

## REDISTRICTING COMMISSION OF OHIO

Written Statement of Kenneth G. Hawley  
Public Hearing at University of Cincinnati  
Cincinnati, Ohio  
August 24, 2021

This is the first time Ohio is drawing state and federal congressional district maps since voters overwhelmingly approved anti-gerrymandering laws in 2015 and 2018. I know this hearing relates only to the 2015 law, and the redrawing of state congressional districts under the new rules established by that law. The arguments against gerrymandering, and the harms caused to democracy itself, however, are the same whether the redrawing of state or federal congressional districts is at stake.

Let me begin by saying that, until recently, I have considered myself to be a life-long, third generation Republican. Gerrymandering in particular has pushed both parties to the extremes. Typically, only the most zealous and opinionated voters turn out for Primary and Mid-Term elections. With our primary election system, that means that in order to win a party primary, candidates must appeal to those most zealous and opinionated voters. Those most zealous and extreme candidates are then most likely to win a party primary. And when districts are gerrymandered, those most zealous and extreme candidates are almost guaranteed to the ones elected to the legislature, whether state or federal.

The rules set out in the 2015 law were designed to create a more transparent process than the process followed in 2010, and to thus give the public meaningful input into the redistricting process. The rules were designed, also, to keep communities together, and to allow voters to choose legislators who can be held accountable for their actions that affect those communities. These new rules were supported overwhelmingly by voters, Republican, Democratic, and Independent alike, in all of Ohio's 88 counties.

Ohio voters overwhelmingly told you that they do not want rigged elections, where politicians choose their voters instead of the other way around. Ohio voters overwhelmingly told you to redraw the currently extremely gerrymandered congressional districts in a fair, non-political manner, that truly reflects the will of voters and the people of Ohio.

We therefore insist that this Commission respect the will of Ohio voters, uphold the letter and spirit of the 2015 anti-gerrymandering law, and redraw Ohio's legislative districts in a fair, community oriented, non-political manner. PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE, do not disrespect the will of Ohio's voters.

Redraw the maps as if our democracy itself depends upon it. Events of the past year, and ongoing right now, show that it does.



Respectfully,  
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