

Thank you for allowing me to speak today. My name is Brian Miller and I live in Knox County, which is in House District 68 and Senate District 19.

I consider myself an advocate for government that serves the needs of the public by listening to them and responding to their needs. Gerrymandering in Ohio has undermined those goals by creating illogical and unwieldy House and Senate districts that disenfranchise voters. We need new Senate and House maps that are compact, keep communities whole, and give all voters a voice.

My county is mostly rural and agricultural. The neighboring territory on all four sides is also rural, and one can drive 10 minutes or more from the edge of the county and still be in farmland, with very few signs of suburbanization.

Senate District 19 includes Knox and Delaware counties as well as a long, narrow finger extending south into Franklin County. The physical terrain, needs, and issues of the rural north and the suburban south don't mesh. An elected representative can best speak best for the interests of a district that has common threads of history, tradition and culture, rather the one that is manufactured from disparate threads. House District 68 is comprised of Knox County and the eastern half of Delaware County, which forms a dog-leg-shaped piece extending to the east and south. Neither district is compact. Knox County should be placed in a district of mostly rural character that is compact and, as far as possible, avoids county splits.

Gerrymandered districts such as Senate District 19 are designed to keep one party in control in perpetuity with little chance for the other party to win the seat. The elected representative need not pay much attention to views inconsistent with the mainstream of his or her party. Yet, for democracy to work, our elected leaders must listen to and be representative of *all* the voters in that district, not just those of the same party. When a district leans heavily to one side or the other, that is less likely to happen.

The new maps should result in districts that are more competitive, paving the way for elections in which candidates of either party, and candidates with views outside of the party mainstream, are more likely to win a seat. This way, legislators are more likely to listen to diverse voices and interests in their districts.

I urge you to keep these principles in mind and work to create fair maps that elicit the voices of the voters of Knox County and all of Ohio.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my request.

Hearing: Mansfield, 8-27-2021. Name: Brian Miller. Email: brianemiller49@gmail.com. Address: 213 E. Woodside Dr., Gambier, Ohio 43022. Phone: 740-427-4010 (cell). Today's date: Aug. 24, 2021