OHIO REDISTRICTING COMMISSION
WITNESS & MEDIA INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness & Media Information Form before testifying/recording

Date of hearing/location for which testimony is being submitted: _____
<u>Sunday, 2021-09-12; Washington Township, Montgomery County, Ohio</u>

Name: <u>Ann M. Mercier</u>

Are you representing: <u>Yourself:</u>   Organization:

Organization (If Applicable): _____

Position/Title: <u>Citizen and Voter</u>

Address: <u>5412 Coppermill Place</u>

City: <u>Dayton</u>   State: OH_____Zip: <u>45429</u>

Telephone: <u>(937) 439-3905</u>   Email: _____

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute?

<u>Yes</u>:   No: (If yes, please provide written or electronic copies to the co-chair)

Please be advised that witnesses may be asked to limit their testimony in the interest of other witnesses and time constraints of the Commission.

Media Only

If you are present on behalf of a media organization, please indicate your request to record:

Audio record: Video record: Broadcast/Streaming:

Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this Commission are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.

Precincts are poor building blocks when Ohioans try to create state House, state Senate, or US Congressional voting districts. The precincts themselves often are neither compact nor contiguous.

A person can logically create any of those three types of districts with just a few tools: (1) A map of Ohio counties, (2) population information from the 2020 US Census (on the state, each county, and the smaller entities they contain), (3) a list of the counties sorted alphabetically, and (4) a list of the counties sorted by population (largest to smallest).

The nonpartisan organization Fair Districts notified citizens of three free online mapping applications anyone may use: (1) DistrictR (https://districtr.org); (2) DistrictBuilder (https://www.districtbuilder.org); and Dave's Redistricting App (https://davesredistricting.org). They use precincts as the building block from which to create state House, state Senate, or US Congressional voting districts.

One logical way to create Ohio's new voting districts is by working from largest to smallest entity: county, city, town, township, and so on.

For instance, Franklin County was Ohio's largest county in 2020: 1,323,807 people were enumerated there. Within Franklin County, Columbus, the largest city, had a population of 905,748. Ohio's 15 new US Congressional districts are each to have about 786,630 people (between 780,416 and 792,844 people), so Franklin County is too big to be a single Congressional district, and so is Columbus. Look at the map of Columbus. Although the central, northern, and eastern sections are relatively compact and contiguous, the western and southern parts are not. Forming a compact, contiguous Congressional district that starts with Columbus—if one must use precincts to do it—requires including entities outside Columbus.

Building new Congressional districts for Ohio is possible with dividing only a few counties and only a few cities. Early maps that have been released split an unreasonably high number of precincts. Splitting precincts should be unnecessary.

Discard precincts as a building block of districts. Deal instead with entities with governments: counties, cities, towns, townships. This single change would help Ohioans create voting districts that are more compact and contiguous. It should also help create voting districts that more fairly represent all citizens, not just those who gerrymandered the existing districts and precincts.

Thank you.