

OHRRedistricting

From: Seth Bridger <sbridger@messiahfp.org>
Sent: Monday, September 13, 2021 3:22 PM
To: Testimony
Subject: Testimony for Cleveland Area Commission Meeting 9/13

Greetings and Good Afternoon --- To Chairperson and respective Commission members.

My name is Seth Bridger, and I appreciate the opportunity to stand before you today. I am representing myself today, but I am also representing a multitude of other people today --- people who are working right now, others who are taking care of children right now, others whose health is too diminished for them to attend such a Commission Meeting today, and still others who are voiceless, marginalized by systems, and simply too tired of the process to care or give of their Monday afternoon and early evening.

However, I believe --- as I hope each of you do --- that this process is extremely important and essential to the future of Ohio and Ohioans. Extremely important that this process is done with integrity, and an ethic which honors the human dignity of ALL people. It is therefore part of my ordination vows as a member of the clergy, a rostered leader in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to speak.... to speak and use my voice in support of the marginalized, including the people of color in our fine state of Ohio.

I currently serve the people of Messiah Lutheran Church of Fairview Park, Ohio (a first ring suburb of Cleveland's westside, I currently reside in beautiful North Olmsted, Ohio yet, I hail from the zip code of 44691 - - Wooster, Ohio, I attended college in Springfield, Ohio the county seat of Clark County, I served in Americorps for 10 months in the Linden Neighborhood of Columbus, my wife and I purchased our first home in Green Twp in the Western Hills outside of Cincinnati, and she and I resided in the 43209 zip code of Bexley, Ohio for several years duringand after graduate school studies.

All of this speaks to great privilege. I am before you with a clear message..... Listen to the people. I implore each of you --- and by extension the entire Legislative and Executive elected leadership -- to divest yourselves and LISTEN to the people you are hearing from in this process. Listen to the citizens of your home districts -- Yes --- and listen to the citizens -- the people.

I especially wish to thank -- and lift up --- the African American Realtor from the Dayton, Ohio area who spoke at your Commission meeting on - I believe -- Aug 25th. I couldn't sleep last night ---- still upset about the ending of the Browns game yesterday and the Cleveland Baseball Team's entire weekend..... so I was up at 3:15 am. I happened to click past the Public Access Channel --- Ideastream --- and I happen to catch portions of your Commission Meeting from the Dayton area. The African American Realtor Mom who brought her recent high school graduate daughter..... Listen to her ! And listen to countless others who you have and are hearing from.

This process is critically important. And the current map does not do justice to the people --- All people --- of our great state.

Let me conclude with this --- I realize this redistricting will not satisfy all the people. This redistricting can be 100 % just, however, we all must do better, and it included you --- the honorable members of this Commission - -- Listening, and then Acting.

Thank you. Best of luck, and Peace be with you in the process.

Rev. Seth C. Bridger

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"Make it a Great Day!"

"Be still and know that I am God" Psalm 46