

September 14, 2021

Co-Chairs Speaker Robert Cupp and Senator Vernon Sykes
Ohio Redistricting Commission
Ohio Statehouse
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, OH 43215

Chairmen and Members of the Commission,

I am submitting this written testimony on behalf of the Youngstown Chapter of A. Philip Randolph Institute of Ohio.

In 2015 we, the people of Ohio, voted for state Issue 1. The official ballot text read as follows:

The proposed amendment would:

- End the partisan process for drawing Ohio House and Senate districts and replace it with a bipartisan process with the goal of having district boundaries that are more compact and politically competitive.
- Ensure a transparent process by requiring public meetings, public displays of maps, and a public letter explaining any plan the Commission adopts by a simple majority vote.
- Establish the bipartisan Ohio Redistricting Commission, composed of 7 members including the Governor, the Auditor of State, the Secretary of State, and 4 members appointed by the majority and minority leaders of the General Assembly.
- Require a bipartisan majority of 4 members in order to adopt any final district plan and prevent deadlock by limiting the length of time any plan adopted without bipartisan support is effective.

If passed, the amendment will become effective immediately.

I highlighted the first section of that ballot language as it shows what the voters believed would happen if the issue was successful. It passed overwhelmingly with 71.47% of the vote. Compact and politically competitive districts is what we voted for and what we expect. ”

Unfortunately, the maps submitted last week by the majority party violates this language. A clear example is right here in our area. Youngstown is included in the 33rd senate district of Ohio. For the last 10 years, that district has included all of Mahoning and Columbiana counties. Ironically, the southern half of Trumbull County and all of Mahoning County would be a much better fit and would address the intent of this language. The map submitted and approved by the 5 commission members of the

majority party does the exact opposite. The newly proposed 33rd senate district keeps Columbiana in the same district and adds another rural and even more remote county, Carroll County. Mahoning county is home to the 9th largest city in the state, Youngstown. We also have 2 large townships, Austintown and Boardman that have over 30,000 citizens each. These urban/suburban areas with a much more diverse group of voters have little in common with Carroll County whose total population of 26,000 is less than either of the 2 largest suburbs in Mahoning. The only thing Carroll County does is add more Republican voters to the district to gerrymander it for the gain of that party. It also dilutes the voting power of black and brown citizens of Youngstown which is most of the city. The members of A. Philip Randolph do not expect nor accept that our black and brown brothers and sisters should be treated in this manner.

We expect the commission to work together to do what is just and fair for all Ohioans. We expect fair maps that End the partisan process for drawing Ohio House and Senate districts and replace it with a bipartisan process with the goal of having district boundaries that are more compact and politically competitive. Nothing more and nothing less should be your goal. It certainly is ours.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jaladah Aslam". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning of the first name.

Jaladah Aslam, Member
A Philip Randolph Institute

CC: Minority Leader Emilia Sykes
Secretary Frank LaRose
Governor Mike DeWine
Auditor Keith Faber
Andre Washington, President OH APRI