Good afternoon, my name in Tom Jackson, from Solon, Ohio.

Ohioans overwhelming voted to fix our broken system of map making. Ohioans are tired of the status quo of rigged, partisan maps that protect supermajorities and interfere with good governance.

Ohioans overwhelmingly voted for fair maps. I recognize the complexities of creating truly representative maps, but did you even try? There's no fairness or progress in your map. I'm outraged that you put forward maps that are worse, not better than the current ones.

This so-called "working document" needs significant improvement to clear the lowest threshold of being constitutional and consistent with what Ohioans voted for.

In evaluating the map, I considered three factors that I believe are essential to have a Legislature that can produce good public policy.

1. First, keep core communities together. There is no valid reason to divide towns and cities.
2. Second, the maps must proportionally represent the diverse views of our state.
3. Finally, and perhaps most importantly—the maps must allow for and incentivize competition, collaboration, and compromise to bring forth the best people and the best ideas

In all three areas, the proposed maps are even worse than the status quo. I'm asking you to do better.

It selectively divides core communities and packs others.

As a Solon resident, I resent that my community is one of those selected to be divided and cracked (maybe I should be proud). I moved to this city in part because of its diversity and strong sense of community that brings together people from all types of backgrounds. We share a top school district, public library, a wonderful community center and municipal services. We have shared interests around public safety, good roads, quality schools, and a strong local economy. We have a proud history of working together and coming together as a community. Why would you divide this city in half—other than to crack the growing majority of Democratic leaning voters? I can only assume you're upset at the results of recent elections.

Regarding proportional representation and alignment between with voters—it takes just basic arithmetic to see that this proposed map is less proportional than the current map.

By all measures, Ohio is a slightly Republican state. Governor DeWine received just 50% of the state-wide vote in 2018. But the proposed map is even more disproportionate than the current lop-sided make-up of the legislature, which is roughly 65% Republicans & 35% Democrat. Supermajorities like this are bad for democracy. They lead to corruption, stale or backwards ideas, extreme legislation that is often bad policy, and simply bad lawmaking. The new map as proposed will likely expand the Republican supermajority. That is not the progress that the voters demanded and that Ohioans deserve.

The map discourages and prevents good competition—not just for votes, but for ideas.

Analysis of the proposed maps shows just 1 competitive district in the House and just 2 in the Senate. Worse, the proposed map targets House districts where the Democrats gained votes or flipped seats in the last three election cycles. I was actively involved in the campaigns to elect my state representative Phil Robinson. Ahead of the 2018 elections, we were told it would be impossible to elect a Democrat in this district because in 2010 it was carefully crafted to be a safe Republican seat. But the district demographics have shifted, and we knew this seat had become more competitive. Representative Robinson won in 2018 and again in 2020 by close margins—which means we are a truly a competitive district. The voters actually had a choice. As a result, we elected one of the best young lawmakers, someone who is highly regarded in the community, the district, and the state house. Why would you want a map that eliminates these types of competitive seats? Phil Robinson and the other Democratic reps that this map tries to root out are the very kinds of lawmakers we desperately need in our legislature—those that have innovative and competitive ideas, have learned to listen to and work with a variety of interest groups and points of view, and have demonstrated a commitment to getting things done. These lawmakers can't take votes for granted—they know their margins and they work hard for every vote.

No matter how much your budgets try to market Ohio as a progressive state, no advertising campaign will offset the backward policies that are a direct result of gerrymandering. If we want a forward-thinking legislature and state—and not just a few billboards—Ohio needs fair maps.

In the Sept. 9 hearing, you all stated that this map is just a starting point and a working document. I hope you stay true to those words and rework these maps to meet the letter and the spirit of the law and the will of the people of Ohio.

 Thank you for hearing my testimony and for your consideration of my concerns.