



**SPONSOR TESTIMONY OF:**

Richard Gunther  
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**IN SUPPORT OF:**

Maps proposed by the Ohio Citizens' Redistricting Commission  
submitted to the Ohio Redistricting Commission

**[Worthington, Ohio]** Richard Gunther, Professor Emeritus of Political Science, Ohio State University

Commission Member, Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission

Good afternoon.

I am Richard Gunther, Professor Emeritus of Political Science, Ohio State University. I am also one of the five negotiators who produced a draft of what is now Article XI of the Ohio<sup>1</sup> Constitution, as ratified by over 71% of the voters of Ohio in 2015. I am here in my capacity as a political scientist with considerable experience in redistricting, as a co-author of the constitutional provisions that must be followed in drawing new House and Senate district lines, and as a member of the OCRC who participated in drawing the House and Senate maps that we are considering today.

In creating these maps, we followed the criteria set forth in the Ohio Constitution following the 2015 redistricting reforms. The maps that we are presenting to you today strictly adhered to and meet all of these criteria.

First, as required in Section 3(B) the districts for both the Ohio House and Senate are all roughly equal in population size, and none of them deviates from the relevant ratio of representation by more than the 5 percent allowed by the Constitution.

<sup>1</sup> The other members of the negotiating team were former Senator Jeff Jacobson, Representative (now Senator) Vernon Sykes, House Republican Caucus counsel Mike Lenzo and House Democratic Caucus counsel Sarah Cherry. We deliberated over reforms in Ohio's procedures and criteria for drawing General Assembly district boundaries between November 21 through December 4, 2014.



Second, in compliance with rules relating to the splitting of counties, townships and municipalities as set forth in Sections 3(C) and 3(D), considerable effort went into the preservation of political subdivisions and communities of interest.

Indeed, we went beyond what is normally expected of redistricting processes by undertaking a rigorous assessment of what communities the voters of Ohio wanted to remain intact. This involved nine public meetings with 494 Ohio citizens between May 13 and August 27 of this year at which they discussed their preferences in considerable detail. This was followed by the submission of 2,350 maps by Ohio citizens of their respective neighborhoods and preferences for district boundaries. While it was not always possible to reconcile those preferences with the requirements of the Ohio constitution, we made more of an effort to respect these wishes than is characteristic of most other redistricting processes.

Moreover, we strictly adhered to all of the rules relating to the splitting of counties, townships and municipalities that are set forth in Sections 3(C) and 3(D) of Article XI. These splitting decisions are described in considerable detail in the report that we are submitting to the Ohio Redistricting Commission. Our maps include not one single violation of those requirements.

Third, we strictly adhered to the requirements set forth in Section 6(B), which states that “The statewide proportion of districts whose voters, based on statewide state and federal partisan general election results during the last ten years, favor each political party shall correspond closely to the statewide preferences of the voters of Ohio.”

In the five general elections that have taken place over the past decade, Republican candidates for President, U.S. Senator, Governor, Secretary of State, Auditor, Attorney General and Treasurer have received 54.2% of the two party vote share cast by Ohio voters, while Democratic candidates for those offices have received 45.8% of the two party vote share. To ensure that the partisan make-up of Ohio's districts mirror the partisan make-up of Ohio's voters the statewide map should include approximately 54 House districts whose voters lean towards the Republican party (54.5%),



and 45 that lean Democratic (45.5%), and for the Senate, there should be 18 districts leaning Republican (54.5%) and 15 Democratic. (45.5%).

How does our map stack up against this constitutional requirement? Among the 99 House districts, 55 (or 55.6%) include voters who have supported Republican candidates over the past decade, while 44 (or 44.4%) have leaned Democratic. With regard to Senate districts, 18 (or 54.5%) lean Republican and 15 (45.5%) lean Democratic. Both of these sets of district boundaries are remarkably close to the partisan orientations reflected in the votes cast for the two parties over the previous decade.

And both appear to be dramatically better than the maps presented by Ray DiRossi on behalf of the Republican majority caucuses last week.

Finally, this map was drawn to be fair, it does not favor one party over the other and it is in full compliance with section 6(A) which states “No general assembly district plan shall be drawn primarily to favor or disfavor a political party.”

The 2015 amendments to the Ohio constitution were endorsed by overwhelming majorities of both houses of the General Assembly and by over 70 percent of Ohio’s voters. I am hopeful that the Ohio Redistricting Commission will reach a bipartisan consensus and adopt district boundaries for the Ohio House and Senate in a manner that respects both the letter and the spirit of those reforms.

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