

**TESTIMONY OF BENITA KAHN**  
**100 N. Stanwood Rd., Bexley, Ohio**

**IN SUPPORT OF:**

An Open and Transparent Process For Redistricting, Consistent with  
the Voters' Demands in 2015 and 2018.

**Testimony at Ohio State University at Mansfield, August 27, 2021**

My name is Benita Kahn and I live in Bexley, Ohio. I live in House District 18, Senate District 15 and Congressional District 3. I am testifying today because of the history of unfair practices, lack of transparency and failure to allow, much less accept, public input when drawing maps after the 2010 census. These unfair practices resulted in Ohio voters passing (by 71%/75%) amendments to the Ohio Constitution for a Redistricting Commission to draw new legislative and Congressional districts.

Ohio voters wanted to ensure transparency and real public participation in the redistricting process and the creation of districts that are compact, contiguous and do not favor or disfavor either political party. So far, against the clear will of the voters, the transparency and public participation have not been met as shown by: the significant delay in appointing members of the Redistricting Commission; the failure to schedule public hearings in Columbus (the most populace city in the State); and the failure to introduce maps to the public prior to hearings.

The impact of the 2010 unfair districts has been clear. The gerrymandered districts skewed heavily in one political direction have resulted in many Ohio voters, including myself, having their voice and vote limited in Congress and lost at the Ohio legislature. Congressional districts are currently split 75% Republican favored to 25% Democrat favored. The Ohio Senate is split 75% Republican/25% Democrat and the Ohio House 65% Republican/35% Democrat. This skewing does not reflect voter split in Ohio. Since 1856, there has never been a 75/25% party split in Presidential elections and only 3 times has a party gotten 60% or more of the vote.

Ohio's gerrymandered districts have resulted in politicians taking extreme positions to win primaries, knowing they will win the general election due to heavily skewed districts. This has eliminated all incentive to compromise at the legislature on issues important to most Ohioans. The skewed districts have also split communities with similar values such as Clintonville and Bexley residents who live 10 miles apart and are both urban areas. But Clintonville is in a Congressional District that includes areas over 60 miles away and is 60% rural. It is not possible for one representative to fairly represent these diverse interests. Rather than Ohio voters having the freedom to elect officials who represent the voter's issues and positions, the officials have created districts with selected voters who represent the official's position.

In closing, I want to emphasize the importance of having a transparent process with public input that is recognized and taken into account when creating new districts. This time, the districts must be compact, contiguous and not favor or disfavor either political party. We cannot have fair representation if voters' voices are silenced.