

Statement of Mark Griffiths, North Ridgeville, OH

The Ohio Redistricting Commission

September 13, 2021

My name is Mark Griffiths. I live in House District 57 and Senate District 13. We thank the members of the Commission for the opportunity to submit testimony at this hearing.

Sadly, we must state you have failed the voters of the State of Ohio with the Republican backed map being proposed by the Commission. The map is more gerrymandered than the current map. The sponsors of this map admitted they did not consider either proportional representation or the Voting Rights Act when constructing this map. Such considerations are required by the Constitution. Why would this Commission adopt, albeit as a starting point, a map that fails to comply with the Constitution?

A volunteer group of Ohioans formed the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission. They created proposed maps along with a report detailing methodology prior to September 1. None of the members of this Citizens Commission are State office holders. What they have done is produced fair maps that comply with the legal requirements through an open and transparent process. This group has no vested interest in maintaining the status quo and therefore have produced maps that comply with the constitutional requirements.

The OCRC has shown that the goal of proportional representation is not aspirational but attainable.

This Commission should immediately adopt the maps proposed by the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission. They are certainly more in compliance with the Constitution's requirements and would provide a more balanced starting point than the maps being proposed by the Republican majority of this Commission.

We collected hundreds of signatures on the Fair Districts-Fair Election Petition effort a couple of years ago. This effort allowed us to speak to hundreds of voters on this topic. Voters told us over and over again that voters need to pick their representatives and not the other way around.

As citizens of this State, we demand better. Supreme Court Justice Kagan said: "If there's a single idea that made our nation, it's this one: The people are sovereign. The people get to choose their representatives. And then they get to decide whether to keep them. Election Day is what links the people to their representatives and gives the people their sovereign power. That day is the foundation of democratic governance. And partisan gerrymandering can make it meaningless."