

Testimony to Ohio Redistricting Commission
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I was born and raised in Hamilton County. I have resided with my family in the county since 1972 and have been a homeowner in the Clifton neighborhood since 1976. After 45 years as a high school science teacher, I retired in 2018. I love my city and the Ohio River Valley. I believe strongly that good citizenship begins with exercising my right to vote and to be heard by elected officials. I believe that the strength of local communities ensures a sense of belonging among its citizens that incentivizes them to be actively engaged in political processes - the fundamental step in maintaining a democracy. Gerrymandering districts through political mapmaking erodes the political spirit of local communities. Fair districting is a major step to rebuild citizen involvement especially among the generations younger than my own.

Two of my three sons have chosen to remain in Cincinnati. They both live and work within the city. They and many of their friends speak about their disenchantment with Ohio Legislature politics. They are tired of the corruption and the polarized nature of the discourse. Their children are young. They worry about what a future in Ohio holds for them. I stay in touch with many of my former students. They have a way of circling back to their chemistry teacher with news of college courses, career advancement, and job choices. So many of them do not want to stay in Ohio because of the uncertainty in leadership at the state house. How do I defend my belief that engagement in candidate selection and support as well as voting is the way to achieve the leadership they wish to see? I believe it is by standing before this commission today to ask for fair districts - districts that are compact, contiguous and reflect the community in both culture and concerns.

The maps that are created over the next few months are the big step forward in juicing up the enthusiasm for government across all 88 counties and across the many generations that call Ohio home. I believe these maps are a crucial step in revitalizing local community interest in their governments - city, township, county, and state.