

Blessing, Heather

From: rbt@ralphturek.com
Sent: Sunday, August 22, 2021 6:31 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Written Testimony for Redistricting Public Hearings Aug. 23, 2021
Attachments: witness-slip-media-form-word.doc

Commission:

I will not be attending the public hearing in person. However, I submit this written testimony in strongest support of fair redistricting:

Drawing political maps that divide states into legislative districts favoring one political party over the other is unfair and runs counter to a core democratic principle—that all citizens are entitled to equal representation. The legislative districts created in 2012 were drawn in such a way that Republican candidates enjoyed a significant advantage over Democratic candidates. This contention is supported by voting data.

In the four election cycles from 2012 to 2018, Republicans averaged 55% of the total Ohio vote compared to 44% for Democrats. Yet, each year resulted in Republicans holding 75% of the seats, or 12 of the 16 available seats. This happened because GOP mapmakers packed Democratic voters into just four districts, which made up a third of the total number of Democratic votes statewide.

This unfair practice has led to the total control of Ohio’s government by one party. Since 2002, Republicans have controlled all three governing bodies—the House, the Senate, and the Governor’s Office. I feel that the resulting lack of incentive to compromise has led to some extremist policies that have damaged the state in many ways, not the least of which is the intensification of the divisiveness that grips not only Ohio but the nation.

I also believe that there exists a widespread perception that some “representatives” no longer feel a need to be personally responsive to their constituents. This is reinforced when emails are ignored or answered only with stock responses, some of which fail to address the concerns in question, and by town halls that are avoided. And the grouping of disparate and geographically distant communities into single voting districts makes it all the more difficult for those legislators sincerely wishing to represent their constituents to do so. All of this leads to resentment, voter dissatisfaction, and distrust of government.

I find myself wondering just how invested our elected representatives are in our welfare.

Gerrymandering has become extreme in Ohio and elsewhere, in violation of the existing criteria for the fair, nonpartisan drawing of legislative districts. Ohioans voted strongly for fair redistricting in 2015 and 2018. It’s unfortunate that the issue was not addressed before the 2020 elections, but it simply must be addressed before the 2022 elections.

Thank you.