

Thank you commission members for the opportunity to speak today on the redistricting process. My name is Ann Shroyer and I live in Westerville the 68th State Legislative District, the 19th State Senate and I live in the 12th Congressional which is a classic gerrymandered shape running from Mansfield to Clintonville. And as I pointed out in Lima, my city of about 41,000 is cut into 2 state rep districts, 2 state senate districts even though we are only 12.7 square miles.

The importance of fairly drawn districts cannot be overstated. When district lines are drawn to give extreme advantage to one party or another, then the true constituents of that legislator are the large donors and lobbyists who donate/bribe with enough money to bend the ear and get the attention of elected officials. It should be the residents of a district who have the attention of their elected officials, not groups looking to profit from our tax dollars and state laws.

These unfairly drawn lines leave voters with no real representation. We demand a fair and transparent process to end this

For one example, my county has the highest COVID vaccination rate in the state of Ohio, yet we are represented by a State Senator who has been railing against vaccines and masks for much of the pandemic.

The state government is beset by a MASSIVE bribery scandal, and yet almost the entire state legislature and senate was re-elected, because gerrymandered districts guarantee their seats are safe thanks to gerrymandered districts.

I will finish with what I said in Lima 2 weeks ago.

The lack of true representation thanks to unfairly drawn districts can be seen thus - 90% of Ohioans – including 87% of gun owners in Ohio approve of universal background checks, and yet this gerrymandered state legislature has made NO MOVEMENT on passing it – because the majority have major donors in the gun lobby. Columbus OH has over 142 homicides this year, most of them by firearm and many guns purchased with no background check at the perpetual gun show on the east side, but the gerrymandered legislature continues to do nothing to pass

background checks. The legislature did pass a Stand Your Ground/ Kill at Will bill last Christmas – at the height of COVID deaths in the state, the priority was to protect shooters. The only proponent testimony given at the hearing was from a gun lobbying group. The gun lobbying groups pay a lot of money directly and through independent expenditures to our lawmakers and get their bills passed, while mothers mourn their dead children or are shot in the torso and leg while holding their child and running from gunshots in a neighborhood. Mothers are shot and killed with their infant children by domestic abusers and Aisha's Law never made it out of committee in the Senate - and a mother mourns her daughter who died by gun suicide less than an hour after purchasing the gun despite attempts by family to keep her safe because an Extreme Risk Protection Order cannot get passed in this gerrymandered state. We have an entire family shot and killed in a murder suicide in Avon Lake – less than 2 miles from my son's grandparents - 2 days ago – maybe ERPO or Aisha's Law could have saved those children and their mother, but those bills do not have a well financed lobbying group to get a lawmaker's attention, so they die in committee. Maybe if more mothers had a huge budget for donating to campaigns, we could save lives with common sense legislation that the majority of Ohioans want. Or maybe fair districts would give mothers a voice in the state house. Mothers will continue to show up and we DEMAND that we have fair districts to elect lawmakers motivated by their voters who are hurting and not gun lobby groups. We DEMAND fair districts so legislators who are responsive to voters can pass legislation that saves lives including the average 929 Ohioans who die by suicide by gun EVERY YEAR. We DEMAND that there is a transparent and fair process for drawing new district lines. Gerrymandering is killing Ohioans.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

Ann Shroyer

randomann@gmail.com

Westerville, Ohio

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