

Written Testimony To The Ohio Redistricting Commission

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As my presence is required for a meeting of the Ashtabula County Broadband Task Force on October 28th I am submitting this written testimony in lieu of testifying in-person in Columbus on the 28th. I will confine my testimony to the latest version of my complete redistricting plan submitted to the Commission and for which I am otherwise considered sponsor.¹ There's more than enough to address in that.

The redistricting rules have a variety of requirements when it comes to drawing congressional districts. Certain cities cannot be split which this time includes Cincinnati and Cleveland. Columbus *must* be split. Only a limited number of counties can be split and the majority must be kept whole. These can create consequences that were likely not dreamt of when the amendments were originally drafted.

As to my map making decisions, the drawing of the map started with drawing the Cincinnati district. Although it would keep it simple to simply make Hamilton County an entire congressional district by itself that would create too much population deviation. Simply put it would be over-heavy with people.

From there I tried to keep district numbers as close to the current locations as possible. As we are losing one district there will be some changes in district numbers. My general rule in drawing districts was to disfavor incumbents as much as I could as well as to change playing fields. Jim Jordan would get a far different field of voters in my proposed map to face, for example. The snake on the lake is removed with more traditional areas for such districts being drafted. Due to the pressures of trying to balance population levels the district marked "11" on the map does show only a small portion in Lorain County with the remainder in the Mansfield and Ashland areas as well as Morrow, Crawford, and Delaware counties.

Problems arise when you try to balance competing interests against population realities. Ohio's population clumps. Minority populations clump together especially in our cities. With being unable to split Cincinnati and Cleveland the opportunity to have majority-minority districts is reduced. Having to keep the majority of Columbus in one district also results in being unable to easily create a majority-minority opportunity district. None of this means that it is

¹The map can be reviewed on Dave's Redistricting at <https://davesredistricting.org/join/98f59007-5602-44ed-8372-fa6891c5acf6> and is posted to the Commission's website at <https://redistricting.ohio.gov/assets/district-maps/district-map-218.zip>

impossible for minority candidates to be elected to the United States House of Representatives but it would be harder.

My drafting choices for Ashtabula County likely don't make sense at initial glance and do require explanation. Looking solely at partisan balance would push towards including Ashtabula County with Lake and Geauga counties as it currently exists in the 14th district. Socially and economically Ashtabula County has drifted quite a bit away from Lake and Geauga. Ashtabula is a better fit nowadays with Trumbull, Mahoning, and Columbiana counties. Although Dave's Redistricting claims that would result in a Republican-leaning district it should be recognized that a major chunk of Democrat Tim Ryan's current district would be included in my proposed new 14th district. If anything it would likely be a very competitive district. In a Fair Districts webinar the winning map makers did successfully attempt edits to their map showing that even their maps could be adjusted to align Ashtabula on an Ashtabula-Trumbull-Mahoning-Columbiana axis instead of how it is aligned in the current map and the proposal by the Democrats.²

No map proposed to the Commission is perfect. All maps have tradeoffs. The most fair map is likely the most proportional one where no incumbent preserves any significant advantage. I tried to balance population to push towards that view of fairness within constitutional drafting rules. While the Commission will likely not adopt any map before decision-making passes back to the legislature it is my view that concepts from my map should be included in the final map.

The foregoing is submitted for your review and consideration. I appreciate the opportunity to approach the Commission in this matter.

²That webinar, entitled "Fair Districts Congressional Map Winners: Part 2 - Updates Based on Public Input Weds Oct 20, 2021", is archived to YouTube at https://youtu.be/FhE_6d7gmU8.