

Thank you for allowing me to submit my testimony to the Ohio Redistricting Commission. My name is Mark Erhardt and I live in the Columbia Tusculum neighborhood in the City of Cincinnati which is in the Ohio House 27th, the Ohio Senate 7th and the US Congressional 2nd districts. I am here to speak in opposition to the maps officially proposed by this Commission and to speak in favor of the maps submitted Geoff Wise and the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission.

When I retired from my job last year as a senior vice president of a large bank headquartered here in Ohio I had the time to pay more attention to state and local issues. One area that seemed ripe for improvement was how legislative districts are drawn in the State of Ohio, so I began to pay attention to the districting process this year. As someone new to the world of Ohio politics, I would have to say I have been disappointed and underwhelmed by how the process has gone so far, particularly after the citizens of Ohio voted overwhelmingly to create a more bi-partisan process this time around. Frankly, there has been a failure to meet the expectations of your constituents, the citizens you represent. The process got off to a late start, blamed solely on delays in delivery of US Census data, when in fact the Governor could have called the Commission together earlier to define a transparent process to come to a common understanding on who would draw maps, how citizens could better access to proposed maps and to perhaps avoid the mad dash to the finish line between now and September 15th.

I attended both of the Commission hearings last week on Thursday, September 9th and testified briefly at the morning session after the Republican staff presented their maps. I was not impressed with how the Commission conducted its business. Before there was adequate time to review the maps in detail, in the afternoon the Commission voted on partisan lines to advance the Republican staff provided maps as the "official" version for final negotiation and approval. This was a major disappointment - as far as I can tell, every section of Article 11 of the Ohio Constitution refers to the Commission, not one political

party's staff, as having the authority and responsibility to draw district lines. The Senate Democratic staff had previously submitted their own maps. Why didn't the Commission work in a bi-partisan fashion to negotiate differences between the submissions prior to voting to advance an official version for final citizen review and Commission approval? Did the Commission review any of the non-partisan alternative maps submitted prior to the hastily approved partisan submitted maps? Based on my attendance at the Thursday, September 9th hearings, I believe the Commission failed to live up to the bi-partisan expectations that the citizens of this state expected of them. It looks like this was yet another partisan process and outcome.

My specific opposition to the maps officially proposed by the Commission is that I believe they clearly fail to meet the standards in Article XI, Section 6 of the Ohio Constitution. As approved by the voters, the Constitution says the Commission shall attempt to draw a general assembly district plan that meets all three of these standards: A) no district plan drawn primarily to favor or disfavor a political party, B) statewide proportion of districts shall correspond closely to the statewide preferences of the voters, and C) compactness. The map supplied by one of the political parties and approved by the Commission along partisan lines appears to violate all of these standards and that no attempt was made to meet them.

I urge the Commission to reject partisan map submissions and instead focus on proposals submitted by submitted Geoff Wise and the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission. Both alternatives appears to more closely meet the standards detailed in Section 6 of Article XI of the Ohio Constitution. I would also note that the fact that an individual citizen of the state, Mr. Wise, and group of volunteers at the Ohio Citizens' Redistricting Commission were able to create Article XI compliant maps shows how the constitutionally mandated Commission made up of the most powerful leaders in the state failed to do the job asked of them - to follow the Ohio Constitution, as amended by its citizens, to take partisanship out of the redistricting process.