

**PROPONENT/OPPONENT TESTIMONY OF:**

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**[Alliance, OH, August 23, 2021]** —I am here today to remind the commission that the work they are doing right now will directly affect me and my neighbors for the coming decade. If the districts they draw are unfair, their actions will directly result in the negation of my rights as an Ohioan and an American to have my voice heard.

In the last 10 years I have felt unrepresented and ignored by my elected officials. I am active locally helping to organize volunteers interested in supporting progressive issues. I came to this out of frustration that policies being instituted by my government were completely opposed to everything I believe in. I have reached out to my representatives, about issues that are important to me, about bills that are up for consideration, about topics I feel should be addressed. The only response I have ever received was a form letter, and that was a rare occurrence.

As a civically engaged Ohioan, it is my responsibility to pay attention to what my government is doing, and if the policies that polls are showing that Ohioans support are being passed and implemented by my government. There are so many issues about which I care deeply that are not being supported by my government. For example, various recent polls showed that 51.3% or more of Ohioans support abortion remaining legal in most cases. However, our state government continues to pass unconstitutional laws that limit access to women's healthcare, and repeatedly pass laws criminalizing abortion and those who provide the procedures. This is a failure of Democracy.

According to the most recent data I have been able to find, Ohio is made up of approximately 46% democrats, and 53% Republicans. However, our statehouse has republican supermajorities in both house: Republicans hold 64.6 % of the seats in the Ohio Statehouse, and 75.8% of the seats in the Ohio State Senate. My Ohio senator does not care what I think, that I am desperate for Universal Healthcare, that our education system is an embarrassment that robs our children of a decent education. He knows his job is secure, because the district he nominally "represents" is drawn in such a way that my voice is ignored, lumping me together with those with whom I have zero in common. My representative doesn't care that I want a vaccine mandate, that I'm worried about the health of my immune-compromised teenage

daughter, that I'm horrified that our schools don't teach comprehensive sex ed, instead teaching abstinence only despite hundreds of studies showing such curricula don't reduce teen pregnancy or the spread of STDs. He doesn't represent me.

So far the process for redistricting has been confusing and vague. Despite an overwhelming majority of Ohioans twice voting in support of fair districts, I have little to no confidence that fair districts will be drawn. I am here to help ensure that the wishes of Ohioans are followed. Who is working on the maps right now? When will we see them? We need time to be able to access those maps and determine if they are a fair representation of Ohioans, and time is running out.

I need to know that this process is going result in fair representation, as mandated by the United States Constitution. I need to know that my vote will matter. I want to know that my community will be included with those that have similar life experience to me – I live in Mahoning County, but I have an Alliance address. Most of Alliance is in Stark County. If the district is drawn along the county line, I will be voting with people I have almost no connection with. I need my community to be in a district with those I shop, do business, and whose kids my kids go to school. Anything else means my voice, and the voices of so many of my neighbors, will be silenced.