

Testimony of Elliot P. Forhan (*he/him/his*)  
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Competitive district maps are a bedrock of good government. When district maps are competitive, elected officials are accountable to the voters because the threat of losing an election is real. A competitive district map means that the elected officials, and the political parties to which they belong, are accountable. That accountability is the best guarantee of good government.

On the other hand, uncompetitive district maps corrupt our government. Lack of competition destroys the accountability to the voters of elected officials and their political parties. What incentive do government officials and their political parties have to deliver to the voters when they know that they will never lose an election?

Incumbent politicians in Ohio's redistricting process ten years ago avoided competition for themselves and enacted uncompetitive district maps. The elected institutions of government in our state, full of incumbents unchallenged in uncompetitive districts, have been dysfunctional and corrupt during the past decade. Ohio voters by large margins in 2015 and 2018 changed the redistricting process.

Notwithstanding the expressed will of the Ohio voters, the incumbent politicians in our state are doing it again. The district maps that the Republican legislators introduced and the Republican majority on the commission voted to adopt last week are similarly uncompetitive compared to the existing maps. This is an outrage, and it should outrage every Ohioan. These incumbent politicians, the leaders of our state government, are granting themselves gold-plated job tenure. Congratulations to them. It must be nice.

How can you tell that the district maps that the commission adopted are bad? According to the analytics software of the website *Dave's Redistricting*, the partisan lean of the proposed districts exceeds ten percentage points with respect to approximately 83 percent of the districts of the proposed House map and approximately 80 percent of the districts of the proposed Senate map. So, only 17 percent of the districts of the proposed House map and only 20 percent of the districts of the proposed Senate map are competitive. Again: 17 and 20 percent competitive proposed districts; 83 and 80 percent uncompetitive. Outrageous.

It's even worse when you consider how easy it is to create much better, more competitive maps. Users on *Dave's Redistricting* can submit their own district maps, and the website's software analyzes those user-submitted maps automatically. Right now on the website user-submitted maps are publicly available that, compared to the maps that the commission adopted, improve on the number of competitive districts by more than 80% with respect to the House map and by more than 125% with respect to the Senate. These users likely do not have the resources available to them that the commission does, yet they produced far superior maps.

Ohio voters deserve so much better. They deserve a redistricting commission that does its job and enacts district maps that promote competition—not maps that insulate, protect and coddle the incumbent politicians. Members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission: please rise to the moment. Do your jobs. Rescind your adoption of the Republican-proposed district maps and introduce new maps with far more competitive districts. Examples of superior maps are available to you right now.

Thank you,



Elliot P. Forhan (*he/him/his*)