

August 27, 2021

Dear Ohio Redistricting Commission Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Lynn Buffington. I live in Beavercreek in Greene County. I vote in the 73rd Ohio House district and the 10th Senate district. A big problem for me and the majority of Ohioans is that the Ohio General Assembly does a poor job of representing us. A specific example is background checks of gun sales. Polling shows that the vast majority, 90%, of Ohioans support background checks for all gun sales. In other words, Ohioans, of both major political parties support closing the loopholes that allow far too many gun sales to occur without background checks. However, the Ohio General Assembly repeatedly has refused to close the background check loopholes. In large part, this is because of gerrymandering.

It is well known that gerrymandering creates districts that are safe for one political party in the general election. Thus the election outcome is determined by the outcome of the primary. In non-presidential years, the voter turnout in Ohio primaries is sadly quite low, so that in a gerrymandered district, the election outcome is almost always determined by only about 15% of the voters. In my district, in 2018, it was only 14% of the voters who determined the winner to represent me in the Ohio House (the 73rd district).

I truly believe that because my two legislators are in safe districts, when I contact them, they do not feel a need to be responsive to my opinion because I am not in their political party and thus do not vote in the primaries that choose the winner in my district.

In order to change this lack of true representation, I urge you to live up to the promise of Ohio's new redistricting rules in every way. I am especially worried that the Commission may not fulfill two responsibilities: to have a transparent process and to create fair maps according to the new criteria. I specifically urge you to consider the maps submitted by the public. If non-partisan public groups such as the League of Women Voters assess that some maps submitted by the public do a better job of meeting the new criteria than do the Ohio Assembly maps that you, the Commission, propose, then you should reconsider your maps. If that were to occur and you do not revise your maps, then you must fully explain to the public the reasons for your choice.

Thank you for your work on behalf of Ohio.

Lynn Buffington

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