



**TESTIMONY OF:**

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**INTERESTED PARTY:**

Ohio Redistricting Commission Public Hearing  
Redistricting Maps and Process  
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Co-Chair Cupp, Co-Chair Sykes, and distinguished members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the redistricting process and the need for fair, equitable maps.

My name is Erin Ryan and I serve as the Managing Director of the Ohio Women's Public Policy Network, a coalition of nearly 40 organizations working collaboratively to advocate for public policy solutions that build economic opportunity for women and families. Equity is pivotal to our mission as a coalition and should remain a fundamental consideration in all policy creation. **That is why we stand with the voices of Ohio advocates, stakeholders, and leaders from across our great state to urge you to create Statehouse maps that accurately represent our diverse communities and how Ohioans vote.**

We are one of more than thirty members of the Equal Districts Coalition, a state-based group collectively advocating for fair maps. Our reason for joining this robust, diverse coalition is simple: Redistricting is a gender justice issue. The process for how our state maps are drawn, and the final approved maps, will have immediate and long-term consequences on the lives of Ohio women and their families.

The current gerrymandered system has distorted, undermined, and silenced the voice of many voters, which has led to partisan extremism at the Statehouse - hurting the interests of women. Partisan gerrymandering fosters an environment with limited accountability, extremism policymaking, and elected leaders who do not represent Ohio. We have seen this play out time

and time again in the way in which the legislative priorities of the majority leadership stand at odds with the needs of Ohioans, particularly those of women and especially women of color.

While lawmakers have introduced ample legislation that fosters economic opportunity, creates a supportive workplace for women and working mothers, and improves women's access to affordable and comprehensive health care, these bills rarely receive the kind of attention that they deserve - and that Ohioans *want* them to receive. Far too often, the legislation that is heard, advanced, and signed into law in Ohio does not align with the priorities of the women and families it impacts. For example, our state legislature continues to advance and pass abortion bans, despite the majority of Ohioans supporting abortion access. At the same time, state leadership fails to take up common-sense and widely supported legislative issues like paid family leave.

Many times, the issues that disproportionately serve women are relegated to “just” women's issues; ignored, rolled back, undervalued. When in fact, these are economic issues, family issues, and community issues. Fair maps would address the hyper-partisanship and extremism within our Statehouse providing the opportunity for the issues impacting women and families to be better reflected in legislative action.

The pandemic and accompanying economic crisis have brought the issues facing women, particularly women of color, into the forefront: balancing caregiving and work, facing low-wage and low-security jobs, accessing health care services, unstable and unaffordable housing, and more. With fair maps, these issues would no longer be sidelined by partisan politics and extremism. Instead, there would be more of an opportunity to advance efforts that tackle the issues women and families are facing everyday in our communities.

**This Commission holds immense power in ensuring that the redistricting process is fair, equitable, transparent, and constitutional. We urge you to advance maps that:**

- **Provide representational fairness**, based on the preferences of Ohio voters over the past decade, by including at least **44 Democratic House seats** (out of 99 seats) and **15 Democratic Senate seats** (out of 33 seats)
- Ensure that communities of color have **adequate and real pathways to political representation**
- **Keep communities together and refrain from partisan redistricting tactics**, such as “cracking” and “packing,” which distort and divide communities' power
- Utilize a **transparent and public process** with input and insight from Ohioans

We believe that policymaking is strengthened when Ohioans, especially women, are included and centered throughout the process. However, without fair and equitable maps that truly represent competitive and diverse districts, the voices of voters are outweighed by a rigged system. With fair maps, we envision a diverse and equitable future where all communities are represented, where voters' voices are heard, and where our communities' best interests are at the heart of policymaking. This future is possible, but it will require the attention and commitment from this Commission to put Ohioans' best interests first - and that means fair and accurate maps.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony for today's Ohio Redistricting Commission public hearing. I am available to answer any questions by email at [ryan@innovationohio.org](mailto:ryan@innovationohio.org).

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