

PROPONENT/OPPONENT TESTIMONY OF:

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IN OPPOSITION OF:

Proposed State Legislative Maps
Ohio Redistricting Commission

[Cincinnati, OH, 9/14/21] — I am a business owner who is a family physician on Colerain Avenue in Hamilton County. I am also a resident of West Chester, Ohio.

I submitted testimony in August stressing the impact gerrymandering has had on my community. Now, I am writing to oppose the Commission’s proposed state legislative maps. The constitutional reforms Ohioans overwhelmingly voted for 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 – around 54 percent Republican and 46 percent Democrat.

The proposed maps were drawn to overwhelmingly favor one political party, which also goes against constitutional requirements. They split communities of color, dividing Ohio neighborhoods and pulling 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 work to keep minority and marginalized communities together.

Additionally, as citizens it has been difficult to figure out where exactly we fall within these proposed districts because the Commission has not made good, detailed version of these maps available to the public. We are already working within a tight timeline – further steps should be taken to ensure the maps and hearings are as accessible as possible for Ohioans. The process itself must be fair and transparent to ensure fair maps.

As I wrote previously, I am provider of health care in the Cincinnati area and have seen firsthand how the gerrymandered districts of Hamilton County adversely impact my patient population who are from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Whether it is accessing affordable health care, fair housing, voting access, a competent education system, or discrimination, the majority in this region have unmet needs, which perpetuate the cycle of poverty.

When a district is gerrymandered to ensure a certain party wins regardless of benefit to the majority of people in the region, democracy fails. This is counter to what this country stands for and fair districts are the hallmark of a democracy which is the beacon of hope and example for so many.

I continue to urge the commission: please don't take this lightly.

Sincerely,
Samina Sohail MD