

## **Ohio Senate Democratic Caucus**

### **Testimony of Randall Routt, Minority Caucus Policy Advisor**

Co-Chair Cupp, Co-Chair Sykes and members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission, thank you for the opportunity to speak about the redistricting plan as presented to you today. I'd like to take some time to walk you through how this plan was generated in compliance with, and in the spirit of, constitutional reforms to Ohio's redistricting process.

To draw the House map, we first looked at the largest county in the state by population, Franklin County, as required by the Ohio Constitution. Franklin County has a population of 1,323,807, which allowed us to create 11 districts within it. We drew the remainder of the county within one additional district. We then repeated the process for the other 21 counties in the state with more than one House ratio of representation – in other words, for the other 21 counties in Ohio whose populations are large enough to contain more than one House district. We did so from the largest county to the smallest, resulting in the creation of the first 77 districts. Two additional districts encompassing entire counties – Richland and Wayne – were then created. Finally, the remaining 20 districts were created by combining whole counties, municipalities and townships.

As you will see, our House map fully complies with all constitutional redistricting requirements. It does not illegally split a single contiguous municipality or township in any district in the state. It splits counties as little as possible, and only to allow for population requirements: Only 12 of the 64 counties with less than one House ratio of representation are split between two districts. Our map also makes zero illegal community splits.

We used the same process to draw Senate districts, each of which must encompass three House districts. We started the process with the 24 counties in the state comprised of at least one House district, which resulted in the creation of the first 28 Senate districts. We then drew the remaining five districts by minimizing county splits. In our map, only seven of the 80 counties with less than one Senate ratio of representation are split between two districts.

### **Representational Fairness**

The Ohio Constitution, Article 11, Section 6 also requires that districts closely match the voter preferences for candidates as expressed in statewide partisan elections of the past decade. Or, as we have heard from last week's testimony, representational fairness. In short, our General Assembly districts should roughly match the way Ohio voters have indicated their preferences over the past decade.

We calculated this in two ways. First, we used data from the 2021 Ohio Common Unified Redistricting Database to determine a total Democratic and Republican vote share. We then looked at the simple vote totals of each eligible election (every partisan, statewide election) from 2012 to 2020, which resulted in a ratio of 45.9% Democratic and 54.1% Republican voters split over the last 10 years. For purposes of map drawing, this would mean that a map that would most closely match the call of Ohio voters would include 45 likely Democratic and 54 likely Republican seats in the House of Representatives, and 15 likely Democratic and 18 likely Republican seats in the Senate. Our House map includes 44 likely Democratic districts and 55 likely Republican districts. Our Senate map includes 14 likely Democratic districts and 19 likely Republican districts.

## **Compactness**

As we heard repeatedly in testimony last week, the Ohio Constitution also requires that General Assembly districts are compact and keep communities of interest within the same district. It is important to note that many subdivisions are irregularly shaped or are simply not contiguous. The map before you today minimizes community splits to the greatest extent possible.

In summary, these map plans adhere to the spirit of the reforms passed overwhelmingly by the voters of Ohio as well as with federal law, including with provisions concerning the protection of minority voting rights. It is merely a starting proposal by the members of the Senate Democratic Caucus. No outside group or organization has reviewed the maps before you in advance of our submission to the Commission and the public today. In addition to my testimony, I am providing a more detailed description of our plan and additional materials. I'd be happy to take any questions and also have our consultant, Chris Glassburn with Project Govern, here to help answer your questions as well. Thank you.