

TO: Ohio Redistricting Commission
RE: Testimony re: Ohio Redistricting
DATE: Aug. 23, 2021
Submitted by: Elizabeth Oldendorp
6195 Donegan Way
Dublin, OH 43016

There is nothing more fundamental in democracy than the right to vote. This right must be protected and defended so that every vote counts equally and fairly. The long-standing practice of gerrymandering violates the presumption of fair and equal votes. Democracy means the voters choose their candidates. It does NOT mean that the candidates or parties get to choose their voters. Yet partisan gerrymandering is the practice that has gone on for many years in violation of true democracy.

I moved here 3 years ago from Nassau County on Long Island in NY. I and many others worked very hard to get fair districts and waged a campaign for several years to achieve that. Yet, despite all our efforts, along with the efforts of several non-partisan organizations, we were thwarted time and time again, meeting after meeting, by a gerrymandered legislative body that refused to consider fair districting maps. Instead, one party—the controlling party—drew their map in the dead of the night without any input from the minority party or the public, and rammed it through.

That is NOT true democracy where every vote should count equally. Computer-aided technology enables the controlling party to draw districts that do not represent the vote of the people. Packing the districts and drawing districts shaped like ducks, snakes, salamanders, and various other configurations grossly violate the principles of fair districting.

The criteria that SHOULD be followed are the following: compactness, contiguity, equal population, partisan fairness, racial fairness, and preservation of existing political communities. But you already know this.

The state legislature should not be permitted to draw the lines. No single party should be allowed to control the drawing of voting districts. The lines should be drawn by a non-partisan group of people with equal input from all parties, including minor parties. Non-partisan organizations also should be a part of this group or commission. There must be ample time for public input as well as full transparency.

I hope that these hearings will work towards the goal of fairly-drawn districts that give both major parties an equal chance of winning the people's vote. Cracking and packing districts by any party in control is unfair and blatantly partisan, resulting in false representation of the people's vote. Our democracy is ailing and in dire straits. It is beyond time to let the true voice of the people be heard.

Thank you very much,

