

## 2021-08-27 Redistricting Testimony

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Senator Sykes and members of the Redistricting Commission. My name is Connie Rubin. I reside in North Canton, in House District 50, Senate District 29, and Congressional District 16, have voted in Ohio for 48 years, and during that time have registered voters, served as a poll worker, testified, written hundreds of letters to my legislators and Congressmen, and have run for office.

I wear this white outfit today in honor of Ohio and American suffragists. Yesterday marked the anniversary of adoption of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment which allowed women to vote. 101 years later you hold in your hands to ability to make our votes reflective of the public will, or to make our votes meaningless. In 2011 you chose the latter.

As you know, in 2015 and 2018 Ohio Republicans, Democrats & Independents rebelled against the rigged system you created, and supported a new process we hope will force you to adopt fairer districts reflective of the moderate political views of the majority of Ohioans and of our statewide voting patterns.

I commend you for having these hearings around the state, and would encourage you to begin providing additional such opportunities for citizen-input on **legislative** issues **at least twice a year**. Not everyone can come to you in Columbus on weekdays. Another 21<sup>st</sup> Century alternative would, of course, would be to allow on-line testimony via Zoom.

But I digress; we are here to talk about fair legislative and Congressional districts. To that end, I would like to share with you how I will judge the fairness of the districts you ultimately draw and adopt:

Fair State legislative districts should no longer result in a veto-proof super majority in either the House or the Senate. This state is much more evenly divided, and House districts should reflect our 54-45 Republican-Democratic divide.

Fair districts will be ones which allow for a change in Party, especially when incumbents are term-limited out of office. Given the political makeup of the statewide electorate, house districts should probably be 30% safe Republican, 30% safe Democratic, and at least 30% that could go to either Party, depending on the abilities of the candidates. Ideally, NO district would be a "safe" district for any incumbent, but that is probably unlikely given our current polarization and different views of city, suburban and rural voters. It is my opinion that districts favoring either Party by 10% points or more are inherently unfair.

When dividing counties, please use major arteries as dividing lines, so districts can be easily **described** and **identified** by voters. Whenever possible, don't divide townships, cities, or villages, and keep school districts whole.

The Ohio Dept. of Development has applicable statistics regarding Ohio's population. 80% of us live in metropolitan areas. A fair legislative map will mean that 80 House votes come from those metropolitan areas. A fair map will also assure that at least 20 House members and 6 Senate members are minorities, reflecting the 21% of their population in our state.

With regard to Congressional districts, 8 districts should be Republican and 7 districts democratic. Any other result will be ***patently unfair*** and subject to a lawsuit. At least 5-7 of our Congressional Districts should have a Republican-Democratic divide close enough to allow a change in Party during each Congressional election. That would be fairness we have not had for 10 years.

Because this hearing is your next to last, it is worth repeating some of the admonitions of previous Ohio voters who have testified:

- Gerrymandering is disenfranchisement. Please keep Eldridge Gerry (the father of Gerrymandering) in his tomb!
- The Gerrymandering of 2011 has created polarization that is tearing us apart. This new process offers the opportunity to create districts that will encourage cooperation and dialogue to revitalize our communities, not tear us apart.
- The polarization created by our current districts has left both urban voters and rural voters feeling unheard, and disrespected.
- The drawing of legislative and Congressional districts are a process which deserves to be done in public, subject to our state's strong sunshine laws.
- Creating fair maps is a matter of will and a matter of integrity. We hope you will demonstrate both!