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PRESENTED TO:
2021 OHIO REDISTRICTING COMMISSION
SINCLAIR COMMUNITY COLLEGE DAYTON, OH

Dayton, Ohio August 24, 2021 - Hello, I am Debra Saunders. I reside in Dublin, Ohio, and my Ohio Legislative districts are 16 and 21. As a voter in Ohio, I have been waiting for this time to come, supported by very clear and overwhelming voter declarations in both 2015 and 2018. We want and expect appropriate change to occur as the redistricting process is conducted with the recently released 2020 census data. Unlike the clandestine, secretive process that occurred in 2011, we call on the Ohio Redistricting Commission to meet the redistricting obligations that promote fairness in voter representation within the districts, transparency in the process, and sufficient time for the people of Ohio to review the proposed district maps and provide comment.

The districting that occurred in 2011 impacted where I live, resulting in non-sensical mapping. State Route 33, directly in front of my property, is in a different House district than mine. Looking at the map, it resembles a lollipop carve-out where the roadway is a thin stick with no properties or voters, leading to a group of residences that are the candy, the purpose of the bizarre mapping. The obvious and sole purpose was to create a narrow conduit for a land grab just north of me. These districting practices have divided neighborhoods, provide no continuity for community, and speak loudly of special interest for partisan politics. These practices have had great negative impact on our lower-income and marginalized communities within Franklin County.

We know that redistricting can be equitable and represent the voters of Ohio fairly. This occurs when districts are structured sensibly without rogue carve-outs, extensive chops or splits, or stretched over a large territory. Fairness occurs where each vote does matter because either party has a chance at winning, unlike what Ohio has experienced from the last redistricting where election outcomes have been known long before election day. In this age of greater data availability with data analyses and modeling, considerations for the fair composition of each district and partisan balance of districts in our state can occur readily.

I stand with my fellow constituents of Ohio, imploring this Committee to demonstrate a strong willingness to work with the mandates of the voters of this state by providing a redistricting process that is evident and understandable, is fair for each voter, and allows a public review of the proposed maps before moving to legislative approval.

Thank you.