

## Testimony

Thank you for opportunity to be heard. I am here today to talk to you about the importance of hearing the collective voices of Ohioans. 'We' want to be at the top of your minds as you work through the Redistricting process in a transparent and bipartisan manner.

I grew up in NE Ohio down the street from the B&O RR tracks and old factory buildings. As a kid, my favorite activity was sharing National Geographic magazines with my dad exploring lands, cultures and people from all over the world. Most of the content was awe-inspiring but it was the articles about people who had lost their self-rule, (their voices) that stuck with me. I was a kid, what did I know?

Later, I became a scientist and studied every "OLOGY" that I could. ...Zoology, Geology, Anthropology observing and appreciating the connectedness of planet, community and its people, including the shared struggles of people in societies where voices had been neglected.

We find ourselves here today, in a society that is often referred to as divided; I still look for the ways that we are connected. We all want our voices to be heard. We want to know that what we think, matters. Gerrymandering takes away our voices and what matters to us.

Gerrymandering divides us. Not just by the lines that are drawn on a map to create voting communities but ....by the disenfranchisement that it creates when voters' voices are diluted. It takes away our power to affect change.

Gerrymandering takes away our voices.

My congressional district runs from central Hamilton County 110 miles to almost the southern tip of Ohio through several rural counties. Congressional townhalls don't often happen here. Both rural counties and urban/suburban counties have needs, they're just usually not the same. The residents of both types of communities need to be heard.

I am here today to ask you to exercise fairness when creating Ohio's districts. Ohioans must know that speaking the truth about our needs won't fall on deaf ears because of a political purpose or an upcoming election.

We, Ohioans have spoken twice, in 2015 and 2018 with over 70% support for fairness in the redistricting process... a fairness that will be reflected in the communities where we live, work and strive to be good citizens and neighbors. We want you to hear our voices, listen to advocates and experts and create new maps with our best interest in mind. Show us that you hear us.