a sneaking suspicion it ain't going to work. So I made a copy of everything, brought it in here. I was one of the first five people in this room between 8:30 and a quarter to 9:00. I give my stuff a couple of these gentlemen here. And it ain't even there. Because you have to say, is anybody not spoken yet? How did we get to this point? I married, a father of two to all children, I have two grandchildren. I'm retired from Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 94, as a pipefitter welder. I am presently a member of Ohio, a board member of the Ohio Alliance for Retired Americans. I am here to testify in favor of fair districts. The current state legislative and congressional maps have led to a more polarized Ohio. These politically motivated districts allow the most extreme politicians to win. In most cases, you know who is going to win the seat by the outcome of the primaries. Luckily, Ohio voted overwhelmingly and to end gerrymandering in 2015 and 2018 for redistricting reform. The people of Ohio on fair maps have shown by over 70 percent support of all these two ballot initiatives, which you've heard over and over today. But this is how democracy works. It's a government of the people, by the people and for the people. Voters want transparency and engagement through public hearings that are convenient for the public to attend and to be a part of the process. It's a shame that all of these commissions hearings and happenings during the work day. For the past year and a half, we've called our workers heroes. But then we don't even give, allow them the space to for them to be heard on something important as redistricting. The new maps must not favor one political party over the other. It should hold communities together, not split them apart, also make the representation fairer and make districts that reflect the preference of how Ohioans actually vote. We've heard this before. You know, we got our congressional district just 12 to 4. That's seventy five percent in favor of one political party. I don't think that's what people voted for. I don't think it is. And I know you don't think it is. If you do it, probably on a different planet. I find it hard to believe that meetings haven't already taken place. We have no idea. Nothing, we don't know. Where's the transparency? Has any of the parties [indecipherable] in secret meetings on redistricting? I can't believe that we've never done anything yet. Well, I'm going to do this this quick, but it could be. In Stark County, we're split into three congressional districts and not one representative lives in Stark County. That's crazy. I reside in the 7th Congressional District and I've never, ever been able to meet my representative in person. Now, for a couple of the few and the biggest fiascos of gerrymandering, and you heard a little bit about it, but I'm going to give you a little different slant. In Ohio, we deregulated the Public Utilities Commission in the late 90s. That was huge. Huge. John Kasich, former governor, is quoted in the Akron Beacon Journal in April of 2014. And I will quote, "I will tell you, it's a challenging time in a state that has gone through this whole business of trying to figure out what deregulation actually means." Kasich further added "the ideological effort to deregulate, I'm not so sure it's the smartest thing we have done in the state of Ohio, but we are where we are. We can't go backwards now, so it's onward in a deregulated environment and we got to figure it out." The result? House Bill 6. What you did, and I don't know if you were there, I know Kirk was there, I don't know how he voted. We deregulated the electrical industry, so all these suppliers, Ohio Edison, Ohio Power, Toledo Edison, Dayton Power Light, all of them, created the generating capacity. They created a distribution system. They, yep, they maintained it. It works for good. Now, all of a sudden, we're going to deregulate it. And that's been over, what, twenty one, twenty two years ago? You correct me if I'm wrong, I know it's going to be that long. And we created a bunch of resellers. And all we get there the other day I get a damn phone call from somebody. I'm seventy seven years old, I'm getting confused. I don't know whether to switch, stay here or there. It's all chaos. We don't need to do that, we had a good system. But I got to changed. You know what? It still ain't fixed. But that's what we ended up with. That's crazy. Another one is the defunding and the degrading of the public health care system in Ohio and this country. It's a total shame. This has led to not doing enough research, development and fighting diseases that are hurting and killing our citizens in Ohio and the country. Another example, Citizens United vs. the Federal Election Commission, in which the US Supreme Court ruled in January of 2010 5-to-4 that the free speech clause of the First Amendment prohibits the government from restricting independent expenditures for political campaigns by corporations, nonprofit corporations, unions, wealthy billionaires and committees established for the purpose of fundraising, which are PACs. Here again, Citizens United is a conservative nonprofit organization funded by corporate donors. Result? Tons of dark money. These are few examples of corporate think tanks and their corporate donors and their lobbyists have been able to get legislators to pass. They write the bills and they pass it on to the legislators to enact them. So when we talk about elections, this is what happens. We don't elect our representatives. The corporate think tanks, the corporate donors and their lobbyists elect them, not we the people. This has been the way it's been in Ohio for over 30 years. People would be shocked, but some have mentioned it already in this room, to know how many bills in Ohio and other states and United, in the US Congress, are written by conservative, corporate funded think tanks like the American Legislative Exchange Council, short ALEC, and others that are corporate writing bill mills. Right now, there are four bills that I know of in the Ohio House and four bills in the Ohio Senate that have ALEC origins all over them. Don't take it for me, now. Just go to the website ALECexposed.org and search Ohio and see how many elected Ohio representatives and senators are currently dues paying members of ALEC. And then you can go in and see how many former members of the Ohio Senate and House were members. Thank you for allowing me to give testimony on this very important topic, and please do everything you can to pass fair state and congressional district maps that reflect the prevalence of how Ohioans actually voted. Thank you very much. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [03:35:47] Thank you.

**Jurosz** [03:35:53] Good afternoon, my name is Nathan Jurosz, and today, what I wanted to share briefly was just kind of my thoughts on today. It looks like I'm the last testimony, so it sounds like we'll be off on our way. I live in North Akron in District 13. I know just crossing three blocks and then now in District 11, go a little further and I'm back in District 13. I was reminded by a quote by John, by John McCain that said about Americans that there is "more that unites us than what divides us." I think that most of us want our candidates who listen to us, let us know that we exist and let us know that we are heard. When I started voting first time in 2014, the values that were shared in me when voting was not for party, but for the person. The way the districts are now, it feels as though each candidate is advocating for their party's loyalty and not their constituents loyalty. Throughout this session, you heard many people talk about fairness. A few people ironically talked about power being important than fairness. But I feel that as a instructor teaching leadership skills toyouth with my master's degree in organizational leadership, one part of leadership is also the values that we share. I do not want Democrats to gerrymander districts in their favor, nor do I want Republicans doing the same. [Applause] What I want is a system that is fair and balanced for every person so that instead of about party lines, it's about ideas and discussion and integrity and character. None of you here today are at fault for the way the districts are now. You inherited this. What that means is you have the opportunity to set the example for the nation of what a fair district state can look like. I ask that you consider your legacy above a short term political gain. What if Ohio had fair districts and set the example for the entire nation? I have so much pride in Akron, in the state and in this country, and I would love for each and every one of you in this Commission to do the same and to set that example. Not for partisan agenda, but to leave a legacy that was for the people of this state. Thank you again for your attendance, I know you have another commission coming up in a couple, in a few hours, maybe less than two hours. And I appreciate those of you who are in attendance. I do appreciate the surrogates that are here, but I do want to just express that I feel there's a lack of genuineness when our leaders are not here to see us and talk to us. So I hope that you convey that, but that we miss seeing them, although I enjoy seeing your faces, I would like to be speaking to the people who are the ones I voted for or that were elected. Have a good rest of your evening and I hope you take this into consideration as you plan the districts of Ohio. Thank you and have a good rest of your day. [Applause]

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [03:39:00] Paul Woording. Emel Scalise. Xao Wen? Kathleen Arthur.

**Arthur** [03:39:28] I think it's good that I'm like the last one to speak, because when I'm, it's short and sweet. It is that we in Ohio must have a democracy that is fair and just for all where each citizen has a voice, their vote and their vote is their voice. Do not stifle voices by overpowering with political power and control. We must have fair districting for all citizens of Ohio. It's just. We must. Thank you for being here. I'm so glad to see the Sykes' because I talk to them often. Thank you.

**Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes** [03:40:14] Thank you very much. Was there anyone else who would like to speak today? Is there anyone else who would like to speak? Seeing, hearing none, anyone from the panel would like to make any comment? With no further business, we are adjourned.