

Thank you for the opportunity speak to you today. My name is Christopher Zander. I vote in the 28th District in Reading but I've lived in the 21st in Dublin and the 69th district in Medina, I recall William Batchelder's daughter was in my 3rd grade class. I'm here today to stress to you the importance of creating fair, competitive maps. While the 28th isn't the most gerrymandered district in Ohio, one only needs to look at some of the other districts in South West Ohio to see that lines are drawn to favor reelection of certain parties by wide margins. I believe that much of the division we see today between the two major parties is the end result of using partisan maps and the primary election system.

I believe that on average, when a given district is safe for one party, a candidate only has to compete within one's party for reelection, resulting in tacking further right or left in order to be relevant. When a politician's positions have been stretched to the extreme and made instantly referenceable thanks to technology, its nearly impossible to cooperate with the 'other party' without instantly being challenged as a flip-flopper, traitor to the party, etc. If we can make our districts less partisan, political actors are forced to moderate themselves to remain electable. I believe this moderation can be difficult to do, and therefore results in better candidates. It's a simple task to garner the most attention or applause by taking an extreme position that plays to a certain ideology than it is to have a nuanced position that takes edge cases and exceptions. I argue that a good legislator must be capable of nuance and must see that there are exceptional circumstances that must accounted for when creating, debating and voting on laws. Hopefully those of you here listening to the voters today have those characteristics regardless of how your district is currently drawn.

If partisan maps continue to be produced, time will be wasted in court as the bad maps are contested, but maybe you will find a way to win the day. But I warn you that this is not an issue that is going to go away, I think you can see by the number of people here today that the voters of Ohio are tired of gridlock, and are tired of gerrymandering. We want politicians who REPRESENT us; and who represent the best of us, not the loudest of us. This is an issue where you will be held to account because our democracy depends on it.

Thank you.

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