

Ohio Redistricting Commission Testimony

Testimony Location: Ohio Statehouse, Ohio Senate Building, Room 126 - Senate Finance Hearing Room

Testimony Date: September 9, 2021

My name is Tony D'Ambrosio, and I live in current Ohio House district 28, Ohio Senate District 8, and Congressional district 2.

To All those on the Ohio Redistricting Commission, thank you for allowing me to submit this written testimony

The map I have seen to date is one submitted by the Democratic members of the commission. This map appears to meet the requirements set forth by the Ohio Constitution. Have the Republican committee members also drawn their own map? Is this not supposed to be a commission wide activity? There has been a lack of transparency in the process so far. The commission needs to advise the public as to the action steps you will be taking to meet the next deadline requirement, needs to provide more than 24 hours notice for each hearing, and a provide a complete schedule of public hearings so citizen advocates can fully prepare to participate in the process.

I repeatedly wrote Governor DeWine prompting him to start the redistricting process despite the delay of census data. I always received the same terse reply. We will be following the constitutional guidelines. Yet, the commission has failed to meet the first deadline and have not advised on plans to meet future deadlines. Prior to receiving census data, the commission could have been agreeing on definitions of terms and interpretation of current constitutional requirements and setting internal procedural timelines and guidelines so that overall deadlines could be met. There is the issue with Senate incumbents and their current district lines and how this will be addressed with future Senate district lines. The issue of representational fairness. These issues could have been addressed by the commission prior to receiving census data so that the process could move forward in an expedited manner.

I volunteer with non- partisan organizations demanding free, fair, accessible, safe, and secure elections and one non-partisan organization whose mission is to reduce gun violence and increase firearm safety. As a member of these organizations, I find I am fighting an uphill battle on all fronts. Ohio is seeing too much legislation that is disenfranchising voters and making Ohioans less safe from gun violence. The people of Ohio are not fairly or accurately represented in state or federal legislatures. I believe this is the result of unfairly drawn legislative and congressional districts. My current congressional district stretches from Cincinnati to Portsmouth.

In the past, both political parties have marginalized the other party through mapmaking, and Ohio has some of the most gerrymandered districts in the country. Ohio voters adopted reforms to curb gerrymandering in 2015 for state legislative maps and 2018 for Ohio's congressional districts by over 70% of the vote. We demand an open, transparent process that

results in fair maps that serve voters - not partisan, political interests. Please keep redistricting fair, transparent, non-discriminatory, and politically impartial. Maps should serve the voters - not the political interests of parties or candidates.

Thank you for considering my testimony,

Tony D'Ambrosio