

Draft of planned remarks to Ohio Redistricting Commission hearing, August 23, 2021

Members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission,

I would like briefly to address the larger picture:

Partisan gerrymandering is real, and it is appallingly effective at imposing preferred outcomes upon elections, thereby thwarting responsive, representative democracy.

Ohio has been thoroughly and inexcusably gerrymandered for the past decade, and that was very intentional.

Ohio voters are clearly against partisan gerrymandering and want it ended.

Unfortunately, those responsible have yet to offer real apology or amends for the wrong done to us. Worse, the proceedings so far this year fail to demonstrate goodwill or sincerity about delivering reforms and fair maps.

No actual work on redistricting has been done, yet, at least not in public.

The hearings now begun raise more questions about intent than they satisfy. In the absence of proposed maps, it's unclear what we are supposed to tell you which we have not been saying again and again for 10 years. If the Commission wishes to "take the temperature" of Ohio on the issue of redistricting, just in case it has changed, you might look around at all the yard signs which say "END GERRYMANDERING" AND "FAIR DISTRICTS NOW." I have yet to see a yard sign advocating "muscle through more gerrymanders and skew Ohio election results for 10 more years."

If, however, you sincerely believe that these listening sessions will provide value to a fair redistricting process, you should have started them months ago. You should also schedule some outside of the average workday.

You should have convened this commission months ago. If the Commission could convene before Census Data, and the Commission can hold hearings before draft maps, then there is no valid reason for such long inactivity.

The partisan attempt in the General Assembly to lawyer up in advance, using public resources, does not inspire confidence, either.

But I want to make clear that I am addressing all members of this Commission and not merely some. The Commission's first, long-awaited meeting opened and closed so quickly that it felt like a prank at our expense. Yet who spoke up on our behalf?

We deserve better and have demanded better than the insult to democracy which we have suffered over the past decade. Any and every member of this Commission who sincerely wants to deliver better—not just claim it but deliver it—needs to do better than has so far been the case this year.

Thank you.

Matt Kuhns,
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