

Ohio Redistricting Commission 9-25-23 5:30pm

<https://www.ohiochannel.org/video/ohio-redistricting-commission-9-25-2023-530pm>

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:00:00] Senate minority leader, co-chair of this redistricting commission. I'd like to thank all of you for joining us both in person as well as joining us virtually. I also want to thank everyone who has submitted testimony electronically and in person. As a reminder, the commission will be meeting again on Tuesday, tomorrow at the Ohio Statehouse in the Senate Finance Hearing Room at 10 a.m. And with that, I'm going to call this meeting to order and gavel in the Ohio Redistricting Commission. There we go. Okay. Our first person to testify today. Yes. Oh, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Roll call. Can we do roll call, please, Bre. Thanks.

Clerk [00:00:50] Co-Chair Leader Antonio.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:00:50] Here.

Clerk [00:00:50] Co-chair Auditor Faber.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:00:54] Good evening.

Clerk [00:00:54] Governor DeWine.

Gov. Mike DeWine [00:00:57] Here.

Clerk [00:00:57] Secretary LaRose.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:00:57] Here.

Clerk [00:00:58] Senator McColley.

Sen. Rob McColley [00:01:00] Here.

Clerk [00:01:00] Representative Jeff LaRe.

Rep. Jeff LaRe [00:01:02] Here.

Clerk [00:01:04] I got really happy. Leader Russo.

House Minority Leader Allison Russo [00:01:08] Here.

Clerk [00:01:08] Thank you.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:01:10] Do we have a quorum? Yes, we do. Thank you. Okay. I. I figured it out. Also, as we have folks come to testify, just like earlier in the day for time and brevity and really to respect everyone's time. We're going to ask everyone who comes up to the podium to testify for 3 minutes. And Bre is going to be our timekeeper. Yes, she is. She did a great job earlier today. So with that, I want to call, first of all, Gary Welch. And for the sake of some people may be downstairs. I don't know if we have overflow. We'll have Peter Hoffman is on deck.

Gary Welch [00:02:04] You need a name, address or anything like that?

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:02:07] You just ready to introduce yourself and start whenever you're ready?

Speaker 5 [00:02:11] I'm Gary Welch. I live across the border in Cuyahoga County, and I'm very disappointed with all of you that are involved in the redistricting process. It's going terribly. Disappointed in all of you involved. You're experts at politics, getting elected, power. You are not experts in math and fair districts. And it shows. And it really hurts the citizens of Ohio. As long as you have to be involved and I hope at some point citizens are doing it. You need to learn the subject. Please put in the work, learn the math, trust the experts. Currently, you start with a desired result. Everybody wants to have a supermajority. You back into a criteria and a process that gets you there. Shame on you. What you should do is use the experts. You should trust the experts. You should do trust the math. You should create some criteria keeping counties intact, maybe minimizing the distance between corners of a district. Legitimate criteria. You should trust the experts, and we will get fair results if you do that. I know the court allows you to gerrymander. Just wrong, and no court can make that right. Please stop it. Please trust the experts and trust the math.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:03:27] Thank you, Mr. Welch. Before you leave. Make sure see if anybody has any questions for Mr. Welch? Seeing none, thank you very much.

Gary Welch [00:03:39] Thank you.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:03:41] Next up is Peter Hoffman as he makes his way to the podium. On deck is Barbara Ague. Sorry.

Peter Hoffman [00:03:53] Governor. Commissioners, thanks very much for this opportunity. And to my fellow American or fellow Ohioans, my name is Peter Hoffman. I was born and raised in Cuyahoga County. I'm currently a resident of Shaker Heights. I've lived and worked overseas about 25 years. Most of that time was spent in China. So I've learned what a one party state is like and the impact that it has on our human rights, our ability to expand and be innovative. And I would like to point out that of the People's, National People's Congress in Beijing, 70% of the members are Communist Party members. Currently here in the state of Ohio the Republicans own 73%. So my question is, will we in Ohio become a one party state? Thank you for your time.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:04:47] Thank you, Mr. Hoffman. Are there any questions or comments for Mr. Hoffman? Seeing none. Thank you. Thank you, Barbara. And I apologize if I mispronounced your last name. And while Barbara is coming to the podium, podium and Ann Houder is on deck.

Barbara Ague [00:05:07] Okay, My name is Barbara Ague.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:05:09] Ague.

Barbara Ague [00:05:09] And, but people sometimes put an R in there and call me Argue. So hopefully I won't be argumentative tonight. I live in Cuyahoga Falls, Summit County. And first, let me say that I appreciate you added this extra session for people that may be working or couldn't get here this morning. However, I would like to point out that you have

excluded the entire Jewish community because Yom Kippur is over after sunset. So there are some people I know that would have come today had it been at a different time. The current maps that I understand still favor a partisan gerrymander favoring Republicans in violation of the Ohio Constitution's anti-gerrymandering provision. The 2018 voter approved constitutional revision prohibits a map that unduly favors or disfavors a political party or its incumbents. Per the Youngstown Vindicator that I read last week, the Commission's Republican majority adopted maps that give the GOP a 62 to 37 advantage in the House and 23 to 10 in the Senate. One of the constitutional requirements for maps is to reflect voting trends in the last decade, that was 54 to 46 Republicans, Republican majority before 2022 and then 57 to 43 after. Currently, Republicans have a 67 House member majority to 32 Democrats and 26 senators to seven Democrats. The Ohio Supreme Court has already struck down two maps, yet the fair changes haven't been made. The majority party wasn't happy with the Ohio Court's response. Then it was taken to the US Supreme Court, who in turn rejected the Ohio Republican's ISIL based appeal. However, the only means, that means it is now going to go back to the court, which is now more conservative. So it appears that we just keep pushing it until you get the answer you want. Drawing a map to benefit a party rather than to represent citizens of the state is repugnant to me. The citizens of this state successfully approved legislation to tamp down gerrymandering in 2015 and then again in 2018, to no avail. What is so frightening about bipartisanship? I have a right to have a voice as well, because districts are heavily drawn to favor Republicans, Independents and Democrats living in the state never have a meaningful opportunity for our voices to be heard. As a result, citizens are going to take a new amendment to the polls again. And to me, that should tell you something. Wouldn't it be better to represent all the citizens, citizens of Ohio as you're supposed to, instead of putting it back on us to yet again take an amendment to the people? Thank you.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:07:52] Thank you. Any questions for Barb, seeing none. Thank you. Next up is Anne Houder and on deck is Rebecca Gorski.

Anne Houdek [00:08:06] I get that a lot. It's my handwriting. It's Anne Houdek.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:08:10] Oh.

Anne Houdek [00:08:12] Yeah. Know, I get that a lot. Okay.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:08:14] Well, sorry.

Anne Houdek [00:08:15] Welcome. Geauga County. I'm Anne Houdek from Burton Township and a lifelong 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 committee. Ohioans deserve better. You deserve better, we do. We need fair districts, we need this commission to stop ignoring us. Why do 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 does not dominate. Competitive elections lead to accountability by our state representatives and state senators. We need more people to run for office and gerrymandered maps discourage that. Why? Why would anyone waste their time running for state Senate or be a state representative when they're fighting a losing battle when the deck is stacked against them with gerrymandered districts? Despite their best efforts, they'll lose. That's just not right. And 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 twice when we voted

for them, 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 period of time you're clearly not interested in hearing our opinions because you did not give citizens time to prepare and attend. Through testimony not only today, but previously, citizens have given you alternative maps to consider; maps that they took their valuable time to prepare and present to you. By fast tracking and waiting months to begin this process you're not giving yourselves time to consider these maps or to seek outside expertise. I mean, I would want as much time as possible to, because it's complex, you have said that before, like today. You said it's complex and there's a lot of details involved. Give yourself time. We deserve your thoughtful deliberation. Do your job, please. Succinctly stated by the Ohio Capital Journal, quote, lawmaker's goal appears to be to run out the clock and rammed through through skewed maps with little public scrutiny. Because the Supreme Court now has a right wing majority it's expected to greenlight whatever lawmakers come up with. And that's a sad truth, isn't it? And that's not right. That's not right at all. We the citizens, can't be more clear. We want fair voting districts. I mean, that can't be more clear than that. 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.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:11:18] Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Houdek. Are there any questions from the panel for Ms.. Hudak? Thank you so much.

Anne Houdek [00:11:28] I know you heard all that today, too, but it bears repeating. Thank you.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:11:32] Next up is Rebecca Gorski. And on deck is David Guran.

Rebecca Gorski [00:11:40] Members of the commission, my name is Rebecca Gorski and I am a resident of Chesterland, Ohio, here in Geauga County, a place I have called home for 11 years. During that time, I've been represented by four state representatives and three state senators, in part due to redistricting. I am a volunteer and activist in the nonpartisan, grassroots gun violence prevention movement. My volunteerism takes me to the Statehouse to testify in committee hearings and meet with lawmakers. In last Friday's commission meeting co-Chair Faber commented that the General Assembly mostly operates in a bipartisan fashion, though a small percentage attracts headlines, whether it's guns or abortion. Highlighting guns and abortion as not being a bipartisan effort in the Statehouse illustrates so perfectly the need to end undemocratic partisan gerrymandering. According to a recent poll, Ohioans overwhelmingly support gun safety measures such as safe storage laws, extreme risk protection orders and background checks on all gun sales. 90% of Ohioans support mandatory training for concealed carry permits. 90% of Ohioans is by definition, bipartisan. Yet last year, the General Assembly passed legislation allowing anyone 21 and older to conceal carry a firearm in public without training or a permit. In committee, 150 Ohioans submitted testimony in opposition of permit-less carry. The seven proponents were connected to the gun lobby or otherwise benefitted from the loosening of our gun laws. How is that representative of voters? This past May, S.J.R. No. 2 exceeded the required 60% threshold in both chambers, resulting in Issue 1. August Issue 1 then failed with only 43% of the votes. I am missing a page— with only 43% of the vote statewide. While all Democratic legislators voted the same on S.J.R. No. 2 to as their districts voted on Issue 1, nearly half of Republican legislators voted differently on S.J.R. No. 2 than their districts voted on Issue 1, including Geauga State Representative Steve

Demetrio, State Representative Sara Fowler Arthur and State Senator Sandra O'Brien. That's right, Geauga County voted "no" in August, while three fourths of those elected to represent us in the General Assembly voted "yes." Back to gun violence prevention and fair districts, during my conversations with legislators, representatives from the majority party have said the quiet part out loud. They agree something needs to be done to curb gun violence, but if they vote for it, they will be primaried and replaced by, quote, "someone much worse." Just five years ago, my own state senator here in Geauga County was a primary sponsor of a Republican gun safety package from both chambers backed by then Governor Kasich. Even these bills sponsored by the majority party did not move. Four years ago following the horrific Dayton shooting that brought Ohioans begging Governor DeWine and the legislature to do something to halt gun violence, a gun safety package was introduced by Republicans and Democrats together in the state Senate. Majority party leadership in the Senate was not interested in taking up these bills. These examples show that at least some members of the majority party used to be responsive to the desires of the majority of Ohioans, but increased partizan gerrymandering has all but stopped this. Gerrymandered districts drive extremism and polarization. Wrapping up just to say that Ohioans by nature are not extremists. Yet by any measure, our gerrymandered districts have led us to being governed as if we were. You have that, this commission has the power to help reduce the influence of extremists by creating districts that more fairly represent the true nature of our state. If this is an impossible goal, it seems the only remaining answer is an independent system redistricting commission. Thank you for your time.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:15:21] Thank you, Ms. Gorski. Any questions for the witness? Yes, Leader Russo.

House Minority Leader Allison Russo [00:15:27] Thank you. Thank you, Chair Antonio. And thank you, Ms. Gorski, for being here and also also wanted to thank you for coming down to the Statehouse. It is not an easy drive from here down to Columbus, and when you factor in parking and testimony in committee hearings, not always running on time, that takes an extreme amount of commitment and I appreciate you and others like you who do that and make sure that your voices are heard at the Statehouse on these very important issues. And, you know, related to what you have to say in Friday's hearing, someone pointed out, I actually wrote it down, that when you manipulate districts, you manipulate elections and you are manipulating public policy. And I would argue in many cases, we're not getting the best public policy for Ohio that actually represents all of Ohio, not just extreme ends of the ideological spectrum. And if you have anything to say about that, would you agree with that, since this probably should be a question rather than a statement? I'm curious if you agree with that?

Rebecca Gorski [00:16:36] And if we're talking about gun safety legislation, we know that's not only 90% of Ohioans that support, you know, permits and training to conceal carry a firearm, it's more than 90%, according to this recent poll in July and previous polls. So this is consistent that represent, or that support background checks on all gun sales and transfers. And I know from the work that I've done throughout the state and I have led various I've held various leadership positions that were statewide. And this organization that we have supporters from all political backgrounds, we have gun owners, we have veterans, we have all kinds of support. So it's not a partizan issue and, it should, that should be reflected by our elected leaders in the Statehouse.

House Minority Leader Allison Russo [00:17:28] Thank you.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:17:29] Thank you. Seeing no other questions, David Guran is up and Patricia Denny is on deck.

David Guran [00:17:45] Good evening, this is my first time at Paterson's State Park. Excuse me. It's beautiful with all the change in colors, however, is not the first time before this commission. In contrast to Punderson, the behavior and actions of the five Republicans of the redistricting committee is extremely ugly. Two of the five Republicans since last year have been replaced. The junior varsity squad is in place now after Matt Huffman and the other guy. What is this ugliness? Well, the five Republicans have chosen to delay the hearings until the last possible moment. In fact, according to LaRose, the deadline to complete the maps was last Friday. It would be nice to know how Secretary of State came up with September 22nd as a deadline. Now, the Republicans have known since 2021 when they forced through the current map that the maps, the commission, the maps would need to have the commission come back and update them in 2023. You all had free time after the biennial budget was completed on June 30th. That was two and a half months that you guys could have had hearings. But the Republicans chose not to. I've concluded that the five Republicans have already made their decision. Therefore, the five Republicans don't deserve any respect from the public. So tomorrow in Columbus, the Republicans, with their gerrymandered and unconstitutional map will pass it, without any Democratic support. So my question to the chair, co-chair, Senator Antonio, will these maps be used for only two years and then the commission will have to meet again to put this through this Kabuki theater again? I'll just go ahead and finish up and answer question. Of course, we need to keep in mind that the Republican maps, are, unfairly solidify its unearned stranglehold on power with a super majority in both houses of the legislature. Again, the Republicans have flaunted the rules of the Constitution. And again, public should not give you any due respect.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:20:36] Thank you, Mr. Guran. In answer to your question, to the best of my ability. It depends on who you talk to, as far as an answer to your question. I believe that the Constitution was, was silent on where we are right now because it did not anticipate where we are right now, which is under a federal court order with with maps that were not deemed constitutional for a two year period, which is why we find ourselves here again instead of having a four year map as some people expected. So I believe if we find ourselves in a place where there is no agreement that anything from a four year map would be deemed because there were not the votes or and then we would go from there. Some folks believe that if we can't agree, it's another two year map and then the cycle would repeat itself. And if there was agreement, it'd be another four year map until we get to the next census tract. So there's a little bit of detail to be worked out I don't expect us to to haggle on this right now because I know there's different opinions. Certainly, I'm sure one of my colleagues is just ready to chime in on what they believe and so that's fine. But all I can tell you is, unfortunately, even with this, because of this, the strange situation we find ourselves in, it's not clear. And if one of my colleagues, is there anyone else who wants to make a comment or weigh in on this at this point? You're wel— no? Okay, I guess not.

David Guran [00:22:24] All right. Thank you.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:22:25] Thank you.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:22:27] Madam co-chair?

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:22:27] Oh, I'm sorry, Secretary you did.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:22:30] Not on, not on that question. But you raised a point that I want to make sure to clarify, because I think you deserve that answer. You asked about the timeline that was laid out. So of course, as the chief elections officer, I want to make sure that our boards of elections are well-prepared to conduct another free and fair election in a bipartisan way, which is what our good, hardworking elections officials do year in, year out. And it starts from the deadline of December 20th, on December 20th, candidates by law have to turn in their petition, that's candidates for state rep, state Senate, state Central Committee, state school board. I mean, any any district office, any office that intends to be on the ballot in 2024. Those candidates really, in fairness to them, need to have a month or so to circulate those petitions in the districts where they're running, right? Because they've got to gather a certain number of petitions varies by office. Before they can do that the boards of elections need a month to program their computers so that each registered voter is in the correct district. Okay? And so counting back from there, there needs to be time allowed for the possibility, maybe even the probability of litigation, because I think we've found from past experience that there's often litigation surrounding this process for whatever reason. And again, if the boards of elections get a final map approved by a court through the litigation process, then they take a month to get all that programing done and we don't want to rush them on that more than is due because we don't want them to be moving so fast that they make errors. And so that date takes us to the 22nd of December. What I've told our team and my colleagues here on the Commission is that we should be moving as expeditiously as possible with all alacrity, because every day past the 22nd introduces more opportunity for error. And so that's why I'm encouraging my colleagues to do their work, do our work as expeditiously as we can.

David Guran [00:24:18] Just to repeat, the, uh, the date that the filing date is, again, is?

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:24:25] Candidates are required to and of course, they can do so sooner, but what they have, they have to have districts before they can turn in petition signatures, they're required to do so by the 20th of December. That's when they turn in their petition signatures to qualify for the ballot.

David Guran [00:24:40] So with the month programing, so the real date is November 20th.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:24:45] Mr. Guran, I'd like to ask you to direct your question to the chair and then to—

David Guran [00:24:48] To the chair to Mr. LaRose, then the real date, because of the programing that which takes a month, which seems a little long, but would be November 20th, Correct?

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:25:00] That's the date that.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:25:01] Followup?

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:25:02] Madam Chair, if I may?

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:25:04] Yes.

[00:25:04] Thank you. Sorry about that. It's been a few years since I've been in the legislature I forgot the process. The, the date that the final districts, through any kind of litigation and that kind of thing would need to be done, would be the 20th of November, and that's if the boards are going to have all of their programming done by the 20th of December. Of course, candidates need time and that can co-occur in parallel. Litigation takes weeks, maybe months. Only the court knows the the timeline that they operate on. And so that's why we took the sort of the average time that litigation takes and the average time that it takes to do those programming at the boards of elections and that's how we got the 22nd of December. I mean, you can see where the fall goes pretty quickly will be on December 20th before we know it.

David Guran [00:25:52] So if there's no litigation, if you guys were more transparent and worked with the Democrats, there wouldn't be litigation so—

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:26:01] Mr. Guran, I would like to again, ask you to direct your questions through the chair.

David Guran [00:26:07] It's more of a statement, but to the chair, to Mr. LaRose, so if you worked with the Democrats and be more transparent and listen to the public, then I don't think you would have that litigation. That's because your—

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:26:25] Secretary.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:26:25] If I may. Yeah. That's not necessarily a safe bet, because in a state of 12 million people, there are people that, for whatever reason may find themselves aggrieved with this process, even if there's bipartisan agreement on this. And I certainly hope we do reach that bipartisan agreement on this. So we can't kind of gamble on this notion that there won't be litigation on this. And again, that would be unfair to our boards of elections, to the candidates and to the citizens that are going to participate in the process.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:26:51] Thank you. Mr. Guran.

David Guran [00:26:52] Thank you.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:26:53] Thank you. Oh, I'm sorry. Leader Russo has a question before you leave.

House Minority Leader Allison Russo [00:26:58] Thank you to the chairwoman and to Mr. Guran. First of all, thank you for being here and for your testimony but I just want to acknowledge that your point is very well taken and noted that while it feels like we're on a very, and we are, on a very accelerated timeline and this self-imposed deadline that we have. Your point is noted, we had 16 months before this to get this done in two and a half since the budget, even if we take the legislative work and the budget does consume a lot of our time, but two and a half months since then. So your point is noted and is a fair point, I think. So thank you for being here.

David Guran [00:27:42] Thank you.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:27:43] Thank you. All right. Patricia Denny is up and Mary Vedda is on deck.

Patricia Denny [00:27:52] Would I be able to wait until the last because I thought I signed up last. I'm Patricia Denney. Does it matter?

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:28:03] No. If you wanna wait.

Patricia Denny [00:28:05] Yeah. I don't mind waiting, really, because I haven't had time to prepare anything then.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:28:11] Okay, Sure, Sure we'll, we'll, then we'll bring you back. Mary Vedda.

Mary Vedda [00:28:22] Good evening committee I'm Mary Vedda, I'm from Cuyahoga County, Olmstead Township, and I was born and raised in Ohio. I love Ohio and that's part of the reason why I'm here. Ohio citizens want honest, fair representation. I want honest, fair representation. When I have called my representatives that are not necessarily of my party, I don't feel I'm getting fair representation because I think they just blow me off. Your maps are not honest or fair. You're supposed to be serving the common good of all Ohio citizens. The maps should represent a percentage of Democrats or Republicans, and that's what you should be aiming for. I watched those hearings last year. You purposely drag this out. I saw it. Everybody knows it. You drug it out. And just like I said today, that you could have started this whole process earlier, but you drug it out again because you like doing that. So my final comment is gerrymandering destroys democracy.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:29:43] Thank you, Ms. Vedda, does anyone have a question or comment for Ms. Vedda? No? Okay. Thank you. Moving on. Shelley Lewis is up next and Andrew Green is on deck.

Shelly Lewis [00:30:05] Good evening and thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Shelly Lewis and I am the president of the League of Women Voters of Geauga. It's election season and that brings our role into sharp focus. Our job is to make sure that every eligible voter is registered, has accurate, timely information about candidates and issues, and is able to vote using their preferred method. Our job is not to influence an outcome, but to make sure that voters are able to make informed decisions that align with their personal values. We trust voters. We think you should, too. You had the power in 2021 and 2022 to create proportional competitive maps. He refused to do so and repeatedly thumbed your nose at the Ohio Supreme Court. I sometimes wonder what would happen to me if I disregarded a court order. You've had the power in 2023 to create an open, transparent process that welcome public participation throughout the state. Instead, you gave us this, a handful of oddly located public hearings, that exclude the vast majority of Ohio voters. We don't even have a way to view and discuss the proposed maps. I do not speak for Geauga voters, but I can offer these observations. Geauga voters are tuned in and they turn out. We consistently have some of the highest voter turnout numbers in the state. And while Geauga is a Republican majority county, on August 8th, voters from across the political spectrum sent a clear message that they value democracy over partizan politics. Voters did you a great favor on August 8th. They showed you exactly where the line is. Don't mess with democracy. I will remind you that over 70% of Ohio voters explicitly told you they want fair maps so that there are elections have meaning. You have the power to fix this. But to do so, you will have to trust voters. Thank you.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:32:45] Thank you. Are there any questions for Miss Lewis? Thank you. Andrew Green is next. And Walter Claypool is on deck.

Andrew Green [00:33:01] Good evening, co-Chair Antonio and members of the Commission. Thanks for allowing me to testify today. My name is Andrew Green I've been a resident of Northeast Ohio for nearly my entire life. On Friday, you all heard from a gentleman named Geoff Wise. Similar to him, I currently work in industry as an engineer and have a side hobby in political science. And in his testimony he discussed an approach that he felt was appropriate for complying with what he described as some, as somewhat conflicting objectives of Article 6A and 6B. So he described that this requires beginning from a neutral draw, and I kind of went through this this exercise to to go from a neutral draw, which is the 6A part and get closer to proportionality, which is the 6B part. And in doing that, I started with the September 20th map that was adopted as the working document by this commission under the assumption it was a neutral draw, even though Dr. Wise, in his testimony, acknowledged that it wasn't. So using that map as my starting point, I started, I sought to move closer to proportionality in the process. I managed to reduce the number of districts that split split townships and municipal corporations, including one that may have been an oversight, but there was a district that did split a township and a municipality. It split a portion of of a village that had zero population so it's not a difficult fix, but that is in violation of Article Section 3D3 of the Ohio Constitution. So I'm going to skip over this next part for time. So for proportionality, I inched a little bit closer, and that's all detailed in my written testimony I'm not going to go through it just for time's sake, but gets a little bit closer. I still don't think it's quite in line with where we need to be, especially considering the fact that the the September 20th map was not a neutral draw so it wasn't really the correct starting point, but in deference to the commission, I did choose that as the starting point. I also go into a little bit about compactness based on the Reock and Polsby–Popper test. The map that I drew does improve on both of them in both the Senate map and the House map. And I've got some other comparisons to maps that have been adopted by this commission, proposed by others that haven't been adopted just to see where those numbers kind of fall in different maps. With the consideration of incumbents, I took that into account, as I think has been made pretty clear by this commission, that you don't want to double bunk any incumbent. So I have no non-term limit and incumbents that are double bunked. County splits in the house map: I have one more county split than the September 20th map. Senate map: There is, I believe, four more. But county splits in the Senate map aren't really a constitutional objective, so I wasn't really trying to do anything with that. But the real thing that I was focusing on was the 3D3 requirements on splitting townships, municipalities, so as Senator McColley mentioned in Wednesday's hearing when they introduced the map, I believe you said there were four township splits and one municipal split, excluding Columbus, Cleveland, and those because they obviously have to be. And I found that extra, what I believe was an un– unintentional zero population split in district, House District 29. Um, but I was able to eliminate four.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:37:14] Mr. Green if you could wrap it up.

Andrew Green [00:37:16] Out of those four of those– excuse me four of the five township splits and I did add one additional townships split in there. So my maps got the one municipality and two townships. Um, and then I've got details about the specific changes that were made as well at the end of my written testimony. And if there's any question, I'd be happy to take them.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:37:42] Thank you. Mr. Green. Are there questions? Secretary.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:37:47] Thank you, Co-Chair, thank you Mr. Green, for the thoughtful approach to this. What proportionality breakdown were you able to get to?

Andrew Green [00:37:55] So I kind of looked at it from a, a standpoint of what are the range of possibilities with this map. So the— in the House side, if you take districts that are in that like I did, 47.5 to 52.5 percent competitive, so they could go either way. So with the map adopted on Wednesday as the working document had anywhere from a 30 to 67 split to a 39/60 split, mine keeps that ceiling still at 39/60, but it raises that floor a little bit to 34/64. And then on the Senate side, we go from between 9/24 and 10/23 to between 9 and 24 to 15/18.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:38:48] Thank you. Additional question?

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:38:51] Yes, Mr. Secretary, go ahead.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:38:53] Thank you. Has your map been uploaded to the commission website and then have you submitted your testimony? I'm particularly interested in what you called the unintentional what you believe may be an unintentional split that as a zero population impact. I want to make sure that our teams take a look at that. Has that been uploaded to the website along with your testimony?

Andrew Green [00:39:12] To the co-chair, to the Secretary LaRose. Yes, it has.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:39:15] Terrific. Thank you.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:39:16] Thank you, Leader Russo did you have a question?

House Minority Leader Allison Russo [00:39:19] No, thank you, Madam Co-Chair, I had the same question because I don't see it, but— oh, we found it. Thank you.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:39:29] Yeah, it is on there.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:39:30] Yeah.

House Minority Leader Allison Russo [00:39:31] Thank you.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:39:31] Great.

House Minority Leader Allison Russo [00:39:33] And thank you for your time to create this.

Andrew Green [00:39:34] Yeah, absolutely.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:39:35] Thank you. Yes.

Sen. Rob McColley [00:39:37] So I've written down HD 29, and I agree with the secretary. We need to at least take a look at that sometimes there's a difference between Dave's Redistricting and the mapping software we use.

Andrew Green [00:39:48] Sure

Sen. Rob McColley [00:39:48] There will be discrepancies that may show up on one that don't show up on the other. Do you know what specific township it was?

Andrew Green [00:39:57] To the co-chair, to the senator, it wasn't a township, it was a municipality, the village of Cleaves in southwest Hamilton County.

unidentified [00:40:06] Okay, village of Cleaves.

Andrew Green [00:40:08] And I assume, to the co-Chair to the representative or to the senator, I assume Springfield Township was the one that you knew was split and for lack of a better word, intended to split.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:40:22] Any further questions? Yes. Auditor Faber.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:40:26] Thank you. I've pulled up your testimony, been looking through it as you've been testifying, and thank you for your effort and work on this. Frankly, I'd yield you more time because you're actually here talking about the maps which is what the hearings are for, so I sure appreciate that, and to give us input of how we can draw better districts and offer amendments. Looking at this in particular, one of the things that I think Mr. Wise testified to or others have testified to, when you deal with political geography in trying to mix that around, did you have any concerns about what we call the geographical location conundrum of where Ohioans tend to live and meeting some kind of proportionality number?

Andrew Green [00:41:11] So through the co-chair to Auditor Faber, I understand what you're asking, and I don't think that my approach necessarily required that to be a consideration through the methodology that I followed and Dr. Wise described in his testimony, you start from a neutral, not really looking at partizan data, what do you get? And then try and move a little bit closer to proportionality. So I didn't necessarily have, you know, straight, whether you want it to be 54/46 or 57/42...

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:41:54] Most—

Andrew Green [00:41:56] The goal is to move from, from that starting point closer. And as Dr. Wise said in his testimony, where in between those two marks is up to you guys.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:42:08] Madam Chair?

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:42:08] Auditor Faber.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:42:09] Thank you. Most of the experts that have testified on this topic and including the citizens redistricting proposal all recognize that political geography in Ohio probably means another 3 to 5 points advantage for Republicans because of the clustering largely of Democrats in the areas. If you're going to avoid cities, counties and township splits, it's very difficult if you're not going to draw hub

and spoke districts, which I know you know what are based on your work. To accommodate those kind of magical mystery ratio kind of numbers. It looks like you had to take some considerations to to make amends to to avoid that to hit some of these numbers. Where in the maps did you spend your time making those kind of adjustments?

Andrew Green [00:42:55] So, I mean, the adjustments that I made were well, so I'll start with, some of what the adjustments that I made really came more from just changing House District to Senate district pairings, which had some cascading effects in some different areas that required the moving of some some House districts, which because of population concerns, kind of cascaded, especially in the southern part of the state, but outside of the major cities and what I just described, there wasn't a whole lot of change. So, you know, focusing on the major cities, in particular Hamilton County, Montgomery County, Summit County, and then at Lucas County, Lucas County was primarily to get rid of the District 44 that just slivers along the Maumee River and is, you know, barely contiguous for that, that about mile long stretch of the Maumee River.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:44:00] Thank you for your work and your submission. I sure appreciate it. I'm going to be taking a close look at it.

Andrew Green [00:44:05] Sure. Absolutely.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:44:06] Any other questions? Thank you, Mr. Green. Thank you. Walter Claypool. And then Ms Denny, you're up after Walter Claypool.

Walter "Skip" Claypool [00:44:27] Thank you, Madam Chair, thank you all councilmembers, for showing up. Thank you particularly to Mr. Frank LaRose and to our governor for being here a long way for you to travel up to Geauga County, hope you get some syrup before you leave. And I think you've done great work. I represent a handful of people in this room. Unfortunately, our Republican Party in Geauga County dropped the ball, I got word on this about an hour ago, so I'm not as prepared as I would like to be, but let me make a few comments to you about the redistricting and the way that it feels to many of us in Geauga County that have been impacted by this and as a former candidate and a county commissioner and a trustee, I can tell you how it's impacted many of us. And it's, look, let me make a brief comment, too. I have to giggle and chuckle every time I hear the term we're a democracy. We are not a democracy, I am hoping that you understand that, we are a republic. And a republic has very distinct difference from a democracy. Democracies fail and they fail because the majority tends to overrule the minority in many cases. I would love to have the time to get into the details on this redistricting and talk about the maps and so on and so forth, 3 minutes doesn't give me enough time, but let me touch base with you on this. Geauga County has a specific culture, our culture has now been split. We have representatives that represent Ashtabula as well as Geauga County, Portage County, as well as Geauga County. And so our population and the way we would like to vote and the representation we would like to have is diluted. And that's what happens when you have unfair maps, you tend to get thrown into populations that distorts the values of the culture that should expect a certain representation. You've done a admirable job and trying to create balance, and I give you credit for that. I've heard a lot of comments about our redistricting being unfair. I think it's a little unfair too but in the other way because I don't want to be thrown in with people who culturally don't align with the Geauga County culture. I don't want to be thrown into Cuyahoga County values because our culture is way different from Geauga County values. And so I applaud you for trying to create some balance, because I know and I've seen and I've talked to individuals who

were involved with the redistricting process. It's a tall task, and I'm very disappointed in our Supreme Court justice who sided with the other side in the merits of this thing, because I think this could have gone in a whole different direction. So with that said, I applaud you for your efforts. Stay the course. I think the districting maps are as fair as they can be, considering. And I thank you. Any questions?

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:47:25] Well, I, I just want to make one point of clarification. Thank you so much, Mr. Claypool, for being here today. Actually, you know, we are living in a democracy because the people govern themselves. It's representative because people choose selected officials by free and secret ballot, and it is a republic because the government derives its power from the people. So I think maybe we can agree that we are we are all of those things, and especially this commission has been charged with making sure of that free and fair ballots and free and fair voting going forward. But I thank you for your being here tonight. Is there any questions for Mr. Claypool? Seeing none. Thank you so much for being with us. Okay. Ms. Denny? Patricia Denny?

Patricia Denny [00:48:25] Well, I would like to apologize for not being prepared with a formal statement, because as many people have said, there really wasn't enough time. And it's so unfortunate because it really stifles the voice of the people, especially the people who are most vulnerable. Which includes some people in Geauga County and Lake County, and many people in Cuyahoga County. And I have to say that there is a moral dimension to all of these kinds of discussions. I've been immersed in Catholic social teaching all my life, really. And I learned from the Notre Dame nuns who live here in Geauga County now, that, number one, we can't be one issue voters. And I also learned from them that, we must be the voice for the voiceless. And so they got me involved for probably 20 years of my life, working, volunteering, basically in high poverty areas in the city of Cleveland at one of their schools where the population was 100% African-American. And as soon as I started there, I started to realize this is so wrong. I mean, it's rare, I grow up, but my family, a large Irish family and Slovak, were really white flighters. And I found myself in the neighborhood where I was born, and my parents left when I was four or five to move out to Lake County, which is where I live now. So. I just find it, kind of morally offensive to hear that someone's culture is is so different from another's culture. These people in the inner city of Cleveland who are so deprived and many in Lake and surrounding areas too, but it's concentrated poverty. So it's just to me, it's a moral outrage and I just felt that I had to point out the huge moral dimension and that all of these discussions have, including fair maps which leaves, unfair amounts, leave many people the most vulnerable, voiceless. And issues like purging of the voter rolls, when I was canvassing a couple years ago, well, no in 20– 2016, I was canvassing in the city of Painesville in Lake County, and I found out that in an African-American neighborhood, three people had been purged from the rolls and they didn't realize it. It's easy. You know, I'm not a lawyer. I don't I don't read legal speak. I, I don't do it well. But I wish I did because, you know, I guess I missed my calling I should have been a lawyer to try and to try and be better with language, but anyway. So, you know, issues such as purging of the roles. Has a huge impact on how votes turn out. So. Thank you.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:52:49] Thank you. Miss Denny, are there any questions of the witness? Yes. Seeing none.

Co-Chair Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:52:56] Thank you for coming.

Co-Chair Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio [00:52:56] Thank you. Is there anyone else? That is the end of the list that we have in front of us, of people who have filled out a witness slip to provide testimony. Is there anyone else who wishes to come before and testify at this time? Okay seeing none, I want to again thank all of you for spending this time with us both here physically as well as Ohioans who are watching around the state. We appreciate your participation. I want to personally thank all of you for taking the time out of your day to be here and really committing to our democratic process. I want to also remind you again that there is an upcoming commission meeting tomorrow. It will be Tuesday at the Ohio Statehouse in the Senate Finance Hearing Room at 10 a.m. and the commission will continue accepting written testimony as well. If there's no further business to come before the commission, we stand adjourned. Thank you.