

[Xenia, Ohio, 8/24/21] I'm here providing my testimony today because I was around 15 the last time Ohio's maps were drawn, and since then I have watched time and time again as my fellow Ohioans have suffered under a series of maps that were drawn behind closed doors and with the sense of secrecy we should not be seeing in modern-day politics.

More often than not it seems, my colleagues, friends, family and I find ourselves at the Statehouse protesting for our basic rights, while a group of people who could never truly represent me - even if they wanted to and they don't - continue to legislate based on their own personal beliefs and the wants of those who line their pockets.

In 2019 in Dayton Ohio, just a 15 minute walk from where we stand now, I stood in a crowd of mourners and listened as Governor Mike DeWine promised to "do something" about the gun violence we had just seen tear apart a community, and by extension, the entire state. In April of this year, I watched on in horror as DeWine signed a Stand Your Ground bill into law, effectively endangering the Black and brown people of this state.

Our elected officials are meant to represent the people, and are meant to advocate for the betterment of all Ohioans. Clearly, this is not what's been happening at the Statehouse in recent years. I hope that you all will finally fix that.

Please, do right by Ohioans and use this time to create maps that truly represent our communities and lets each individual have their vote matter just as much as the next. Thank you for your time today.