



Testimony in Opposition to Commission Maps

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All On The Line

Good afternoon, Commissioners, my name is Katy Shanahan and I am the Ohio State Director for All On The Line, a grassroots advocacy organization that's fighting to end gerrymandering and a member of the Equal Districts Coalition, a group of more than 30 prominent labor unions, advocacy, and civil rights organizations who have come together to demand all Ohioans have an equal voice in our political future.

You have asked us to stop being repetitive in our requests for a fair map and a transparent process, but I would respectfully push back on that and ask that you all start listening to our reasonable asks. They bear repeating because you're still not hearing us.

As you all well know by now, Ohioans are ready for fair maps. They have told you that consistently throughout the mapless hearings the Commission held in late August and in the 3 public hearings we've been provided in the days leading up to the final deadline tomorrow. Unfortunately, though, the official map proposed for consideration by the Commission fails to live up to our demands because it does not accurately reflect how we vote, it dilutes the political power of Ohio's communities of color, and it carves apart our communities.

Since 2011, Ohio has lived under some of the most gerrymandered districts in the country with a gerrymandered legislature that's passed bills that have harmed our communities, our rights, and our future. Last week Republicans unveiled -- and five of you voted to consider, along partisan lines -- a set of maps that are actually *even more* gerrymandered than the ones we have now.

Ohio's Constitution is the law of the land and not just a collection of aspirations. That document requires that our maps are drawn to reflect how we actually vote. As you've heard in great detail over the last couple of weeks, across the last decade Ohioans have voted 54% Republican and 46% Democratic - that means we should see 44 Democratic House seats and 15 Democratic Senate seats. Instead, the official Commission-proposed map would give the Republicans a whopping 66% of the seats - again relegating Ohioans to live under un-earned Republican supermajorities in both chambers.

Last week, Republican mappers admitted that their leaders instructed them not to consider racial demographics when drawing maps. This claim would, I guess, be more believable if the maps didn't so masterfully crack and pack especially Black communities across the state to undermine their political power. Even more, though, telling Ohio's communities of color that you didn't even take them into

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consideration when drawing districts that will impact their political future is an insult. It's also a dereliction of duty.

Fair districting doesn't require us to be colorblind. We should be drawing maps to reflect the diversity of our communities. The Ohio Constitution requires that you all -- the Commission -- to draw maps that comply with federal law, including - importantly here - the Voting Rights Act.

How can you claim that your maps are constitutional when you've admitted you haven't done the necessary analysis to ensure that that's the case? And while I think the newly-proposed Democratic maps are a vast improvement over what the GOP introduced and the Commission officially proposed along party lines, it doesn't quite reach full representational fairness and we need more time to fully analyze its impact on our communities. And one quick note - we would NOT endorse the Commission skipping through it's next deadline. Constitutional deadlines matter - as do all the other rules guiding how the maps have to be drawn. We're not going to choose between a fair process or a fair map. We need both.

In 2015, Ohioans sent a clear message on redistricting - we want fair maps, drawn through a transparent process that brings us in at every step. As the Commission, most of you have also sent Ohio a message - that you don't care. You don't care about deadlines, which is why you blew through the first one. You don't care about requirements to draw districts that reflect how we vote, which is why you drew the GOP into another decade of undeserved supermajorities. You don't care about requirements to ensure communities of color get real representation, which is why you told your mappers to crack and pack them. You don't care about public input, which is why these hearings on the maps started just 3 days before the final deadline and most of the Commissioners aren't even here to listen to us. But despite all of that and the efforts to curb our engagement, Ohioans - from Cleveland to Cincinnati, Dayton to Toledo, Lima to Columbus, and Zanesville to Mansfield - still showed up and we still showed out for the maps that we deserve. Our fight isn't over yet. We hope that you'll meet us where we are and draw maps that serve all of us. But if you don't, know that Ohioans will keep showing up to demand better.