

Ohio Redistricting Commission Testimony
by Debra Shankland
Mon 13 Sep 2021, 4 - 6 p.m. at Tri-C East

I appreciate the opportunity to address the DiRossi House District map.

I live in Brecksville in the 22nd House District. In the proposed map, I was relieved to see that Brecksville and Broadview Hts., cities which share a school district, were not split. However, North Royalton to the west was left out. These 3 cities share much in common: a State Route which connects them, and many businesses, preschools, parochial schools and churches. I know that a line needs to be drawn somewhere, but the proposed district takes on a shape similar to Jim Jordan's, but this one looks like a block-headed duck. It swings east and north to include the entirety of Brecksville, Broadview Hts., Independence, Solon, Orange, Pepper Pike, Highland Hts. and Gates Mills. What do these cities have in common? Their residents are overwhelmingly white in racial composition, overly dependent on personal automobiles for transportation, incredibly devoted to lawns, and possess a high potential for generous campaign donations. So, good for us!

But somehow, portions of Brooklyn Hts., Cuyahoga Hts. and Newburgh Hts. were also included in this district. I can't help but wonder if the unique concerns of residents in those places, which include industrial areas along the Cuyahoga River, will be diluted and drowned out. They may be more concerned, as we all should be, about breathing polluted air and drinking lead-tainted water than keeping corporate taxes low. Perhaps those residents are used to having their needs ignored, but that is not right.

I don't live in the worst of gerrymandered districts in Ohio, but I know that the DiRossi map can be improved. Why not look at the minority party map that was submitted on time? It could have been improved with the rest of the commission's help and then submitted for our comment. That is what the Commission was supposed to do: work together to come up with fair maps.

The best maps I've seen so far were those submitted on time by the Ohio *Citizens* Redistricting Commission. A fair map should have the possibility of resulting in at least 44 Democratic House seats and 14 Democratic Senate seats, and serves the needs of all Ohioans.

Thank you.

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