

**PROPONENT/OPPONENT TESTIMONY OF:**

**MARY ROBBINS  
80 N PORTAGE PATH, APT 6b2  
AKRON, OHIO 44303**

**IN SUPPORT/OF: FAIR MAPS**

**TITLE  
SUBTITLE  
COMMITTEE/COMMISSION**

Testimony

**AKRON, OHIO JULY 25, 2021**

**I appreciate the opportunity to be heard today and the schedule the committee has to keep during this period of gathering testimony from the voters. I Thank you all who have gathered here today.**

**I am Mary Robbins, a life long resident of Summit County and a mother of 5 grown children. I am here because I love my Highland Square neighborhood, my city of Akron, Summit County, my state of Ohio and our magnificent democratic republic of the United States.**

Ohioans mandated an improved system for drawing voting districts when they passed referendums in 2015 and 2018. Critical deadlines have been squeezed because of the pandemic, making the process more difficult. Every effort to avoid the fall back 4 year plan should be avoided, but instead we have seen our lawmakers rather drag their feet and hinder the process at critical opportunities.

For example, these public hearings were not scheduled until a precious few days before they were to begin and then only during business hours thus preventing any participation by working people and others with daytime responsibilities. The Redistricting Commission was not even appointed by the Governor until very late in the timeline when it could have been working all summer gathering public testimony. This despite Ohioans pleas to get started on the public commentary as well other important pre-work to ensure a fair process. As a result, much citizen

participation has been curtailed. I notice even the Redistricting Committee members, tasked with hearing the citizens input were unable to arrange attendance with so little notice. Governor DeWine, a member of the committee tasked with drawing the maps, was found at Bengals training camp instead of in Cleveland or Canton on Monday. I am relatively innocent when it comes to state politics, but even I begin to wonder if the current majority party can participate in a cooperative manner for it is never easy to give up power once it is yours.

Here in Summit County, we are broken into 4 congressional districts thereby diluting our regional voice to make known our wants and needs. Our map is a total travesty as everyone in this room knows. None of our representatives live in Akron or even Summit County and many citizens are confused about who our representatives actually are. Summit County has no singular voice. Lawmakers have consistently avoided tackling our gun violence issues when voters have overwhelmingly asked to have gun purchase background checks at the very least. Also, gerrymandering has allowed Ohio to be the number one state in corruption as exemplified by the First Energy debacle as well as countless other important issues like school funding, environmental issues and medical directives. It is maddening to the voter to see nothing done on important issues to Akron. How could an accused felon remain in high state office for months after being so charged? Larry Householder. Over and over again, issues are not decided on the common sense of the majority of Ohioans but decided instead by representatives elected in gerrymandered districts who are safe in their seats, can become more radical and influenced by outside sources and do not have to even listen to the people or debate the subject.

The United States was founded on citizen voice and involvement. Gerrymandering is an insidious attack on the principles of democracy which can have disastrous effects on our country's future by allowing one party superiority over the other. Ohio votes 55% republican but retains 75% of the representative seats. Is this fair or rigged? We must get back to debating and coming to solutions together as opposed to allowing one party to unfairly dominate for another 10 years.

We, the citizens, demand a place at the table of government as our democratic republic requires. Please see that every effort is made to fulfill the spirit and letter of the referendums now Ohio constitutional law, in the first go around. If the committee defaults to the 4 year option, we will be submerged in needless litigation for years and the status quo will remain through 2022 most likely. Coming to an agreement will result in a more equitable, fair and transparent process that will benefit **both** parties in the long run but most importantly, the people of Ohio will benefit.. As our representatives, we expect no less from you. Just do it, I implore you.

Sincerely,

Mary Robbins