

PROPONENT TESTIMONY OF:

Jazz Bennett
100 Hunter Woods Dr. Oxford, OH

IN SUPPORT OF:

Equal Districts
Drawing Our Future
Ohio Redistricting Commission

Testimony

[Oxford, Ohio, 08/18/21]

I, Jazz Bennett, am in support of Equal Districts in the State of Ohio and across the nation. Unfair Districts do nothing but strip the power of the vote away from people who have the right to vote as citizens in this country. Every vote matters. Equal Districts allow the people's voting power to be just, nondiscriminatory, and valued.

Gerrymandering has impacted me as an Ohio citizen because it makes me assume that if I am not part of the political affiliation that my state legislatures are of, then they do not care about my needs, my voice, and my citizenship. As a U.S. citizen, the most vital power I have is my vote; it is my choice of who I vote for and what I vote for in every election. This is the liberty that the Constitution claims that I deserve to have, so why isn't that promise being fulfilled? Why are my rights being manipulated? I believe that people should come before corporations, therefore, why does a dollar bill matter more than my life? Our State Legislatures should value the opinion of all people--not just the wealthy. The majority of people in this country are not wealthy so this is a classist issue. It is also a racist issue due to the common practice of dividing the votes of a predominantly minority community if politicians assume the way a specific neighborhood will vote due to a social identity that they hold. As someone who loves this country, I am done with assumptions, betrayal, and unfairness.

We want and need a fair redistricting process because our democracy deserves to be for all people--not just a select few. We are the United States of America, but due to gerrymandering, uniting as one country has become trickier. I want my vote to matter just as much as I want my neighbor's vote to matter. This should be a fair and equal democracy if we claim to be the land of the free. With fair redistricting, all votes will matter, more voices will be heard, and our society will become more informative, inclusive, and communicative. Politicians must stop making moves and decisions behind closed doors. The people deserve to hear what politicians desire and politicians deserve to hear what the people desire. This agreement must

be mutual rather than one-sided. We cannot be a nation that is made up of an untrustworthy government.

Please consider the importance of our democracy and what it means to be a proud citizen of this country; this includes the right to vote and the right for that vote to matter for all people regardless of social identities or political party. Thank you. Let's enforce Equal Districts in the state of Ohio and beyond.