

TESTIMONY OF:

Zaiba Malik
7836 Spring Garden Ct
West Chester, OH 45069

IN OPPOSITION OF:

Proposed State Legislative Maps
Ohio Redistricting Commission

West Chester, OH, 09/14/2021

Dear Commission,

I submitted testimony last month describing my community and how it has been impacted by gerrymandering. Today, I am writing to oppose the proposed state legislative maps.

I am a resident of Butler County for the past 16 years and choose to live in West Chester to be close to my extended family and the Muslim community. In addition, I own two businesses in West Chester. I define my community as the schools, shopping, and cultural centers near and around me. These are the people I share coffee with, my kids go to school and play sports with, and go to the mosque with. I am disappointed to see how my current districts do not include my next-door communities that I share life experiences with.

Gerrymandering has disenfranchised our community from seeing an impact of our vote for local elections as well as community funding. As I wrote (along with many others who spoke to the Commission in person) in my previous testimony: We need fair redistricting to encourage everyone to have a voice and to ensure politicians are actually representing and speaking for the districts they are elected to.

However, the proposed state House and Senate district maps do not deliver on this. These maps are unfair and unacceptable, especially in light of the constitutional reforms for redistricting Ohioans overwhelmingly voted for. We the voters passed these reforms because we were tired of gerrymandering, but map drawers have used the same strategies once again.

These constitutional reforms direct you to draw districts that “correspond closely to the statewide preferences of the voters.” Yet, the proposed maps do not reflect Ohio voting preferences, which are around 55 percent Republican and 45 percent Democrat.

The proposed maps were clearly drawn to ensure the power of one political party over the next for the next decade, which goes against constitutional requirements. They split communities of color, dividing Ohio neighborhoods and connecting together parts of our state that simply don't belong in the same districts.

I oppose these proposed maps and instead support maps that reflect the voting preferences of Ohioans, comply with the Voting Rights Act, and keep minority and marginalized communities together.

Additionally, citizens can hardly tell where exactly we fall within these proposed districts because the Commission has not made clear, detailed versions of these maps available to the public. The process itself must be fair and transparent to ensure fair maps.

Thank you for your time and counting my voice in the process for fair district maps that actually represent the people.

Sincerely,

Zaiba Malik, M.D.