

Testimony for COMMISSION REGIONAL HEARING September 13th in Cleveland

My name is Gerald Barna. I am currently in Ohio House District 57, Ohio Senate District 13, and Congressional District 7. I have been a resident of the city of Avon for 18 years and lived in Lorain County for over 50 years. I was employed at the NASA Glenn Research Center and retired after 40 years of service. I served in a number of engineering, project management, and senior management positions in my career at NASA. After retirement I was consultant for a number of small businesses and non-profit organizations for 15 years. I learned many lessons in solving difficult issues during my career. As an individual I have tried to effectively utilize this experience in support of the 2021 Ohio Redistricting process.

Initially, I focused on issues affecting Avon and Lorain County. I testified in previous hearings to identify and address the major issues of the current House District 57. Some of these issues were the following: District 57 is not compact and has convoluted boundaries; Avon has no shared interests with most of the communities in the district; Avon has very strong shared interests with communities such as Avon Lake and other Lorain County communities which are currently in adjacent districts; and North Ridgeville in Lorain County is split which opens a path to Avon. In reviewing the Commission Maps introduced on September 9th, I believe that these issues have been resolved in the formation of District 52.

In reviewing the Commission introduced House and Senate Maps overall, my focus was on compactness, retaining counties, cities, and townships in their entirety where possible, and insuring there are shared interests of the various entities within a District. In particular, I believe that these shared interests are critical to achieving effective representation in the General Assembly.

While I can evaluate these factors for District 52, I am not sufficiently knowledgeable of the communities in many of the other Districts in the State where inputs from those living in the District need to be heard. From an overall evaluation of the Commission introduced Maps, there are many districts which do not appear to satisfy the criteria previously discussed. My concerns are reinforced by the apparent increase in resulting representation by Republicans in the House and Senate which I believe is contrary to effective government. For these reasons I cannot support adoption of the Commission introduced Maps unless there are major modifications.

I urge the Republicans working on the 2021 Redistricting to negotiate in good faith and that both Republicans and Democrats be willing to compromise to achieve General Assembly Districts which will be good for 10 years. Anything else will be extremely detrimental to Ohio and its citizens.

Gerald Barna