

Ohio Redistricting Commission Members,

Thank you for considering my testimony as you complete the process of reapportionment and redistricting required by the constitutional amendments approved by the voters of Ohio in 2015 and 2018. Voters approved a new system with rules that require fair representation of all Ohioans so that their votes may truly count.

I am a second generation American. My parents' lives, and therefore mine as well, were shaped by the rise of fascism in Europe and the destruction those regimes brought to their people. In the beginning elections were held; however, the Party chose the candidates. Officials not supporting the party line were just removed from office at first, but later imprisoned. Parties should not control the process to choose the legislator. Gerrymandering allows the majority party to choose the candidate in the primary who is then almost guaranteed to win in the general election. A vibrant republic needs its citizens engaged in government. Gerrymandering brings about apathetic citizens. Citizens who feel their votes don't matter in the district in which they must vote. We have witnessed party loyalty with donor repayment as motivation rather than public service by our elected officials. Voters have no redress at the ballot box when districts are drawn to favor the incumbent. It seems we are often subject to a minority that seems emboldened by our current system to subvert the public good.

Please allow the people the benefit of maps drawn with fair representation. Allow Ohioans to see the process of drawing the districts, the first map of which is due by September 1, 2021. Algorithms and/or maps have already been submitted by individuals and non-partisan groups. The Chairman of the Hamilton County Republican Party recently stated he feels his party has the numbers to draw favorable districts after the 2020 census and that he is not worried about the redistricting. Those statements fly in the face of the will of the people of Ohio.

Good government requires at least two opposing parties to present a check on the most extreme points of view in either party. When there is no effective opposition legislation becomes law that may be totally contrary to Ohioan's collective will.

Please give the citizens of Ohio a say in their government. It is up to you.

Thank you for your time and attention.