

September 12, 2021

To: Redistricting Commission

From: Heather Tuck-Macalla

Re: Redistricting Written Testimony

Dear Members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission,

I write to you as an active citizen within our great democracy of the United States of America. I have great reverence for my elected officials and the process that puts them into place. It is due to this reverence and respect for our democracy that I have actively worked to end gerrymandering. Gerrymandering, the process corrupt elected officials use to retain power illegitimately, is one of the greatest threats to our great nation. I spent up to 30 hours a week for over a year collecting petition signatures, educating the public about gerrymandering, and recruiting and training volunteers to do the same. I did this all while working full time to ensure that our democracy is healthy for the next generation. With over 70% of voters in every single Ohio county agreeing gerrymandering should end, this honor is now in your court.

This Redistricting Commission has completely dishonored the voter's sacred trust. Although I spent 30 hours a week for over a year to create fair districts along with other voters, this commission has clearly not even spent 3 hours working together to create fair maps. The maps introduced by only the Republican members of the commission are an insult and dishonor to the voters of Ohio. It seems that the members of the Commission have no interest in communicating with their constituents or awareness of them and instead are holding on to their power to please corporate donors.

I on the other hand have spent a great deal of time talking with voters across Ohio, especially within the greater Cleveland area. Of particular concern to me are the proposed districts 13 and 18. Both snake on the lake districts connect wealthy suburban districts on the West side of Cuyahoga River to inner city districts on the East side of the Cuyahoga River. Those from this area can tell you that the East West divide of Cuyahoga County is great and organizing and communicating from one side is extremely difficult.

I would like to specifically discuss District 18. I used to live in Fairview Park, the far west end of the district, and I recently canvassed door to door in Slavic Village, the far East end of the district. I have also canvassed extensively in the suburban West side of Cleveland. The two areas and their needs are very different from one another. Every person I spoke to in Slavic Village, had gun violence from gangs as their number one concern. Being able to walk outside without fear of being killed, is their top priority. In the suburbs, I heard several concerns from quality schools, taxes, and the economy. Most of all I heard people express concern about Republican extremist policies and the lack of checks and balances that have led to corruption. Slavic Village and Fairview Park and everyone in between, deserve

quality representation. They deserve a compact district with similar demographics to create fair, efficient, and effective representation. District 18 as it is currently drawn, does not allow for that.

I respectfully request that the Redistricting Commission meet and discuss as an entire group, and properly draw fair districts for Ohio. Several citizens drawn maps have been submitted to you, including my own to prove that fair maps are possible. This is the oath you have taken. It is what voters of Ohio have entrusted you to do. I challenge you all today, to stand up and make the voters of Ohio and our founding fathers proud. Do your duty to end gerrymandering to ensure that our democracy is viable for the next generation.