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To the Ohio Redistricting Commission:

We are having a crisis of faith- faith in one another and in our institutions. Ohio needs you to restore that faith. I implore you to uphold the promise that you made when you swore your oath of office, as well as when you were sworn in as member of this Commission: create districts that are fair and just, just as you promised to do, and just as the people of Ohio have asked you to do.

The citizens of Ohio voted overwhelmingly to have maps drawn with public input. When certain members of the Commission produce a map several days before the legislature votes on it, this is hardly allowing for public input. Neglecting to attend hearings on mapmaking, as many members of the Commission have, also smacks of a disregard for public input.

Ohioans also voted that it would be the duty of the Commission to begin the mapmaking process months ago. The Commission had access to census estimates, but chose not to use them. Further, the voters approved a measure that called for keeping communities together, and many of the GOP-proposed districts do exactly the opposite.

But the people who drew this map are wholly disinterested in what the people they serve actually want or need. They don't actually serve the people of Ohio, they serve themselves and the corporate interests who prop up their campaigns. In their service on the Commission they seek to create districts that help only their seats and their party, as evidenced by the following:

Anyone who has lived anywhere near northeast Ohio knows that people from the east side don't really travel to the west side, and vice versa. The reasons why have been debated for a long time, but in this case they are irrelevant. What is important is that a State House district that straddles the Cuyahoga river is not only highly impractical, it is far from something that the people of those communities would ever choose for themselves.

I live in one of the 3 proposed new districts that would run from west to east. With this proposed new district, my state house representative would potentially not know anything about my community – where our library is, what decisions our town council is making, what issues are being hotly debated in front of the school board, how many children in our town have tested positive for Covid, how many families in our community receive subsidized food, or what

challenges our Police Department faces. Not only would this person from the other side of the district have trouble representing me, but someone from my side of the proposed district would in turn know little about the other end of this this reborn “snake on the lake.”

One could argue that a district in this shape could be the result of attempts to create competitive districts, but the 3 districts that run across the Cuyahoga River have clearly predetermined outcomes for their elections. There was no noble attempt at fairness here.

It's hard to know what to write to a body that will essentially ignore my testimony. I'd like to appeal perhaps to your sense of righteousness. Does making a rigged map help you feel like you're upholding your duty to serve the people of this state and country, or does it in fact feel like a gross misuse of power? Thanks to comic books, even my 8 year-old knows that with great power comes great responsibility. I ask you to be deserving of both.