

Testimony of Peter Rockwell Petto, Ohio Redistricting Commission, 9/13/21

My name is Peter Rockwell Petto, from Bay Village. I vote in House district 16, Senate district 24, and Congressional district 9. I am a retired high-school statistics and mathematics teacher. I recently helped the League of Women Voters construct a districting map that was submitted to the Cuyahoga County Redistricting Commission; and several chapters of the League with community maps that were submitted to Fair Districts Gallery and to the Ohio Citizen's Redistricting Commission.

I am here today to offer analysis of the maps proposed by the Commission on September 9. These maps should NOT be the maps chosen for Ohio. On August 23, I testified in Cleveland before this Commission on several topics including my community, the west shore suburbs of Cleveland that comprise Bay Village, Rocky River, Fairview Park, Westlake, and North Olmsted — at that time I made this plea: don't break up our community.

On September 9, the Majority Party's mapmaker, Mr. DiRossi, began his testimony with praise for all the citizens who had testified at the statewide commission hearings. However, I see no evidence that the maps he produced took any of that testimony into consideration. My west shore community, with a total population of 122,879 could have remained intact as a house district that is within the target range. Instead, it was split into three house districts. Suburban Rocky River was combined with Lakewood and a swath of Cleveland that extends nearly to University Circle, far beyond downtown. Similarly, suburban Fairview Park was combined with another swath of Cleveland that snakes eastward across urban Cleveland to the other side of town past East 80th Street. I've attached maps showing this to my written testimony. The other four community maps I helped construct were similarly fractured.

Mr. DiRossi also began by talking about how irregular many municipal boundaries are, talking about rivers and giving illustrations in Columbus and elsewhere. I think it is instructive to look at a place where those constraints are substantially eliminated: within the City of Cleveland. Cleveland has a population of 372,624 and comprises 3.12 ratios of representation. It must be split, and mathematically could be split into 3 house districts combined into one senate district, all weighing in at about 4% above target. What happened? Cleveland was, in the proposed house map split not 3 or 4 or 5 ways; it was split 8 ways. And only one of these districts is entirely within Cleveland. Look at the map of the districts inside city limits and you will see the dark shadow of 2011 redistricting: at least three snake shaped districts. Many broken neighborhoods.

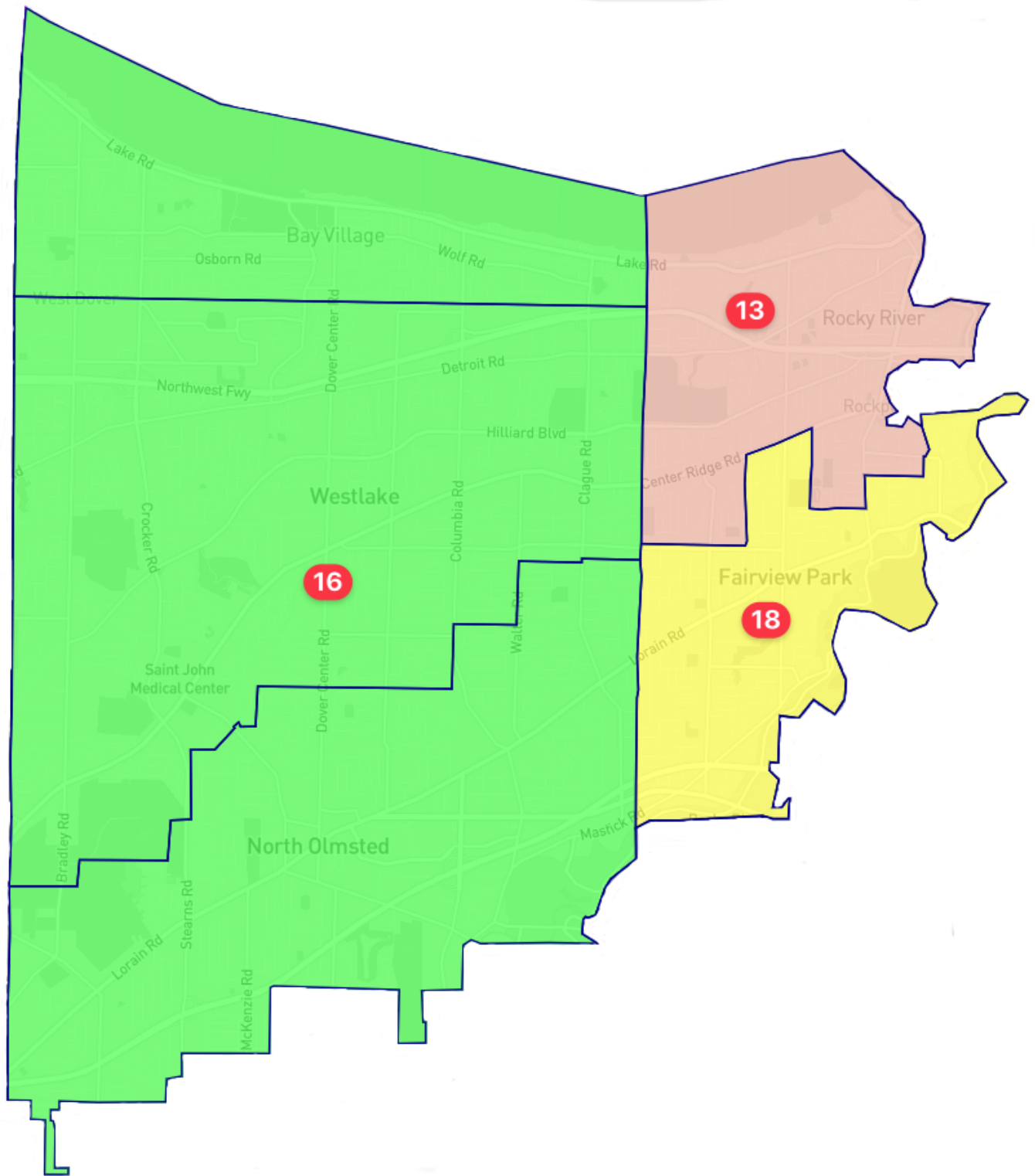
In that hearing Mr. DiRossi said his maps, "comply with ALL the Constitutional requirements," over and over again, whenever he was asked about section 6. A listener to these hearings might think that he meant that the maps satisfy every Constitutional instruction. That's not

what Mr. DiRossi appears to have meant. I think he meant that the maps satisfy Section 3, the section labeled "Requirements for drawing Senate Districts". His testimony made clear that they do NOT satisfy section 6, additional district standards — when he asserted repeatedly that he did not consider partisan preference. He also claimed that he did not consider demographics, which speaks to the Voting Rights Act under federal law.

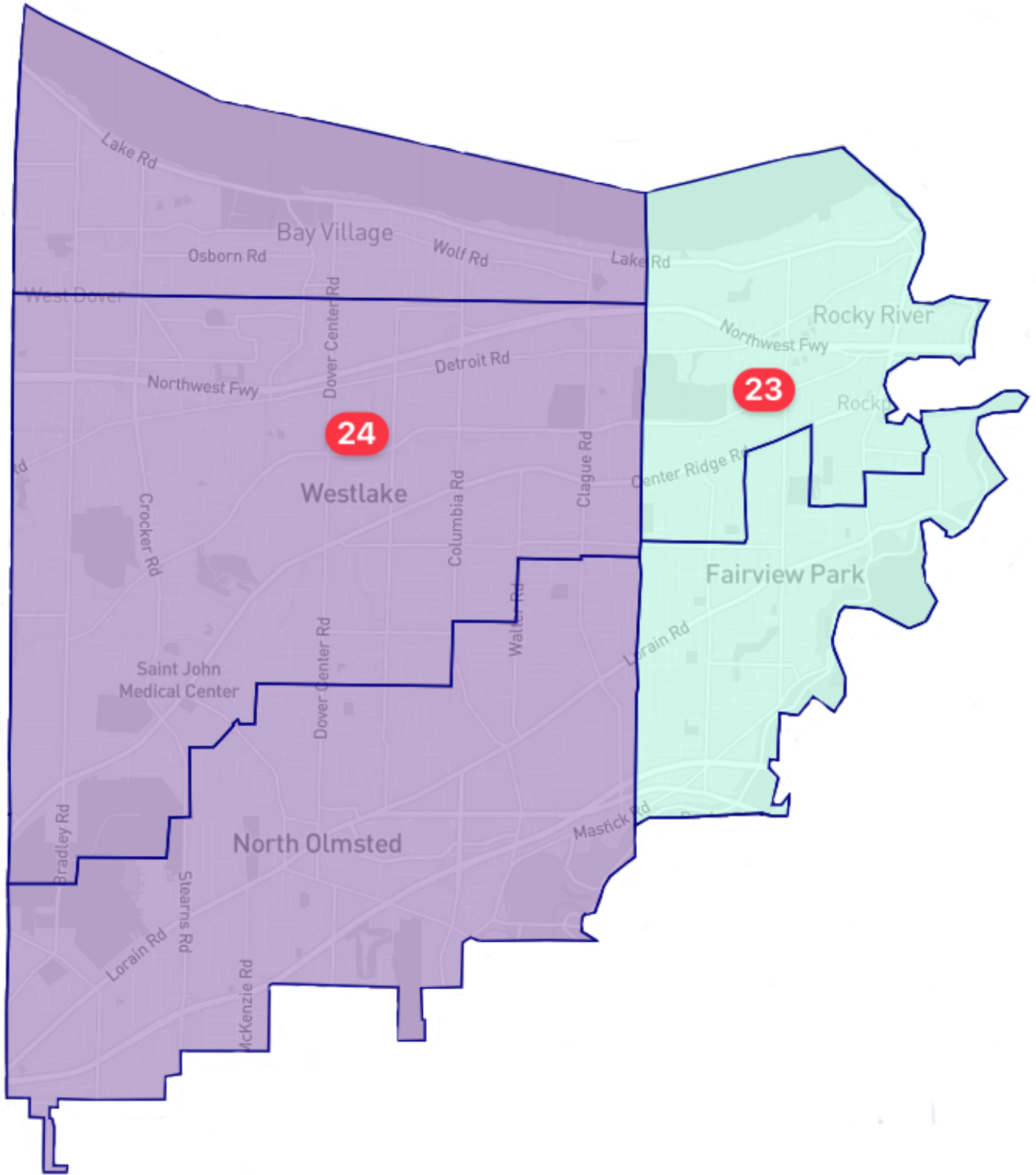
Many maps that satisfy section 3 Constitutional compliance have been submitted to this commission. More than a few do better than the Commission map with respect to other Constitutional directives. I believe that for the Commission to fulfill its section 6 duty, you need to score each and every one of these maps' partisan composition and compactness; and then choose the map among those that best meets these targets. The other thing you must attempt to do is to determine whether a map was drawn primarily to favor or disfavor a political party. At a minimum you must ask mapmakers about their mapmaking procedure. If it was automated, they should disclose their algorithms. And you should apply statistical methods that can show impermissible political gerrymandering. If I tell you I didn't use partisan data to draw this plan, that is unpersuasive. Everybody knows that Democrats are clustered in high population and urban areas. It's easy to draw a map that favors one party without using specific data

When I was young, my parents had many requirements and many standards for my conduct. It was not uncommon for me to say, "I heard you!" and for them to reply, "but were you listening?" I hope that you heard and listened to these thoughts, and that you will take them into consideration as you do the right thing.

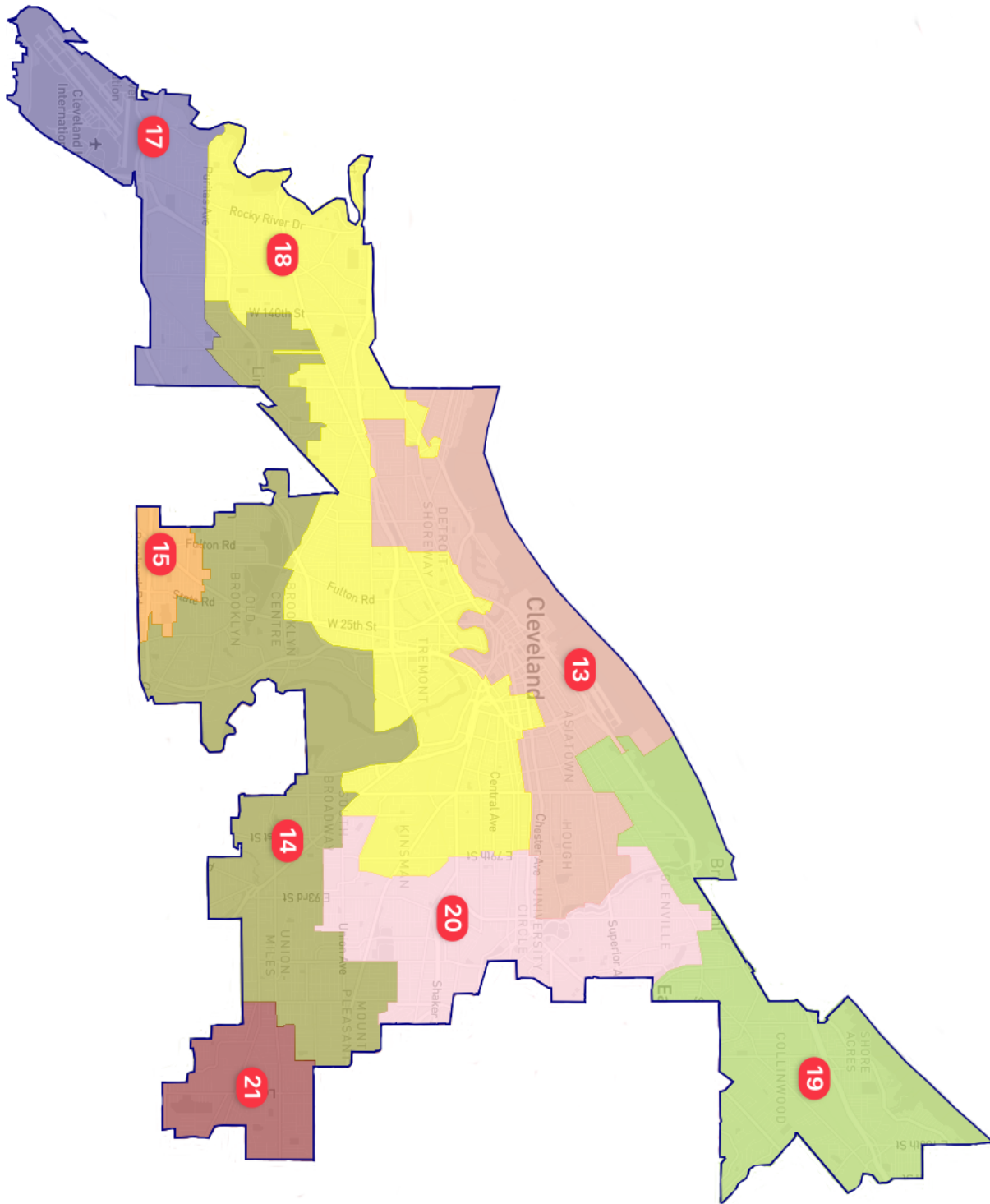
Thank you for your time. I'm happy to answer any questions you might have.



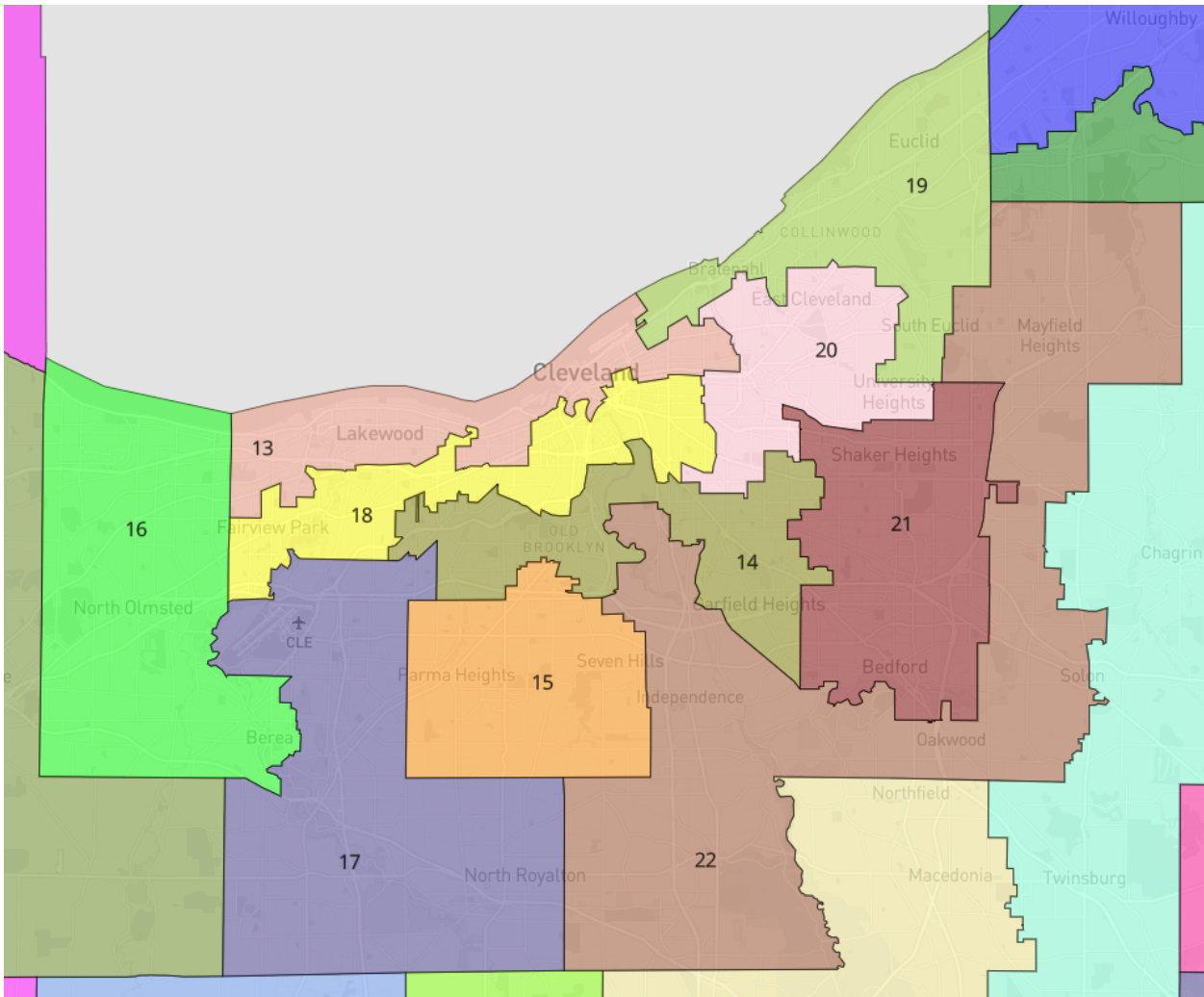
Westshore Suburban Community — Commission House Map



Westshore Suburban Community — Commission Senate Map



The City of Cleveland — Commission House Map



Greater Cleveland Area — Commission House Map