

**PROPONENT/OPPONENT TESTIMONY OF:**

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**1.**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

I lived in Seattle Washington from 1988 to 2012. Seattle is located in King County where I took for granted that a voters guide and mail in ballots would be sent to me by the board of elections.

I was dismayed when I moved to Oxford, Ohio in August 2012 and there was no easy to understand, thorough, and balanced voters guide mailed to me before every election and of course no mail in ballots to drop into one of the 73 ballots boxes like there is in King County.

While I didn't expect every election to go my way in Ohio like it did most of the time, living in Washington's 7th congressional district. Since that first fall here I've had the feeling that something was not right with my access to voting and voter information in Ohio's 8th congressional district.

I could say the future of democracy can be seen in King County Washington but not all people want that future. I have learned this non-democratic fact clearly living in the southwest part of the Buckeye state.

I have mostly felt in the dark politically in Butler county and there is a reason why and it is by design.

**2.**

What I have learned is my vote is not proportionally represented as 1 person, 1 vote in the Ohio state and national legislatures. My vote and the votes of my community in Oxford have been diluted in federal and state elections for years.

The reason my vote doesn't count is, I have learned, is that Ohio has some of the most

grotesquely gerrymandered legislative districts in the country and I live in one of them.

We all know gerrymandering is done by either party in power at the time of redistricting which was the case when the Ohio maps were redrawn by the Republicans in 2011 but the effects of that redrawing are now damaging our democracy.

Ohio Republicans from gerrymandered districts are proposing laws to suppress access to the ballot box, control access to honest historical education, and not allowing a true accounting of the coup attempt of January 6th. Gerrymandering on either side leads to polarization and now the effect is tearing the country apart.

### **3.**

I also feel quite in the dark about public input into the Ohio redistricting process. I've put in many hours of work over the past few months just to figure out how to get to this point speaking with you today. The fact that we don't have any virtual testimony available during a pandemic speaks volumes about the current process.

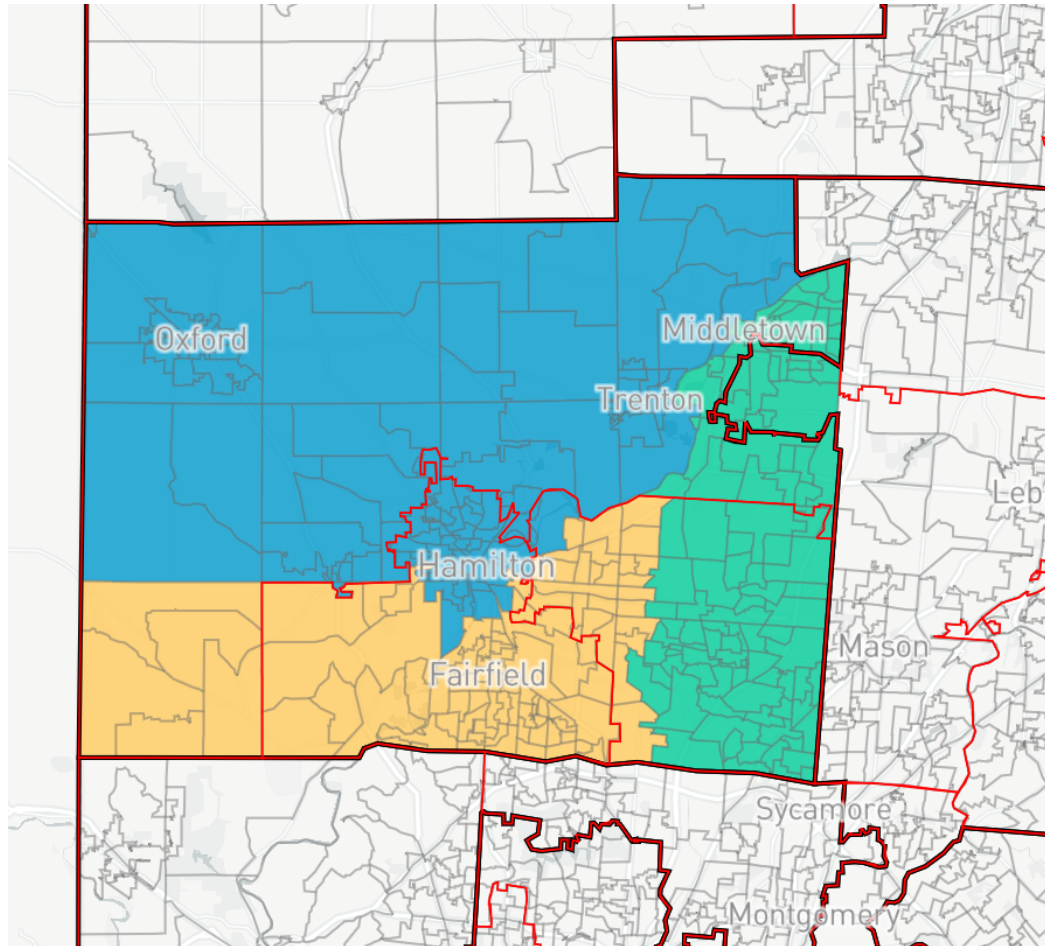
It doesn't take much to figure out that many people in power want the public to be kept in the dark about the redistricting process. For a start there must be proposed maps made available well before public input. There needs to be at least 5 months of more time of public outreach and comment to have any meaningful citizen input into this process.

The pandemic and delayed census data have only provided cover for those who want to continue to skulk in the dark. We also all know we all are kidding ourselves because the only fair way to do this is to have an independent commission such as the state of Washington among many other states.

I have learned there are a few simple rules for fair map drawing. Rules I believe we can all agree on such as:

- Compactness and uniformity of districts
- Minimizing the number of county and municipalities split into different districts
- Competitiveness – maximizing the number of districts which either party could win
- Representational fairness – balancing the number of districts which favor each party

Using these rules, in a few hours, I drew my own version of the state legislative maps which I've included in this testimony.



I believe my redrawing of the districts represents my community better.

**4.**

I'm a student of history and I know the path of creating an authoritarian, non-democratic state and one of the tools is the divide and conquer methods of gerrymandering which lead to cynicism and apathy. I can see and feel this totalitarian machinery in action here in Ohio. I believe that having fair districts and a fair process to draw the districts can act as a tempering force to unbalanced power that will lead our country to further disaster.

I'm asking you to support the transparent, fair, and honest process of redrawing the Ohio maps with a robust period of public engagement which will put you on the right side of history instead

of fighting against it.

Thank you for your time.