

I was not born in Ohio. I was not raised in Ohio. Both my husband and I are from suburban Philadelphia. After we married, we moved around the South a bit, to lovely areas of Raleigh, NC, Charleston, SC and Atlanta.

In July 2002, his job brought us to Upper Arlington and we decided to stay. We bought a home, made good friends, and raised our two daughters here. We appreciate the good-natured, moderate folks who live in Ohio. People can “agree-to-disagree”, yet still get together for a backyard cookout. We let each other pass on the road. We smile to each other in the grocery store.

As time goes by, however, it seems that moderation and good sense have been lost in our country and in our state. The most radical, loudest voices rule the conversation. I believe our gerrymandered districts have much to do with this. Gerrymandered districts only serve to divide us.

I, along with more than 70% of my fellow Ohioans, voted to support redistricting in 2015 and 2018. We hoped that our Representatives and State Senators would actually listen to our concerns and actually represent us in the General Assembly. We hoped that good-natured, agree-to-disagree conversation could continue.

Ohioans agree that using open, fair, transparent practices to draw districts that keep communities together and our Statehouse balanced is simply common sense and good government.

I urge the Commission to create maps that follow the will of the people.

Mary Beth Smith
Upper Arlington