

**Ohio Redistricting Commission**  
**Written Testimony by Cathy Cowan Becker**  
**Tuesday, September 14, 2021, at 10 a.m.**

Rep. Cupp, Sen. Sykes, and members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony about redistricting in Ohio. My name is Cathy Cowan Becker, and I live in Columbus near Grove City on the southwest side of Franklin County. I previously submitted testimony on redistricting for the hearing at OSU-Mansfield. Since then the Republican maps and Democratic amendments have been released, so I wanted to submit additional testimony.

Let me start with what everyone on the commission already knows, which is the criteria for drawing new state legislative districts. These criteria include:

- Contiguity and compactness
- District boundaries should be created using county, municipal, and township boundaries
- Where possible, House districts should NOT split counties more than once
- District population cannot vary greater than 5% from its representation ratio
- No maps that (dis)favor one party over the other
- State legislative maps must have representational fairness based on the preferences of Ohio's voters from the preceding decade – that is, the overall percentage of favorable seats for each party should match the percentage of votes they've received over the last 10 years

Let's look at this last item – drawing districts that represent how Ohioans vote. Over the last 10 years, about 55% of Ohioans have voted Republican and 45% Democrat. The first set of Democratic maps released a few weeks ago reflect that, with 55 of 99 seats in the House strong or lean Republican, 44 Democrat, and an 19/14 split in the Senate.

The Republican maps released last week make a mockery of this principle – which, despite claims to the contrary, is literally [enshrined in the Ohio Constitution](#). Their maps would result in gerrymandering worse than what we have now – 67 rather than 64 Republican seats in the House, and 25 of 33 Republican seats in the Senate. Only 16.5% of House seats and 19.8% of Senate seats would be competitive.

If you look at the other criteria, you can see why the Republican maps are so unfair. Dozens of counties – not just urban but also rural – are split up. Examples include Auglaize, Belmont, Columbiana, Defiance, Morrow, Warren, Wood, and Wyandot. In urban counties, district lines do not follow city boundaries. In Franklin County, for example, Dublin, Hilliard, Upper Arlington, Westerville, and Worthington are all split at least once if not twice.

Clearly the Republican maps favor one party (Republicans) over another (Democrats).

The Democratic amendments do a better job at not splitting counties and cities, though they still award more districts to Republicans than Republicans have earned from voters in the last decade.

As an Ohio citizen, I urge members of the Redistricting Commission to look again at the criteria for drawing state legislative districts. Ohioans voted overwhelmingly to put these criteria into the Ohio Constitution. We did this with great hope that the state might finally have fair maps.

Republicans, you are obligated to abide by these criteria in drawing state legislative districts. There's nothing to be gained by claiming the criteria don't exist, they are not in the constitution, or they are something they're not. These criteria are not gerrymandering. They are the rules a large majority of your constituents voted for.

Democrats, you don't have to vote for gerrymandered districts. If the Republicans want to vote themselves into four-year districts, let them. If they want to punt this to the Supreme Court, let them. If they want to cause chaos with blatantly unconstitutional lines, let them. You need to vote for the fair maps your constituents want. Anything less doesn't represent us.

I hope this commission will do the right thing and draw the fair maps that Ohioans demand, support, and deserve.