

Redistricting Commission Testimony
County Councilperson Dale Miller
September 13, 2013

Speaker Bob Cupp, Senator Vernon Sykes, Members of the Redistricting Commission,

I am speaking this afternoon to call your attention to the egregious deficiencies in the draft map for Cuyahoga County. The proposed map is not at all compact; it mercilessly chops up Cleveland into disorganized little bits, and distributes those bits to numerous districts with no regard whatsoever to natural communities. Proposed districts such as #13 and #14 would serve well as instructional examples for Gerrymandering.

I call your attention in particular to the plight of the West Park community, which comprises Cleveland Wards 16 and 17 on the far west side of the city. As I understand the proposed map, each of the two wards would be chopped up and distributed among at least three different State Representative Districts. The West Park area has been a coherent and well-defined neighborhood for at least 100 years. It is geographically small in size, with a population of about 45,000 people, less than 40% of the target population of a State Representative District. There is no valid reason why it should not be included in a single State Representative district.

The voters of the State of Ohio overwhelmingly passed constitutional amendments designed to make State Representative and State Senate districts compact and politically fair. This proposed map does neither. It draws lines that split up communities and organizes districts in ways that make no sense from a perspective of easily understandable community representation and it creates a set of districts that will likely have a political result that differs widely from the overall division of popular votes among candidates of the two major parties.

I call upon you as Redistricting Commission members to fix this map and create districts that reflect the popular will in reforming the redistricting process—districts that are compact, respect natural communities, and are politically fair. I close by reminding you that even if you cannot bring yourselves to be politically fair, you can still create a map that is advantageous to the majority party, while still cleaning up the distorted shapes and dismembered communities found in the current draft map. Please at least do that much.

Thanks very much for your time and attention to my testimony.