

September 14th, 2021

To the members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission,

My name is Louise Valentine and I live and vote in Delaware County. My current State House district is 68 and State Senate district is 19. My kids attend Westerville Public Schools and we live in a suburban neighborhood, alongside other suburban neighborhoods like Lewis Center, Powell and Dublin within Delaware County and New Albany and Gahanna in Franklin County.

Although I have many concerns with the officially proposed maps that the Commission voted to advance last Thursday, one of my primary concerns is that communities like mine are not being kept together and are, instead, being broken apart. In the proposed map, the city of Westerville does not share a House or a Senate district, but is divided by the Delaware/Franklin County line. So those of us with our kids attending the same school district and, in some cases, even the exact same schools would have different representation. The same is true of a city like Dublin. I can think of no other reason to do this other than to dilute suburban representation in the Ohio House and Senate by including many other surrounding rural counties in those districts. If there is another explanation it is certainly not clear.

Westerville is one of the top 40 largest cities by population in the state. Outside of Delaware County the largest city in the proposed State Senate district is Mount Vernon in Knox County and it doesn't even break the top 100 most populous cities in Ohio. Delaware County is also the wealthiest county in the state and although this shouldn't necessarily be the driving factor behind creation of a district it should be taken into consideration that the other counties included, specifically in the State Senate district, have nearly half the median household income of those of Delaware County. This can make a big difference in priorities at the ballot box when it comes to these differing communities. The other glaring difference is that Morrow, Knox and Holmes counties are all primarily rural with a few small towns. While it's good to have some diversity in a district, it also needs to be balanced with fair representation. The question needs to be asked if the Ohioans in each House and Senate district will have the opportunity to vote for someone who truly represents their needs and when you have districts that unnecessarily encompass vastly different communities, the answer will usually be no.

Ohio voters went to the polls in two separate elections over the past decade to pass new rules for fair maps because we want fairness and transparency in the redistricting process. We want more competitive districts that serve to hold those in power accountable to their constituents. We want our representatives to reflect our communities. And maybe most importantly, we want to feel like our vote counts and our voices are heard.

I'm asking today for the members of this Commission to work together to reconsider these maps. Maybe this is by making edits to the proposed maps or maybe this is achieved by taking a look at one of a number of other maps introduced by both groups and individuals. Several of these other maps include areas of Delaware County or Franklin County that are more similar to

my community than what has been proposed in the official introductory maps. Communities should be kept together with other like communities and this is definitely achievable if you have the will to do it. Approving the current proposed maps would be a great disservice to the people of this state and would not instill any further confidence that our governmental processes are fair and in the best interest of the citizens of Ohio.

I thank you for your consideration of this request and for taking the time to allow for public commentary and submissions.

Regards,
Louise Valentine
6768 Fox Run Dr
Westerville, OH 43082
Lvalentine82@gmail.com
614.426.4442