

Karen Vroman
10041 Columbus Grove Rd.
Bluffton, OH 45817
Fair Districts for Ohio

To whom it may concern

My name is Karen Vroman, and I am a resident of Bluffton, Ohio in Allen County for over 16 years and a lifelong resident of Ohio. I have raised five children who also reside in Ohio, and I have 14 grandchildren. James Hauenstein, my husband has been a lifelong resident of Bluffton and he too has 4 grown children. Both of us worked in state government for decades and have stood as staunch advocates and staff for the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees and organization that represents over 1,000,000 working men and women in the State of Ohio. As such I will be testifying today in favor of fair districts.

Jim and I joke with friends and associates that we live in the “duck” (District 4) which is by the “snake on the lake.” We have embraced this situation here in Ohio with a sense of humor, but it is well known that Ohio is a gerrymandered state. According to the New York Times magazine’ ...Many political scientists consider the House maps in Republican-controlled states like North Carolina, Michigan, Ohio and Texas to have the most pronounced partisan slants....” (Pennsylvania was also on the list until its map was redrawn last year.)” (www.newyorktimes.com2019/06/27/uswhat-is-gerrymandering.html)

We are here today because we need to change it. Ohio have amended the constitution twice to represent Ohioans accurately. Voters should be able to select the people that represent us in all levels of government and in turn those that represent us should be accountable and willing to represent a diverse, and unique and collective electorate. Our districts should not be manipulated by crafty politicians and computer modeling software that ensures outcomes specific to groups and individuals. We should not live in an area where decades and decades go by where no one from the other party has held a congressional seat. Again, folks, partisan manipulating the boundaries of our electoral districts for the express purpose of skewing the outcomes of elections is just wrong and corrupts our democracy.

We have an Ohio delegation to the U.S. congress that has 4 democrats and 12 republicans. A recent article dated August 25, 2021, in the Columbus Dispatch indicates “Republicans have a supermajority in the House and the Senate and control 75% of the State Senate Seats even though Ohio consistently votes 55% to 45% for statewide Republican candidates.

Now Jim and I live in a place where our community of interest will most likely never align with the majority, and we accept that. What we don’t accept is that our representatives have been choosing who represents us and not the voters. You have stolen the voices of many through this gerrymandering process. We believe (and this was proven in PA)

that if you redrew the lines in Ohio a million different ways, none would be more optimal for the republican party than the current one we have today. This needs to change.

Democracy functions on compromise. When you intentionally destroy the ability to compromise and the will to compromise through gerrymandering and pandering to fringe elements, you are destroying democracy at its heart, and we are seeing that happen every day in the United States of America. Democracy should be a beacon of light for her citizens and not a rift driving us apart. We need to be committed to doing this right

Thank you.