

OPPONENT TESTIMONY OF:

EDWIN FULLER
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NOT IN SUPPORT OF:

Ohio Assembly Maps Proposed by
Ohio Redistricting Commission on September 9, 2021

Good afternoon, Co-Chair Cupp, Co-Chair Sykes and Ohio Redistricting Commission members. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Edwin Fuller. I live in Harrison Township, in Montgomery County. I vote in the 43rd Ohio House district and the 10th Senate district.

When I saw the proposed maps that were released, it prompted me to drive through what constitutes not only my own neighborhood, but surrounding areas as well. What I physically saw reminded me once again of the pressing need for recognition of community interests and needs, like needs that find root in an actual understanding of the people, issues, and connections that constitute what a district can look like...one that is fairly defined and identified. There are so many needs that face our people, needs that transcend political identification, ideology, and expediency. Needs such as equitable education, just law enforcement, even economic and psychological recovery from a tornado that tore through our community two years ago, but the scars of which still stare us in the face. Why am I driving by, everyday, areas of my community, my district that look so patently different from other parts of this city? Why do I see the same buildings, living structures that once housed families hanging as abjectly open, raw and exposed as they were on the morning after the tornado tore through? Why do I live in a community where too many black and brown faces, families of every color too many of whom still live in a precarious economic situation all not believe that their interests, their futures are not as bright as perhaps others on the other side of town because they and their well being are being gathered into an artificial mapping arrangement that serves the needs of political interests that are not their own? Why is a fairly derived and drawn map such an incredible ask for the average community member to make of elected officials?

Gerrymandering has happened under the watchful eye of both Republicans and Democrats. It has served the needs of political operatives and failed the very real people who live in the communities that comprise the subject areas. It is something that has happened without the contribution, the advice and consent if you will of those who know these communities best. When the community is involved in addressing the question of what does a fair map look like, and just as importantly, what it does not look like, we can all more justly approach a fair solution. The Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission engaged real people in

contributing to a mapping exercise that showed how the perspective, the input of “the represented” can paint a picture based on lived experiential truths rather than political gamesmanship. I challenge you to give it the attention and merit it deserves. Fair bipartisan maps should be the goal. Fair maps that will allow the average citizen to start to believe that his/her vote really can count, that the interests of a community really can be represented in a fair manner arising out of its self interest, not a political interest.

My request, my plea to you as elected officials in care of the public trust, a trust which may not always have the face, the concern, the voice that you may be comfortable with -- is to listen to the voices of very real people who are asking you to act in the best interest of that trust and those voices. Fairly drawn maps should reflect a community’s interest, not political expediency or advantage seeking.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Submitted by Edwin L. Fuller (emontyf428@gmail.com)

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