

September 25, 2023

To: Ohio Redistricting Commission

From: Anne M. Houdek, Burton, Ohio

Re: Testimony before the Commission, Punderson State Park

Welcome to Geauga County. I'm Anne Houdek from Burton Township and a life-long Ohioan.

The reason I'm here is that you need to hear from people like me. I'm not a politician. I'm a voter, plain and simple, who is appalled by the actions of this Commission. Ohioans deserve better. We need fair districts and we need this Commission to stop ignoring Ohioans.

WHY WE NEED FAIR DISTRICTS:

- Fair districts means competitive elections
- Which means more points of view are expressed in our General Assembly and one point of view doesn't dominate.
- Competitive elections lead to accountability by our state representatives and senators
- We need more people to run for office and gerrymandered maps discourage that.
- Why? Why would anyone waste their time running for state representative or state senate when the deck is stacked against them with a gerrymandered district. Despite their best efforts, they'll lose.

Regarding the actions of the Commission, the adage "actions speak louder than words" applies.

By your actions, it's clear you don't want fair voting districts. This commission has ignored us when twice we voted for fair voting districts. Ignored the Ohio Supreme Court by playing games with timelines and deadlines when it declared maps unconstitutional. And by holding these public hearings in a short space of time, you are clearly not interested in hearing our opinions because you did not give citizens time to prepare and attend.

Through testimony, citizens have given you alternative maps to consider—maps that took their valuable time to prepare and present to this Commission. By fast-tracking and waiting months to begin this process, you are not giving yourselves time to consider these maps or to seek outside expertise. We deserve your thoughtful deliberation. Do your job, please.

Succinctly stated by the Ohio Capital Journal: “Lawmakers’ goal appears to be to run out the clock and ram through skewed maps with little public scrutiny. Because the Supreme Court now has a right-wing majority, it’s expected to green-light whatever lawmakers come up with.”

And that’s the sad truth, isn’t it?

We can’t be more clear. WE WANT FAIR VOTING DISTRICTS. And if you don’t provide them, we will. We need to get politicians out of the map-drawing process and put it in the hands of citizens. And the group Citizens Not Politicians will make it happen. Because citizens like me will help.

Thank you for the opportunity today.