



SPONSOR TESTIMONY OF:

Andre' Washington
6805 Oak Creek Drive, Columbus, OH 43229

IN SUPPORT OF:

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

[Columbus, Ohio] Andre' Washington President the Ohio A. Philip Randolph Institute
Commission Member, Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission

Co-Chair Antonio , Co-Chair Faber and members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission thank you for the opportunity to be here today. My name is Andre Washington, President of the Ohio A. Philip Randolph Institute.

This testimony is offered in support of the maps submitted to you by the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission.

I serve as the President of the Ohio chapter of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, which was formed as an alliance between the civil rights movement and the labor movement. APRI's founders recognized that Black people and working people of all colors share the same goals: political and social freedom and economic justice.

We cannot achieve any of those goals without fair districts and a meaningful opportunity to elect the candidates of our choice. In 2015, Ohioans voted for a Constitutional amendment that offered a fair and transparent process we can trust, where communities remain whole and where voters' representational power hasn't been diluted by "packing and cracking," voters, especially Black voters.



“Packing” is when minority voters are artificially concentrated into a small number of districts so that their overall electoral influence is weakened. Cracking splits minority communities and spreads minority voters thinly into many districts in which they have little or no electoral influence.

Our citizens commission did not wait until last month to begin having conversations about redistricting. We brought redistricting to the community with public hearings, community map making sessions, and with public education beginning in May.

As a citizen commissioner I heard over and over again from other Black community members about how it feels when our voices are so consistently unheard in the political process. As a labor leader, father, and man of faith I know that there is a critical need for good jobs, safe communities and healthy families. Black communities and other communities of color cannot afford to have our voices silenced.

The Commission reviewed the proposed unity maps in front of you today to ensure that minority voters were fairly represented. The proposed House of Representatives map has 15 districts with a substantial opportunity for Black voters to be represented electorally and the Senate map has six.

The Ohio Redistricting Commission has the power to ensure that Black communities are heard in this redistricting process and in their government. I urge you to uphold democracy and draw maps that are fair and representative of all Ohioans.