

September 9, 2021

From: Maureen D Welch

To: Co Chairs Speaker Cupp and Senator Sykes and members of the Redistricting Commission

Subject: Testimony to the Ohio Redistricting Commission about state redistricting plans pursuant to Article XI of the Ohio Constitution and Commission rules.

I am a resident of Guilford Township in Medina County, Ohio. I am testifying in writing only due to health concerns and as a member of the public. Thank you to the Redistricting Commission for the opportunity to share my testimony regarding the unofficial maps submitted by the Ohio Democratic Caucus, community groups, citizens of Ohio, and other interested parties. Glaringly missing as I write my testimony is an official map, drawn in a bi-partisan and transparent manner and presented to the citizens of Ohio and voted on by the Redistricting Commission as required by the Ohio Constitution.

I am commenting on The Ohio Citizen's Redistricting Commission Maps for the Ohio state legislative and senate districts for their compactness and keeping communities together. While I believe Medina County could be kept whole and it is for the Senate in The Ohio Citizen Redistricting Commission senate map. Medina County is split for the State House Map presented by this same group in an east/west manner, keeping all cities whole and dividing the more rural southern half of the county (which I live in) from the northern half of the county. This is a much better split than the egregious and confusing lines drawn through cities from north to south in 2011 and this maps split should be considered if a split becomes necessary in Medina County. This map on its face meets appears to meet the constitutional requirements and representational fairness. I encourage you to consider The Ohio Citizen Redistricting Commission's maps as a starting point.

I applaud the effort of the Ohio Democratic Caucus maps which were drawn in a timely manner and presented to the Ohio Redistricting Commission on August 31, 2021, with a goal of getting bipartisan conversation started on the state redistricting process. Co-Chair Sykes was clear the maps were a work in progress and a starting point. Sadly, during the same meeting Senator Matt Huffman, who is well versed in Ohio redistricting rules and law, erroneously and in a misleading manner stated that the map had "unconstitutional violations" because the need to protect the incumbent senate districts which are not up for reelection and cannot be redrawn. Indeed, senate districts may be redrawn with the understanding that senators will be in newly reconfigured districts with correct renumbering, which the Ohio Democratic Caucus has now accomplished. This type of misinformation is not acceptable and misleading to the public. During the August 31 meeting Leader Sykes repeatedly asked Co-Chairs when an official map would be brought forward for review and when minority members of the commissions would be provided opportunity for input and be involved in the developing of the commission's map. The answers were evasive, misleading, and disappointing. It is hard to trust the process of the majority party map that is taking place behind closed doors.

Ohio citizens overwhelmingly voted for two constitutional amendments providing clear rules for redistricting and transparency in the process. Instead, the Ohio Redistricting Commission was seated late, has held short and sparse meetings with limited information released to the public and the minority party members, and provided limited notice for public meetings. Not acceptable. I expected that the bipartisan commission would be meeting regularly for long hours, engaging in a collaborative

and transparent process to follow the letter of the Ohio Constitution, considering the Voting Rights Act and bringing the spirit of the 2015 redistricting amendment to the new state legislative maps. Why has that not been occurring?

Currently, I urge you to consider The Ohio Citizen's Redistricting Commission Maps as a starting point. I encourage you to work in a bipartisan manner to do the will of the voters of Ohio in developing the new state legislative maps providing adequate time for the public to review and comment on the official map. I thank you for the opportunity to comment and look forward to the opportunity to comment on the official map as voted on the Ohio Redistricting Commission. Please provide adequate time for review and comment.