

David Niven, Ph.D.

I speak today as a political science professor who has studied, published academic research, and testified as an expert witness in federal court on gerrymandering.

Despite what you have been hearing from the doom and gloomers about gerrymandering in Ohio, I'm here to offer straight facts without hyperbole. So let me reassure you...Ohio does not have the most gerrymandered legislative map in the United States. It has the second most gerrymandered legislative map in the United States.¹

Only Tennessee Republicans have a legislative map that would award them more seats by virtue of winning fewer votes than Ohio Republicans. Ohio Republicans enjoy the favor of a map that secures more than 60 percent of state house and senate seats without the hassle of needing to win a majority of the votes cast.

With Ohio's map, its heads Republican win, tails Republicans win, and in the unlikely event the quarter lands on its edge and never falls over, Republicans win.

But we are not here about the maps. We are here about the governing. We are here about the diminishment of the people's voice.

I did an analysis of state legislatures across the country.² I compared the influence of voters versus the influence of maps. And when you line them up side by side, the degree to which a state legislative map is gerrymandered is a better predictor of state legislative policies than the voting preferences of the people.

Think about that for a moment. The map matters more than the people. The map matters more than the people.

Ohioans have overwhelmingly called for a commitment to stem gun violence, policies like background checks for gun purchases. The legislature in Ohio takes no action. In fact, the legislature continually moves in the opposite direction.

How could any elected body have such little interest in the priorities of the people? The map matters more than the people.

President John Adams once said, "As the happiness of the people is the sole end of government, so the consent of the people is the only foundation of it."

Notice he didn't say the talents of mapmakers are the foundation of government.

The consent that is so essential to a healthy government can only be found in fair votes in fair districts.

I urge this commission to rise above the debilitating notion that fairness is a sucker's bet. Fairness is baked into the bedrock of the nation's founding. Fairness is woven into the Constitution. Fairness is not a threat to your political success, but the best measure of it.

¹ Based on state house and state senate maps in place for 2012-2020 elections, calculating the number of seats each party would win in a perfectly even 50-50 election result.

² Regression Analysis, dependent variable: ideological midpoint of state house membership, 2018.

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.899 ^a	.809	.799	.35441

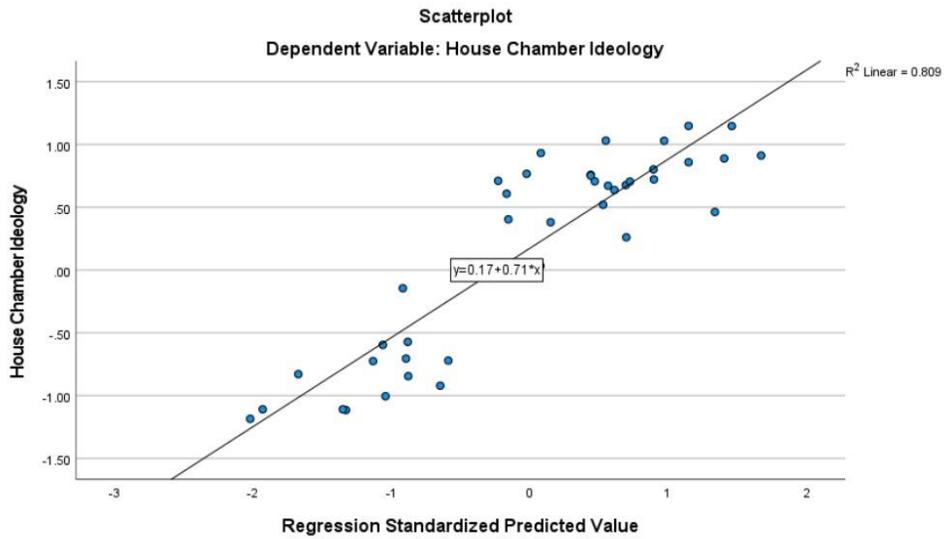
a. Predictors: (Constant), Map Partisan Bias, Statewide Partisan Vote Index

b. Dependent Variable: House Chamber Ideology

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.270	.069		-3.930	.000
	Statewide Partisan Vote Index	.039	.006	.510	6.027	.000
	Map Partisan Bias	.064	.010	.518	6.123	.000

a. Dependent Variable: House Chamber Ideology



The Relative Influence of Voter Preferences and Map Bias on Ohio House Policies

(Based on applied regression coefficients)

