

My name is Caroline Cook. I live in Newark, Ohio.

Governor DeWine, Speaker Cupp, Senator Sykes, Senator Huffman, Representative Sykes, Secretary LaRose, Auditor Farber

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony today. I would like to have presented it in person, but the short notice to react to the maps being proposed has made that impossible for me. I did offer testimony in Zanesville at a previous meeting where most of the commission was not able to attend and no maps were offered. I hope that you did read all the comments by the citizens urging you to follow the spirit of our State Constitution in creating maps that are fair, promote voter engagement, and are not designed to provide unfair advantage to a political party. This is what the voters expected of you when they signed those petitions to end gerrymandering and voted to demand a better process of drawing state House and Senate maps.

I am begging you to listen to those who come before you today to ask that you not approve the maps that are being offered by the Republican members of the commission without the approval of the two Democratic members. The maps offered for consideration fix a few of the problems with the previous maps, avoiding splitting and some of the strange configurations designed to crack and pack districts to make them favorable to one party or the other. However, they fail to resolve the issue of gerrymandering. The proportionality of the maps offered continue the heavily partisan divisions that give Republicans more than their share of safe districts. I am disappointed in the inability of this commission to agree on a map that is at least as good as the ones offered by the winners of the Fair Districts map making competition. Proportionality is especially problematic in the Republican map. The citizens have shown that maps can be drawn to provide a fair representation in our statehouse. It is not an impossible task to draw maps that will give voters a real voice in our state government. I urge you to fix the maps to give the voters what they expressed the desire to have, fair maps, a House and Senate that truly represents all of Ohio.

Thank you.

Caroline J. Cook

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