

Written Testimony Submitted to the Ohio Redistricting Commission

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Thank you to the Co-Chairs, Ohio Redistricting Commission, Speaker Cupp and Senator Vernon Sykes, for the opportunity to provide written testimony. I will NOT be able to testify in person due to health concerns in my family.

I am a resident of Guilford Township in Medina County, Ohio. Like all Ohio districts in 2011, Medina County's state legislative district lines were unconscionably gerrymandered.

I have to ask, what does my community have in common with those who live 40+ miles away except to provide an intentional and unquestionable advantage for one political party? Very little.

What motive does an elected representative in my district have to hear out and take any action to address the issues and concerns of even the moderate elements of the other party? Clearly none.

There is not the remotest chance of an electoral consequence for elected representatives who systematically ignore the concerns of voters coming from a different political perspective. Only the primary election is of concern and to most representatives. These extreme gerrymandered districts cater to the aspirations of the most extreme candidates from BOTH parties thus producing legislative bodies that are wholly unable to work for the good of the overall population as opposed to the sole interest of the extremists.

Leading up to the 2018 vote for redistricting reform which garnered over 70% approval from voters, I was one of many who gathered Fair Districts petition signatures. People from across the political spectrum signed the petition eagerly when they came to see the horribly gerrymandered districts in which they lived – and anticipating even worse for the future. This overwhelming support obviously carried over to the voting results on the issue.

When communities including Medina County are kept whole, citizens can work together on common concerns, petitioning our legislator and know who we need to call. Sometimes it was clear in calling my representative that they didn't even know they represented my community! At the very least, citizens and representatives should be clear about their relationship.

I urge the Ohio Redistricting Commission to be transparent and diligent in carrying out the will of over 70% of the voters of Ohio in the spirit and eagerness in which the people of Ohio voted in favor of reform. Please allow full bipartisan input on the 2021 district maps and ensure that citizens have ample opportunity to comment on splits that are made. Please be exceptionally transparent with the map drawing process every step of the way, ensuring that the Commission draws maps in the best interest of their communities. Let communities chose their representatives – not the other way around!

Thank you for the opportunity to share this testimony on the redistricting process. I look forward to and will be commenting on proposed districts maps when they become available.

Respectfully,

Denis M. Osowski