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Congressional District 2

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To the Members of the Redistricting Commission:

I appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony to this commission.

I currently live in the gerrymandered congressional district 2. Here, Hamilton County is carved up and a portion of Hamilton County/Cincinnati has been added to a large rural area to create a safe partisan district. Congressional district 1 is equally gerrymandered. The practice is called cracking, breaking the population of Hamilton County/Cincinnati into two pieces. As a result, two congressional districts have been created where the representatives have very little incentive to represent the City of Cincinnati/Hamilton County well because they do not depend on their votes to get reelected. Effectively, a population of over 800,000 people has been disenfranchised.

The urban portion of district 2 has very little in common with the rural portion of the district; counties Clermont, Brown, Adams, Highland, Ross, Pike and Scioto.

Public transportation is one area where the needs between urban and rural communities are very different. In this current gerrymandered district (2), public transportation in the City of Cincinnati is getting no attention from the elected congressman even though it is vital for many people in the city because it connects people to jobs and thus enables them to be self sufficient in earning a living.

Other areas with very different needs for urban versus rural communities include jobs and the environment, like addressing climate change for example. In an urban area climate change adaptation could include addressing storm water runoff, planting trees to provide shade and cooling effects and expanding public transportation networks. In rural areas, agricultural practices might benefit from modification, field drainage tiles may need to be laid, biofuel crops could be grown, wetland and other conservation easements could be created.

I am asking this Commission to honor the Ohio Constitution, article XIX on congressional redistricting to create a compact district in Cincinnati/Hamilton County that encompasses the entirety of the City of Cincinnati and the majority of Hamilton County. This district would meet the requirement of the Constitution to draw a compact district and to leave a county intact where the population exceeds that of the congressional district apportionment of 786,630.

This would be a fair district. It would enable the congressional representative to be more successful because they only need to focus on one community of interest; a community with common needs in areas such as jobs, public transportation and the environment. At the same time, citizens in such a community can more successfully have access to their congressional representative to advocate for the issues concerning them as well as hold the representative accountable.

I have the great privilege and fortune to live in a democracy. In a democracy, power flows from the people and people should be empowered to select their representative and not visa versa. People should be empowered, not disenfranchised. That is how a democracy is kept alive.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Andrea Dannenberg