

Ohio Redistricting Commission 9-25-2023 10:00am

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Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:00:00] Good morning, everybody. The committee will come to order first, and I'll call this meeting the Ohio Redistricting Commission. Commission to order. I would ask the clerk to call the roll.

Clerk [00:00:15] Co-chair Antonio.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:00:16] Here.

Clerk [00:00:17] Co-Chair Faber.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:00:18] Present.

Clerk [00:00:19] Governor DeWine.

Gov. Mike DeWine [00:00:19] Present.

Clerk [00:00:21] Secretary LaRose.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:00:22] Here.

Clerk [00:00:23] Senator McColley.

Sen. Rob McColley [00:00:24] Here.

Clerk [00:00:25] Representative LaRe.

Rep. Jeff LaRe [00:00:26] Here.

Clerk [00:00:27] Leader Russo.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:00:27] On her way. On her way.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:00:34] And for the record, we are starting anticipating leader Russo will be here momentarily. But the suggestion was to go ahead and get started because we have a pretty active list of people who want to testify and we're going to go ahead and accede to that request. [inaudible] Thank you. Members will find the minutes from the September 13th and 22nd meetings in your folder. Is there a motion to accept the minutes?

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:01:02] So moved.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:01:03] Is there a second move by Senator I'm sorry, Secretary LaRose,.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:01:06] Second.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:01:07] Seconded by Representative LaRe or Co-Chair Antonio. Any objection to the minutes hearing? No objection. The meetings are accepted without objection. By the way, the minutes for the 9-20-2023 meeting last

Wednesday are included in the 9-13 document because the meeting the 13th went into recess and resumed on the 20th in case anybody has questions about that. With a quorum president, we will meet as the full committee. We're at the point of taking public testimony. Couple of suggestions on the public testimony. We have a relatively long list for public testimony. I will announce who is first and then who is on deck. And we will keep people moving that way. I know there is about a 30-second delay in the meeting room downstairs, which is the overflow. That will give people plenty of time to move on up if they're there. We ask, pursuant to the constitutional provisions that testimony be focused on the maps and we will ask you to keep your testimony to that purpose, to the maps that have been presented. We also ask that you keep your testimony to 3 minutes. We will have a timer and anybody at 3 minutes. We will give you a chance to wrap up a final thought, but then ask that you move on so that we can move to the next person. The witness testimony as we go forward. I have Sean Gilbow first, and if I mispronounce your names, I apologize. And then we will have Glenn. It looks like Glen Reining. [inaudible]

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:03:00] You're Glenn?

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:03:01] Jeremy Wald would be next then in the order. But before we get started, I would like to thank the Punderson State Park staff, the folks from the Department of Natural Resources, the Ohio Highway Patrol, and the other officers and officials who have made this location available and who are doing the work to keep us on time and all adjusted. So I just want to give them a shout out. Everybody was very nice and hospitable. We sure appreciate it. And so let's. Sean Gilbow. Mr. Gilbow, you're first. If you would state your name and spell your last name for the for the transcript. And do you have written testimony?

Sean Gilbow [00:03:49] Yes, It has been revised based on some information that was provided me by your legal counsel, Mr. Cox. I will make sure to have it emailed to the committee, but it cuts out a third of the comments I was going to make.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:04:02] All right. Did you provide that testimony to the website? So we have that on up on the website.

Sean Gilbow [00:04:08] The original comments? Yes.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:04:09] Okay. Please proceed. Thank you, sir. Good morning. My name is Sean Gilbow.

Sean Gilbow [00:04:15] I am the vice president of Summit Conglomerate Chapter 7700 of the Ohio Civil Service Employees Association and a member of the Ohio Chapter of Pride at Work, the LGBTQIA+ arm of the AFL-CIO. I have 29 years of service to the state of Ohio. Service, which began when Bob Taft, whom I had the privilege of meeting, was Secretary of State. And during his time as governor, I had the privilege of working under one of his lieutenant governors, well-known Summit County resident Maureen O'Connor. When my position in Columbus was eliminated in 2014, one which involved the issuance of driver's licenses and state ID cards as part of my job duties, I was able to transfer to Northeast Ohio to be close to my parents, whom I got into a nursing facility shortly after I moved to downtown Akron. Both of them have since passed away. Two days after my mother died was the last day I was represented by Vernon Sykes in the Senate. My apartment building, the 401 Lofts on South Main Street was one of three downtown Akron apartment buildings, the other being the standard and the depot, that were placed in the Senate District of Kristina Roegner and the House District of Bob Young. And right across

the street from me is a district of Vernon Sykes and Tavia Galonski. On that same block are the offices of the Akron Beacon Journal. As of a week from tonight, I will no longer be represented in the Ohio House with the resignation of Bob Young. As someone who lost an agency co-worker to domestic violence and who was required as a state employee to take domestic violence courses, the term misrepresented is not strong enough to describe my feelings about my being redistricted. I would use the term disenfranchised. I commend Doug Livingston at the Beacon Journal and Dave's Redistricting for giving me information on both the Democratic and Republican proposals. I applaud both parties for putting downtown Akron and the University District back in the same House and districts. This will allow me to have Tavia Galonski as representative should she be re-elected. I also support the plan for the Senate from the Democrats. But before I could support the GOP proposal regarding Senate District 28, the question I was going to pose to the committee is who will represent me? I thank your legal counsel, Mr. Cox, for confirming it will be Vernon Sykes. This cuts out pretty much the remainder of my prepared remarks now that I know Vernon Sykes, under both proposals, will once again represent me and my fellow Akron residents. In closing, next Tuesday will mark my 60th birthday and I like to do something on a milestone birthday with a profound impact. So for the second time in a year, I made a \$1,000 donation to Akron Children's Hospital Center for Gender Affirming Medicine in the name of, among others, Bishop Edward Malesic and Frank LaRose. [applause]

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:07:05] Thank you, sir. Sir, normally the members have an opportunity to ask questions if they have any. Are there any questions for the witness?

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:07:13] No. Just very quickly. Thank you so much for coming and spending your birthday week with us here and your comments. Thank you. Thank you for your service.

Sean Gilbow [00:07:24] As our contract negotiations get started later this year for a new three year contract.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:07:29] Thank you. Any other any other questions or comments? Sir, thank you for keeping your comments within the timeframe and keeping them on point to the issues. I sure appreciate it. Our next witness. Mr. Reining passed, would be Jeremy Wald. Following Mr. Wald will be Kevin Morgan. So Jeremy Wald, the Kevin Morgan on deck. Good morning, Mr. Wald.

Jeremy Wald [00:08:02] Good morning.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:08:02] I'm saying your name correctly.

Jeremy Wald [00:08:03] Yes.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:08:05] Welcome to the committee.

Jeremy Wald [00:08:10] Um. I have some printouts, screenshots of the amendments I wanted to make to the maps. Is it okay if I.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:08:17] Sure. Well, the staff people happy to help you out. We like visual aids.

Jeremy Wald [00:08:29] And then. Okay. And then my comments kind of refer to two different sets of amendments. So I'm going to have to cut things out. But, um, good morning. My name is Jeremy Wald, and I'm a resident from Parma, Ohio. These remarks pertain to the first one, which I advocate for putting Seven Hills in Senate District 24. So I'll just cut to the chase. I've heard that the Commission is trying to avoid pairing incumbent members in a single district, notwithstanding this principle which is not legally required. I would ask at this body consider one exception, and that's for the City of Seven Hills and their representative, Richard Dell'Aquila. As House Districts 14 and House District 19 include incumbents, a completely different district was drawn for Representative Dell'Aquila into another of these districts. This district is nothing like the one the representative was currently elected from. Seven Hills is the center of Cuyahoga County. It has traditionally been found in Senate District 24, but appears to avoid pairing representative Dell'Aquila with another House member. The House district contains Seven Hills, which is in House District 15 and has been paired with Cleveland, which in turn placed Seven Hills outside of Senate District 24 because of the nesting rules. This unusual pairing of Seven Hills aims to sever it from the Senate district and from the city of Parma, which is now in Senate District 24 even though Seven Hills shares the school district in municipal court with Parma, I know that grouping communities with common interests and relationships is a consideration of this body. As such, the current configuration of Senate District 24 and House District 15 does not honor those considerations and serves as a Democratic gerrymander. As for the current representative who was elected essentially unopposed on the ballot, the Supreme Court had struck down map two and the filing deadline was not reopened for map three. So candidate who filed under map two was drawn out of map three. And as a result, Representative Dell'Aquila was the only candidate on the ballot for this race. And then I'll try to move over to remarks on the other one real quick. So my second plan aims to make changes to House District 16 and House District 17. This one's a modest one, affecting a few House districts in southwest Cuyahoga County within Senate District 24. This proposal aims to change the boundaries of then House District 16 and House District 17 and then to balance it out, changing some in House District 13. But this would put House District 17 at a 49.5/48.1 Republican, as measured by Dave's Redistricting, which is a fair district that both Republicans and Democrats have reasonable chance to win. This change is vital because under the proposed plan, despite Cuyahoga County having among the largest group of Republicans in the state, there would not be one Republican leaning contained district in the county. Every single contained district would instead be drawn for Democrats. Thus, despite Governor DeWine getting 43% of Cuyahoga County's vote and Senator Vance getting 32% of Cuyahoga County's vote, there are no Republican favored districts in the county. Thank you.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:11:33] You. Thank you. And you did it right at 3 minutes. Yes. Good work.

Jeremy Wald [00:11:37] Cut a lot out.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:11:38] Two topics. Question for the witness. Sir, I have one. So what you're really proposing is to do some reconfiguring within two municipality borders. Is that what I hear you're saying?

Jeremy Wald [00:11:54] Yeah. In the first one, looking at Seven Hills and trying to include it in Senate District 24.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:12:02] Refresh me. Why? Why do you believe Seven Hills makes more sense in one district versus another?

Jeremy Wald [00:12:10] Well, it shares a lot more in common with its neighboring district, which is also in Senate District 24. They share a municipal court and a school district. And then this district was essentially drawn to help Dell'Aquila not have to run against the incumbent in 14, Sean Brennan Representative Brennan.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:12:34] Other questions or comments. Thank you, sir. Thank you for your testimony.

Jeremy Wald [00:12:39] Thank you.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:12:40] And thank you as well for keeping on point. Our next witness is Kevin Morgan, followed by Stephen Michael Kellat. Stephen Michael Kellat. Mr. Morgan, thank you for joining us.

Kevin Morgan [00:13:00] And thank you for having this hearing. My name is Kevin Morgan. I'm a resident of Montville in House District 99, which over, historically have been a perfect example of gerrymandering. And this new map is as well kept that kept that thing going. I'm a registered Republican and frankly, disgusted by the redistricting committee's goal to gerrymandered districts to gain a disproportionate number of seats in the Ohio House of Representatives. The last presidential election had roughly 55% Republican, 45% Democrat. That means that a fair district map would produce in the mid fifties for Republican representatives and mid-forties for Democratic representatives. Instead, this commission has repeatedly submitted unconstitutional maps to get as many Republican seats as possible. Realize I'm a registered Republican and I'm disgusted by that. Toward this end, you draw districts with tentacles to accomplish one of two things either extend a tentacle to siphon some Republican votes away from an area that already has plenty. And maybe you can effect a different district with that, or to extend it tentacle to concentrate more Democratic votes into an area that already has plenty of Democratic votes. And so you can just load up that district. I see that in Senate District 18, which is near includes Lake County, where I used to work, as well as my House District 99, the representative District 99. It goes up and it grabs, goes around Geneva, then goes up and grabs Ashtabula City, which I'm presuming was the intent to grab some of those Democratic votes up in Ashtabula City, and those numbers could be overwhelmed by fairly Republican Geauga County. That's the nefarious part of it all. And that's what disgusts me. Ohio's citizens - Ohio's citizens made it clear that no matter what party is in charge, we want to stop this nefarious practice of gerrymandering. I ask that you take a good, hard look at any map you propose and ask yourself, Does this map represent all of the people in Ohio in the best and most fair way possible? Thank you very much.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:15:46] Thank you. Question for the witness. Hearing none, thank you, sir, for coming in your testimony and thank for keeping on point and under time. Our next witness is Steven Michael Kellat. Did I say that right? Yes.

Stephen Michael Kellat [00:16:09] I have documents for staff.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:16:10] Thank you. Followed by Jamie Shatsman Thank you there.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:16:19] And thank you, Mr. Kellat, for giving us written testimony. It's always nice to follow.

Stephen Michael Kellat [00:16:23] Printed copies are being distributed.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:16:25] Well, got it. Thank you. Feel free to proceed.

Stephen Michael Kellat [00:16:29] Good morning. I did prepare written testimony, but I'm pretty much going to diverge from it based upon the testimony of a fellow resident of the 99th Ohio House District. Folks in attendance can see my originally prepared testimony online. On the Redistricting Commission's website, if they wish to see the original remarks as prepared. I live in the Ohio House 99th District. We have not been blessed with our choice of member of the House. Our member of the House has made international headlines, and that's not been a good thing. Thanks to the layout of the district she's in a safe seat. Republican votes in Geauga County preserve her. The Grendel machine in Geauga County, for the most part, ensures she's not going anywhere. The lobe, once you cross the land bridge into Trumbull County, I'm sorry to Trumbull Township, you go up to Harpersfield and you cross. You go all the way to the state line and Conneaut. This is cracking and packing. You're literally taking your Democratic stronghold in northern Ashtabula County and you're attaching it to a predominantly Republican county. So all those Democratic voices are silenced. When I got to watch the most recent campaign, the Democratic candidate, she was winning. She was getting the votes. She was winning Ashtabula County. She was winning that segment. And it was all for nothing. Because when the candidates were in the match up in Geauga County, the current incumbent. She had that turnout. And back to the statehouse she went. There is no one single monolithic Ohio. And with mapmakers in Columbus drawing with that sort of mindset. You take a look at Geauga County, you take a look at Ashtabula County, you take a look at Trumbull County, you look at people and you treat them as widgets that are interchangeable. That's fine. That's a way you can do things. That doesn't respect the diversity of our state, that doesn't respect the people of our state. And in the end. You get perverse outcomes. You get members of the House that play footsie with Holocaust denial. You get outcomes that frankly, are absurd. How can you change this? Keep Ashtabula County whole. That's a competitive district. We sent people like L. George Distel, Deborah Newcomb. And that's time. Thank you.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:19:48] Questions for the Witness.

Sen. Rob McColley [00:19:52] If I could make a comment.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:19:54] Sorry, Senator McColley.

Sen. Rob McColley [00:19:59] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a general comment. I think there's something that and I'm sure, given the fact that we're up in this part of the state, obviously we're going to be talking a lot about northeast Ohio. And that's the point of the meeting here today. And I appreciate everybody coming to talk about it. One thing that I think is important to reiterate is the difficulty from a from the splitting rules in the constitutional amendment of drawing districts, particularly in that corner of the state, because you have Lake County that is a protected county, Trumbull County, Portage County, all that are protected counties. And so there aren't a lot of options per se to draw House districts. I would also point out that Ashtabula County as an index is 57.5 percent Republican. And so I just wanted to make that clear. Thank you.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:21:00] Senator McColley, for for the benefit, when you say protected county, what does that mean? Yes, I mean, I'm looking at people shaking their head like, what the heck does that mean? And and if I hadn't been doing this for a couple of weeks, I'd have the same question.

Sen. Rob McColley [00:21:14] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll explain it. So Lake County and Trumbull County and Portage County, all being larger than a single House district, are constitutionally entitled to have a whole House district wholly contained within that county that's that's required under our Constitution. Obviously, in that corner of the state, that leaves the only two counties until you run into other protected counties of Summit and Cuyahoga, depending on different types of protections. That leaves only Ashtabula and Geauga that are either surrounded by a Pennsylvania border and Lake Erie or other protected counties that have to share districts. Making it even more difficult is that Trumbull and Mahoning County are both protected as well, and it is impossible to put them into a Senate district. And so that means the Trumbull County Senate district cannot go south. It must go either north or to the to the west, which again compounds the difficulty of drawing these districts, given the requirements of the Ohio Constitution.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:22:26] Thank you. Other questions or comments for the witness, sir. Thank you for your comments. I appreciate it. And I also read while you were speaking your other comments and appreciated those as well. And what I heard you saying was that you want to keep cities, counties in townships whole as possible. And if that happens, the districts would be better.

[00:22:45] Yes, sir.

[00:22:46] And I tend to agree with that. So other comments hearing on. Thank you for coming in and thank you for sharing your thoughts.

Stephen Michael Kellat [00:22:55] Thank you, Mr. Co-Chair.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:22:56] Our next witness would be Jamie. Jamie Shatsman been followed by William. I'm not even going to get close on this. William? Can you help me? I don't know. I can't read that.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:23:17] William.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:23:19] William K How's that? If you're William K.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:23:21] William K in the last name begins with W.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:23:23] Is that Weissenberg? Mr. Weissenberg. Good to see ya. [inaudible]

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:23:40] Thank you, ma'am.

Jamie Shatsman [00:23:41] Thank you.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:23:42] Do you have written testimony for.

Jamie Shatsman [00:23:44] Yes. It's on the website as well.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:23:46] On the website we're on. Yeah. He's passing it out so great.

Jamie Shatsman [00:23:48] And I'm to try to cut it down a little bit for the time limit.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:23:51] Thanks for joining us.

Jamie Shatsman [00:23:52] Thank you. Good morning. Co-Chair Antonio, co-chair Faber, and members of the Redistricting Commission. Thanks for the opportunity to testify. My name is Jamie Shatsman. I'm a resident of Eastlake and I'm also on the Willoughby Eastlake School Board. However, I have to be clear that any thoughts that I share today represent only my personal perspective. And while I make reference to my role as an elected official, my testimony is not intended as a statement from the school board. In all honesty, I wasn't even sure I should come here today and speak because I'm not an expert in any way on legislative maps, but I'm fortunate to have a personal situation that affords me the opportunity to do so. And I think it's important for you to hear from Ohio residents in preparing this testimony. I looked at the Ohio House of Representatives website and found this written under the heading The Role of a Representative: State Representatives listen to the concerns of their constituents and speak for them. I often have conversations with members of my local community about the importance of our local elections, and I'm certainly not here to diminish the significance of local elected officials, particularly when we have school boards on the ballot in November. But I think it's also important to note that while a local school board does set policy for their individual school district, school boards also have a duty to uphold the laws enacted at the state level. And when it comes to education, which I know has been a focus of the 135th General Assembly, our legislatures are making decisions about fair school funding, school choice, curriculum requirements, the duties of the Department of Education, or now to be named Department of Education and Workforce, mandatory retention practices, teacher minimum salaries, teaching eligibility, parental rights, participation in women's sports, student meals, feminine hygiene products, payment of athletic events, school transportation and more. And I think it's clear from this list that this body sets policies that impact our lives and the lives of our children. And that's a big deal. I teach my eight year old daughter that voting is a really huge responsibility. I tell her that the elections matter because I believe my vote matters and I believe everyone's should. And it's starting to feel like a redistricting commission has more influence over who will represent us than the actual people who cast the votes in elections. I live in House District 23 and Senate District 18, although prior to January 23, Eastlake was in the House District 60 and Senate District 25. We're not unique in that. But I think it's worth mentioning that voters in Eastlake did not actually elect our current state senator because we were drawn into a new district. The same is true for our neighbors, in Willowick and Willoughby, who are also drawn into a new district 18. And I believe it's true for other cities across the state. We did elect our state rep in November 22. Representative Troy won that election by 51% of the vote in what some news sources called the most competitive House race in the state. I looked up our indexes for our current maps versus the proposed maps, and it'll change from 50.47% to 53.50. And I think I've been watching you guys. I believe that the race is no longer considered a toss up anymore. But regardless of what you call it, I think it makes it less likely that we'll have a middle of the road legislator representing us in a state legislature that already has a supermajority. And I've heard a lot of different things thrown around when considering maps, proportionality, compactness, preserving certain areas or incumbents and

competitiveness. But I just want to ask you, are the maps fair? Are they more fair than the maps that were ruled unconstitutional by the Ohio Supreme Court that we are currently using? And I just want to point out that in 2015, 71% of voters support an amendment to create a bipartisan commission to draw districts that don't favor one political party. So this is certainly not about the party that has the super majority. I don't mean to say that, and I'm just asking you with sincere respect for the difficult position that you guys are all in drawing these maps. If you don't truly believe we're making a change that more fairly represents the voice of Ohio voters, please don't do it. [applause]

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:27:51] Thank you, ma'am. There may be some questions, but just for the this this procedure is being transcribed. And for those who are hard of hearing and listening to the transcript, if you could keep the applause and the comments afterwards down because it messes, I'm told by the staff it messes up the transcript and it becomes very difficult to hear on on the broadcast. Having said that, any questions for the witness? Leader Russo.

House Minority Leader Allison Russo [00:28:17] Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you so much for your testimony, and I would like to thank you for your service on the school board as well. Those are are difficult roles. I know and always appreciate folks who are willing to serve at that level and just, you know, in I guess, a response to your comment saying that I think you rightly point out that it is extremely difficult for constituents when your elected representatives at the statehouse, whether it be a state representative or a state senator, continue to change from the last set of maps to this set of maps and the proposed maps going forward. Different individuals. And I think and correct me if I'm wrong, you would probably agree that it's a disservice not only to the constituents, but also the communities that those constituents live in, because it's difficult to know for local issues, funding, etc., who to go to to advocate for your community and have a real vested interest if it continues to change over and over again. Would you agree with that?

Jamie Shatsman [00:29:38] Through the co-chairs to the House Minority Leader? Thank you for that question, and it's my pleasure to serve in a local office. I do actually agree with that. I think a lot of times people are uninformed. They don't even know who their representatives are. They don't know who to go to. They don't understand what's going on or why things are changing. I know that people were looking at old elections and they're like, Oh, well, we elected this person. Well, no, some of our county elected this person, but not all of our county did. And it's hard to actually, as you know, a busy working mom, for instance, to really spend the time you need to understand some of these things. But what people do understand is they want to have a voice and they want to have someone that they can talk to when they need help. And I think that happens all the time with individuals and it also happens with organizations like in our school district. We try to build relationships with our legislatures so that they understand, we try to invite them in. And certainly it's our job to do that often if we need to. But it is certainly easier to build on our existing relationship that you already have if things are only changing for the sake of changing. And I understand that there's different legal requirements, but my point here today is if they're not getting better, can we just leave them the same? Is there a way to do that?

House Minority Leader Allison Russo [00:31:00] Thank you..

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:31:03] Co-Chair.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:31:04] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you also for for being here and for testifying. I think you hit on something as also an elected official in your community. I appreciate the fact that you're talking about the relationships that are built that then affect your community. And it's a two way street. Correct. I mean, can you just very briefly talk a little bit about why those relationships are important as a school board member, to be in touch with your elected officials at the state level?

Jamie Shatsman [00:31:41] Thank you. Through the co-chairs to the one chair. That's fine. Absolutely. So I do think it's a bi directional relationship, 100% on the one hand, and I will say that I've been able to in a short time develop a personal relationship with Representative Dan Troy. And therefore when there's something that our community wants, our constituents are asking for. They very often can't make the trip down to the State House. They often don't want to do that. They're intimidated by the process. And so we speak on their behalf. And sometimes they don't even want to call their state representative because it feels intimidating. Right. And so having that relationship where I can say my constituents are coming to me and this is what they're looking for, or my property tax owners here do not want this income tax reform because it will mean that they lose their 10% subsidy to their property tax. That's something that we can talk to our legislators about, particularly on fair school funding. I didn't just reach out to my representative. I reached out to every representative, and I think Representative LaRe had the pleasure of hearing from me during HB 33. But building those relationships so we can have a real dialog about what in the budget is important, what is less important or less of a priority. It's different for every district, but we just want to have a seat at the table. I think the other way is when representatives can come to us and let us know what decisions they're making, what grants, what funds are available that can come back to us and come to our community. So it's definitely a two way street. Just like any relationship is. Thank you.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:33:25] Thank you. Thank you. Chair. Co-Chair.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:33:28] Other questions. Thank you, ma'am.

Jamie Shatsman [00:33:32] Thank you so much.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:33:35] Thank you for keeping giving us written testimony and keeping it inside the lines. Mr. Weisenberg, good to see you. I see you do not have written testimony. Is that correct?

William Wiesenberg [00:33:47] That is correct, Mr. Chairman. And good morning to you and the members of the committee.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:33:50] Welcome to the committee.

William Wiesenberg [00:33:51] Thank you. And if my comments are not within the admonition you exercise at the beginning, I will respect you ruling me out of order. It wouldn't be the first time that's happened to me in my career.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:34:02] Unlikely to happen. Go ahead.

William Wiesenber [00:34:03] First of all, Governor, it's good to see you. I hope you're feeling better.

Gov. Mike DeWine [00:34:07] Doing well, thank you.

William Wiesenber [00:34:08] Good. Good to see you. Thank you. It's been often said that the process is as important and more important than the product produced not just by a legislative body, but by people in general. Last week, when I saw the schedule for this meeting and I noticed that it came on the holiest day of the year in my faith, Jewish faith, I was very, very angry. Matter of fact, I sent a text to the chairman who acknowledged, Yeah, darn. I was surprised that no one had looked at the calendar, recognizing that this is the holiest day of my faith and that there are over 100,000 people of the Jewish faith in northeast Ohio, specifically in the Cuyahoga County community bordering where we are today. But last evening, I watched and participated in the Kol Nidrei service, and I learned something that I had learned as a young boy when I started going to temple that I shouldn't be angry. I was disappointed. The Kol Nidrei service, and what we are about today in my faith, is about recognizing our transgressions, our sins, atoning for them and respecting others and understanding that we can all do better. And so I'm not angry, but I'm disappointed in the process is I said, is more important than anything else in my point in coming this morning is, as some of you know, I have spent my entire adult professional life around the Ohio General Assembly beginning to date myself in 1971. And I've worked with many great people, including at that time, a young state senator from Greene County came to the Ohio Senate. And we met on day one. And we've had a wonderful relationship over many, many years. Of different political beliefs but respect to one another. Right now what concerns me as a citizen is the fact that our public, our citizenry has lost trust and confidence in our institutions of government. It's lost trust and confidence and worries about the demise and the perils facing our democracy. That, to me, is very, very dangerous. And I devote my time, which I refer to, is my fictitious retirement to working on those issues. So the one thing I would do today, I would hope you would consider as you move forward to examine the process, to ensure that the process has the trust and confidence of the people of the state of Ohio. There's another reason I'm here today. I have one grandchild, a grandson, a junior at the University of Kentucky, and I told him when I spoke to him on Saturday morning that, well, one thing I will leave you with is that I will probably have attended the last meeting of the redistricting commission as we know it today, and that hopefully we will have a process in place in the future that is more responsive and more in keeping with the trust in democracy. Mr. Chairman, I thank you for permitting me to appear before you this morning. I wish you and the members well and Happy New Year to you and God be with you. Thank you very much. And I'm happy to answer any questions.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:37:41] Thank you. [applause] There goes the transcript. Comments questions? I do want to thank you, Mr. Wiesenber, for bringing it to my attention that we had, as I said, made a mistake. I'm picking the dates. The dates were picked to try and keep with the schedule Secretary LaRose picked and the dates were made at a meeting at a motion. That's what happens when we act on the fly. We did make sure that we had two other dates for people who wanted to be observant today to also attend and testify. We added another hearing for tonight. But also, as is anybody who wants to submit written testimony, we would certainly take that as well. And candidly, we reached out to the Ohio Jewish Federation to try and make a means to make sure that is communicated as well. So I appreciated you personally bringing that. That was the first time it came to my attention. We immediately brought to the attention of the rest of the committee, and we had a discussion on Friday at our meeting for options. We tried to

explore other options. Actually, one of the things we talked about doing was having a hearing at a Jewish community center in Columbus on Tuesday. And I think the consensus was that for the work and the effort involved, having that same hearing downtown in Columbus might have just been accommodating as opposed to a few blocks difference in the location with the technology and things that were necessary. So that's where we'll be on Tuesday, but I sure appreciate that. And to our friends who are observing today our best and hopefully you have a productive fast and day.

William Wiesenberg [00:39:23] Thank you very much. My physicians told me the fast will be very healthy for me. But I should also know from your schedule, and, Mr. Chairman, that I know the hearings are 5:00 today.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:39:33] 5:30.

William Wiesenberg [00:39:33] 5:30, but I don't know how that it's a sundown. It doesn't the end of the holiday for those who will be breaking the fast this evening with family. So I know, I know you tried, but in the future, whoever is doing this needs to just try a little harder. Thank you.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:39:55] Thank you for your. And we do appreciate you again. I appreciate it more than you know, bring it to my attention is which reflected when when we texted back and forth. Yeah.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:40:06] Mr. Co-chair, thank you so much for first bringing to the attention of my honored co-chair as well as then to the whole committee. I do want to explain the staying tonight after five and 5:30 is really to accommodate yet another group that the consideration was left out in the original time frame, which was people who are working during the day and wouldn't even would never be able to attend as we are here right now. And so the learning and the effort of really being more accommodating continues. And I share your hopes that in the future we have yet a more democratic process going forward. Thank you.

William Wiesenberg [00:41:00] Chairman, Senator Antonio. I had a teacher one time who told me when I was a young boy that if we learn one new fact a day, we would have had a good part of our education satisfied. So I know you tried. Thank you all.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:41:16] Thank you. Any other comments or questions? Thank you, Bill. Our next witness. Did I skip putting somebody on deck?

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:41:29] Yes.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:41:30] Well, the next witness is State Senator Kent Smith, who needs not be on deck. Followed immediately by Brian Humphrey. Mr. Humphrey is on deck, then will be Justin Tjaden. Did I said that one wrong? I apologize. Senator Smith, welcome to the committee. I assume you have handouts because it looks like you're bringing papers.

Sen. Kent Smith [00:41:57] I do. I do. These were also emailed, so I'm not sure if you have them, but now you have more. So I'm State Senator Kent Smith. I've got four pages of testimony. I've already tried to abbreviate some of it to try to meet meet the time requirements. I represent Cuyahoga County, hold you all in high regard. It was reported on Cleveland.com, one of you said, and I think this is important quote It's important to try to

ensure that communities are represented by someone who shares their interests, especially as Ohioans with the same political bent increasingly cluster together geographically. I could not agree more with that sentiment. Quickly, let's start with some math, and I'm abbreviating testimony. U.S. Census says Ohio has 11.7 million people in it, which if you divide that by the 99 House seats and 33 Senate seats is 119,000 per House seat, 357,000 per Senate seat. The constitutional amendment allows for a 5% variance. So the range in the House seats is 125,125 to 113,211 on the low end. The proposed maps are making Democratic seats larger than they should be and Republican seats smaller than they should be, which allows them to falsely increase the number of Republicans in the state House and state Senate. Let's look at the four urban counties. Again, I'm going to try to fly through this. Franklin County, home of 11 House seats, the six largest of which all lean Democratic. Five of those House seats have a population of 121,000 or larger. Then there is Montgomery County, home to four state House seats. In November 2020, Montgomery County voted for Joe Biden, 50-48. Yet this county has a 3 to 1 GOP advantage based on the manipulation of the statehouse districts. Like Franklin County, Montgomery County's most Democratic district is its most populated, which is House District 38, a 72% Democratic index and a population of 125,132, which is actually over the maximum allowable. The other blue district is House District 39, which is right next door to 38, but it only has a 49.7 Democratic majority, which means Montgomery County could go 3 to 1 Republican in the statehouse, even though it voted for Joe Biden. You see a similar scheme in Hamilton County, but this time it's more noticeable in the Senate map. Hamilton County has seven House seats, two Senate seats. Again, the average population, 119,000. Of the seven population -- of the seven House districts, the Democratic districts ranged from 122,117. The two House districts with the smallest populations in Hamilton County are the ones to likely vote Republican. This repeated scheme cannot be a coincidence. GOP mapmakers are trying to minimize Democratic voices in the state legislature, and they can do that by making Democratic districts larger than it should be. The more people, more district, the less power. This manifests itself even more dramatically. If you look at the state Senate map and Hamilton County, how does a 5 to 2 Democratic majority in the statehouse turn into a Senate map with a 2 to 1 Republican advantage? Again, Republicans mapmakers have manipulated the borders and boundaries to take a county that voted 57% for Biden and distort its state Senate representation. Quickly. And I'm trying to be quick. Cuyahoga County, home of ten Senate House seats, all within the district border. And they are all well over the average and some, again, exceed the maximum allowable. The range of population is 124,466 to 125,141. Due to overcrowding, Republican mapmakers have again cheated Cuyahoga County out of an 11th district fully inside its borders. Cuyahoga County's population is 1.2 million, which, if you divide it 11 ways, gets you 114,983, which is above the minimum district per average by almost 1,800 people. There is no reason to draw any district outside of Cuyahoga County, which is what happens when House District 23 gets drawn into Lake County. Four of the seats, again in Cuyahoga County are over the maximum allowable. Yet the state Senate district map is worse in every way. Currently, Cuyahoga County has two Democratic senators. I know them well. They are the proposed GOP map overcrowds those two Senate seats. Draws House District 23 in Lake County, making it a Republican leaning state Senate district. And the western part of Cuyahoga County is a toss up district, which means Cuyahoga County, which gave Joe Biden his largest percentage win and its largest pure vote total win in all 88 counties, might be represented in the Senate by two Republicans and two Democrats. The Cuyahoga County state Senate map should be restored, something like it was in 2012 to 2020 when it had a Western district, Eastern district and a city of Cleveland district. While the population numbers have shifted, this map actually would make more sense. And I would direct you to the city of Cleveland population itself. Again, the average state Senate district is 357,501. The city of Cleveland

population is 367,991. It's almost a perfect match. The city of Cleveland should be given its three House seats, its one state Senate seat, and the other eight districts could be divided up in the suburbs. This would be a map that is equal and logical, not overpopulated, manipulated and illogical. I have five requests of the Commission and this will conclude my remarks. Make all the districts equal in size. When the numbers are equal, the chances are the maps will be fair. That's number one. Number two, move the Montgomery County boundaries to better ensure a more accurate 2 to 2 state house ratio rather than 3 to 1. Number three, correct the state Senate balance in Hamilton in Cuyahoga County. Number four, ensure 11 full House districts are within Cuyahoga County. And number five, make sure that the city of Cleveland gets its state Senate district restored as it had in the last state in the last decade. Again, if it was reported, it was reported that, quote, It is important to try to ensure that communities are represented by someone who shares their interests, especially as Ohioans with the same political bent, increasingly clustered together geographically. I think these five recommendations would improve the current proposed maps, and I appreciate the Commission's kind attention. Would be happy to answer any questions you might have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:48:30] Thank you for joining us.

Sen. Kent Smith [00:48:33] I've got to assume you turned off the timer because I am shocked. Okay. Because I'm shocked that I got that.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:48:41] And I'm told. Yes.

Sen. Kent Smith [00:48:42] Yeah.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:48:43] Apparently they were giving you some legislative prerogative which as a former member of the legislature, I understand. As an ex member of the legislature, I would not have agreed with. You have questions for Senator. Senator McColley.

Sen. Rob McColley [00:48:58] Thank you chair. Your population data Where did you get it from?

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:49:04] The per district data? I got the per district data from Dave's Redistricting.

Sen. Rob McColley [00:49:11] Okay. So I think this might be part of the reason for the discrepancy. All of our districts are drawn based off the decennial census data as is required in the Constitution. So it's very possible that there were some population shifts in some of those areas that may have resulted in what you're saying may may be another data source that we're not permitted to use. And so the decennial census data is what we are required to use under the Constitution.

Sen. Kent Smith [00:49:47] So, yes, I do not know where Dave's got, you know, is able to determine that. House District 13 and Cuyahoga County has 125,141 people. House District 16 I'm sorry, House District 18 has 125,128 people. House District 21 has 125,132 people and House District 22 has 125,141 people. But I think it is a remarkable coincidence that all of those districts in the county that gave Joe Biden his biggest percentage win and raw total raw vote total win are all above the maximum threshold. And the other six districts, again, that total is 125,125 based on just the math of the population divided by 99, this population in the census divided by 99. The other six districts are all

124,466 or higher. This is I don't know how you can not look at the population within the state house districts in Cuyahoga County and not believe that some mapmakers were trying their best to, instead of giving Cuyahoga County 11 seats, they gave us ten. And if you look at Franklin County, again, of the 11 seats there, the top six in population, all lean Democratic. If you look at the districts in Hamilton County, seven state House districts, the top five all lean Democratic. And in Montgomery County, the one district that is tried and true going to go blue is as it is, it as it is now drawn is also over the legal threshold.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:51:44] Other questions or comments? Thank you. Senator, I appreciate you coming in. I'm told that Representative Sean Brennan is also in the audience but does not wish to testify. Good to see you, Representative.

Sen. Kent Smith [00:51:57] Appreciate it.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:51:58] Thank you.

Sen. Rob McColley [00:52:00] Mr. Chairman, if I could just one comment. I just got a message that the maximum allowable population is 125,145 per the decennial census population. So just some added context per House District 125,145.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:52:29] All right. Our next witness is Brian Humphrey. Mr. Humphrey, followed by Justin Tjajden.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:52:43] Mr. Humphrey, welcome to the committee.

Brian Humphrey [00:52:46] Morning. Thank you.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:52:48] Do you have anything written for us?

Brian Humphrey [00:52:50] I do not.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:52:51] Okay. Just wanted to make sure.

Brian Humphrey [00:52:53] You could read my mind, but.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:52:55] Well, thank you. If you had something, we wanted to make you help get it passed out.

Brian Humphrey [00:52:58] Right. Thanks for the opportunity to speak this morning. I guess I'm astounded by a number of things. The way the maps come out. The previous speakers have identified several ways in which they're amazingly favorable to one side and not the other. But what I was really here to express my thoughts about are the amazing way that the redistricting committee has chosen to ignore our Supreme Court repeatedly. Over and over and over again. Perhaps not this most recent committee, but previous iterations of it. Recently, in August, we had a special election. I thought we made a rule or the legislature had ruled that we shouldn't have August elections, but amazingly, we did. And the voters of Ohio decided to keep our current method of amending the Constitution. Which appears to be a good thing, since it's been mentioned by the committee that your hands are tied by several clauses in that constitution. So perhaps it should be amended to make the redistricting more fair. More equitable. And I think if you continue to ignore the will of the people in the Supreme Court. The voters of Ohio will

change the Constitution. And that would be a good thing. So good luck, gentlemen and ladies.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:54:51] Thank you. Questions. Comments for the witness.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:54:54] Thank you, Mr. Humphrey.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:54:55] Thank you for coming in and appreciate your testimony and keeping it inside the timeline.

Brian Humphrey [00:54:59] I want to say hi to my boss, Frank LaRose, since I'm a poll worker frequently. He he instructs me very well on what I should be doing and how to do it.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:55:12] Let me add thank you for being a poll worker. You've joined about 35,000 Ohioans from both parties who in a time where it feels like Washington can agree that today's Monday, Republicans and Democrats work together to run elections in Ohio. So and I'll just remind you that the taxpayers are our boss, both of us. And so thank you for being a poll worker.

Brian Humphrey [00:55:30] I'm paying myself, I guess. Thank you, sir.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:55:34] That's right.

Brian Humphrey [00:55:36] Unfortunately, this coming November, I'll be in Hawaii, So I'm going to have to vote absentee and I'm not going to be able to work for you this time.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:55:46] Recruit your replacement please.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:55:49] I'm sure he'll give you an approved vacation.

Brian Humphrey [00:55:50] Yeah.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:55:53] All right. Our next witness is Justin Tjaden. Followed by Mary Ellen Struzi.

Justin Tjaden [00:56:06] I don't have any written testimony to provide.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:56:08] Thank you. You're up, Mr. Tjaden.

Justin Tjaden [00:56:11] Just ignore the T. As I said, my name is Justin Jaden. I live in Geneva on the lake. I've been in Ohio for about eight years now. I came from a very, very, very small town in northeast Colorado. About 1,200 people in a county of about 2,400 people. And this is also the part of Colorado that around the time that I came to Ohio, they were in the process of trying to secede from Colorado because of their lack of representation. So as weird as this might sound, I do think I have a little bit of authority on being able to speak to not being heard. And Governor DeWine, thanks for being here. I do hope you're feeling better. I was one of the 60% of the state who voted for you, but I voted because of your leadership during the pandemic. I voted for you because of the bipartisan nature on which you seem to had been running your government at that time. And now here we are. I want to spend the rest my time speaking about perception and reality.

Because the reality of the situation may very well be that you all believe deep down in your souls that what you are doing is right, that what you're doing is right for the people of Ohio. I can understand. I can appreciate that. But Secretary LaRose just said we work for the taxpayers and perception is the reason this room is so full. The perception is that's not true. The perception seems to be that as long as we have power, we will protect those who help us keep it. The perception is we'll protect Josh Williams in District 44 because he won a contested district, voted party line. So now we're going to give him some help. The perception is Senator Theresa Gavarone won a competitive district, voted party line. So we're going to give her some help. But the perception is you're not helping all Republicans, are you? As Senator McColley said, Lake County is a protected district. It is currently represented by Republican by the name of Jamie Callender and, I don't know, Representative Callender. But I do know that he has a 94% rating from CPAC. I do know that he believes in small government. I do believe that he believes in everything that the Republicans should believe in. But I also know that he voted against an anti-trans bill. I know he voted against a state budget that included the ripping away of rights of duly elected state Board of Education members, something that members of this committee who are running for Senate may want to remember next time they are talking about the bureaucracy of the federal Department of Education. And he also is working in a bipartisan manner to legalize marijuana. And he was also drawn into a district that the media says, or according to media reports, is with an incumbent Democrat. Who now faces a challenge. The perception is we are the new Ohio Republican Party. We are the government. And we're here to help, whether you want it or not. Thank you.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:00:00] Questions for the witness. Comments for the witness.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [01:00:04] I just have one comment. I appreciate your coming here today and speaking. I'm assuming as a Democrat directly to your colleagues that are Republican, because you know, this commission, while we are all the commission, we certainly have varied representation on the commission. I just wanted to point that out.

Justin Tjaden [01:00:28] And if I may address that momentarily, I'm not a Democrat.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [01:00:33] No, no, no. And to be clear. I am.

Justin Tjaden [01:00:36] Okay.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [01:00:36] Well you, your your comments seem to be my understanding is they were directly made to the Republican members of this commission. I'm just pointing out for point of clarification that the whole commission is not. There are two of us who are democrats.

Justin Tjaden [01:00:52] Oh, I. No, I understand.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [01:00:54] That was my only point.

Justin Tjaden [01:00:56] Thank you, Senator Antonio. And I and I do want to clarify, too. We know in California, from Colorado, Michigan, Illinois, New York, Maryland. Democrats can't draw maps either. So it would be really nice if we had an independent redistricting commission to take care of something like this. I'm a registered independent. And what

you all should be kind of nervous about is independents outnumber Republicans in this state. So you can mess with the voter rolls, you can mess with the maps, you can draw however you want. You can change how we vote when we vote, what we need to vote. It doesn't matter. The independent voice of Ohio is coming. And you guys thought August was bad. You ain't seen nothing yet. [applause]

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:01:46] Other questions for candidates. Hearing none, thank you, sir, for coming and joining us. Our next witness is Mary Ellen Struz, followed by William Kinney. Kennedy and then Amy Zipp. Ma'am, welcome to the committee.

Mary Ellen Struze [01:02:11] Thank you very much. Appreciate having an opportunity to speak a very short plea. I'm not an experienced public speaker. I am a mere ordinary citizen who is very concerned about where the direction of this state is going. I feel that we need definitely to have a independent commission. I think it has been evident that the failure to create a map that is agreeable and fair and protects the democracy that we live in, that allows two parties who are fair and balanced. As a citizen, I don't feel that's how this state is going. From a numerous on numerous situations, the lack of funding for education is of course a very high priority to me, who is a retired schoolteacher. The immigration status, which is more of a national situation, but there are some opportunities, I think, within state government to improve the attitude towards that. I am pleaing from the bottom of my heart and as a person who passionately believes in democracy, that you create an independent commission. Thank you for the opportunity to speak and I'm glad to see our governor is recovering.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:03:51] Thank you. Questions. Comments for the Witness. Thank you, ma'am, for coming today. And thank you for keeping your testimony within the time limits. And I'm sure appreciate your input.

Mary Ellen Struze [01:04:01] You're welcome.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:04:04] Our next witness is, I think it's William Kennedy.

William Kennedy [01:04:08] That's correct. William Kennedy.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:04:09] Followed by Amy Zipp. And the next will be looks like Barbara Friedman Yazick. Mr. Kennedy, welcome to the committee.

William Kennedy [01:04:18] Thank you very much. Thanks for allowing us this opportunity. Like the last witness, I am just a private citizen. I have no particular expertise in mapdrawing or in politics. A lifelong resident of the state of Ohio, I was born in Cleveland, raised in Cleveland Heights, went to St Ignatius High School. I have lived in Geauga County since 1994, and I would say that as a citizen of Geauga County in particular, I do not feel represented in this state. We we are a representative democracy and I would like to feel represented. I do not. My only comment really is I know that you have the power to gerrymander and redistrict, redistrict in a way that favors your party. I would say that the the artificial majority that you hold now in the state House is a short term thing. And I think the August election demonstrates that the state of Ohio is much more diverse, much more tolerant, much more generous to its fellow citizens than the state House seems to represent us as. I think the supermajority you have allows the radicals in your party a great deal of power to interfere with our personal lives, with our individual

freedoms. I support women's rights. A woman's right to choose. I don't want school boards directed by the state to behave in any particular way. I think the local school board knows what it needs to do, and I would just remind or request that you consider fairness. That's all. Just be fair in your districting. I would say we could do it, as you say, in 99 districts and make them all the same populace, the same number of people in each district. They can be an absolute almost squares based on the configuration of the state. That wouldn't be, but that would be more fair than what you have now. We could have a system of government where anyone who serves on a jury duty would be eligible to be in a lottery to serve in the statehouse, and then they would have to go to Columbus and serve in the House or the Senate. And I think we would be more fairly represented by that system than by the one we have. My only my final comment is, again, thank you to Governor DeWine for your leadership during the COVID crisis. I know you've gotten a lot of heat from your own party and from many people since then. Hindsight is 2020. I thank you for your sincere interest in providing for the safety of the citizens of this state, and I wish you well.

Gov. Mike DeWine [01:07:45] Thank you.

Brian Humphrey [01:07:46] Thank you.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:07:48] Questions or comments for the witness. Thank you, sir, for taking your time and joining us today. Our next witness is Amy Zipp Ms. Zipp, welcome to the committee, followed by Barbara Friedman Yaksic and then Laurie O'Neil. Welcome to the committee, ma'am. Do you have any written testimony?

Amy Zipp [01:08:16] I will submit this on behalf of Susan Reis from the National Council on Jewish Women.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:08:28] Thank you, ma'am.

Amy Zipp [01:08:30] Good morning. Thank you. Ohio Redistricting Commission for the opportunity to testify on the maps that have been proposed for State House Senate districts. My name is Amy Zipp, and I am here reading the testimony of Susan Reis, who is unable to speak today due to her observation of the most holy day in the Jewish calendar, Yom Kippur. And as a Christian, I would like to say I am extremely disappointed that this happened. I am honored that my Jewish friends asked me to give the testimony on their behalf, and I hope that I can speak well for them. Susan is the state policy advocate of the Ohio National Council of Jewish Women and NCJW. She is also on the board of NCJW Cleveland Section for chairs, and chairs, their legislative committee. NCJW is a nonpartisan grassroots organization of volunteers and advocates who turn progressive ideas into action. Inspired by Jewish values, NCJW strives for social justice by improving the quality of life for women, children and families, by safeguarding individual rights and freedoms. Essentially these rights and freedom is the right to vote and to be represented by fair and constitutional districts for over 130 years. And GW has worked to support voting rights for all Americans. The Cleveland section has over 2000 members and supports and supporters. They follow what the Commission and Legislature are doing and they vote. Recently, Ohioans amended our state constitution, enshrining in it fair districts. We did so to prevent a hyper partisan redistricting commission for drawing maps with the primary goal of protecting incumbents. Nevertheless, it was reported during the last meeting that maps were proposed that would protect incumbents. Ohioans voted overwhelmingly for a fair and transparent process. The redistricting Commission failed these constitutional requirements in 2022, and we're failing now. Thumbing your noses at voters, The Ohio Constitution and the Ohio Supreme Court. The majority members of this

commission have drawn and submitted maps that were deemed to be unconstitutional multiple times by the Ohio Supreme Court. And the Commission is now supporting maps that are even more gerrymandered than the current ones. This type of gerrymandering stacks the deck whereby elected officials choose their voters rather than the voters choosing their elected officials. And with the competitive districts, other Ohio legislation will continue to become more extreme and radical and increasingly out of sync with the majority of Ohio voters. From common sense gun safety laws to school funding and reproductive choice, Ohioans true views and opinions are sidelined. By passing fair maps that more accurately reflect our electorate, our legislators will be more accountable to the voters than surely purely partisan interests. The Ohio's Citizens Redistricting Commission, Sam Gresham, working along with other volunteers, has submitted independent, nonpartisan maps that NCJW supports. These maps are truly representative of the voting makeup of our diverse state and ensure that the voters of all backgrounds and views have a fair shot at being represented in Columbus. We urge you to consider this map when voting on the new maps. Thank you for allowing me to speak on Susan's behalf. That's it.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:12:50] Thank you, ma'am, for for joining us. Questions or comments for the witness. Okay. I wasn't sure. Since you're testifying on behalf of somebody else, whether. Whether the.

Amy Zipp [01:13:00] Yeah, I don't think I could really answer the questions.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:13:03] I was going to ask you about the maps submitted, but we'll take a look at it. Thank you so much for your time and your effort and apologize to your friend that couldn't be here and hope she had a good holiday. Our next witness, Barbara Friedman Yaksic. Followed by Laurie O'Neil and then Jen Miller.

Barbara Yaksic [01:13:34] Members of the commission. My name is Barbara Friedman, executive AKC, and I live in Concord Township in Lake County. Thank you for hearing my testimony. However, I must first express my extreme displeasure with the scheduling of today's hearing. As you have heard before. Today is Yom Kippur, the holiest of Jewish holidays. It's on all the calendars. It's amazing to me that nobody checked that. Would this commission have scheduled a hearing on Easter? It is an unnecessary insult to all Jewish citizens of Ohio that you have ignored this holiday and scheduled a hearing today when this could have been avoided if this commission had started this process earlier and not wasted time with silly infighting such as who would be the co-chair. However, it is because redistricting is so important to me and to countless other Ohioans as indicated by the number of people today. I went to temple last night and I'm here today to offer my testimony. Yom Kippur is a time of reflection, a time to look back at the mistakes of the past year and to consider how we can do better in the upcoming year. It is in that spirit that I ask each of you to honor the oath you took when you joined this commission. Listen to Ohio voters and comply with the Ohio Constitution as twice demonstrated by an overwhelming majority of Ohio voters of both parties. Our Constitution was amended to preclude partisan gerrymandering of voting districts. Hundreds of Ohio citizens testified at public hearings over the past few years, urging this body to create a transparent policy and draft a truly representative map reflecting all Ohio voters. Notwithstanding this mandate, the prior maps put forth by this commission not only failed not to be bipartisan, but were held to be unconstitutional on many grounds, numerous times by the Ohio Supreme Court, as has been testified today by others and as was reported in the Cleveland.com, the proposed map could lead to more GOP seats and fewer competitive districts. Such gerrymandered districts are corrosive to our democracy. They lead to unresponsive lawmakers who refuse to meet with and talk to their constituents or to hold town halls to

find out their constituent views. Which goes to your point, Senator Antonio, about the importance of talking to constituents. They lead and indeed have led to the corruption of public officials. They lead to extremist views, bad policies and policies unresponsive to the voters concerns, concerns. I strongly urge you to review in detail the testimony submitted during prior hearings of this commission and listen to and respond to what Ohio voters want, meaningfully discuss and debate the merits or the merits of the proposed map and create a map that does not unduly favor one political party and otherwise complies with the Ohio Constitution. As the recent August elections showed, Ohio voters want their voices to be heard and complied with, not yours. Again, thank you for listening to my testimony. [applause] Thank you.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:17:07] Thank you, ma'am, for joining us. And thank you for your points. Questions or comments.

Justin Tjaden [01:17:14] I'm sorry, sir. I feel like a teacher right now. Secretary Rose, can you please get off Twitter and listen to the people?

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:17:22] Sir? Sir, I.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:17:24] Tweeted [inaudible] 6 minutes ago.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [01:17:27] My staff must be doing that.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:17:29] Sir, I'm going to ask you to refrain from commenting to the commission. Ma'am. Thank you. Any other questions or comments? Thank you. Our next witness is Laurie O'Neil.

Laurie O'Neil [01:17:48] Good morning.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:17:49] So, Neil, thank you for joining us today. Do you have any written testimony?

Lori O'Neil [01:17:53] I do not. Thank you. I would like to first thank all of you for coming to Geauga County. I very much appreciate. I know this process has been disappointing, to say the least, for many Ohioans. I would like to say that I thank you for coming into the counties and actually allowing ordinary people to have a voice in the process when most of us work all day, we can't go to Columbus. I hope in future I know this is probably unlikely, but when you do face issues that seem to be of, you know, very deep importance to Ohioans, that you might repeat this process and go around the state, it gives us, I think, more trust and also that opportunity. In 2018 when we passed legislation in the state of Ohio to redistrict fairly. I think that Ohioans did so with a great deal of trust and a great deal of hope that we could continue a I think, a history of being a state that we could be proud of. Unfortunately, I think as we stood by last year, hopelessly watching as the very people that we entrusted with this process violated the rule of law, quite frankly, it leads citizens to wonder, who can we believe in at this point? We agree with and abide by process in our everyday lives. You ostensibly also abide by the processes that are, you know, prescribed by law in the work that you do. But when we watch, you violate the law, when we watch you look at our own Ohio Supreme Court and ignore what you were guided and told to do, you erode the trust and institutions that so many of us lament. You know, on the national stage. We talk an awful lot about the erosion of trust in institutions. How do we get that back? Why do some people deliberately do so? Right here in our own state, frankly, many of you are engaged in the same, and it may seem that it's worth it to

maintain your own power. But for how long? At some point, I always say to people what may seem wise today, or maybe you can get away with it, quite frankly, because you have such a supermajority to retain your power. Someday we'll turn the other way and it will be somebody else on the other side of that misusing their power. It's not unique to Republicans or Democrats. It's humanity that has that tendency to do that. So the last thing I would say is Governor DeWine, I've been around long enough to remember when you were a U.S. Senator with George Voinovich and how much I admired you both. And as many people now say about the Republican Party today, that Ronald Reagan couldn't get elected as a Republican today. I think George Voinovich couldn't get elected as a Republican in the state of Ohio today. I would urge you to think about George Voinovich, his values, many of which from a policy perspective, I did not personally agree with, but I admired and respected him. And I hope you'll all take that into consideration. Thank you.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:21:00] Thank you. Questions or comments for the witness? [applause] Miss O'Neil, thank you for joining us and thank you for coming in. We next have Jen Miller, who I would be shocked if she did not have written testimony. Matthew Shaughnessy is followed by Gloria Ferris. Ms. Miller, good to see you today. How are you today?

Jen Miller [01:21:23] Good, thank you.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:21:24] Do you have written testimony?

Jen Miller [01:21:25] Co-chairs and commission members. I'm getting ready to submit it to you. We were I'm going to talk through some things, but I do have good testimony for you. So there are an infinite number of ways to draw a legislative map. There are only really two purposes. One is to be fair, and the other is to seek advantage. I will share with you in my testimony that I have compared to Johnson McDonald, the Rodden III, the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission of Citizens Redistricting Commission maps, as well as the Fair Districts competition winners that all of them are more fair in terms of proportionality and efficiency gap. They are also more compact as measured by Reock and Polsby-Popper. And one of the things that you will get in great detail and I hope you will take advantage of is Auditor Faber. Chairman Faber asked for places where we have concerns on splits. I have a lot listed, but one example is in Trumbull County, where District 65 splits the Village of McDonald in the city of Girard from cities of Niles and Warren. All of these municipalities could be put into a single district that are more similar than pairing these two with more rural northern areas of the county. But mostly I just want to talk about process. Given that voters should be empowered, encouraged to testify and make their impact on how the maps are finally adopted. You had over a year to improve this process, but that's not what we're seeing. I'd like to encourage you again to allow voters to deliberate in the hearings. And in fact, it was you, Chairman Faber, who had suggested that voters should be able to zoom in on maps to talk about that. We're still not there. In addition, the hearing schedule is particularly disappointing. You gave the public very little testimony, only one hearing outside of 9-5 hours. Of course, no real ability for Toledo, Cincinnati, Athens, other places to get to testify without driving a great distance. And then, of course, Yom Kippur, which we've already talked about. I don't think you actually wanted a truly fair and responsive process. The statistics that I've included are agnostic to policies, politicians and parties. It doesn't matter which mapping software and statistical modeling is used. And that's another thing. You had a whole year to figure out how we could all be using the same modeling and the same tools. You didn't do that either. All of this shows me that you are not actually concerned with doing the right thing for Ohio voters. I'm going to leave you with one stat. Michigan has a far less

gerrymandered map and I and I will give you the actual stats of that. But this is what I think is most important. In 2022, Ohio voters were six times more likely to skip the state House races on their map on their ballot than Ohio, than Michigan. So so Michigan, folks, where I'm sorry, were six times less likely to skip the state House races on their ballot than Ohioans. And I think it's because they know here in Ohio that their votes are being rigged, that the maps are being rigged. And I think ultimately, at the end of the day, we want every Ohioan to feel as though they are heard, they're respected, and they're reflected in the maps that this body draws. So I ask you to consider a different starting point. There's a whole bunch of them that are better.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:25:05] Questions for the witness. Secretary LaRose.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:25:11] Good morning. I think you had a comment about the Trumbull Mahoning district regarding a split. Can you repeat that? I have that map open.

Jen Miller [01:25:20] Yeah. And I thank you, Co-chairmen. And thank you, Secretary LaRose. I actually have a whole bunch of these listed in my testimony that I will get to you, but District 65 splits the village, a little tiny village of McDonald and the city of Girard away from Niles and Warren. These are all economically and socially very similar. All four of these municipalities can fit into one single district, but instead they've been split in, paired with a more rural and more conservative, less similar economic area of the county.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [01:26:00] Okay. Thank you.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:26:01] Secretary LaRose. Senator McColley.

Sen. Rob McColley [01:26:05] I just want to be clear I understood your your remarks correctly. It doesn't actually split those villages. It separates them from each other in different House districts, correct? That's what you're saying?

Jen Miller [01:26:16] Yeah, it takes them. Thank you, cochairs. Thank you, Senator McColley. Yes. It's the village of McDonald, the city of Girard are similar to Niles and Warren. Economically, culturally. They should all be together. But instead, what's happened is these two have been pulled off and put with the northern part of the district that is more conservative, very different. That's one of the many examples of deciding how to draw the lines in a way that creates an advantage for the candidates of one party, and I would say candidates, not voters of one party.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:27:01] Other questions.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [01:27:04] Thank you, Co-Chair. For being here. And I share your frustration with the truncated time period as well, and had really hoped that we could have expanded that this process to reach to be able to hear from more people. I think it's something we've heard time and time again. And as as we go forward, I think it's something that's important to any process that is this important when it comes to redistricting. So thanks for highlighting that as well. Thank you.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:27:44] Other questions, comments. Miss Miller thank you for joining us.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [01:27:49] I'll get it to you. [applause].

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:27:54] Our next question. Our next witness is Matthew Shaughnessy, followed by Gloria Ferres and then Nancy Self. That's Shaughnessy. Going once. We will move on. Our next witness is Gloria Ferris, followed by Nancy Self and then State Representative Elliot.

Gloria Ferres [01:28:54] Well, this morning has not started too well for me. I thought that last night I could email my testimony and you guys would have it written here, and I can just put it right in front of me. Then I thought, Oh, that didn't work because I couldn't get on to the info at Ohio Redistricting.Ohio.gov. So that ended that. But I want to thank you Mr. Faber and Ms. Antonio and the Commission for allowing me to speak about my opposition to this new map that I'm just kind of saying what everybody has said that it seems to me it's more gerrymandered than the four previous ones that. Not you all but other commissions have put forward and that the Ohio Supreme Court has turned down. I could stand up here and recall my reasons for wanting to testify today about why I think this gerrymandered map does not speak for all Ohioans, voters and nonvoters. Because, after all, you do represent the state of Ohio. And that's not only the voters in your own party or simply the people who vote. So I'm not going to do that. I'm going to ask you three questions. When did winning become more important to our candidates for public office, then wanting to have a better government for Ohioans? It's my first question. The second, remember, I'm trying to remember this. I'm over 70 and I'm trying to remember all of this by heart. My second question is. Why have we reached a point where I know I'm not alone in this? I live in Cleveland. I live in a small neighborhood, one of the first Brooklyn Center in Cleveland. Why do I see us both parties going to the extremes? You don't speak to the majority of Ohioans anymore. When did you become afraid of the voters? And I think that's really an important to remember. And. I guess my last question to you is what what are we all going to do about it? Don't we all deserve a fair and equitable map that gives us more competition? Because, you know, I, I have Republican friends and like many other people, I am a Democrat, but I have voted for Governor DeWine for years. I don't see that D or that R when I vote, although I do vote in primaries, I would rather have two very qualified candidates to choose from. And I hope that I speak for many others and I hope going forward, I know that Justice former Justice O'Connor, they're starting a citizens not politicians to try to get an initiative on the ballot for 2024. Gives me great hope. And I know that standing up here and asking you why is not going to make a difference? Because it's done and this is what we have. Thank you very much for allowing me to speak.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:33:24] Thank you for joining us. [applause] Questions for the Witness. Hearing none, thank you, ma'am, for coming in.

Nancy Self [01:33:32] You're welcome.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:33:33] Our next witness is Nancy Self. Followed by State Representative Elliot Forhan. And then Eric Grubbe. Erinn Grubbe. Sorry, ma'am. Do you have any written testimony for us?

Nancy Self [01:33:57] I do, but I will have to submit it because I've been writing all over it. That's all.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:34:01] Right. We all do that.

Nancy Self [01:34:03] I'll send it by email.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:34:04] If you could submit it to the website, we'd appreciate it.

Nancy Self [01:34:07] Please proceed. Info at Redistricting.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:34:10] What is the site for somebody to submit to it, by the way? Anybody out there who's watching or listening? We will also take your written testimony. If you'd like to submit it. We'll happily consider that the website is redistricting.Ohio.gov. There should be a link to submit testimony on the website.

Nancy Self [01:34:29] Got it.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:34:30] So thank you for that. Gave me a little opportunity to put a plug in for people to submit their to submit. Thank you, ma'am. Please proceed.

Nancy Self [01:34:38] Thank you. Good day. Commissioners, Thank you for having us. I want to thank the Punderson personnel, and I want to thank our state troopers. I really felt welcomed and safe, and I appreciate their effort. And I just want to come in. It's a really beautiful day to be here in Punderson. My name is Nancy Self. I live in Summit County. I've recently retired after 50 years of community service in various nonprofits. Most recently, I served as director of an agency that provides affordable housing. And I'm a member of a small group, I think. A group of people who left Ohio on purpose and chose to come back. I'm a proud graduate of Akron Public Schools. I moved out west and built a rich and fulfilling life of community service and chosen family. Put down my roots through my churches, my post-secondary education. I married a Californian and I earned my undergraduate degree from an Ohio school that had a West Coast campus. And yet I decided about 25 years ago to return to Ohio. My life is rich again for all the same reasons. But I have to tell you that I'm struggling mightily to remain here in Ohio because of my, your, our state legislature. I regret to have to tell you that you present yourselves as debilitating, confused and tone deaf. You might have noticed that this is the most corrupt state legislature in Ohio history as far as I could research, many of you have voted along with Larry Householder without even blinking. It's clear to anyone observing today that your plan is to gain, retain, gain more power. The obvious side effects is going to be fair minded people will either leave or not come to Ohio. Is that really something that you want to be responsible for? It's time for you to let go of redistricting and let us do it. I could spend a lot of time talking about your blatant disregard for authority, but other people have sort of handled that. I'm shocked that you could five times ignore your own state Supreme Court and two federal bench rulings. I do wonder, how did you get so anti-authority? What would you do if your own children disobeyed your rules? I'm going to skip a lot of the other stuff I was going to say, because it's already been said, I'm going to get to what I haven't heard anybody say. And that is, I don't think that you actually want to play the game that you signed up to do, which is implement the will of the voters. And so now it's time for us all collectively to do things differently. I want you each single, every one of you, to become a full throated supporter of the 15-member Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission. This is an amendment that's currently in the LaRose's office. After it gets through all of the work that it has to, it'll be on the ballot next November 2024. It is sponsored by citizens, not politicians. It should be obvious to you by now that politicians have too many other concerns, very often valid, sometimes self-serving, to be able to give redistricting the kind of attention it requires. I did my research and I've discovered that Ohio voters have been proposing redistricting initiatives since 1981. Measures were defeated in 81, 2002 and

2012. As you know, because you're sitting on the commission that was created as a result of the amendment to the Constitution that was passed in 2015, that was the Ohio Bipartisan Redistricting Commission. Then in 2018, we passed the current Congressional redistricting procedures amendment. We all know how that developed. The maps were so unfairly drawn, they were taken to court. Five Supreme Court rulings ignored. So I want you each to act as though you have free will. I dare you to act individually to ensure that the 15 member Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission is passed by an overwhelmingly bipartisan effort. If you fear the consequences of taking your thumb off the scale of the maps, then you need to take that up with your God. As your fellow citizen. I choose to give you the benefit of the doubt that you are not all simply power hungry or naive. I understand. I understand. I believe you have many torn loyalties and often honest intentions. The beauty of the upcoming 15-member Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission is in its design open, independent and transparent. Sunshine and well-placed faith in one another are God's best tonics. Ohio is in desperate need of a good tonic. Please do your part and support the 15 member citizens, not politicians.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:41:47] Thank you, ma'am. I assume you're wrapping up?

Nancy Self [01:41:51] I'm done.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:41:52] Thank you for your time and joining us today. Questions or comments for the witness. Hearing none. Thank you, ma'am.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:42:05] Thank you. Thank you, ma'am. No, no. She was telling me how to pronounce the next. Our next witness is State Representative Elliot Forhan. Did I get that right? Thank you, Representative. Good to see you today.

Rep. Elliot Forhan [01:42:23] Good to see you. Mr. Auditor, how are you?

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:42:26] I'm good.

Rep. Elliot Forhan [01:42:26] Good.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:42:28] Do you have written testimony for a representative?

Rep. Elliot Forhan [01:42:31] I do. I will submit it through the website. Was it info at...?

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:42:44] Well, let's get it on the record. Three other people have it.

Clerk [01:42:47] It's info info at redistricting dot Ohio. Dot gov.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:42:54] Info@redistricting.Ohio.gov.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:42:59] Info io.Info at Ohio dot gov No redistricting dot Ohio Dot gov. All right. Thank you, Representative. Good to see you.

Rep. Elliot Forhan [01:43:14] Good to see you. Competitive, proportionate districts are a bedrock of good government. When districts are competitive and proportionate, elected officials are accountable to the voters. Because the threat of losing an election is real. A

competitive, proportionate district map means that the elected officials and the political parties to which they belong are accountable. That accountability is the best guarantee of good government. On the other hand, uncompetitive, disproportionate district maps corrupt our government. Lack of competition destroys the accountability to the voters of elected officials and their political parties. What incentive do government officials and their political parties have to deliver to the voters when they know that they will never lose an election? Uncompetitive disproportionate districts are anathema to good government and to democracy. Incumbent politicians in Ohio's redistricting process a decade ago and again last year avoided competition and proportionality for themselves and enacted uncompetitive district maps. The elected institutions of government in our state, controlled by incumbents unchallenged in uncompetitive, disproportionate districts, have been dysfunctional and corrupt during the past decade and continue to be so today. Ohio voters, by large margins in 2015 and in 2018 took action and changed the redistricting process. Notwithstanding the express will of the Ohio voters, the incumbents in our state are doing it again. The district maps that Senator McColley proposed and the commission adopted last week are similarly uncompetitive and disproportionate compared to the existing maps. This is an outrage and it should outrage every Ohioan. These incumbents, the leaders of our state government, are granting to themselves again gold plated job tenure. Congratulations to them. It must be nice. How can you tell that the district maps that the Commission adopted are bad? According to the analytic software, the website Dave's Redistricting, the partisan lean of the proposed districts deviates by more than ten percentage points from the estimated partisan lean of the State with respect to approximately 83 of the districts of the proposed House map, and approximately 80% of the districts of the proposed Senate map. So only 17% of the districts of the proposed House map and only 20% of the districts of the proposed Senate map are competitive and proportionate. Again, 17 and 20% competitive proportionate proposed districts 83 and 80% uncompetitive and disproportionate. Outrageous. It's even worse when you consider how easy it is to create much better, more competitive and proportionate maps. Not to mention the maps that the Democratic leaders introduced last week. Users on Dave's Redistricting can submit their own district maps and the website software analyzes those users user submitted maps automatically. Right now on the website, user submitted maps are publicly available that compare to the maps that the Commission adopted, improve on the number of competitive proportionate districts by more than 80% with respect to the House map. And by more than 125% with respect to the Senate map. These users likely do not have the resources available to them that the commission does, and yet they produce far superior maps. Ohio voters deserve so much better. They deserve a redistricting commission that does its job and enacts district maps that promote the promote competition and proportionality, not maps that insulate, protect and coddle the incumbent politicians. Members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission. Please rise to the moment. Do your jobs. Reject the Republican proposed district maps. Introduce new maps with far more competitive proportionate districts. Examples of superior maps are available to you right now. Thank you.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:47:31] Question for the witness. Sir, you mentioned a lot about competitive proportion. Do you think competitiveness trumps the other concerns, like keeping communities, counties, cities, townships whole?

Rep. Elliot Forhan [01:47:49] I think proportionality and competitiveness should be should be the overriding concern. I think that as a secondary concern, we should strive to maintain communities of interest and compactness and these other values. But I think that competitiveness and proportionality should be the primary concern.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:48:05] Are you aware that your leaders in the last redistricting process specifically said competitiveness is not a factor in the Constitution?

Rep. Elliot Forhan [01:48:14] I'm not I wasn't following every single detail. And you know, the twist in that there were quite a few. Mr. Auditor, with respect, quite a few details. The last time around, I didn't I didn't follow every single detail. No.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:48:24] You are aware that the Constitution requires you to keep cities, counties and townships whole where you can't?

Rep. Elliot Forhan [01:48:29] Fair enough. But I just reiterate, I think that the primary concern should be proportionality and competitiveness.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:48:35] So to hit that would you draw is what are considered hub and spoke districts to move. I mean you would agree with me that in Ohio's political geography people tend to live around people who vote and think like them. And what that means is largely in Ohio urban core areas, we have a concentration of Democrats. And in the rural areas, we have a concentration of Republicans. In order to get where you want for proportional districts, the only way to do that is something commonly called hub and spoke districts. Is that something you think would be a good political outcome?

Rep. Elliot Forhan [01:49:07] I haven't you know, I haven't examined all of the the consequences of, you know, what I've just articulated. I stand by what I said. I trust the leaders of of the the caucus to the caucus to which I belong and the Democratic caucus in the Senate. I trust that they that they understand the consequences. And yeah, that's that's my view.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:49:30] I appreciate it. And I just wanted to make sure I understood what you were saying.

Rep. Elliot Forhan [01:49:34] Totally understand.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:49:34] So thank you for your testimony. Any other comments concerns.

House Minority Leader Allison Russo [01:49:38] Mr. Chairman?

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:49:39] Representative Russo.

House Minority Leader Allison Russo [01:49:43] Thank you, Chair. And just as a point of clarification, there are a few of us who are returning members from the last version of the Commission, and there are many technical requirements in the Constitution, as well as the proportionality that can and should be followed. And I think as evidenced by multiple maps that have been submitted by both citizens, independent groups outside of this commission, that absolutely can be done. And in fact, it is only with exception in the commission's map that it cannot be done. And so I think that that is the point. I am guessing that my colleague, Representative Forhan is trying to make is that you actually can achieve multiple things. There are many examples of that. This map that is being considered by this commission currently, as well as the previous versions of the map ruled unconstitutional do not achieve that.

Rep. Elliot Forhan [01:50:46] That I agree with Leader Russo.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:50:48] Question or Comment, Representative? You can do both.

House Minority Leader Allison Russo [01:50:51] Rep. Forhan, do you agree with what I just said?

Rep. Elliot Forhan [01:50:52] I agree with Leader Russo. Thank you.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [01:50:56] Mr. Chair.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:50:59] Co-Chair.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [01:51:00] Thank you. So thank you, Representative, for being here and making the point. I think we've heard. I just want to reiterate that I think we've heard from a number of folks this morning that have also talked about their frustration with proportionality, but also have come to us and talked about living in rural and outlier districts. So not necessarily in urban areas, but still feeling that their representation is not reflected in this map. So I think all the points that of proportionality, but also in competitiveness, but also. Common interests, commonality in community. But but the key question comes down to where? Where is that boundary line? Where are those boundary lines drawn and where are those communities of interest that relate to each other? And is that part of the of what you've also taken a look at when you came to us and talked this morning about the proportionality, but also the lack of representation.

Rep. Elliot Forhan [01:52:29] Yes. Leader Antonio, I agree. I think it's a huge problem. And it results because. Because there is because there is no there is no accountability or threat of of losing an election that so many people feel that they that they lack that represent. I think that that's what you get. I think that's what you're getting at. Tell me if I'm wrong.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [01:52:53] Thank you. Okay.

Rep. Elliot Forhan [01:52:54] Thank you. Thank you.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:52:58] Other questions. Thank you.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:53:07] Our next witness is Erinn Grube, followed by Rose Ponyik. These are the last two that I have on the list. So if anybody else plans to testify, if you please fill out a witness list to get you on the list. We also had a matthew Shaughnessy who we called in did not appear. So with that, Ms. Grube, welcome to the committee.

Erinn Grube [01:53:38] Co-chairs, members of the commission. Thank you for hosting this meeting today. My name is Erinn Grube. I live in Chagrin Falls with my family. Kids are here with me today. No school. And I also serve on village council. All the thoughts I'm sharing are obviously my own out of the body that I serve on. Philosophically, I believe that state government needs to do its job running the state and then getting out of the way for local communities. I believe in home rule because we are so accountable at the local level

to our residents. Local government works, but the state government not so much. It's because of the gerrymandering. Gerrymandering corrupts the democratic process causes the system to rot from the inside out. It strips Ohio citizens of a voice within their government and leads to fringe legislation that takes time, energy and money away from the actual issues facing Ohio citizens. This body has an opportunity to do something very cool and create maps so that all Ohioans have fair representation. Let the citizens build a state house that reflects our views. One goal of the maps is to keep communities together. You've been told this community, though, is more than municipal lines. It includes our school districts. The proposed maps break Chagrin Falls exempted village school district in the three separate House districts and two Senate districts. Our House district in the village of Chagrin runs all the way across the southern side of Cuyahoga County, and then our Senate district starts somewhere up near Ashtabula and runs to the west southwest side of Cuyahoga County. These are simply not natural community groupings. I understand you've a lot of demands to make a fair map. There's a lot of give and take with every single tweak. However, this process should be done in an open meeting. Let us understand your philosophical approach. Let us understand how you weigh each of these choices. I fully understand that making compromises in public in a charged political environment is awkward and uncomfortable. But it's your jobs. It's being elected officials. Ohio's citizens spoke very clearly when we passed the current process for map drawing. We expected our state leaders to fairly and equitably draw maps. Instead here we are still drawing maps that defy the common community connections and don't meet proportion and standards all while attempting to meet this very rushed deadline and in favor of what? Just doesn't make sense, I'm here to ask you to take the time to do fair maps in the good faith that you were elected. Consider school district boundaries and natural community groupings and give Ohio citizens a voice in their government.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [01:55:53] Thank you, ma'am. Leader Russo.

[01:55:56] Thank you. First of all, through the Chair Thank you, Ms. Grube, for being here today and testifying. And even though the kids are out of school bringing your child who I can barely see.

Erinn Grube [01:56:08] The other two are on the playground outside.

House Minority Leader Allison Russo [01:56:10] Yeah. Thank you. Thank you for taking the time to do that. And I know it can be difficult, especially in days when kids aren't in school or folks are working. Just to go back to your point about Chagrin Falls and the school district, can you just remind me for context, how big is the school District of Chagrin Falls?

Erinn Grube [01:56:32] Not very big. It's only a couple thousand kids.

House Minority Leader Allison Russo [01:56:34] Wow.

Erinn Grube [01:56:35] But we represent the whole of Chagrin Falls Village, Chagrin Falls Township, Bentleyville, South Russell, which is in Geauga County, and then portions of Bainbridge and Russell Townships, as well as part of Moreland Hills.

House Minority Leader Allison Russo [01:56:46] Okay. So a couple of thousand kids, presumably one of the smaller one of the smaller school districts.

Erinn Grube [01:56:53] My kids classes are like 100, 120.

House Minority Leader Allison Russo [01:56:55] Okay. And so just to reiterate, sorry, follow up, Mr. Chairman, to reiterate what you were saying right now in the current map, because of the decisions that were made to draw a Senate districts and some House districts, you now are split amongst three different representatives and two different state senators.

Erinn Grube [01:57:20] Correct. And ironically, the representative from I would say from Bainbridge, Ohio, will run as a representative because being from Chagrin Falls, because the United States Postal Service views Bainbridge, Auburn, as well as South Russell and Chagrin Falls as being Chagrin Falls. So it creates these weird, complex layers. And I think when you look at how the state budgeting process works and the use of arts and culture grants that schools often rely on for receiving funding for things like auditoriums, you know, it becomes harder to actually access those resources at the state level when you're not a priority because you're this tiny little piece of a bunch of different districts. I mean, I'm in the district right now where the state senator who lives down the street from me is not my state senator.

House Minority Leader Allison Russo [01:58:02] And one other follow up. Currently with the current maps, what is the layout for the school district, do you know? Currently.

Erinn Grube [01:58:11] I don't know what off the top of my head. It's still we're still split. We've always had some sort of split, but like three and two is like it's a new level of split.

House Minority Leader Allison Russo [01:58:19] Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:58:23] Questions. Comments. Thank you, ma'am, for coming. Good to see the kids. Our next witness is Rose Ponyik.

Rose Ponyik [01:58:34] Pretty good. Most people would butcher my name, so I kind of answered anything.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:58:45] Well, one out of 21 I can get, right?

Rose Ponyik [01:58:47] Yeah. Really? Well, you know, I had a this I submitted my written portion to the website, but I'm going to forgo a lot of it because so many people have come before me and did a great job. They hit on a lot of points, so I'm not going to waste your time. There was one thing I do want to bring up, and this is something to consider for the future. Computers don't care. How about you come up with a commission of watchdogs and security people, put all your information in a computer, tell it to District Ohio. It doesn't care what party you're in. It doesn't care what your political views are. It will redistrict fairly. Something to think about for the future because this doesn't have a bias. But anyways, my one experience I was in health care for well over four years. I'm glad you're feeling better, Governor DeWine. I was in infection control when the pandemic broke out, so you can imagine what life was like in one of our large health care systems. I went to a rally, basically what it was before the August vote for issue one. And the crowd there was really very leaning towards, you know, we don't want this to happen or we want to have issue one passed. So which wasn't a surprise cause I was at a church. But one participant mentioned gerrymandering, which was kind of like off topic. But another gentleman stood up in the back and he said to my representative, Steve Demetriou from 35, he said, When

are the Republicans going to fix the map that was ruled unconstitutional? How many times? And Steve's response was, what is one man's gerrymandering, is another man's redistricting. What an insulting response. And he knew he was wrong. I was sitting right up front so I could see kind of like that uncomfortable smile that comes out when people are trying to hedge their bets against the topic at hand. So he knew that what's happening is wrong, and he never did give this gentleman an answer, but it was off topic. So my question for your group here on an individual basis, taking your party politics out of it, either say it now or publish it later. How can you personally answer to the people and give your reasoning for offering such a map you personally as individuals, then when you're supposed to be representing the people? And that's all I have to say.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [02:01:35] Thank you, ma'am. Questions. Comments from the Panel. Leader Russo.

House Minority Leader Allison Russo [02:01:40] Thank you to the chair and thank you to the witness again for taking time to be here today. And just as a point of clarification. The map currently being considered and proposed was not voted to be the map proposed in the affirmative by every member of this commission. So I just want to make that small point of clarification.

Rose Ponyik [02:02:03] So if you could publish that somewhere, how you came to think that this is okay, I would appreciate that. Thank you.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [02:02:09] Thank you, ma'am. Other comments, questions? [applause] Matthew Shaughnessy. Mr. Shaughnessy. Going, going, gone. I have no other witnesses to testify at this hearing. With that, I would welcome a motion from the committee to adjourn until the 5:30 hearing tonight.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [02:02:38] So moved

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [02:02:39] A motion and a second.

House Minority Leader Allison Russo [02:02:43] Second.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [02:02:43] Hearing any objection to our motion?

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [02:02:47] Object. Mr. Chair?

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [02:02:50] Yes, Madam Co-Chair.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [02:02:51] Thank you. My understanding is we're just taking a recess until later today.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [02:02:57] My understanding is, is we have a separate, separate hearing notice to make it a separate hearing. So it would be in the next hearing. So it would be a separate hearing.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [02:03:07] Oh, okay. Thank you. Thank you for that clarification. Yeah, we're okay. Thank you for that.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [02:03:12] We're just using the same location, I believe, for technological convenience.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [02:03:18] Okay. Thank you for that.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [02:03:19] Do I have I have a motion in a second. Any other discussion on the motion?

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [02:03:25] I have a motion to call the question. The clerk will call the roll on adjournment.

Clerk [02:03:32] Co-chair Faber.

[02:03:35] Yes.

[02:03:35] Co-chair Antonio.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [02:03:35] Yes.

Clerk [02:03:37] Co-chair Antonio.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [02:03:39] Yes, I said yes.

Clerk [02:03:41] Governor DeWine.

Gov. Mike DeWine [02:03:41] Yes.

Clerk [02:03:41] Secretary LaRose.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [02:03:43] Yes.

Clerk [02:03:44] Representative LaRe.

Rep. Jeff LaRe [02:03:44] Yes.

Clerk [02:03:44] Senator McColley.

Sen. Rob McColley [02:03:46] Yes.

Clerk [02:03:48] Leader Russo.

House Minority Leader Allison Russo [02:03:48] Yes.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [02:03:51] Thank you. Having a unanimous vote, We are adjourned. We will reconvene our next hearing at 5:30 tonight here. Thank you.