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"We can kind of do what we want," The words of Senate President Matt Huffman to the Columbus Dispatch in 2022. Well, with an 8 Democratic and 25 Republican senate split and a 35 to 64 split in the House, that's currently a fact - one that Ohio voters were forced to produce. Underlying that fact is that every single person in legislative office, in both chambers, including the legislative members of this Commission are in your positions based on legislative districts that the Ohio Supreme Court officially ruled unconstitutional.

In earlier testimony, Catherine Turcer of Common Cause stated in her testimony that "The manipulation of district lines is the manipulation of elections. The manipulation of elections is the manipulation of public policy. Manipulating districts to favor one party over the other manipulates all sorts of important decisions that are made at the state house".

The manipulation of district lines is the manipulation of elections - We are living with manipulated elections today. The unconstitutional maps that the Ohio Supreme Court determined were a political gerrymander absolutely is not what over 70% of Ohio voters wanted when they passed redistricting reform in 2015. The 2015 reforms demanded that voters choose their electors. What we have gotten so far with this Commission is just the opposite.

Manipulating districts to favor one party over the other manipulates all sorts of important decisions that are made at the state house - this is a reality in Ohio today. I cite just one example, House Joint Resolution 1 and Senate Joint Resolution 2 which resulted in Issue 1 in August. One Party, in this case a supermajority of Republicans, railroaded through the legislation that led to Issue 1. "We can kind of do what we want," - the words of Senator Huffman pervaded that legislation. As a result, supermajority in both chambers of the legislature, established though manipulated district lines foisted a \$20 million August special election on Ohio voters because public support for reproductive choice in a state that is 54-46% republican to democrat split in statewide elections, does not align with the legislation on abortion passed by the gerrymandered supermajority in the statehouse. As Secretary Larose plainly stated "This is 100% about keeping a radical pro-abortion amendment out of our constitution. The left wants to jam it in there this coming November". Issue 1 was an effort by the gerrymandered legislature to move the goalposts for all future citizen-initiated ballot measures. Ohio voters saw it for what it was - a legislative power grab. But the driver for the legislature to take such radical action is rooted in partisan gerrymandering that replaces the will of the people with the will of the party in power.

The Ohio Constitution rests power in the people of Ohio, specifically the voters of Ohio. All office holders are supposed to represent the will of the people. But, when district lines are manipulated for partisan purposes, the power of the voter is stolen - in my opinion, it is the most

insidious form of stealing an election. It also is a form of taxation without representation. This is why the 2015 and 2018 redistricting reforms empaneled this Commission with the expectation that you, who are sitting on the Commission, take an oath to produce district maps that neither favor or disfavor either party. So far, my fellow citizens on this Commission have failed miserably and, evidence points toward a wilful failure of some, in order to retain or increase partisan favor of republicans over democrats that is not in compliance with the constitutional requirements or reflects the actual will of the voters based on the ten year metric established in the Constitution.

As an interested voter who has attended almost every Commission hearing and traveled to Rio Grande to testify during the very first round of redistricting hearings, I have a direct stake in the results of your work product. It is frustrating that the working maps that the Commission has voted to use as a draft this time were again developed behind closed doors and proposed at the eleventh hour - the majority party commission members are fooling no voters that this manufactured crisis and hidden mapmaking, like the one that imposed the illegal maps we are currently voting under, is not intentional. I was at the hearing last week and as the draft map was voted on, I heard the phrase of Senator Huffman once again - "We can kind of do what we want".

At the end of the last round of map drawing, the Commission spent significant tax dollars to hire two independent consultants who hashed out proposed maps in view of the public - a process required by the Constitution. Their proposed House map was presented to the Commission and a Senate map was almost completed. But, at the eleventh hour, Senator Huffman declared that time had run out and a map drawn by the republican mapmaker was introduced and passed on a partisan basis.

As an un-affiliated voter, it is difficult and frustrating to repeatedly watch the manipulation of the process and district lines in the face of an overwhelming demand by the voters of Ohio to be witness to an open process to produce fair maps. It is difficult and frustrating to see hundreds of Ohioans submit comments and testify without a single one of their suggestions given weight or consideration.

Nevertheless, as a voter, I continue to urge the current members of the Commission to give real, actual consideration of the testimony of Catherine Turcer who highlighted the work of Geoff Wise, Pranav Padmanabhan, and Paul Nieves; to conform to the standing decision of the Ohio Supreme Court regarding proportional competitiveness even if a given commission member thinks the decision was "wrong". As David Pepper said in his testimony, and I paraphrase, if we are a nation and a state of laws, we must abide by them through the processes in place - the Commission must do so as well.