

REDISTRICTING COMMISSION TESTIMONY FOR AUGUST 26, 2021

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you. My name is Barbra J. Gant. I vote in the 4th Congressional District, the 85th State of Ohio House District, and the 12 Ohio Senate District in rural Logan County. I would like to draw your attention to the issue of Gerrymandering.

In my county, all of our districts, at both the Federal Congressional and State district levels, have been effectively drawn to favor the current incumbents, members of one political party.

This effectively means that the legislators are choosing their voters instead of voters choosing their legislators. Also, the districts drawn to make this happen cut off neighbors from one another in strange ways and combine parts of the state that are far from each other and may have little in common.

Some relevant facts: Congressional District 4 is a nationally recognized demonstration of Gerrymandering, meant to elect the same person over and over. The duck-shaped district is a huge challenge to cover in relating to voters and designed to discourage any challengers. It is particularly outrageous that the "bill of the duck" includes a couple of correctional facilities with about 3,000 persons to pad the population of the district, but the persons used in this way cannot even vote due to their incarceration. While this district links our county with parts of counties a 3-hour drive away, it cuts us off from neighboring Hardin County, with which our county has many connections. Our State House and Senate Districts carve out 3 townships to be in districts separate from the rest of our county, for unexplained reasons.

The consequences of not fixing the problem include: Discouragement of voting, as many potential voters feel there is no point to do so, because the result of their vote is pre-determined. Also, great potential leaders choose not to run for these offices, because the deck is so stacked against them. A point has been made that Gerrymandering results in the election of extremists. I find that the districts I live in illustrate this perfectly.

I ask you to hold to the guidelines of the Redistricting processes set forth in 2015 and 2018 and assure that counties and communities are kept together to the greatest extent possible and that Gerrymandering is avoided.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my request.

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