

Aug 24, 2021

Redistricting Testimony: Cincinnati

Jen Scott, Southwest Ohio Regional Organizer for Equality Ohio

Members of the redistricting commission, thank you for allowing me to testify before you today about the future of our redistricting process here in Ohio.

My name is Jen Scott. I use she/her pronouns, and I am the Southwest Ohio Regional Organizer at Equality Ohio, our state's LGBTQ+ legislative and legal non-profit organization. Equality Ohio firmly believes in fair maps that are representative of all Ohioans and give LGBTQ+ people the opportunity to be represented in their state legislatures and congressional districts.

LGBTQ+ people are everywhere in Ohio. It's a common misconception that our community exists solely in cities and urban areas, and that Queer people only vote in predominately blue districts. The truth about our community is that it is incredibly diverse and cuts across many intersections of identities, including party lines, socioeconomic status, race, gender, and disability.

According to [the Williams Institute](#), LGBTQ+ people are about 4.3% of the population, including 5% of Ohio's workforce. This past June, Pride celebrations happened all over the state, in rural small towns and suburbs all over Ohio, from solidly blue districts to solidly red districts. And all LGBTQ+ people deserve to be represented as whole people with fair maps that accurately represent their region.

At Equality Ohio, we believe that a fair map is one that accurately reflects a region with respect to localities and their borders, population size and distribution, and a statewide map with a reasonable ratio of political party distribution for representation in congress and at the statehouse. Conservative areas, progressive areas, and flip districts deserve to be represented to create an accurate representation of Ohioans.

Quite simply, supermajorities are bad for everyone, but especially for LGBTQ+ people. In 2021, during a time of unprecedented attack on the LGBTQ+ community, electing lawmakers that are supportive of our community has never been more essential. Fair representation and districts will improve the possibilities for LGBTQ+ people to run for office in their home districts, improving the democratic process and LGBTQ+ representation.

Ohio is currently mounting a multimillion dollar campaign to bring people to Ohio, and people want to live in places where they can be fairly represented and have their voices heard. Future Ohioans will bring their skills, talents, and economic value to our state, but we need to give them the opportunity to participate in our democratic process. For LGBTQ+ people looking to move to Ohio, it's important that they can find affirming communities with affirming representation.

Equality Ohio supports a redistricting process that understands LGBTQ+ individuals as key community members in all parts of Ohio. LGBTQ+ people are your friends, family, neighbors, and community members and leaders.

Equality Ohio envisions an Ohio where all people are welcomed, affirmed and flourishing. We look forward to working with a more representative Ohio legislature to build a better Ohio.