

Testimony for redistricting

I would like to thank the members of the Redistricting Committee for the opportunity to testify. My name is Marja Lasek-Martin. I live in the Village of Ottawa Hills.

By way of background, the Village of Ottawa Hills was established in 1915. It is an affluent suburb of Toledo and has a population of just over 4,500 based upon the 2010 census. Most of the people living in the Village are professionals, business owners or professors. It is situated in Lucas County and almost all sides of the Village are encircled by the City of Toledo.

The Village of Ottawa Hills is part of the Toledo community. However, when the Ohio District maps were redrawn in 2010, the Village was included in Ohio House District 47 and Ohio Senate District 2 and split from Toledo. Specifically, when drawing Ohio Senate District 2, Lucas County was split into two Senate districts, and a part of Lucas County that included the Village of Ottawa Hills was combined with Fulton, Wood and Ottawa Counties to comprise Ohio Senate District 2. Fulton, Wood and Ottawa counties are predominantly rural communities and have very different interests and priorities than the suburban setting of Ottawa Hills. A similar carveout was done in Ohio House District 47.

There are a number of reasons why this was a bad idea and why these Ohio Districts as currently drawn do not represent the interests of the residents of Ottawa Hills.

First, there is no “downtown area” in the Village of Ottawa Hills. In fact, there is only a single commercial business in the Village. Therefore, without a commercial hub, the majority of people living in the Village either make or spend their money in Toledo. People shop for groceries in Toledo rather than going 20 miles away to Bowling Green in Wood County.

We use and pay for Toledo’s resources. For example, since the Village doesn’t have its own library, it uses Toledo Lucas County Public Libraries. The Village may have its own police department but we rely on Toledo Fire & Rescue Department for their services. People remember the “Toledo water crisis” in 2014. Residents of the Village receive their water from Toledo.

Our community borders Wildwood Preserve Metroparks and its bike paths, which are part of Toledo Metroparks. The Metroparks are hugely popular with residents of the Village. Entertainment for Village residents extends to the use of the Toledo Museum of Art, The Toledo Zoo, restaurants, sporting events and

concerts downtown. In other words, even if we live in Ottawa Hills, we work and play in Toledo.

The Village of Ottawa Hills is closely intertwined with Toledo and Lucas County so much so that the Village could not survive without them. This is why it does not make sense to have Ottawa Hills separated from the City of Toledo and Lucas County in terms of legislative representation. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

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