

Blessing, Heather

From: Zirbel, Maria C <Maria.Zirbel@rockets.utoledo.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, August 25, 2021 6:54 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Testimony

I had planned to attend the hearing in Toledo tomorrow and present my testimony live. My class schedule has changed, and I am now required to be in class at that time so I will put my testimony in this email and ask that you give it consideration.

I have been worried for some time now that our democracy is under threat. It has been bought by wealthy and corporate interests. Elected officials, in order to keep their jobs, become beholden to their donors, which necessarily changes dynamics and decisions. The system has become so corrupt that I wonder if it can be salvaged. It has weakened our democracy and it puts the interests of our officials and their parties at the top of the pyramid, at the expense of individual people.

It seems quite clear that gerrymandering allows elected representatives to choose their voters instead of voters choosing their representatives. I have to admit to being baffled at how we ever got to this point. It seems so inherently counter to our personal and American values that I can't believe anyone could justify it. It totally nullifies the idea of each person having an equal vote.

Elections must be free and fair for countries to also be free and fair. Elections must be available to all equally; they must be nonpartisan; they must provide extra help for the disenfranchised. Our strength is in empowering all people.

First, we made corporations people. Then we stopped protecting minority and poor communities by gutting the voting rights act. Many of us are promoting the For the People Act to attempt to rectify that. I ask for your support in that endeavor in any way you can.

Gerrymandering has long been a scourge of the same sort and by having fair districts we are attempting to fix that also. We must have districts where 1 person = 1 vote and everyone's vote counts. We must be able to elect our own representatives and that representation must be equitable. We know that the current system allows officials to pick and choose their voters.

I can see how those officials believe in the rightness of their positions and want to have the ability to continue their work. But everyone must look beyond self- and party-interest and always keep the individual voter at the core of the effort.

Please put aside the self-interest and put the public-interest first but working for and implementing fair districts.

Thank you.

Feel free to contact me with any questions and concerns.
Thanks for your efforts in conducting and attending these hearings.
Best,
Maria

Maria C. Zirbel

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