

Fair Districts for Ohio

To whom it may concern:

My name is George Jeffries and I am a lifelong resident of Celina, Ohio. I'm married and my wife and I have raised 3 professional children and we have 3 grandsons. I have worked in a defense industry plant for more than 39 years and as an engineer for more than 35-1/2 years. All of those years I have been a proud UAW member and have worked to support my union and our veterans. I am testifying today in favor of fair districts or even just common-sense districts.

The voters of Ohio should be able to select the people that represent us in all levels of government. Our politicians should not be able to use computer modeling software to help them draw lines so they don't have to be responsible to their constituents. When they're allowed to select their voters, they lose their accountability to us and become more beholden to special interest groups that help fund their campaigns.

In Mercer County, Ohio where I vote we are represented by 3 different U.S. Representatives. Before you say we're lucky to be represented this way please consider that the congressional districts represented in Mercer County run from the outskirts of Cincinnati up to the area west of Toledo and east to Elyria, Ohio. Our small county isn't a prime consideration when you consider there are cities within the district with populations as big or larger than our entire county. One can literally drive for a whole day without leaving the districts representing us or driving on the same road twice or backtracking.

One of our congressional districts looks like a duck and has been represented by the same elected official since January 3, 2007. I have been to his office (he left as soon as we arrived for an appointment) in Washington D.C. and expressed my concerns on different policies and was told I would receive answers to those concerns in a week or two. His office told me that over three years ago and I am still waiting. I have attended other events where the politician tells his constituents if ever in D.C. to visit him, he always responds to people from the district (lol). If these districts were more fairly drawn maybe the elected officials would occasionally be accountable to us - the voters and tax payers they were elected to represent. In these districts, the General Election doesn't even matter anymore. The outcome can easily be predicted by the winners of the primaries and it doesn't even matter how out of touch the politician may be.

Our state legislative lines are not any better. I live in Senate District 12, which is the home of the Senate President. You would think this would be a good thing and he would be able to "bring home the bacon" to his district. But the way the lines are drawn, he doesn't have to listen to us voters. He is too busy getting wined and dined by pro-charter school lobbyists in Columbus to know what is happening right here in Celina. At least our county isn't split into three different senate or house districts.

With fairer districts maybe perhaps, we could have a chance to elect politicians that would respond to their voters. Maybe they wouldn't be collecting generous salaries and be spending a lifetime in office without doing anything to help the communities they were elected to represent. Please do everything you can to make sure communities are kept together and pass fair maps that will better represent Ohio.

George Jeffries

Celina, Mercer County Ohio