

Members of the Redistricting Commission:

I am Dr. Karen Leith and reside in Hudson, which is House District 37 and Senate District 27. I spoke at the Akron hearing on August 27<sup>th</sup>.

My comments are based on two broad experiences:

- First, as a League of Women Voters member for the last 41 years, I have been part of our campaigns to put the issue of drawing maps on the ballot, even locally chairing our last effort in 2018. **Having gathered signatures, managed volunteers and worked hard to get out the vote, I cannot ignore the incredible gerrymandering on the current presented map of Ohio House and Senate Districts.**
- Second, as a retiree from the Catholic Commission of Summit County, I spent 30 years, the last 7 as executive director, bringing the most vulnerable to the table. Our mission was making sure that all voices were heard and respected. **And I look at the map you have presented and see even more voices silenced. I have spent too many years bringing underrepresented voices to the table to let this go.**

In my various positions, I have remained an independent voter willing to work with any and all elected officials. The issues have always been my focus. In the last few years, I have definitely felt that elected officials no longer listen – and these maps are definitely evidence of that. I do not understand how you can present maps such as these when 71% of all 88 counties want fair maps. Those voices belong to Republicans, Democrats and Independents.

Further comments:

- Listening to the Commission meeting, I was shocked to hear racial data was not used to make sure there is compliance with the Voting Rights Act. I have spent many years working with communities of color in raising their issues. I am now part of a League of Women Voters committee called Real Talk highlighting these very issues. **Ohio's communities of color must be considered in forming districts.**
- As a resident of House District 37, I am horrified to see it now include parts of three counties. It has moved from a very compact district to a sprawling one. **Something is wrong when a redistricting committee takes a good district that respects communities of interest and is both compact and competitive, and turns it into a sprawling district that splits communities of interest.** Having worked with and for the people of Summit County, I know the importance of keeping communities together so that they can unite their voices and work for the common good. Northern Summit County deserves to have a district that keeps its communities of interest together.
- For the sake of time, my last comments have to do with the lack of bipartisan and transparent procedures.
  1. Both partisan maps are unacceptable in and of themselves . Therefore, reconciling the two or taking the Republican one and “fixing” it is not going to give us fair maps.
  2. Not providing a script to explain the choices is not being transparent.
  3. Working behind the scenes to produce a map and then voting on it Wednesday is not the process the public wants and voted on in 2015 and 2018.
  4. Jamming in these hearings before you intend to produce the map tells us that you are not listening. You are fulfilling the letter of the law, and again ignoring the people of Ohio.

Please reconsider what you are doing. Listen to the people of Ohio and give us fair maps. Be leaders; be statesmen.

Thank you for your consideration.