

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF OHIO

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF OHIO, *et al.*,

Relators,

v.

OHIO REDISTRICTING
COMMISSION, *et al.*,

Respondents.

Case No. 2021-1193

BRIA BENNETT, *et al.*,

Relators,

v.

OHIO REDISTRICTING
COMMISSION, *et al.*,

Respondents.

Case No. 2021-1198

THE OHIO ORGANIZING
COLLABORATIVE, *et al.*,

Relators,

v.

OHIO REDISTRICTING
COMMISSION, *et al.*,

Respondents.

Case No. 2021-1210

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Ohio Redistricting Commission - 8-6-2021

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Gov. Mike DeWine [00:00:00] As a member of the Ohio Redistricting Commission, pursuant to Article 11, Section 1 of the Ohio Constitution, I call this meeting to order. We will now proceed to the presentation of any member appointments to the Ohio Redistricting Commission and to order that any new appointments be entered into the record of proceedings. First, Robert Cupp is the appointee to the Commission by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Let the record reflect this appointment. Next, Emilia Sykes the appointee to this commission by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives. Let the record reflect this appointment. Next, Matt Huffman is the appointee to the commission by the President of the Senate. Let the record reflect this appointment. Next, Vernon Sykes is the appointee to this Commission by the Minority Leader of the Senate and again, let the record reflect that. I will state for the record that in compliance with the Ohio Constitution, none of the appointees are current members of Congress. We will now proceed to the administration of the oath and I will administer the oath to everyone and then the Secretary of State will then swear me in. I will get a copy of the oath. Please stand. I, state your name, (I, [inaudible], do solemnly swear (do solemnly swear) to support the Constitution of the United States, (to support the Constitution of the United States) and the Constitution of the State of Ohio (and the Constitution of the state of Ohio), and to faithfully discharge (and to faithfully discharge) the duties of the office, (the duties of the office) as a member of the Ohio Redistricting Commission, (as a member of the Ohio Redistricting Commission) on which I serve (on which I serve) pursuant to Article 11, Section 1, (pursuant to Article 11, Section 1) of the Ohio Constitution (of the Ohio Constitution). This I shall do as I shall answer under God (this I shall do as I answer unto God) Thank you all very much.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:02:30] At this point is my responsibility to administer the oath of office to the Governor. Governor, please raise your hand. I, Mike DeWine, (I, Mike DeWine) Do solemnly swear, (do solemnly swear) to support the Constitution of the United States (to support the Constitution of the United States) and the Constitution of the state of Ohio, (and the constitution of the state of Ohio) and to faithfully discharge the duties, (and to faithfully discharge the duties) of the office (of the office) as a member of the Ohio Redistricting Commission, (as a member of the Ohio Redistricting Commission) on which I serve, (on which I serve) pursuant to Article 11, Section 1 of the Ohio Constitution, (pursuant to Article 11, Section 1 of the Ohio Constitution). This I do, as I shall answer to God, (this I do, as I shall answer under God). Thank you very much.

Gov. Mike DeWine [00:03:20] And we ask now, Mr. Donahue, to please call the roll. President Huffman (here). Auditor Faber (yes). Leader Sykes (here). Governor DeWine (here). Secretary LaRose (here), Speaker Cupp (present). Senator Sykes (present).

Gov. Mike DeWine [00:03:46] We have a quorum present. I will be filing the certificate of compliance of the public meeting notice provision of Section 121.22 of the revised code. Now we move to the presentation of co-chairperson appointments to the Ohio Redistricting Commission and the order that any new appointments be entered in the record of proceedings. The co-chair appointments to this commission by the legislative leaders in the Senate and the House of Representatives, each of the two largest political parties represented in the General Assembly, as set forth in Article 11, Section 1, of the Ohio Constitution are Robert Cupp and Vernon Sykes. Let the record reflect these appointments. Now. I will turn over the meeting to the co-chairpersons. Thank you all very much.

Sen. Vernon Sykes [00:04:46] Thank you, Governor and Mr. Co-Chair and members of the Commission. I'd like to welcome everyone here today. Ohioans voted twice this last decade to reform our redistricting process. My goal is to cooperatively work with all of you and give the voters what they wanted. To end as much as we can, the gerrymandering that's been taking place in the state. And we hope that we can work together to achieve fair districts through a bipartisan process in a way that maximizes public participation. Together, I believe we can end partisan gerrymandering and draw districts that result in fair districts of which represents the citizens of this great state. Mr. Co-Chair, would you like to make a statement?

House Speaker Robert Cupp [00:05:43] Thank you, Co-Chair Sykes. First, I'd like to thank Governor DeWine for convening the Commission and getting us on the way to creating a fair and equitable legislative and congressional maps as we are constitutionally charged to do. And I look forward to working with co-chair Senator Sykes and all the members of the commission as we undertake this very important task. As you know, we have an extremely tight time frame in which to complete our task due to the Census Bureau's four month delay in releasing the data necessary to begin drawing the maps. Regardless, we are here and ready to begin these, these hearings on this important project. We also know how vital it is to have the people of the state of Ohio actively involved in the process. Accordingly, we have tentatively scheduled nine meetings around the state to obtain input from Ohioans. We want to hear from them and to include them in this critical process. We will be finalizing the details for these meetings in the very near future. With that, I say to my fellow commission members and to the people of Ohio, let's go to work.

Sen. Vernon Sykes [00:06:59] Are there other members that would like to make statements? Seeing none, is there any other business that we need to address? Hearing none, any objections to, to adjourn? The meeting is so adjourned.

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State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:00:01] Again, I am State Senator Vernon Sykes from the Akron area and co-chair of this commission. We'd like to thank you all for being here today, really appreciate your input and need your input for better and fair districts. At this time, I'd like to also thank Cleveland State University for hosting this here and like to invite Dean Roland Anglin with the Levin Urban College to do a welcome.

Anglin [00:00:40] Good morning. I don't want my back to the commission. Good morning. My name is Roland Anglin and I'm the Dean of the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs here at Cleveland State.

Audience [00:00:56] We can't hear you.

Anglin [00:00:56] I am Roland Anglin. I'm the Dean of the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs here at Cleveland State. On behalf of Cleveland State, I want to welcome you to our campus. The work in which you engage is critical to our region and State's vibrancy. It is complicated work, and we wish you all the best in your deliberations today. Thanks again for choosing Cleveland State to host for, to come to our campus. This is an important meeting and we strive to be of service to the region and the state. Again, welcome and good luck.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:01:35] Thank you, Dean, and thank the University. At this time, we would like to call this regional hearing to order. As people arrive who would like to testify, we ask you to fill out a witness slip on the table provided by the staff. Will the staff please call the roll?

Staff [00:02:04] Yes sir. Can you all hear me? Yes. Co-Chair Vernon Sykes?

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:02:09] Present.

Staff [00:02:10] Auditor Keith Faber?

Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:02:11] Yes.

Staff [00:02:11] Leader Emilia Sykes?

State Representative Emilia Sykes [00:02:15] Here.

Staff [00:02:15] Senator Theresa Gavarone, designee for President Huffman. Representative Scott Oelslager?

State Representative Scott Oelslager [00:02:24] Here.

Staff [00:02:24] Designee for Speaker Cupp. Merle Madrid?

Merle Madrid, SOS Designee [00:02:27] Present.

Staff [00:02:28] Designee for Secretary LaRose. Matthew Donahue, designee of Governor Mike DeWine. That's the end of the roll.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:02:41] Thank you for the roll. In November 2015, Ohio voters approved a constitutional amendment which implemented a new General Assembly redistricting process and established the Ohio Redistricting Commission. The commission consists of the Governor, the State Auditor, the Secretary of State and one commissioner appointed by each of the legislative leaders of the two largest political parties in the Ohio House and the Ohio Senate. Four in total, one from each of the caucuses. The commission has until September 1st to pass a plan with the votes of at least two members affiliated with each major party. If it fails, the commission has until September 15th to pass a plan by a majority vote, four members. Maps that are passed with votes of two members affiliated with each major party are valid for 10 years, and maps passed by a simple majority vote are valid for two years, two general elections, a four year period. District requirements. Ohio legislative reapportionment process, as in all states, occurs in years ending in one, which are also the years in which the federal census figures are released by the United States Department of Commerce. The census figures released this year indicate that Ohio has a population of 11,799,448 people, a two point three percent growth from 2010. Under Article 11 of the Constitution, each of the ninety nine House districts should contain 119,186 people, and each of the thirty three Senate districts should contain 357,559 people, with a five percent deviation up or down. Anyone who has researched or undertaken the drawing of legislative districts knows that this process involves from far more than putting roughly the same number of people in each district. Article 11 contains specific rules governing the construction of these districts, including several layers of sometimes complex requirements, including district population requirements, rules on how to prioritize the splitting of political subdivisions, and additional district standards regarding favoring or disfavoring political parties and compactness of districts. The board must comply with the Ohio Constitution in addition to all applicable federal laws, including the Voter Rights Act. Because these hearings are being held for the purpose of receiving your input in this process, we're not going to go over the rules and in detail of the law. However, we encourage you to visit the commission's website at www.redistricting.ohio.gov, which provides additional information on the redistricting process under Article 11. The purpose of today's hearing is to gather information, comments and input regarding the upcoming reconfiguration of the House and Senate district lines. Under a new congressional redistricting process adopted by voters in 2018, the Ohio legislature has the first opportunity to draw congressional lines with enactment of a bill signed by the governor. If it cannot, only then will the process fall to the Ohio Redistricting Commission. Therefore, we ask all witnesses to limit comments on testimony to the most immediate task of the Ohio Redistricting Commission, the adoption of Ohio House and Ohio Senate districts. Today, we are here to listen to you. We're not here to debate you or one another. We're here to get input from Ohioans on the state legislative redistricting process and how it impacts your communities, your representation in the Ohio General Assembly. Today, we have a limited time, amount of time for the hearing, and we want to give everyone an opportunity to give input in this process. We've scheduled here for three hours and we're going to ask witnesses to limit their testimony to initially to four minutes, to give time so that we can hear from everyone. A few other items before we begin, the proceedings will be recorded by the Ohio channel so the board and its deliberations may consider these things and all of these comments that are made today. So we ask you to speak clearly, loudly enough for the panel and the audience to hear, just like we have to do that today, make sure you do that as well. The commission also is accepting written testimony. You can submit that if you like online or you can give it to us if you have it here today. Any questions of the commission members? We'd like to call up our first witness today, Catherine LaCroix. She's coming.

LaCroix [00:09:02] Good morning and thank you for that slight pause. Due to the full room, I was way in the back, so I had to scurry up here and recover my breath. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I'm Catherine LaCroix. I'm the co-president of the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland, a 100 year old, all volunteer, nonpartisan organization dedicated to the importance of the vote. We are part of the State and National Leagues of Women Voters, which have been fighting for redistricting reform since the 1970s. In Ohio, our first ballot initiative attempt was in 1981. Throughout this time, through multiple phases of Ohio's political life, we have sent the same message. Legislative districts must be drawn in a way that represents communities and does not unduly favor one political party over another. I personally was heavily involved in coordinating our league's petition drive for congressional redistricting reform in 2017. The outpouring of grassroots support for that petition drive was overwhelming. Over 700 enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers worked with our Greater Cleveland League. It was the largest group effort we have ever seen. The same army of activists has remained interested, involved and as you can see from the packed room today, in spite of a pandemic, we are eager for successful reform. Our Greater Cleveland League has been- our greater Cleveland area, has been particularly hard hit by gerrymandering in both its state legislative districts and its congressional districts. So I speak to you both as members of the Redistricting Commission and, for four of you, as members of the Ohio General Assembly, for you will be the leaders in drawing both types of maps. In the interests of time and in the awareness that many people will speak after me, I will not detail the facts all too familiar to all of us concerning the current district lines in our area. My major point to start off this hearing is that the decision makers in Columbus owe the voters faithful adherence to the intention of the reforms. 75 percent of Ohio voters spoke in that 2018, 70 percent in 2015, draw lines in a way that respects our communities and is not politically biased. When drawing lines for the State General Assembly, it is particularly important to respect the need for representational fairness and to draw districts that are compact and understandable to voters, not dividing neighbor from neighbor in separate districts. We at the League are hopeful that our elected representatives will rise to the challenge. We hope that the redistricting process will be transparent, respect public input, and overall and overwhelmingly serve the voters. Our League has been working on this issue for 50 years. We will be doing everything we can as part of the Fair Districts Coalition in the coming months to assure fair districts for Ohio voters. Thank you.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:12:30] Ms. LaCroix, thank you for your comments. We certainly appreciate it. There any questions at this time? If not, thank you very much.

LaCroix [00:12:38] Thank you.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:12:39] Next person will be Miss Lynn Lilly.

Staff [00:12:47] And chair before Miss Lynn comes up, in the interest of time, we'll be holding testimonies to four minutes. Thank you. Four minutes.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:13:14] She doesn't seem to be here. We'll move to Ms. Pamela Mascio. Ms. Pamela Mascio.

Mascio [00:13:32] Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you. My name is Pamela Mascio. I live in Aurora, in the 76th House District represented by Diane Grendell, and the 18th Senate District represented by Jerry Cirino. I'm speaking here today to tell you why I believe it is critical to our democracy to restore representational government by drawing fair maps for the next ten years. I've previously been involved in

state issues. I was the president of the Northeast Ohio affiliate of Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation from 2001 until 2007. During that time, I initiated a bill in partnership with Senator Kirk Schuring, to provide additional state funding for the Breast and Cervical Cancer Program. After two years of work, the bill passed with bipartisan support and was signed into law by Governor Kasich. I was honored to attend the signing ceremony with both Democratic and Republican representatives. I'm not sure I could accomplish that same feat today. Our legislature has grown more deeply divided and seems to be concentrated on fringe cultural issues that only a minority of Ohioans would think important. I believe we have arrived at this point almost entirely because of partisan gerrymandering, which continues to become more and more sophisticated as technology advances. The voters no longer have a voice. I have called Representative Grendell's office over 20 times in the past year. I keep track of all the calls I make. I have never once reached her or an aide. I only get a voicemail. I leave my message and when appropriate, I ask for a callback. I have never received one. In all the inquiries I have made, I have only once received a form letter back from her which did not address the questions I raised. I know Representative Grendell does not have to answer my calls or respond to me because she will undoubtedly be reelected. I ask you, should I continue to call and try to interact with her? I believe I'm wasting my time and I'm beginning to feel foolish. I'm personally experiencing the disenfranchisement caused by gerrymandering in our state. I'm also a speaker for fair districts and over the past six months I have spoken to all kinds of groups on redistricting. Just last week I spoke to the Rotary in Aurora, a largely Republican group. In every talk I've given, someone inevitably asks, "Is gerrymandering legal? How can this be?" To our collective detriment, it is. But please do not ignore the powerful and unprecedented vote by Ohioans, in 2015 and 2018, demanding fair maps, not skewed to one party or another, just fair. And we want ten year maps. Not four year maps, but ten year bipartisan maps. Please do this work in accordance and most importantly, in the true spirit of the reforms that Ohioans overwhelmingly passed. Thank you for listening to me today. [Applause]

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:16:53] Thank you, Miss Mascio. Are there any questions? Thanks a lot. Next witness will be Ms. Linda New.

New [00:17:11] Thank you for this opportunity to speak about this crucial issue of redistricting in Ohio. My name is Linda New. I vote in Ohio House District 7, Ohio Senate District 24 and the 18th Congressional District in Olmstead Falls. I would like to draw your attention to the issue of unfair representation in my neighborhood and in neighborhoods across the state. The Pew Research Center indicates that 42 percent of voting Ohioans lean toward policies held by Republicans, 40 percent lean toward policies held by Democrats, and 18 percent have no party affiliation. To ensure fair representation in the Ohio General Assembly, we should see near equal numbers of Democrats and Republicans in our legislature. Instead, our Ohio House is 35 percent Democrat, 65 percent Republican, and our House Senate consists of 24 percent Democrats and 76 percent Republicans. These inaccurate numbers were finagled through unchecked gerrymandering in Ohio. When district lines are drawn with such disregard for communities, cities, counties, indigenous groups and the concern - the concerns of half of America - of Ohio constituents are not represented by the legislature who should be working for us. Because of this misrepresentation in the General Assembly, decisions are being made with little regard to the health and safety of Ohio voters. We see countless examples of this miscarriage of legislative responsibility. Ohio House Bill 6 was steamrolled through the legislature using bribery and coercion with almost no voter support, leaving Ohio with polluting coal mines and outdated nuclear power plants. Right now, 80 percent of Ohioans do not support a House Bill 6. Our opportunity to build a

thriving wind energy sector is being wasted in favor of leaking methane, injection wells, hydraulic fracturing of our shale beds, and dangerous cracker plants in low income areas. All in defiance of proven research demonstrating the urgent need for a just transition to sustainable energy sources. Even now, bills are being discussed that will allow huge amounts of radioactive fracking waste to be spread on our roads in defiance of ODNR testing results, all for the benefit of a company that looks to profit from the sale. If the people of Ohio were fairly represented in the General Assembly, addressing these problems of environmental injustice would be the highest priority in our legislature. Instead, the health of our community - of our communities is being threatened by legislators who are not, will not be held accountable for their actions due to gerrymandered districts in Ohio. I want to live in a state where every voice counts. And I ask you now to correct this unjust disregard of Ohio's interests. Redistricting must be done transparently, with community input, resulting in an accurate representation of Ohio voters. We all want safe, healthy, thriving communities in our beautiful state. Thank you for your time and consideration of my request. [Applause.]

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:20:42] At this time we want to take a brief five minute break. They want to open up this wall for more space. [Applause.].

Recess [00:20:56] [Recess].

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:20:56] At this time, we've had two additional commission members to join us. Would they introduce themselves please, briefly.

State Senator Theresa Gavarone [00:21:05] I am State Senator Theresa Gavarone. I live in Bowling Green and represent the 2nd Senate District, and I'm here on behalf of President Matt Huffman.

Audience [00:21:17] Can't hear.

State Senator Theresa Gavarone [00:21:20] Is my mic not on?

Audience. [00:21:21] [Indecipherable]

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:21:21] Hold the mic close to your face.

State Senator Theresa Gavarone [00:21:21] Can you hear me now? I'm State Senator Theresa Gavarone. I live in Bowling Green and represent Ohio's 2nd Senate District, and I'm here as a designee on behalf of Senate President Matt Huffman.

Matthew Donahue, Governor Designee [00:21:36] I'm chief legal counsel-.

Audience [00:21:38] Can't hear.

Matthew Donahue, Governor Designee [00:21:38] I'm as close as I can get.

Audience [00:21:46] [Indecipherable].

Matthew Donahue, Governor Designee [00:21:46] My name is Matthew Donahue. I'm the chief legal counsel for Governor Devine and I am his designee today.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:21:52] We also have several state legislators here in the room. We certainly appreciate their attendance. They play a very, very vital role in this whole fairness scheme. Will the state legislators please stand. [Applause] At this time, we will continue, with Brian Glassman.

Glassman [00:22:33] Senator Sykes as co-chair, designee for Representative Cupp as co-chair, and to all members of the commission, my name is Brian Glassman. I am a professor emeritus at the Cleveland Marshall College of Law, just down the street. Among other courses, I teach election law. I've also presented and written on the subject. I'm testifying not as a Republican or as a Democrat, but as a voter. Simply put, a robust representative democracy depends on greater voter participation. As I tell my students, I don't care how you vote. I care that you vote. Logic dictates that if voters believe their votes don't count, because of gerrymandering or other similar practices, they are less likely to participate. At that point, all members of our representative democracy lose. There will be less buy-in by voters to the results of elections because they didn't help select the winner. And voters will be deprived of better candidates with better ideas. Although gerrymandering has existed for well over 200 years, Elbridge Gerry, after whom the practice was named, was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Our nation's founders could not possibly have imagined how modern technology would allow voting maps to be drawn with such surgical precision. To the detriment of our representative democracy, we have arrived at a point where our legislators choose their voters rather than the other way around. Gerrymandering by packing and cracking voters moves us farther away from the core principle that every vote should count equally. Certain redistricting criteria, compactness, contiguity, communities of interest, are grounded in common sense. Another protection of minority groups is based on our highest ideals and mandated by federal law. But locking in partisan advantage or ensuring the reelection of incumbents? Such criteria damage our representative democracy because they effectively block better candidates and better ideas. The 2020 elections saw a surge in voter participation, up to a participation rate of approximately 66 percent, according to the Pew Research Center, in part due to many highly competitive races at all levels of government. Still, as reported by the Pew Research Center, U.S. voter participation rates lag far behind. We are 30th out of 35 countries. These are other industrialized democracies. Political races not hampered by gerrymandered districts will be more competitive and will produce greater voter participation. I urge the Ohio Redistricting Commission to seize this historic opportunity to draw voting districts that are free of gerrymandering and thus give better candidates and better ideas a chance to flourish. Our democracy deserves no less. As I conclude a question for the commission, will you release to the public copies of any proposed plan at least seven days before you adopt it? And will you allow- [Applause] And will you allow at least one day between each of the final three public hearings mandated by Ohio Constitution Article 11.01C? Thank you for this opportunity to present. [Applause]

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:26:44] Thank you, Professor. Are there any questions? Seeing none, thank you very much. Peter Petto.

Petto [00:27:02] Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I'm here because I believe that a careful, open, nonpartisan and transparent redistricting process is important to Ohio's future. I am a recently retired high school mathematics and statistics teacher, and I have helped many students learn quantitative literacy, including topics such as voting power, fair division and apportionment, things you are wrestling with today and in the weeks ahead. A lot of my students found these subjects fascinating, but were aghast when they looked at Ohio's heavily gerrymandered maps. These maps have been a gruesome tattoo on our

body politic over the last ten years. So many gnarly districts illustrate oh so clearly the appearance of impropriety. The current maps are evidence that those people who were closest to lawmaking in 2011, those legislators, bent our laws to their own advantage. I imagine I will not be the only person to remind you that over 70 percent of Ohioans, and a majority in every one of our 88 counties, want a fair districting process. Unfortunately, this round of redistricting has already started out badly. I'm not talking about the delay in receiving the U.S. Census data. I'm talking about the delay in starting these hearings and the haste with which they have been announced and are being conducted. Because we citizens- [Applause] Because we citizens have not had sufficient time, for the most part, to process the census data, these hearings are premature for the presentation of completed state maps. So nearly everything you'll hear today, you could have heard weeks or months ago. I'm certain you were asked to begin these hearings before right now. And right now is when I would certainly prefer to be finishing a map that I could propose for your consideration. I can say one or two things about my current districts that I hope will be helpful to you as you construct my upcoming districts. I live in Bay Village, about 17 miles west of here. Members of the Bay Village community constructed a map detailing our community of interest that will be submitted to you separately. My first ask is, please don't break up the Bay Village in West Shore community we've defined. That includes our town, Rocky River, West Lake, Fairview Park, and North Olmsted. Our current state House District is well drawn; it is exactly our community of interest. Our current state Rep is Democrat, the previous one was Republican. Our state Reps have been highly responsive and attentive to their constituents, both D and R. But our state's Senate District, number 24, is poorly drawn. Perhaps you know it. It's non compact, it's on the verge of being noncontiguous, saved by a sliver of Euclid in our Lake Erie border. It certainly looks very fishy to anyone who glances at it, that having both the western and eastern borders of Cuyahoga County is the edges of a senator's district that does not include most of the in between is a little crazy. We need a better state Senate District. Now, I heard that you might not handle congressional districts, although maybe you will. In any case, Bay Villages' District along Lake Erie is taught across our nation as a classic example of partisan gerrymandering. We need a better one there too. So please make sure our new maps are constructed of districts that are compact, and do not draw them so that they favor or disfavor a political party. Make sure that we get to see each and every iteration of the maps as you draw them and give us the opportunity to critique those maps and suggest better ones to you before they are finalized. Please follow not just the rules and the case law. Go further. Follow the spirit of the law, please. Make us proud to be from Ohio. Thank you for your attention. [Applause]

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:31:09] Are there any questions for Mr. Petto? To Mr. Petto and Mr. Glassman, Professor, I would like to ask you all at some point to maybe submit some comments about representational fairness, how you think that should be calculated. That would be good from your perspective, from a scholarly perspective. Certainly we appreciate that. At this time we'd like to call up Ms. Elizabeth Rader.

Rader [00:31:50] Good morning. My name is Elizabeth Rader, I go by Betsy Rader, and I live in Russell Township in Geauga County. I am testifying as a lifelong Ohio citizen, a voter and a former Democratic candidate who has recently run for office for United States Congress and Ohio's 14th District and for Ohio State Senate District 18. I regret that I cannot comment today on actual proposed maps, as Ohio's citizens intended when they pass the new redistricting laws. However, I will tell you this. The districts in which I vote and ran are both grossly gerrymandered. For instance, Ohio's 18th state Senate District carves up Lake and Geauga counties in a convoluted fashion to remove from the districts cities like Painsville, Chardon, and much of Mentor, excising the precincts with more

Democratic voters in order to make the district as unfair as possible. The current boundaries of state Senate District 18 makes sense only when the point is to create a sure winner for the Republican Party. I won't say much about Ohio's 14th Congressional District, I know you're saving that for another day, but suffice it to state that in that district two counties are split among four districts, Cuyahoga and Summit, and one is split among three districts, Portage County. Extracting the Democrats, packing the Republicans, into a district where it would be politically competitive if it were fairly drawn. Gerrymandering in northeast Ohio is creating an unhealthy one party system where sometimes only one party is even represented on the ballot in the general election, giving voters no choice at all. Unfairly drawn districts leading to routine twenty and thirty point victory margins discourage both candidates and voters from even participating in the democratic process. Unfairly gerrymandered districts lead to extremist candidates in party primaries, who need only appeal to the party's base before sailing through the general election. And once those candidates are in office, they are often unresponsive, as you heard earlier today. They're unresponsive because they are so confident of reelection. For instance, my Republican state representative, Diane Grendell, did not even bother to vote on the removal of Larry Householder, an incredibly important issue to voters in this state. Running for office, I regularly met voters who did not know what district they lived in because even the street where they lived was divided among different districts. I met voters who did not know who represents them because their Representatives felt no need to reach out to voters. I met voters who were reluctant to get involved in a political campaign by volunteering because they were justifiably hopeless that their efforts could make a difference. I found it difficult to raise the money to run competitive races because potential donors could see how severely gerrymandered my districts were and were rightfully skeptical that even an excellent candidate could win. This compounds the unfairness of gerrymandering by adding extremely unbalanced financial resources to the mix in many campaigns. Competitive districts are good for everyone, no matter what their political persuasion. A one party system where voters have no choice is what we see in corrupt and autocratic countries, with unaccountable leaders. Discouraging voters and candidates by presenting them with an unfair, undemocratic election system is destroying our democracy and our great state of Ohio, pushing our politics to the extremes at a time when we desperately need to be able to work together on life and death matters. I ask this commission to please listen to the clear will of Ohio's voters and create fair districts. Support democracy. [Applause].

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:35:50] Are there any questions of the members? Thank you very much, Ms. Rader, appreciate it. Ms. Kim Robinson. Kim Robinson. We'll move then to Laura Rushton. Excuse me if I'm mispronouncing that.

Rushton [00:36:34] Good Morning. Thank you for this chance to speak. My name is Laura Rushton. I'm here to talk to you today about why it's so important to me that this commission and the legislature honor our call for a transparent and bipartisan approach to redistricting. I'm a former teacher who used to take my fourth grade classes to the state house every year to meet their Representatives and tour the Statehouse, that magnificent building where laws are passed that could could affect their lives. I lived in Richland County then, in Mansfield, where I taught fourth grade in a private school for seven years, and then moved to a public school in Shelby to teach third grade. I made sure my students understood how the government worked, how laws are made and changed, and what it meant to be an actively engaged citizen of our democracy. These are essential values to me. Now I live in Cleveland, where I tutor adults preparing to become U.S. citizens, and I am active in the League of Women Voters and other civic organizations. I have helped in campaigns, served as a poll worker and voted in almost every election since I was old enough to vote. After my family and my church, nothing is more sacred to me than the

right to participate in our democracy. While I was teaching during the 1990s and 2000s, I knew who my Representatives were and took it for granted that my city was in one district where my member of Congress and State Representatives knew the area and at least occasionally mingled with the people they represented, at our county fair, town halls, and other events. After 2010, that changed dramatically. My congressional district stretched across seven counties and our mid-sized city of Mansfield was split between two districts. The 12th may not have been the most gerrymandered district in the state, but it struck me as completely illogical that a very small slice of Richland County was carved out to be a part of a district that ran all the way to Zanesville in the southern half of Muskingum County. For some odd reason, it also included the Columbus neighborhood of Clintonville. After seeing the district map, it was no surprise to find out that it had been created in secret by one party, with no input from the other, just to make it harder for minority candidates to win elections. Gerrymandering hurts our state by splitting up counties and communities. In Mansfield, I was in a different congressional district from friends who live no more than a mile away. My representative's office was an hour's drive to Columbus, and he failed to respond when constituents called for a town hall about the proposed repeal the Affordable Care Act. We had to have a town hall without our congressman, who apparently didn't find it necessary to listen to our concerns. Gerrymandered districts create safe seats for incumbents so they don't have to work to win the votes of all the people they represent. It has resulted in sharper partisan divisions and a deep sense of futility, and it allows more extreme views to dominate in the legislature while long term problems remain unsolved. I understand that this commission's primary job is to create legislative districts for the Ohio General Assembly, so I would also like to say that I've been in touch with my Representatives in the Ohio House and Senate on various issues. They will listen to my concerns, but over the past decade, it has been increasingly clear that their party leaders influence the bills they support or oppose, regardless of the issues I raise. This was especially true with a House Bill 6, which both my Representative and Senator voted for in spite of my objections. I live in Strongsville now, which is in the 7th House District and the 24th Senate District. I attempted to draw a map of my Senate district, which has a funny horseshoe shape. It includes only the outermost suburbs of Cleveland, so my Senator is all the way out in Chagrin Falls on the Far East Side, an hour's drive from where I live. The east and west sides of Cleveland have very different perspectives and problems, which our Senate district, as it's currently drawn, does not reflect. Now that Ohio voters have spoken, twice, by a clear majority in all 88 counties, it is time to redraw the maps with concrete, compact districts that make sense. The constitutional amendments passed in 2015 and 2018 call for public hearings and transparency. We, the people, have been ignored for too long. When the new maps are drawn, all we ask is that you listen to your voters, follow the guidelines laid out in these amendments and work toward bipartisan consensus. Listen to experts and voting advocates. Pass the Public Submissions bill, so there is a timely process for submitting sample maps. This is your opportunity to restore the people's faith in our system of government. Thank you for taking the time to listen to my testimony.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:41:37] Thank you very much. [Applause] Any questions? Mr. Tim Clarke, Tim Clarke.

Clarke [00:42:02] Good morning, panel. My name is Tim Clarke. 10 years ago, I submitted a plan to this board's predecessor and the first thing I want to say is that is my intention to submit a plan to the to this panel. Unfortunately, data's only been out for 10 days, so I haven't actually gotten around to finishing it, but I intend to submit something. The other thing I would state is that there is a statement on the website about how to submit a map. But the procedure, I think is a little bit unclear. It says submit a zip file, but it doesn't say

exactly what should be in the zip file. So it would be helpful if that could be clarified. Thank you. Anyway, one of the things that I said when I submitted the plan 10 years ago was how important it was that the districts should reflect the will of the people of the state. If a majority of the voters vote for a party to govern the state of Ohio, that party should be given the opportunity to govern the state of Ohio. Elections, elections matter, elections should matter, but only if those results actually reflect the will of the people. And the districts that we have had for the last 10 years basically stated that it didn't really matter how many people voted for Democrats, Republicans were around the state of Ohio. Since then, of course, the rules have changed, and while there's been a lot of different changes, a lot of - not least of which is the membership of this panel - in my opinion, the most important change is that there is a mandate, a constitutional mandate, that districts should reflect the political balance of the state. I hope that this panel takes that mandate seriously because it goes to the heart of our representative democracy. Hopefully, I'll be able to give you, hope we'll [?] be able to discuss some more concrete suggestions when I have a proposal to submit, but for now, I'm going to leave it at that. And I thank this panel for their attention.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:44:16] Thank you, Mr. Clarke. [Applause] And we will also look at the website to see if it can be clarified.

Clarke [00:44:22] OK, thank you.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:44:23] Thank you. Mr. Stephen Kellat.

Kellat [00:44:50] Good morning. My name is Stephen Michael Kellat. I live in Ashtabula, Ohio. For the interests of disclosure, I am the Republican candidate for the Ward 4th seat on Ashtabula City Council this November. Otherwise, good morning, thank you for the opportunity to address you today. The redistricting process will help determine our state's fate for much of the next decade, which makes providing input this morning rather important. Ashtabula County is the largest county in our great state by land area. Located on Lake Erie southern shore, it has land area that gives it an area roughly half that of the state of Rhode Island. Ashtabula County has a population density far, far lower than many of the other counties of our state, though. Currently, Ashtabula County is split in two districts for the Ohio House. The majority of the county is part of the 99th District, which is represented by Sarah Fowler Arthur of Geneva-on-the-Lake. A small part of the southern reaches of the county, focused on the United States route 322 corridor, is part of the 64th District, represented by Michael J. O'Brien of Warren. Currently, I live in the 99th District. Our district is subject to a bit of a socio, pardon me, socioeconomic mismatch. Ashtabula County is comparatively far poorer than the communities in Geauga County that are additionally included in the 99th District at present. Chardon is greatly mismatched in terms socioeconomically compared to most communities in the Ashtabula County portion of the 99th District. This creates a difficulty for the people of the district in that any Representative would have a rather difficult time balancing the diversity of interests of an unbalanced district. Data from the 2020 census shows that the racial and ethnic composition of Ashtabula County is similar to Lake and Geauga Counties. The data also shows, however, that socioeconomically Ashtabula County has far more in common with Trumbull and Mahoning Counties than it does with Lake and Geauga. It is rather disturbing that there is a higher percentage of people in poverty, as well as a higher percentage of people with disabilities under the age of 65, in Ashtabula County compared to Lake, Geauga, Mahoning and Trumbull Counties. I strongly urge that you please consider realigning the 99th District's boundaries so that they do not include any of Geauga County. Inclusion of all of Ashtabula County's population as well, pardon me, as well as part of

Trumbull County's population, would create a district that would be more, pardon, more coherent socioeconomically. The federal government already considers interests to align in that direction, as Ashtabula, Trumbull and Mahoning Counties are part of the East Gate Regional Council of Government Transportation planning group, while Geauga is part of the Northeast Ohio area wide coordinating agency Transport Planning Group. Federal government doesn't even consider it part of northeast Ohio. In too many ways, the definition of northeast Ohio used by outlets like The Plain Dealer as well as Cleveland area broadcast media, does not include Ashtabula County. They do include Geauga County in their definition of northeast Ohio, even at the Plain Dealer, and house staff cover stories there. Even though the Nielsen Company includes Ashtabula County in its Cleveland designated market area, the odd thing is that none of those television stations can actually be picked up readily with the consumer grade antenna in Ashtabula County. If you put rabbit ears on your TV in Ashtabula, good luck. WEWS, News Channel 5, you're not going to see it out there. Even though the district lines are drawn to try to include Ashtabula County in the Greater Cleveland sphere of influence, I will be brief, many areas of daily life show that it is not properly part of the party at all. Geography, social factors, economic factors and even culture show that Ashtabula County is increasingly a community that should not be included in districts that include areas from Lake or Geauga, as that is just a grouping of very unlike things. A more natural fit would be to align it more directly with Trumbull to the South for its Ohio House district, and if that decision passes to this commission, also for its US House district. Thank you very much for your time consideration today.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:49:28] Thank you very much, appreciate it. [Applause] Ms. Hannah Servedio. Servedio.

Servedio [00:49:50] Hello! Members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission, thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today in support of Ohio's redistricting process and in the hope that fairly drawn maps are the result of these community hearings. My name is Hannah Servedio. I am a Cleveland resident, House District 10 and Senate District 21, and I am proud to serve as the senior organizer with NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio. As such, I'm going to speak about an issue that I care deeply about, one that is undeniably affected by our current map system: access to abortion care. I spend a lot of my time traveling and talking with community members, not only about what's happening statewide as it relates to reproductive health and rights, but also why some of it has come to be. As a result of that gerrymandered districts, there are a disproportionate amount of anti-choice legislators in the Ohio House and Senate. On average, more than six out of every 10 people in Ohio supports the Supreme Court ruling in Roe v. Wade, and yet our Statehouse is flooded with abortion ban after abortion ban. It's hard to keep up and I work in the field. My tax dollars, the ones that I happily pay, are going towards legislators battling it out on the House and Senate floor over experiences most of them have never had to deal with, not to mention specifically ignoring testimony heard that spoke to these experiences. Instead of solving actual issues in the state, like food insecurity, education funding and maternal and infant mortality. Even in the face of a deadly [Applause] Even in the face of a deadly public health crisis like COVID-19, abortion is still somehow the focus. Senate Bill 260, which prohibits physicians from using telemedicine options to prescribe abortion medication to patients, was passed and signed into law before being challenged, during a global pandemic, a time where telemedicine care became dire and heavily utilized in other fields of medicine. These bills and budget decisions are directly causing harm to our communities, especially communities of color. For too many, abortion is a right in name only. That's why we don't just talk about reproductive rights, it's important that that translates to reproductive access. The impacts of restrictions on or outright bans of

reproductive health care are felt the most by people already marginalized and oppressed by the structural inequities here in Ohio. And instead of addressing the needs of their constituents, anti-choice legislators have been following their own agendas every step of the way. Gerrymandering drives political extremism. We don't see the balance that communities would benefit from, and instead, the power is held by those who have the privilege to shout the loudest. Legislators get comfortable in these districts. They don't hold town halls. They straight up say that they don't address the calls or emails of people they don't agree with. They know that they continually push ideals that interests them and their big donors without feeling any real effect at the ballot box. It's predetermined, it's anti-democratic, and it's unfair. Voters should get the chance to choose their representatives, not the other way around. Regardless of this commission's personal beliefs on policy based issues in the state, I hope you'll take into consideration that fair maps, districts drawn with community input, represent Ohioans more equally and will be a benefit for all going forward. Thank you. [Applause]

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:53:02] Thank you very much.

Servedio [00:53:03] Thank you so much.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:53:07] Gerald Barna.

Barna [00:53:19] Morning.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:53:19] Good morning.

Barna [00:53:23] Senator Sykes and members of the panel. My name is Gerald Barna. I've been a resident in the city of Avon, Ohio, for 18 years and lived in Lorain County for over 50 years. I'm here to talk about the 57th District, House District, which is where Avon resides currently. There are many issues with House District 57, and I'd like to highlight some of those and propose a solution for addressing those issues. I don't know that I can do it, but I was working, you know, pictures are worth a thousand words, and so I drew up some maps yesterday, but I don't know if I can get them on your computer here. I'd like to try if that's possible.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:54:20] I don't know. Do we have technical people here to- Apparently, he's his own technician. [Laughter] [Indecipherable] That would be great, that would be great.

Barna [00:55:15] I do have copies of my testimony that have been distributed. Both are online. Unfortunately the maps did not get [Indecipherable]

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:56:07] [Laughter] We do have a technician in route, so you could just continue until they get there.

Barna [00:56:12] Well, we'll do it, we'll do it without the without the map then the moment. I was a senior manager at NASA, Glenn Research Center and retired in 2003 after 40 years of service. After that, I consulted part time for small businesses and community organizations, nonprofit organizations. So this is the experience that I tried to bring into this presentation. Avon is essentially, the district, essentially, has a large body, and then it narrows down, moves northward, takes about a third of North Ridgeville, where I lived also, and then includes Avon, but does not include any of the surrounding communities, which are very similar to Avon, particularly Avon Lake. They're primarily residential, but

with a focus on industrial development. And this is not true of a great portion of District 57. There it is, that's not the one that's the before.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:57:42] Yes. Mr. Barna, your time is running so we-

Barna [00:57:45] Well this is, let me just go, there it is. You can see where that District 57 goes. It snakes down cutoff Northridge. And there's Avon among all of the other communities. So what I'm proposing is on the next chart. It's a compact, with continuity, contiguity, that retains city and township borders in their entirety and has strong similarities. That's it in blue, yes. And you can see the change. And that's what I'm proposing that you consider as a as a district in your deliberations.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:58:32] Thank you, Mr. Barna, we certainly appreciate it. It does look more compact. Thank you very much. [Applause] Benjamin Boardman. Benjamin Boardman. Mark Griffiths. Ralph Turek. Mary Walsh. Reginald Williams. Areege Hammad. Oh, excuse me.

Williams [01:00:03] I'm Reginald Williams.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:00:03] Oh excuse me.

Williams [01:00:03] [Indecipherable].

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:00:03] Thank you, sir.

Williams [01:00:06] Thank you. I want to thank the entire commission for opening up this issue to the public. It's a it's a giant step and it's a baby step. And I do appreciate it. I'll tell you, there are many people before me and many people coming after me that are going to talk about the districts and the specifics and the nitty gritty. I'm not going to talk about stats and maps or anything like that. I want to get underneath that just a little bit. I live in Shaker Heights and in my home there are four votes; myself, my wife and I have two voting age daughters. It's really, it's really more like three votes, two very long arguments every election cycle, and then one vote. My youngest daughter is, whenever it's election time, she asks me questions like "Oh, dad, how do I know my vote's going to count? How do I know they're going to count it the right way and where it's going to count? How do I know they're not going to bundle my vote up and put it aside or something like that?" And, look, I'm just a dad. I grew up believing that voting matters and it's difficult to answer that. You see, underneath all these numbers, there really is a human aspect to it. I'm an attorney in private practice. I'm here, honestly, because I'm able to. There are many, many people that would be here, that want to be here, but they can't be here at nine o'clock in the morning, because somebody has to serve your morning muffins and coffee. Somebody has to be there when Wal-Mart opens. So when you look at all of these good people here and just know that all of them, all of us and although I'm standing here, I can really only speak for me, but all of us are here to represent their interests too. And the hope is that you all understand that their interest needs to be represented, even though they are not here, even though they may not have voted for you, even though they may not have voted. [Applause] Of course, many of these people are black and brown and, well, as you figure out how to make this redistricting process more transparent, just I ask that you really pay attention. You just make it your business to think about, to see the unseen, because it's not as though they don't understand or know the issues or know that there's something going on. They know. I mean, the conversation that I had every every election cycle with my daughter, many of us have. Here's the thing, redistricting is a moral issue, it is a moral

process. It transcends partizan politics, it transcends constituency maintenance. It transcends winning. It's the only way to get things done to help everybody, and when you're elected, you are elected to represent everybody. [Applause] The people that can't make it often are young, they have children. They're young voters, they have children that are going to grow up to become voters. And don't you want them to believe in the system? Don't you want them to believe that voting works? [Applause] I'm involved in school discipline and I've been involved in it for a good number of years and I see a great many students and their families and I deal with them, I've got to know them, I deal with them very closely. And the vast majority of students that get into serious trouble, I'm talking about expulsion or repeated suspensions, and this kind of thing, these are students that face all manner of difficulties unrelated to their actions, things that they can't control. I mean, the kinds of things that- It's remarkable, you would be amazed. I mean, things like food insecurity and mental health issues, COVID-19 and gun violence. And these are the issues that you're supposed to do something about. And I'm not trying to put you on point about that, but you know what you're supposed to do and you know, and you all are working out how are you going to do it. But the issue is that gerrymandering makes it impossible to get these kinds of, get the kind of solutions that are needed to help these folks done. And there's a human cost. And that cost is found in our hospitals, you find people dying in hospitals, young and old. You find people dying of starvation in their homes, you find kids dying in the street from guns. I mean, these are these are things that these are problems that can be addressed. I absolutely believe it. And, you know, I've always felt like, you know, down in Columbus, you know, some of the most creative thinkers are down there. Some of the political world's greatest thinkers and most creative thinkers are down there. Is just a matter of focusing and, focusing and being transparent and understanding that integrity means being more than a politician, being a statesman, you know. It means, it really means, the legacy of bringing in everybody. I thank you for taking time to listen to me, I really do. And I look forward to where this lands next. Have a great day. [Applause]

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:06:49] Thank you, Mr. Williams, for your perspective and also for reminding us what we are supposed to do. Thank you very much.

Williams [01:06:56] Thank you, Senator Sykes.

Merle Madrid, SOS Designee [01:06:59] Senator, if I may.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:07:00] Yes.

Merle Madrid, SOS Designee [01:07:00] Just a follow up comment and question for Mr. Williams. Thank you, sir, for your time and testimony this morning. I'm Merle Madrid, I'm a designee for Secretary of State Frank LaRose. I just wanted to address the issue you raised about your daughter's questions about faith in our elections and will her vote be counted, because I think we live in a time right now where whether it's your daughter or a pillow maker or anyone in between, the questioning of our integrity of our elections is under attack. And that is the bedrock of our democracy. She can go down to the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections eight blocks from here and be a poll worker. I know a lot of people in this room have done that. I hope that all of you do. She can see the logic and accuracy testing that the machines go through prior to every election. She can see the post-election audit that's conducted every election. I say that not to call her out. She's representative of what so many people in this country right now are questioning. And that's the accuracy and the integrity of our elections [Indecipherable] and I can say for Ohio that that is as transparent a process as there is anywhere in this country, anywhere in this

world. So I encourage you to - right now, there's a mayoral election going on September 14th. It's the early voting season here in Cleveland and in Toledo. Whether it's a municipal election or an even numbered year gubernatorial or presidential election, please encourage her to participate. Her voice matters. Her vote will be fairly counted. Every Ohioan who chooses to participate will be fairly counted. Thank you for your time here this morning.

Williams [01:08:32] I appreciate that. I just want you to know I take her down there and I have for years. I take her down there and we have conversations with the good people working there and everything. It's a question, it's more a question of the spirit of the process. It's more a question of that. [Applause] I mean, no one's doubting that. And I'll leave it at that, but I appreciate what you're sharing and I will take it under advisement.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:09:04] Again, thank you, Mr. Williams.

Williams [01:09:05] Yes.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:09:08] Areege Hammad. Areege Hammad. Hammad.

Hammad [01:09:27] Good morning. Can everyone hear me? OK, what?

Audience [01:09:31] No, we cannot.

Hammad [01:09:33] Oh, sorry. My name is Areege Hammad. I'm speaking on behalf of the Ohio chapter of the Council on American Islamic Relations, known as CAIR Ohio. As a civil rights and advocacy organization for Ohio Muslims, we understand what the maps mean to our community. Muslims are often the subject of political discourse, yet rarely receive adequate political representation. The way our districts are drawn not only takes away our voting power, but also impacts how policy is made and how we are treated as constituents. We are working to ensure citizens and underrepresented communities like ours are involved in redistricting. We refuse to let Muslims be left out, split up or ignored in this political process. Gerrymandering is a calculated and dangerous practice undertaken by both political parties to diminish political power among geographic communities, and it disproportionately impacts minority groups who have less political influence as it is. To many of us, too many of us have had little say in who represents us and watched helplessly as laws are passed that hurt families and ignore our needs. One example of many is the neighborhood surrounding the Islamic Center of Cleveland, one of the largest Muslim communities in Northeastern Ohio. It is currently split into multiple congressional districts and multiple state House districts, thus diluting the voting power of Muslims and immigrants in this community. Because of the way the districts are drawn, our elected officials have no incentive to be receptive, accessible or responsive to us or our concerns. Fair and equal districts will return power to the people. This year is our chance to have an open, transparent and truly fair redistricting process. Ohioans know their communities best, and therefore it is imperative that the official redistricting commission allows ample time and an opportunity for the public to provide input. A select number of politicians could not possibly understand the full picture of diversity within our Ohio communities. Fair maps can only be accomplished through input from our diverse community members. This is the only way to ensure minorities do not continue to be politically disenfranchized. Thank you. [Applause]

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:11:47] Thank you very much; questions? Mark Hennessey. Mark Hennessey. I don't see him. Randall James. Susan Kaeser. [Applause]

Kaeser [01:12:43] Good morning, members of the commission. Thank you so much for holding this hearing as you commence the redistricting process. I hope you maintain an open and transparent process that invites public scrutiny and comment as the process unfolds. My name is Susan Kaeser. I have lived in Cleveland Heights for the last 41 years. I'm very proud to live in a place that is diverse by race, wealth, religion and age characteristics going back more than 60 years. Our diversity is essential to our identity, and it is important that elected officials that represent us value this diversity and are responsive to issues that drive the very survival of this kind of unique community. We are counting on you to honor our situation. In a representative form of government, it seems to me there are three really important principles. A high quality system of public education that prepares our youth for responsive and responsible citizenship, uniform and inclusive access to the ballot, and districts that allow for maximum representation of the interests of residents and that do not advantage any group or political party. All three are critical to our democracy. They should not be partisan ideas. How you define districts is critical because of the legislature's control of these fundamentals of a functioning democracy. We are looking to you to respond to the will of 71 percent of the voters who approved the amendments, the call for a transparent and responsive process that leads to fair districts in Ohio. My specific policy concern is how well the legislature fulfills its obligation to fund and operate a high quality system of public schools. As you know, at least 90 percent of the children in Ohio, children whose parents are Democrats and Republicans and independents, attend our public schools. Yet despite their dominance and central role in our democracy, the legislators, legislature, consistently makes them a stepchild of state government. It has become so partisan that legislators consistently prioritize private options, belittle the public system they are sworn to protect, and weaken its capacity to fulfill its essential role. This issue is not [Applause] This issue is not the only one, of course, that troubles me. But it is evidence that the legislature is so out of balance that it is unwilling to prioritize the interests of most of the children in Ohio. I urge you to pursue the redistricting process in a way that honors the spirit in which it was approved by the voters of Ohio, to make sure all interests are fairly represented and that partisan purposes do not interfere with democratic purposes. Thank you very much and thank you, Senator Sykes, for your leadership in public education.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:15:55] Thank you so much. Thank you. [Applause] Susan Kido. Susan Kido. Matt Kuhns.

Kuhns [01:16:30] Thank you very much. My name is Matt Kuhns, I am a resident of Lakewood, Ohio. I would like to briefly address the larger picture here. Partisan gerrymandering is quite real. It is quite effective at imposing preferred outcomes upon elections and thereby thwarting responsive representative democracy. Ohio has been thoroughly and indefensibly gerrymandered for the past decade, and that was very intentional. Ohio voters are clearly against partisan gerrymandering and want it ended. These are things we know. Unfortunately, those responsible for gerrymandering Ohio have yet to concede real wrongdoing or to make amends. The proceedings are 2021, from which we must hope will at least emerge some remedy, have thus far not revealed convincing goodwill toward the general public or sincerity about delivering reforms and fair maps. The hearings now underway raise more questions about intent than they satisfy. In the absence of proposed maps, it's unclear what we can tell you, despite the wonderful testimony we're hearing, which we have not already been able to say and have said many times. If the commission just wishes to take the temperature of Ohio on the issue of redistricting in case it has changed, you might note the yard signs which are not only in this room but throughout neighborhoods, saying "It's time for fair districts" and "End

gerrymandering now." I see many of these signs. I have yet to see even one road sign advocating "Muscle (?) through more gerrymanders and skew Ohio election results for 10 more years." [Laughter] If, however, you believe sincerely that these listening sessions will provide value to a fair redistricting process, then they should have started months ago. You should also schedule some outside the average workday. [Applause] This commission should have convened months ago. If the commission could convene before census data and the commission can hold hearings before draft maps are prepared, then there was no valid reason for delaying so long. Additionally, the partisan attempt within the General Assembly to lawyer up before doing anything else, using public resources, did not inspire confidence either. [Applause] Before concluding, I do want to make clear that I am addressing all members of the commission and not just beating up on some. The commission's first long awaited meeting opened and closed so quickly that it felt like a prank at our expense. And yet the commission happily adjourned as though every member was in on the joke. We deserve better and we have demanded better than the insult to democracy inflicted over the past decade. If the members of this commission sincerely want to deliver better, not just talk about it, but actually deliver it, great! But the standard set so far this year is not living up to that aspiration. Thank you and good day. [Applause]

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:19:21] Thank you very much for your testimony, appreciate it. Terry Carson.

Carson [01:19:33] Good morning. I'm Terry Carson, I vote in the 76th House district. And I want to thank you all for your service, the staff as well as the designees and the office holders. The work of the people is very difficult and mostly unrewarded. I want to tell you that 50 years ago I started an insurance agency. And for most of those 50 years, I was active in the agency. I retired, mostly retired 2 years ago. And I want to tell you that during, at the beginning of my, I guess, practice, people held a very positive feeling about Ohio. And that has changed in the last 10 years. I've had hundreds of thousands of conversations with people over those 50 years. Obviously I continue to have conversations with people, but people feel like Ohio is a failing state, if not a failed state. They don't use those words, but that's what they're really thinking. [Applause] And they've lost confidence in a state where one party gets 52 percent of the vote, but 75 percent of the seats. [Applause] So people say, "Why should I vote? It's not really going to matter, I'm in a district that is going to keep electing the same people over and over again." And I'll tell you what that results in, it results in a lack of leadership, a lack of new ideas, a lack of progress. And we just keep spinning around in a in a tale, just chasing our tail. You know, I've had the great fortune to be in 60 foreign countries. And have had the great fortune of being all over the United States. And I see that Ohio is, in fact a failed state. It's just very difficult to see unless you have some long term perspective. And so I think without a healthy exchange of ideas, there's no progress, there's no analysis of what's happened in the past. There's no hope to make changes. And that's really all we have in our lives, our hope that things are going to be better, that things are going to change. Thank you. [Applause]

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:22:21] Thank you, Mr. Carson. Susan Lewis.

Lewis [01:22:37] My name is Susan Lewis and my family has lived in Westlake, North Olmstead, Bay Village, Fairview Park, since the 1920s. That's 100 years. My Ohio Senate district now extends from the Lorraine County line in a U shape around Cleveland to the Far East Side and Mayfield Heights. My congressional district is now shaped like a backward J going from West Lake all the way south to Wadsworth and Wooster and then east through several rural communities. This feels to me like taxation without

representation. [Applause] I'm disappointed that this commission has provided such limited hours for testimony from the public. Public input could have been ongoing since many weeks ago, and now the commission has it in one week. There are no evening hours or weekend hours, effectively eliminating testimony from people who work regular hours. There is essentially [Applause] There is essentially one three hour opportunity on one day for all of the voters of the Greater Cleveland area. I have several family members and friends who are teachers who are very interested in this fair district issue and process, and all that goes on in Columbus that affects them, who cannot attend because they are back in school. I hope this commission will be faithful to the will of the voters of Ohio and follow the rules for creating new fair districts. A lot of people are paying attention to how this goes. And I urge you to reserve larger rooms. [Laughter and Applause] Thank you.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:24:27] Felicitas Sanchez.

Sanchez [01:24:42] Oh I seem to have misplaced my notes. Pardon me. Oh I still can't find them, oh no. I apologize, commission. I seem to have misplaced my notes. All right, I'll have to just wing it. My name is Felicitas Sanchez and I live in Lakewood, Ohio. I want to thank the commission for allowing me this time to express my feelings on the redistricting that's happening in Ohio this year. I wanted to talk about District 9, where I live, and it stretches from Cleveland to Toledo.

Audience [01:25:32] Speak in to the mic.

Sanchez [01:25:32] I'm sorry, and -

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:25:34] Move closer to the mic, please.

Sanchez [01:25:36] I couldn't find that note. But anyway- Oh I found it! OK, I won't start over. I want to thank the commission for giving me this opportunity to express my feelings on redistricting in Ohio. I feel that communities need to be kept together. I live in Lakewood and I am in District 9, which stretches from Cleveland to Toledo. I have family that live in Castalia, just outside Sandusky, and I see the vast difference in our hometowns. They know that I live in a city and they live in, they live among farms in Sandusky. I feel we each can be better representative, represented, by representatives that are closer to where we live. The voters of Ohio in 2015 and 2018 have asked for a fair map, by asking for reforms. Let's keep our communities, towns and counties together and get the fair representation we have asked for. Thank you. [Applause].

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:26:42] Thank you. Daisy Reish. Reish.

Reish [01:26:50] Reish.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:26:56] Reish.

Reish [01:26:56] You've heard, you've heard - My name is Daisy Reish, and thank you for letting me speak. I'm here to talk about personal. I agree with everybody that's already spoke, but I'm politically involved and I work a lot to try and get candidates elected. But I can't get a candidate elected because it's so gerrymandered. I put my money in it. I go door to door. I do everything that's possible to get somebody elected. That cannot happen in my district. I live in Lorain County, which was Democrat, but I'm in a Republican district; 57 and 7. I helped a candidate, one who was airplane pilot, Navy. He had a degree, law degree, and he could win and do a lot for the state of Ohio. Did that happen? No. A pig

farmer won it. Now, what do you think of that? [Laughter] You know? So and I helped one thousand kids register to vote, two years ago. And one of them voted, because they don't think their vote counts. It's not because the vote doesn't count. It's because they know that it's going to be Republican or Democrat. That is why they don't vote. And that's the young people in this district. My vote doesn't count. In 57 and 7, my vote doesn't count. I called my representatives constantly and they never vote for me. They always vote the opposite [Applause] And they listen, but they don't do anything about it. So in order for us to become a better state, we need to have gerrymandering go away, and let people vote the way they feel and they want everything to happen. Thank you. [Applause].

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:29:28] Thank you very much. Cristos [Indecipherable].

Cristos* [01:30:07] Hi, my name is Cristos [Indecipherable]. I'm a resident of Shaker Heights. First off, I want to thank you all for coming out here today. But what I wanted to talk about isn't, you know, a lot of people have come up here and they've cited numbers and they've shown maps. And, you know, I'm not the most eloquent person here. I'm the smartest person here. But what I am is an Ohio citizen. And the fact that there are so many other citizens showing up today really just shows how important this is, that we have fair districts. And frankly, you know, it pisses me off that we have so many people showing up. And my question is to you, will you all show up when it comes time to draw the maps? Because I don't think you will. [Applause] And that pains me to say that. And my challenge to you is this: simply prove me wrong. That's all you have to do. Just draw up some fair maps, make it so that votes actually matter for the first time in a decade. And you know, it almost feels helpless. It feels like that episode of The Twilight Zone where the guy sitting in the plane and, you know, he's shouting, "There's a man on the wing of the plane." That's what it feels like right now. We're all pointing at the man on the wing of the plane, which is, you know, unfair districts. And you, I just want you to see that. And I want you to see how messed up this all is, how disturbing it is, how undemocratic it all is, because it's, this has to be representative. What's been going on this past decade is just, it's disgusting, it's abhorrent. And it scares me that so many people are willing to show up today and speak out against this. And odds are it stays the same or gets worse. And that's really disturbing. Time and time again, I have friends from out of state who like to bash Ohio. And, you know, of course, I'm politically involved, a lot of them involved in politics as well. And they love to point to the maps and say, you know, just like, you know, what the hell is this? And I don't know. I can't answer them that. And, you know, I don't know how many elected officials could answer that. That, you know, what is, what's up with our maps? And the voters in 2018, they came out and they voted on Issue 1 and they said, we want fair districts. We're all here today saying we want fair districts. You know, you're going to hear from a lot of people over the next week, should have amendments months, but you know, this next week, you'll hear a lot of people, you'll hear a lot of voices, you'll hear a lot of frustration. And I just want you all to go ahead and listen and take that in and understand that what's going on, the status quo, it's not OK and it should change. And if I, you know, if I want you to leave here with just one message, remembering one thing, just three words. When you're drawing new maps, make them fair. That's all you need to do. [Applause] It shouldn't be a high bar. It shouldn't be a tall ask. Make them fair. Thank you for your time. [Applause]

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:32:54] Thank you. Are there any questions at all, any questions? Thank you very much. Andrea Mitchell.

Mitchell [01:33:13] Good morning, Commissioners. On the form, you have to check whether you represent the organization or yourself. I just had a personal comment I

wanted to make, and then I do have a statement representing an organization. I concur with so many of the speakers who have spoken before me, especially Mr. Williams and Mr. Kuhn and Ms. Lewis. Look at the time of this presentation. There are so many people here who probably have taken time out of work to be here, to voice their opinions. It's set on the first day of school at Cleveland State University. It took me 20 minutes to get a parking space to be here, but it was important. And I wanted to bring a voice not only for myself, but for my organization. Now, greetings Commissioners. My name is Andrea Mitchell and I'm a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated, Greater Cleveland Alumni Chapter. Political awareness and involvement is one of the core programmatic (?) thrusts of Delta Sigma Theta. So we want to thank you first, for this opportunity to address this very consequential matter of fair districts. Here in Greater Cleveland, in Cuyahoga County, we believe that people should choose their own representatives, not elected officials choosing whom they want to represent. [Applause] The latter [Laughter] Thank you. The latter leads to extreme marginalization and an imbalance of power, and that's why Ohioans voted two times, twice, to improve the process of drawing district lines, both for the Ohio legislative districts and the U.S. Congress, in overwhelming numbers. Some years ago, the average majority of Ohioans probably didn't even know what gerrymandering was, let alone care about redistricting and the process. But now your constituents are paying attention. We know that it is harder [Applause] It is harder to draw a gerrymandered map, tailored to produce a particular outcome, than to draw a fair map. [Applause] The current, the current twelve to four U.S. congressional map is the product of a lot of hard work to manipulate the lines to achieve a particular outcome. This year, citizens are taking part in mapmaking competitions sponsored by Common Cause, the League of Women Voters, and several other advocates. The competition will produce fair maps drawn in accordance with new redistricting rules. The legislature can no longer pretend that the maps that they have produced are the best and the only possible option. Bipartisan maps would be the best outcome for the people of Ohio. And accordingly, that is our expectation and our goal. I thank you for your time and consideration and look forward to hearing how you plan on accomplishing fair maps.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:36:24] Any questions? Thank you very much. John Shaw.

Shaw [01:36:42] Good morning. I came here with absolutely no intention of speaking, and I may think that was the right thing to do by the time I'm done here. But when I'm in a forum like this and I hear these kind of things, the one thing I go back to, for people of a certain age, remember a cartoonist by name of Walt Kelly and his character, Pogo, who was quoted as saying, "We have met the enemy and he is us." So I'm going to specifically disclude everybody here from that because they took the time to come out here. But when I hear numbers of quoted, like 70 percent of the people voted for the constitutional amendment to change things- 70 percent of what? 70 percent of the people who came out to vote that day. Well, that was probably 40 percent of the elected, of the registered voters at that particular election. It's embarrassing. Our voting numbers are an embarrassment. So we're asking you to do is basically save us from ourselves. Do the least you can do and make the districts fair so that at least the people who are willing to come out and take a stand and actually cast ballots have a reasonable chance. And then we need someone else to step up and teach us how important it is that in a functioning democracy, people have to participate. So I'm just asking you to do the least you can do, which is make it fair to start with so the people who do care get good results. Thank you. [Applause]

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:38:20] Any questions at all? Matthew Hahn. Hahn.

Hahn [01:38:49] Good morning to the commission.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:38:51] Good morning.

Hahn [01:38:52] My name is Matthew Hahn. I am a visiting professor at the Cleveland Marshall School of Law. I apologize for my casual attire, I just got back into town. And I'm also a former voting rights litigator. So I don't want to speak at length about the procedural cost of unfair maps, but I hope that's something that the commission takes into account. I echo the sentiments of those who have spoken before me, and I'd just like to emphasize a few things. First, that competitive districts do increase turnout. As somebody mentioned, we have a municipal election in Cleveland that's happening right now. The mail ballot request rates for the three wards that have competitive seeming elections are already approximately double that of the other wards in the city. So drawing competitive districts actually does make people more invested in the process. It makes our democracy fairer. It makes it more participatory, which is a goal that I hope we all share. I do want to circle back to House Bill 6. I was a public defender before this current roll, so I did go and look at the indictment that was handed down for former Speaker Householder. One of the things that caught my eye is that the allegations of the sort of racketeering conspiracy that created House Bill 6, allegedly, is that the company and Mr. Householder and the other associates actually identified safe districts where they believed they could actually run candidates that would be favorable to voting for Mr. Householder as Speaker and then voting for House Bill 6. When we have elections where we feel like the outcome is predetermined, that allows people like Mr. Householder to even consider this kind of perversion of our democracy. And so that, I think, is one of the things that is at stake in drawing fair maps in Ohio. The commission mentioned a couple, when Mr. Glassman, my esteemed colleague, was speaking, they mentioned that they were looking for a couple of potential ways to tell 'Is this map fair? Is it not fair?' There are all sorts of, you know, great statistical analyses out there. But I would recommend that, just as shorthand because hopefully you'll be looking at a lot of different proposed maps, you'll be considering them very closely, and if you are two of the easy shorthand metrics that voting rights litigators tend to use are the efficiency gap, which measures how many votes in an election spread across districts are quote unquote wasted. They're not necessary for majorities in the, like winning majorities in those districts. Generally, an efficiency gap of less than 7 percent is considered acceptable. The Ohio maps currently state, state House, state Senate and Congressional, I believe are 9 percent, 9 percent and 14 percent. In addition, another maybe easier to understand metric is the mean median gap. Basically the middle district, how far is it away from the state as a whole? You should be aiming for close to zero for that to be fair. You just want that number to be as low as possible. I believe, if I remember correctly, that those numbers for the three maps right now are 5 percent, 7 percent and 16 percent. In addition, I do want to sort of diverge from some of my friends who have spoken here. And I want to caution the commission not to rely solely on compactness. Fair districts tend to be compact. Compact districts do not have to be fair. There are ways to draw districts that look OK, but actually do split up communities of interest. And so I would just caution the commission to think very critically about the maps you're seeing. Think about these other metrics that are there and to sort of address and decide on district lines accordingly. Thank you very much.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:43:48] Mr. Hahn, a question. As I have inquired with the other scholars that have testified today, to take a look at the representational fairness measure that's included in the Constitution, and if you could submit some comments on that that we could share with the body, that would be great.

Hahn [01:44:07] Okay, thank you.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:44:07] Thank you. Any other questions? [Applause] Comments? Thank you very much. Sue Dyke. [Applause]

Dyke [01:44:26] Sorry, I was not going to testify today at all. But there are a couple of things that really stood out to me that I'm going to cover with the commission today. I live in Cleveland Heights. I'm in House District 9. Congressional, I'm sorry, Senate District 23 and Congressional - people are texting me, I'm sorry - Congressional District 11, where Marcia Fudge won in 2020 by eighty two points. OK, that is probably the largest margins in the country. I don't actually know, but I've got to assume that that's one of the largest margins in the country and that's because of gerrymandering. While I agree with her, she also is not accountable to me. I agree with her politics, but she wasn't accountable to me. So, and I don't want to spend a whole lot of time talking about congressional districts, but I also want you to know that I have been, I collected over 5000 signatures in 2017 and 2018 to get fair maps on the ballot. And so I've probably talked to more people than you may have ever talked to in your whole lives. Personally, face to face, and most people, almost everyone, was appalled about how unfair and how rigged our maps are here in Ohio. I have also, I've done work with the League of Women Voters, fair districts, campaigns, including local issues, statewide issues, federal and state, legislative and local, candidate campaigns, as well as right now actively involved in a very grassroots voter engagement campaign. So I'm talking to the voters more than you are on a daily basis. So I have a sense of how people feel, whether their votes matter or not. They may go and vote, but they don't feel like they don't, that they matter. I have also brought many people, some who spoke here tonight, into the process to understand gerrymandering and its impacts across the state and across the country. I lead a small little group of people who call every week. We have been calling since March. We have been calling state legislators. We have been calling, in just last week we called when we found out who was on the commission. We called the Secretary of State's office, Frank LaRose. We called Auditor's office. We called the Governor's office. We also call Senator Sykes' office and Minority Leader Sykes' office as well. We call all of you. But sadly, the thing that motivated me to talk today was the fact that the Republican component, the Republican members of this commission, except for one - thank you, Auditor Keith Faber, for being here - do not seem to be interested in participating in this very important discussion. It makes me [Applause] While I'm sure you all do a very nice job. Mr. Donahue, Senator Gavarone, Representative Oelslager, and Mr. Madrid from the Secretary of State's office, your bosses aren't here. The co-chair of the commission, Republican co-chair of the commission, what? Couldn't even be bothered to show up today? Now, was that because [Applause] Is that because... I don't even know why, is that because these meetings were hastily scheduled in the middle of the day? The Governor's not here. He's on the commission. I called Secretary Frank LaRose's office last week, and so did my group members. And you know what they were told? They were, they got kicked down the road, kicked the can down the road, to the co-chairs of the commission. Alright? We also called Auditor Faber's office, and we spoke to, I spoke to a really lovely woman. And I was calling before you would announce these hearings and before you had announced how we could actually get up and speak today. And as she was looking for information, she came across the website for equal districts that talked about how we could testify or practice our testimony with the Equal Districts advocacy group. There was nothing. Here we are last Wednesday trying to figure out how can we testify. And I appreciate the fact that a website went up on Friday for us to submit our testimony for these public hearings. But there's still nowhere for for the public to comment when the maps do finally come out. There is no portal for us to submit maps. [Applause] I'm almost getting the sense that this process is not being taken seriously. And

how could that be? You've had three years to get ready for this. This is [Applause] Sorry, I am going totally off script, but I just feel so strongly about this. It's almost like you want to retain the Republican super majority in the House and the Senate so you can just keep going about and not listening to your voters. [Applause] Let me see, what else did I want to say, since I went totally off script. [Laughter] I want this commission - and I want to, first of all, thank the Democratic members, two, that showed up and are taking this process seriously. I want to know, these were my questions, where is Republican Secretary of State Frank LaRose? Where is Republican House Speaker Cupp? Where is Republican Senate President Matt Huffman? Where is his Republican co-chair and House Speaker, again, Cupp? And where is our Governor? Where are they? I just can't believe that they are taking this process seriously if they are not here to listen to the public. How can we believe that you are going to take this once in a decade opportunity to bring democracy to Ohio? Because right now it's not a democratic state. How are we supposed to believe that you are going to take this seriously? The Republican members, in specifically, need to prove to the voters and all Ohioans that they are taking this once- sorry, I'm repeating myself. Be present and listen to us. I want you to as surrogates and designees, that's the proper word, to tell them to come. Alright? or is this what we're going to have all week? I know we're taking time out of your day, but shoot, this was announced early, late, last week and here we are. We have put aside everything to come here today. [Applause] And we are not getting the same response from the people who are supposed to be on this commission. We have no longer have checks and balances, and this is what I want to leave you with, in Ohio. With the gerrymandered districts, we do not have democracy. We have, we have no checks and balances. Supreme Court, Governor, state legislature, all of the statewide offices, are all Republican. And Ohio is not an all Republican state, and you all know that. And I want to see you take this process seriously. I want your bosses to take this process seriously. And you need to change. And give us proper representation in this state. Immediately. Thank you. [Applause]

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:52:47] Are there any questions for Ms. Dyke? Any questions? Thank you very much. Ruth Gillett. Gillett?

Gillett [01:53:30] Hello, my name is Ruth Gillett. I'm a resident of the city of Lakewood, which is a western suburb of Cuyahoga County. Currently Lakewood is in the 9th Congressional District, the 13th House District, and the 23rd Ohio Senate District. I appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony and this verbal testimony to the Ohio District Redistricting Commission about this process and the importance of assuring that it is done fairly and openly. I would like to endorse four suggestions to achieve these objectives. In part, I paraphrased ideas that came from students in a class taught by Professor Dennis Turner this past winter at the University of Dayton Osher Lifelong Learning Program. So first, we should develop a new timeline for completing the redistricting process and petition the Ohio Supreme Court for approval. Because of the delayed release of the 2020 census data and the failure of state leadership to begin Ohio's process earlier, it is impossible for Ohio to meet the deadlines written into the redistricting legislation. Redistricting is too important and will be with us for a decade. Let's try to do a good job. Number two, establish a nonpartisan committee that does not include elected persons or politicians to develop mandatory guidelines for drawing the district boundaries. Use a computer program based on these guidelines to generate an initial map for public comment. Number three, establish a nonpartisan committee that does not include elected personnel or politicians to review that map. And four, to continue providing statewide public comment opportunities to review and revise the proposed map until there is general public consensus, say, 70 percent approval rating per the percentage of state voters who approved redistricting reform in 2015 and 2018. In addition to these specific suggestions, I

have participated in a mapmaking process coordinated through the League of Women Voters and Fair Districts Ohio. The map our group developed for Lakewood has been submitted to the commission through the required portal. So Albert Einstein said "Not everything that can be counted matters and not everything that matters can be counted." Today, people have made clear that what matters in drawing districts is that they be fair and that the process be inclusive. I think if Albert were here today, he would clearly agree with this approach. Thank you very much for this opportunity to provide comment.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:56:37] Are there any questions for Ms. Gillett? Thank you very much. Kate Warren.

Warren [01:56:58] Good morning. I want to thank the Redistricting Commission for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Kate Warren. I live in the city of Cleveland in the 9th Congressional District, in the 15th State House District, and in the 23rd State Senate District. I'm also currently a candidate for Cleveland City Council in Ward 13, located predominantly in the old Brooklyn neighborhood of Cleveland. And as a candidate, I have the opportunity to speak with voters nearly every day. And the first thing I would like to share is the confusion created, by the way that our congressional districts are currently drawn. I know we've been asked to limit our remarks to state districts, but I have a story to share that I believe illustrates a larger point. Just before the special election, the primary special election in the 11th Congressional District, I was talking with many voters in my Ward who told me that they were getting ready to vote in the special election. They had been inundated with ads, yard signs and social media posts about the election. And I had to inform them, much to their confusion, that our neighborhood wouldn't be voting in the special election. Although much of Cleveland, as part of the 11th Congressional District, including neighbors who live just one and a half miles north of me and two and a half miles east of me, the area where I live is represented by Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur, who lives 95 miles away in the city of Toledo. In fact, if I were to drive up to where my congresswoman lives, I would have to drive through five other congressional districts to get there. So the way that these maps are drawn creates confusion and it does not promote participation in our government. The same confusion and lack of compactness impacts state districts, arguably more so. For example, the old Brooklyn neighborhood where I live is split between the 15th and the 11th state House Districts in ways that look incoherent and nonsensical. I am pleased that under the new rules approved by voters, Cleveland cannot be split into multiple congressional districts. And I will be watching closely to see that that, that the commission follows that basic rule. Excuse me, that the legislature follows that basic rule. As an Ohio voter, an engaged citizen, and as someone who has participated in both nonpartisan and partisan political activity, I believe that Ohioans deserve for our legislators to follow both the letter and the spirit of these redistricting reforms. Gerrymandered districts serve no one except hyper partisan politicians. Everyday Ohioans deserve to live in districts that represent our interests and are reflective of our communities, communities which are beautifully diverse in opinion, racial and ethnic background, and socioeconomic status. We deserve the ability to elect legislators who will be tasked with the hard but important job of legislating on behalf of their diverse communities, finding common values and compromising. Finally, I would like to address, as many folks before me have, the importance of collecting public input in the process. I have been involved in and closely following the collection of and reporting of census data. So I understand the unique time constraints of the pandemic has presented, given our constitutional deadlines for map making. But I urge the committee, as many others have, to not give short shrift to the collection of public input in these maps. I request that the committee offer opportunities for citizens to submit maps for consideration, and I urge the committee to make available public hearings that take place outside of business

hours and possibly offer virtual forums. I was messaging with a neighbor who has been very active in advocating for redistricting reform, he even created a petition and was circulating it, and I asked if he was going to attend today, but unfortunately he has to work. So he is not here to share what he has heard from the folks he's talked to. So I want to thank you in advance for your consideration in making sure that this is a fair and transparent process. And I look forward to following closely that you all are following the rules that the voters approved. Thank you. [Applause]

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:00:57] Thank you. Are there any questions? Ms. Cynthia White. Cynthia White. [Applause]

White [02:01:26] Hello, my name is Cynthia White and I live in Bay Village, which is in districts 9, 16 and 24. I would like to tell you about some of my experiences with redistricting. I was one of the many fair districts volunteers in 2017 that came from every county in Ohio who gathered signatures on a petition to create a constitutional amendment which would prohibit partisan gerrymandering of congressional districts. I know this hearing is focusing on state level districts, so my testimony today is about what I learned about public knowledge and attitudes toward gerrymandering in general. I went to multiple public gatherings all around northeast Ohio over a nine month period of time, asking a large variety of people to sign my petition. When I first started out, most people did not know what the word gerrymandering meant. I would show them the map of Ohio with the district lines drawn on it and point out our most famous gerrymandered district, District 9, the snake on the lake, stretching from Marcy Kaptur's house in Toledo, to Dennis Kucinich's house in Cleveland. Party affiliation did not seem to matter when it came to signing the petition. Members of both parties explicitly stated that they wanted their democracy to be fair. Some voters who identified as a Republican might have been initially reluctant to sign, saying that they knew that the Republicans had an advantage and they liked it that way. However, when I pointed out that they were living in the snake on the lake and that that was a packed Democratic district which was not competitive for Republicans, they understood the negative impact of gerrymandering and most changed their mind and enthusiastically signed. As the months went by, public enthusiasm built and an increasing percentage of people knew exactly what gerrymandering was before I said anything and many approached me to sign before I even asked them. My state representative, District 16, is an example of a fairly drawn district that is compact, representative and competitive. It changed hands from Republican to Democrat in 2020, one of the few in the state that did. It should be kept unchanged. We did some community mapping with the Bay Village League of Women Voters, and we automatically drew that district as being representing our interests. My state District 24 on the other, my state Senate District 24, on the other hand, is every bit as gerrymandered as my congressional district. It is 'U' shaped, picking up the wealthier suburbs around Cleveland, along the western, southern and eastern borders of the county. It has not changed hands during the entire decade and it can't remain intact under the current rules. I think the Redistricting Commission owes it to the citizens of Ohio to faithfully execute the intent of the amendments that they have passed. And I hope you will do so. As you can tell from this audience today, we will be watching and making sure that the public understands your work. Thank you very much.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:04:43] Thank you for your presentation and for watching us. We appreciate it. Shari Obrenski?

Obrenski [02:05:14] Good afternoon. Is it, it's almost afternoon, we've got nine minutes. I won't go that long. My name is Share Obrenski, I'm the president of the Cleveland Teachers Union. I am a first time testifier, long time voter. I am here today to represent the

nearly 5000 members of the Cleveland Teachers Union. We are teachers, paraprofessionals and related service providers who have our, for the most of us, very first day of school with children today. Which is why you don't see more of my members here, because they're working with kids, doing their job. As many of our other, as many of the other testimony that you've heard indicated, these hours are not exactly convenient for those who wish to be active in the political process. So I'm here on their behalf. Prior to becoming the president of the Cleveland Teachers Union, I was an American history and government teacher for 22 years in Cleveland. Every single year, I would encourage my students to learn as much as they could about the political process. We would talk about the census, we would talk about districting and redistricting. They even worked on maps themselves to see how the districts were drawn. And invariably, when we would get to Ohio and we would look at the maps, my students could not understand why they were drawn the way they were drawn. They looked at them and they knew, as 15 and 16 and 17 year old kids, that it was unfair. They knew it was unfair. And I think we all know that the way things are currently drawn are unfair. We have to do better. The way our districts are currently drawn takes away the voice of the people. They also largely disadvantage those that have the least voice already in our society. They uniquely disadvantaged, black and brown people in our society. They uniquely disadvantage those that are in poverty because the way the districts are drawn, we make sure that those folks don't have a big enough say. And that's not right. You are here, and I appreciate all of you who are here today, to make sure that every voter's voice is heard. Whether they choose to come to the polls or not. And that you are representing every citizen in drawing the lines of these districts, so that our children have the public education they need. So that the ills that we have in our society are adequately addressed by the state legislature and not just the pet project of the day. And so that we don't have politicians who may become arrested due to corruption running unopposed because their districts are so uncompetitive. So I implore you today. [Applause] To listen to all that you have heard, take it to heart, take it back to those who should be in the room with, in the room here with us today. Schedule hearings moving forward that working people can attend and can see what's happening in this process. And that you do the right thing, because not only are all of us watching, not only the voters of Ohio are watching, but our children are watching and they deserve better. Thank you. [Applause]

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:08:48] Any questions at all? Thomas Hach.

Hach [02:09:20] Members of the commission, thank you very much for the opportunity to speak. My name is Tom Hach. I'm the executive director of Free Ohio Now, which is a liberty organization throughout the state, and I represent about almost 5000 members of my organization throughout the state. I'd like to start by saying that when you look at Ohio, if you look at the political offices that are statewide, Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, Auditor, and then we recently had a presidential election. Republicans won all of them, every single one of them. Ohio is a Republican state. If we're going to have fair districts, Republicans dominate. Republicans need to be represented by what they have earned. It is incredibly important for all of us that voters' votes do count, is no doubt, but you can't gerrymander a state. So when it counts the most, when you have a whole state that can't be gerrymandered and all five of those political offices have been won by Republicans, that needs to be reflected in the redistricting. That absolutely has to be part of the equation. I'd also say that. What's going on in this room really is a- I was a little surprised and I think that whoever decided to have all of these hearings at colleges really wasn't thinking very clearly, to be honest with you. You do not have a representative cross-section of Ohio in this room. I'm the only one who has really spoken up in favor of a different perspective on what fairness is. This is wrong. You need to have another week of

hearing from the people. Here's a map. I know it's not very well printed. Here's here's a map, seven counties were blue in the presidential election and I'm happy to give this, too.

Audience [02:11:38] [Indecipherable].

Hach [02:11:38] You know, why don't why don't you talk to me afterwards and we'll have a conversation about masks. Please don't interrupt.

Audience [02:11:45] [Indecipherable shouting].

Hach [02:11:45] Please don't interrupt. [Indecipherable]

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:11:47] Please allow the speaker to speak, please.

Hach [02:11:51] So this is representative of the fact that this audience is not reflective of Ohio as a whole. Who's been heckled? The guy who speaks out different than anybody else. This is wrong. You need to have another week where you need to, if you look at that map, 7 of the counties were blue, 81 of them were red, and yet all of them are at universities. That's wrong. You need to have another week and you can have them at career centers throughout Ohio and you can get the cross-section that you need. This is just, what you're being is bullied. You're being bullied by one half of the of the voting electorate and you're not hearing from the other half. This is wrong. And I'm really disappointed in how this was organized. Thank you very much for your time. [Applause]

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:12:41] Are there any questions? We'd like to notify the audience that we want to give respect for every presenter and please give them, extend everyone a courtesy.

Audience [02:13:00] The campus rules of having a mask [Indecipherable].

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:13:01] It is not our roll [Applause] It is not our role to enforce university.

Audience [02:13:08] [Indecipherable].

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:13:08] Oh, well. [Indecipherable] Rita Mayhew, please. Please.

Audience [02:13:18] [Indecipherable] Go get security. [Indecipherable] Get up! [Indecipherable]

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:13:27] Campus security. [Indecipherable] Did you fill out a form?

Audience [02:13:37] [Indecipherable] a form.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:13:39] Do you have a - you can fill out a witness slip, if you'd like to speak. Can we make sure? Yeah, if you could give us that please, the witness slip.

Mayhew [02:13:56] Hi.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:13:57] Yes.

Mayhew [02:13:57] My name is Rita Mayhew, and I'm from North Ridgeville, Senate District 13, Ohio House District 57. I was born and raised in Cleveland, Cuyahoga County. I taught in Cleveland, Strongsville, Westlake. I spent 30+ years with my husband in the military. We just came back to Lorain. So and when you come to me, either the last, you're darn close. So a lot of what I wanted to say has already been said. However, I can second it all and I would like to do that. I especially would like to see the process extended to better hours. And if it would be better at different sites, I'm really not against that either. However, with all due respect, you most certainly can gerrymander states. It's been done all over the place so to say that you cannot gerrymander a state I think is not exactly accurate. I will also say that most people here have supported a fair districting. And in any kind of commission like this, you're going to have compromises, which means they're going to be things that we like and things that we don't like, we have to keep that in mind. But no matter how you slice it, you need to slice it fairly. And this is not been, this state is a joke. I've lived all over the state. Gerrymandering is definitely a joke. So I would appreciate you changing that. My main focus now, since I'm coming to the end, is how are you going to proceed forward? I guess these are more questions for you. What are you going to do? We're concerned about this little time. We didn't get any maps, so we have nothing to really look at to say, yes, this is good or no, this is not good. We have no, we aren't sure the process going forward. Could you make your website better? Could you have more information out that's really pertinent to people, so people can understand what this process is going forward? Because honestly, there's not a whole lot of time to do this. I don't see how you're going to listen to all this stuff and get these maps by, when is it, the end of September? Or something like that. I mean, how are we going to do this? So could you be a lot more specific on getting information out, get the newspapers more involved, and the TV in that? I don't know who was here, but didn't look like a lot of people. This is important to people, but honestly, I don't think a lot of people knew about it. I mean, that's your responsibility. If you really want to make this better, you have to let people know. And the onus, sadly, right now is on Republicans because there's five of you compared to two Democrats. So, you know, it's nice to have what you have. I understand that. But it's also your chance to be courageous and do the right thing, to be fair for everybody. For everybody. That's what this is about. I understand that it's nice to have what you have. You know, nobody wants to give up their bailiwick in their job or any place else. But it's not right, you know tha. If people aren't represented, it's not right. Bottom line, please do the right thing. [Applause]

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:18:17] Thank you for your comments. And questions at all? Soren Hansen.

Hansen [02:18:43] My name is Soren Hansen. I'm a resident of Lakewood. I've lived in-

Audience [02:18:50] Louder.

Hansen [02:18:50] My name is Soren Hansen. I'm a resident of Lakewood and I've lived in Shaker Heights and Bay-

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:18:57] Just a second, please. Can we have everyone's attention, please? Do we have security? They're on their way? The University security, I believe it's on their way, and I will ask you to let them handle that issue, please. Sorry, Mr. Hansen.

Hansen [02:19:32] Thank you.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:19:32] You may go ahead.

Hansen [02:19:34] I'm also a professional engineer. I've been a consultant in the technology called Geographic Information Systems, and you should all know that gerrymandering is wonderfully done by geographic information systems. And you should really have some technical expertise on your commission to really inform you about how to use the technology. Mark Salling, who is here in Cleveland State University, would be a wonderful candidate. However, what I'm missing here is a list of priorities on how you are going to approach this. And I'd like to suggest at least four different priority, in order. There are two that I think are really significant, in my opinion, belong at the top of your list. And the first one is you want to encourage as many citizens as possible to vote. I think we can all agree on that. And of course, it should be done in a fair and fraudulent free way. The second is each district should have as close as possible to the same number of citizens represented. In other words, the spread should be as small as possible. You've said five percent. I think that you could do even better than five percent. One thing that hasn't been mentioned at all, and I think that belongs in your list of priority objectives, is goals in equity for Ohio minorities. No one has spoken about this at all, and I think it's very important. One of the reasons for gerrymandering is to make sure that we can establish at least one district where the black population of Ohio can assure that a black candidate has a good chance of winning. And that's been established here in this area. However, the current way of gerrymandering is to make that district as big as possible. I suggest that one of the ways, if you're going to gerrymander something for a good cause, like allowing black minorities to win in and have representation in the Congress, in the legislature, is to set a major limit that the number of people in that district should be as small as possible. And it should still, also, in order to be fair, allow the white population living that district to have a fair representation. So I'm suggesting maybe it should be 60 percent possible black population and 40 percent of the other. With those four goals in priority order, we end up with a series of other potentials. So you start out with creating the first district near the city of Cleveland where a large population of black people reside. But make that intentional black district as small as possible, which I already said. And do not allow gerrymandering to political affiliation to benefit any political party. That's got to be part of the decision to make sure that as many people as possible, citizens, can vote. However, do use citizens political affiliation from their last election to group people into any new district. We're not going to get rid of gerrymandering. The geographic information system is such an important technology that is going to be used to gerrymander. So you know exactly where everybody resides, what their last voting record was, and you pick one person who belongs here or there. And that's why we have gerrymandering now. Bad gerrymandering. I'm an advocate for good gerrymandering. And we're going to use the same technology that has been used for bad gerrymandering, for good gerrymandering. And make sure that the political parties are represented as close to as equal in each district. This will ensure citizens will want to vote and have their vote count. Thank you very much and thank you also for your time.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:24:26] Thank you for your presentation. [Applause] Any questions at all? The next presenter is Loh.

Loh [02:24:48] Well, good afternoon, everybody. Thank you for all of you coming to Cleveland. I'm Loh. I probably, people in general do not think people like me actually even belong into this country, but unfortunately I'm here. And I have visited our very grand and important Ohio Statehouse many times. So for today's subject, as a minority being the

majority, I have to say one thing. One lady she left, but she used a particular expression and I think lots of people agree. Taxation without representation. Actually be more specifically, it's a representation with our representations. Gerrymandering actually started with one of the vice presidents, long time ago. If you can use your smartphone, Wikipedia will tell you. It is a very scientific calculation. However, it has been misused for a long, long time. So in Ohio, we have all the inequities, all built on the wrong uses of gerrymandering. His name actually is Gerry not "Jerry". Sorry about that. In this case, if we don't stop correcting our maps as a starting point for the whole process, the children in the state will never get a proper education, for example. Back in the state budget sessions, we talk about how difficult and how hard it was to find a proper formula. That goes to our representation without representation. People here all feel the pain. Even you go to vote. The person you voted to go into Ohio Statehouse sometimes doesn't really speak up for you. Senate Bill 17 is one good example. The sponsor of the bill, he wanted to make sure we have no fraud. But even in his district, the people in poverty did not get a representation, to have a proper way in order to have the help they need. For example, SNAP, Medicaid, all of that. Because the eligibility will be completely narrowed down if that particular bill passed and not get executed properly. So this is what we all have to watch out. This room, I have been here several, several times. And I know these dividers should have been taken off. That will make everybody here feel more welcome to be here. If everybody spent the time to be here, all of you, you don't live just next door. You came all the way up here to listen to us. We also make an effort to come here. Some people pay the parking. Some people had to go through all kinds of trouble to getting here. So now we both feel a little bit frustrated. So this is something we can work together to improve. In that case, I would definitely support Ms. Ruth Gillett's suggestion. This whole process maybe should be reconsidered, rescheduled. Yes, there are legal proceedings we have to go through, but it will be worthwhile. At least it will make people rethink their faith to the government, to the voting. Otherwise, 14 people out of 100 come out to vote, and 17 people out of those people saying something. Does that really represent everybody's will in Ohio? Please. That's a no, for sure. We don't need a rocket scientist to figure out that simple mathematics issue. Right? Thank you very much.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:29:08] Thank you. Any questions at all? Steve Ermin. Mimi Foust.

Plevin-Foust [02:29:44] Hello, members of the commission, thank you so much for coming here. I'm Mimi Plevin-Foust. I'm a parent. I grew up here in Cleveland, in Shaker Heights. I moved away for a long time. And like so many others, I came back here after I had a child. I'm very happy to be back in Ohio. There is one issue, though, that I find that I'm not happy about, and that is just how gerrymandered our state is. And I say this as someone who is, I'm someone who became a parent after the age of 40. I have one child. I think there's more and more people like me. And the issue that I feel most concerned about is gun violence. And I have, I'm a board member of God before Guns. We're an interfaith advocacy and education group, nonpartisan, working like so many others to reduce gun violence in our state. And just as the parent of one child, I'm concerned, I'm very worried about this issue, because literally every day, every week, in Cleveland, and I think across the state, our children and babies are being killed by gun accidents, by stray bullets. People's husbands and fathers and brothers and sisters and mothers and grandmothers are being killed by guns. Partly because we have a gun policy in the state that is really being run by ALEC and the Buckeye Firearms Institution and whoever, whatever corporation gave them a lot of money last week. And those are the laws that are being written, handed to legislatures and proposed in Ohio, and that people who care about reducing gun violence in Ohio are trying to stop from being passed. And it's

heartbreaking. It's heartbreaking when you are part of a group of advocates who have traveled for hours to come to a committee hearing about whatever is the latest new, completely wacky and extremist gun law that ALEC has given to our legislatures, legislators. And there are no legislators in the hearing to hear the opponent testimony because they don't care. They've been gerrymandered in. Their majority is gerrymandered in. And meanwhile, children are dying. They're dying in their car seats. They're dying in their beds. And, you know, there are common sense bipartisan laws that could be passed if we had a representative legislator, legislature. I mean, child access prevention laws would save children's lives. Red flag laws would save the lives of people who are gun owners and commit, you know, in danger of committing suicide. I mean, those laws, those red flag laws have saved countless lives by reducing the suicide rate among gun owners in other states. There's many common sense laws that we can agree on, like background checks that over 90 percent of Ohioans approve of. If we did not have it. [Applause] Thank you. If we did not have such a gerrymandered state. And and I just... I just think that this would be better for everyone if we had fair districts. It would be better for Republicans, it would save Republican lives, it would save Democratic lives. It would give all of us the chance to have healthier, safer communities in every way. And I urge you to further this process to- I agree with my former neighbor, Tom Hach, that we should have more hearings in more places at more hours, not just during working hours. I also urge you to extend the deadline for finishing this and then to extend the spring primary date into June so that, you know, you can do this properly and you can get good feedback from people on actual, you know, proposed maps. And I'm one of the people who has been calling your offices since March, along with many others, to request that this process begin. Your staffers are wonderful. Thank you so much for hiring such lovely staffers and for being so responsive to us. But I also want to say that not only do we desperately need fairer districts in Ohio, but I hope that would be just the very first step in a process that next goes on to having ranked choice primaries that are not partisan. States that have implemented this have been able to have such better representation. It frees every legislature from the worry about who is the extremist on the right or the left that will challenge them. It allows, once you're elected, it allows legislators to work across the aisle to create truly, you know, bipartisan legislation that's best for the state. Please talk to the states that have passed this because their legislators are much happier. And then, as well, to have public funding, complete public funding, of all campaigns so that you are never having to worry about working for whoever is the highest donor. But you are truly working for the voters who are funding your campaigns. If you do all of that as a package, then gerrymandering is not as scary because you know you're really going to be working for the voters and not challenged by extremists in primaries. Thank you very much. [Applause]

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:35:45] Thank you. Are there any questions? Maria Cordaro.

Cordaro [02:36:05] OK. My name is Maria Cordero. Louder? Okay. I will try.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:36:14] A little closer to the mic.

Cordaro [02:36:15] Okay. I'm a resident of Bedford. And I'm also a member of Free Ohio Now. And I'm up here just to back up Tom. Because I agree that we didn't get any notice that this meeting was going on. The only way I knew about it was an email from him. And that's why I'm not prepared to speak to you, because I didn't expect to talk. But I did take his e-mail and bring it to my friends at my church, and a lot of them are from the area around me, because I live in District 1, 11, sorry. They live in Euclid, Beechwood, Akron and Richfield, and they didn't know anything about this meeting. And we had talked about

it before, about how the districts are weirdly set up. And a lot of my friends don't even know about districts being set up this way, what they have to do with voting rights and how elections go. So if there's a way to tell more people about what's going on now with the redistricting and what it means, because most people I talked to don't really know. It's like, you know, what the districts look like and how the votes are made. I don't know. It's just the only reason I know about any of this election is joining groups like, you know, Free Ohio Now. It's how I get most of my information. So...

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:37:57] Well, thank you very much. We certainly appreciate it. Any questions? Thank you very much.

Cordaro [02:38:03] Thank you. [Applause].

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:38:10] Shane Petty.

Petty [02:38:22] Thank all of you for being here today. I am a resident of Middleburg Heights. I didn't come here planning to speak. I came to observe on behalf of an organization. And I do not speak on behalf of that organization. I am here to share personally with you as a local resident, a local pastor, as a voter under the age of 35 with an elementary age daughter. This has been one of the most depressing and demoralizing experiences I've had in public life. To sit here during this hearing. And while I have to say I probably don't vote, in fact I would say I'm almost certainly don't vote in the way that the gentleman who was here earlier, the white gentleman without a mask, does, I agree wholeheartedly with him that we have to find better places, more representative places, more opportunities, more time for these hearings, because this room does not represent the state. This room doesn't even represent the Democratic Party. People here either risk their jobs to be here, either are retired, or they are like me, and we're in a socioeconomic status that allows us jobs with flexibility to be here. And because of that, it's a very, very specific, largely white, largely affluent, group of people that can be here today. And because of the makeup of this room, we've played into stereotypes about liberal elites. We've made fun of a pig farmer. My little daughter had to listen to that. My daughter had to listen to a man be heckled for doing what the majority of people here say is a civic duty. If we want fair districts, we have to have fair districts for every single person in this state, regardless of if they vote red or vote blue. If all votes matter [Applause] they have to matter for everyone. And the way that this was set up, with so little information ahead of time, with so few hearings, in such a short time, in times and places that are not accessible for everyone - we tried 30 some minutes to park, too. This is abhorrent. And as someone who's trying to start a life here, someone who's trying to show a young child that this is how democracy works, I'm ashamed at the way that this has gone down, and I hope and pray that there will be many, many, many other opportunities I have to bring my little girl to see the way that democracy works, because this is not it. We must do better. And I implore you. Thanking all of you for being here, truly the bottom of my heart. We have to do better. Let's do better. Amen? [Applause]

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:41:55] Are there any, are there any others that would like to testify today? Can you come forward? Can you be sure to fill out with your slip for us when you finish?

Hall [02:42:14] I did submit one through email last night.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:42:18] Okay.

Hall [02:42:18] Yep. My name is Kelly Hall. Good afternoon. I won't take too much time here. Thank you for fulfilling your obligation to hear from the public today on an issue as important as redistricting. My name is Kelly Hall. I'm currently a voter of Ohio Senate District 15 and Houston District 18, though I spent the majority of my life as a resident of Avon Lake, Ohio, just 30 minutes from here on Lake Erie. I'll be finishing my fourth year at Ohio State. And I think it's fair to say that my generation and my age group is vastly underrepresented in this room. And it was not until I left home for college in Columbus that I realized just how difficult it is to be a voter in the metropolitan Cleveland area. Racial and partisan gerrymandering has systematically broken down and divided Cleveland's communities, with pockets of conservative and financially well-off voters clumped together in districts sure to produce favorable, predictable electoral outcomes for those already in power at the Statehouse. This is not the spirit of our democracy as a lot of people have emphasized today. Ohio has always been considered a swing state, it is not a dominant Republican state, as someone else has said here today. In the last decade, we've watched as Ohio Republicans gained a supermajority in the Ohio legislature, freely enacting laws that don't serve the needs of a large segment of Ohioans. This year, we have a chance to redraw the maps in favor of all of us, where we get to choose our elected officials rather than our elected officials choosing us in accordance with their own interests. Fair maps are the spirit of our democracy. And though I currently live in Columbus and I'm glad I've given plenty of space to my my peers in Cleveland, this year's redistricting process has left so many young people, including myself, confused and discouraged that their voice will be heard and considered by this commission. The Ohio Redistricting Commission is asking Ohioans to provide their map, their input on the maps with no maps yet to be presented. What many of the folks today have pointed out is that this directly infringes on the Ohio bipartisan redistricting reforms that Ohio voters overwhelmingly voted to pass in 2015. You may also be wondering why I've chosen to testify here today, though I grew up here. What I'm wondering is why Ohio's largest urban area, Columbus, has been excluded from the state redistricting hearings. Columbus residents are forced to commute to Mansfield and Zanesville for their input on our state maps to be heard. And that excludes many, if not most, of our communities. Young folks represent a small minority in this room, but we are the ones who will for years to come suffer most the consequences of partisan and racial gerrymandering in Ohio. [Applause] I'll just finish up here. 2011's rigged maps have put extremist politicians in power. And they are hurting Ohio workers, families and students like me. Now is the time to restore democracy in Ohio and to restore young Ohioans faith in our democracy. Young peopl may be far and few in this room today, but they are watching and they will hold this commission accountable. I welcome any questions that you have for me today. And thank you for listening.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:45:52] Thank you. Are there any questions? Is there anyone else that would like to speak? Come forward. Have you, in fact, completed a witness?

Johnson [02:46:13] No, but I will.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:46:14] Thank you.

Johnson [02:46:17] Good afternoon. My name is Merle Johnson. I'm a member of the Ohio Board of Education, but I am not representing that organization. I am speaking for myself. I taught school in Cleveland for 40 years, and so whenever I speak, I always speak on behalf of students. We have students who are turning 18, and when they look out and see how elections are preplanned, how sometimes votes don't really make a difference because of the gerrymandering, then they get discouraged. We talk about why people

don't vote. If you keep seeing the same people getting elected and they're the same people who are putting out bad bills like House Bill 322 and 327, which would prohibit educators from teaching about race in the classroom under threat of losing their license and under threat of school districts losing their money. When you get people elected [Applause] when you have gerrymandering, then the people who develop those bills, those horrible, dangerous, abhorrent bills, they keep getting elected and it causes people not to want to come and speak against the bills because they say, why should I? They're going to get passed anyway. So when we talk about students who are turning 18, who really would like to have some hope that they can make a difference in this world and in this state, then it's important that you do the right thing, that you develop fair districts for the benefit of all of us. Thank you. [Applause]

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:48:08] Are there any questions at all?

Johnson [02:48:09] Any questions?

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:48:11] Thank you very much.

Johnson [02:48:12] Thank you.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:48:15] Is there anyone else that would like to speak? Is there anyone else that would like to speak? Come forward, please.

Jones [02:48:40] Good afternoon. My name is Mittie Davis Jones and I am a retired professor, actually, here from Cleveland State University and glad that my status did allow me to be here today. So I just want to speak again, as others have, on behalf of fair districts in Ohio. Since the voting rights legislation was struck down, section 2, which requires review of congressional redistricting to ensure that they do not lead to discriminatory outcomes, I think it's incumbent upon those at the state level to take on that responsibility to do whatever needs to be done to ensure that the districts that are established do not have discriminatory impacts on people of color. The person earlier spoke about districts being designed to have a lot of African-American people, in particular, in one congressional district here, it happens to be District 11. So it needs to not be the case. The vote needs to be established in such a way as people can really have a bearing or an impact on the outcomes of the elections to ensure that their representation is not consolidated in one area. Also, I'd like to speak, as others have, about the opportunity for folks to come forward to speak before the commission. These hearings need to be held in places that are more accessible, because Cleveland State is just not an accessible place for various reasons. I mean, it is on a bus line, but for people who are driving, who need to park and things of that nature, it's really not an accessible environment. And lastly, I'd just like to say that I appreciate the fact that these hearings are being held, but I think the time line needs to be expanded so that more people can participate. The time frame in which these hearings are being scheduled is very limited. And a lot of people in the community are not aware, barely aware, of redistricting and/or gerrymandering. But, you know, having the opportunity to speak and come forward, I think is very important. But having said that, I applaud you on being here, taking this out to the people, but please expand upon that. Thank you very much. [Applause]

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:51:04] We'd like to thank everyone for attending here today, those that present particularly. We'd like to say that the commission members, all of the commission members, are sworn in separately and apart from their original legislative and administrative responsibilities, to comply with the law, the letter and the spirit of the

law to adopt fair districts here in the state of Ohio. We have new guidelines and we intend to ensure that we follow the new guidelines to adopt fair districts in Ohio. Again, thank you. I want to thank the university for hosting us here today. The website, we'll continue to work on it to make available to you, all of the information that that is needed. Thank you very much.

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Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:00:09] Those who are not present here today, we are so thankful that we're here at Youngstown State University and to greet us the host is President Jim Tressel.

Tressel [00:00:22] Thank you, Mr. Senator [applause] thank you, on behalf of our entire YSU family and the Mahoning Valley, we're excited that this discussion is here. We believe that a university is a wonderful place to have discussions. In fact I happen to think that a university is unity in diversity and we get a chance to share what we think with one another in a thoughtful manner. And so we're excited to be able to host this. I can assure you we'll get some sound here pretty soon. If not, we'll have some new sound managers. [laughter] Just kidding. But we appreciate it. It's a busy time on college campuses getting ready for school to begin, and we just had the naming of our new excellence training center, Kohli Hall, which will meet the workforce needs of the future. So we just had a big day and got a lot of things going on. Just wanted to stop and welcome you. And we're glad you're here and enjoy the afternoon. Thank you sir.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:01:30] Thank you. Thank you, will the staff please call the roll.

Roll Call [00:01:38] Co Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes, (present), Representative, Tim Ginter (present), designee for Co-Chair Robert Cupp (present), Matt Donahue, designate for Governor Mike DeWine. (present) Auditor Keith Faber (present), we have Merle Madrid designee for Secretary Frank LaRose, (present), we have Representative Michele Lepore-Hagan, designee for Leader Emilia Sykes, (present), And we have Senator Kirk Schuring designee for President Matt Huffman (here).

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:02:18] We have a quorum present and we will move forward. I know...anyone that would like to testify today, we ask that you please fill out a witness list so that we can record it accordingly. In November of 2015, Ohio voters approved a constitutional amendment that implemented a new General Assembly redistricting process and established the Ohio Redistricting Commission. The commission consists of the governor, state auditor, secretary of state and one commissioner appointed by each of the legislative leaders of the two largest political parties in the Ohio House and the Ohio Senate. Four in total, one from each of the caucuses. The commission has until September 1st of this year to pass a plan with the votes of at least two members affiliated with each of the major parties. If they fail to do that, then by September 15th they may pass a map with the simple majority, just four votes. And that map would last for only four-year period. The Ohio legislative process, redistricting process, is one has taken place really in all the states around the country and is based on the census. The United States Department of Commerce published census data, so we have new numbers so we can configure the districts appropriately. In Ohio, the population was eleven thousand eleven million seven hundred ninety-nine thousand four hundred forty-eight people, a two point three percent growth over 2010. And that means for each of the House districts we have one hundred and nineteen thousand one hundred and eighty-six people, and in each of the Senate districts will have three hundred and fifty-seven thousand five hundred and fifty nine persons, with the five percent deviation. Legislative districts are complex– is more than just putting the right number of people in each one of the districts. There are several layers of complex requirements, including the district population requirements, rules on how to prioritize splits, political subdivisions and additional district standards dealing with favoring or disfavoring political parties and compactness of districts. The board also has to

comply with all federal regulations and guidelines, the Ohio Constitution and including the Voting Rights Act, on the federal level. These, we are going to when we can, get information broadcast here today. We had a hearing earlier today in in Cleveland and we will have a series of hearings all over the state all of this week, a total of ten. And we encouraging you to look at the website that we have www.redistricting.Ohio.gov for additional information or to submit written testimony or even submit maps. The purpose, the main purpose today since we're right up on the deadline for the House and district state maps that we are addressing the state legislative maps at this particular time. Today we're here to listen to you. We're not here to debate one another. We're here to get as much information as we can about how districts affect you and get input from you to use in formulation of the plan. Before we begin, we just want to make sure that you know that the written testimony will be available and able to be submitted on the website. With that if no other statements by any of the other members. We'd like to move to the first person to testify, Mr. John Bocchieri. Thank you.

Bocchieri [00:07:23] Thank you. Members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission bringing this public hearing to Mahoning County, performing your constitutional duties in the open so that we may have a discussion about the political future of this community. I have served with all of you at some point over the last 21 years, whether in the state legislature, or in our nation's capital. I've known all of you to be honorable in your public service and its approach. We passed legislation together. We worked together to help Ohioans after natural disasters and in their time of greatest need. I acknowledge your honorable service. However, when it comes to campaigns, Ohioans acknowledge that the process which legislative and congressional districts are drawn, and have been drawn, demonstrates your political muscle versus fairness. Simply put, past maps have not been drawn as honorably as your individual service. Past commissions have packed and cracked communities like mine, lumping vast numbers of voters in the districts that do not follow the fairness model in which comprises competitiveness, keeping cities whole, and representational fairness. It is clear that Ohio politicians are picking the people they want to represent versus people picking politicians they want representing them in government. It seems from this process, which in the days of Governor Jim Rhodes and Speaker Vern Riffe saw maps that were drawn with little...number 2 pencils, after much consensus, to maps now that are drawn with laser 3-D printers built from the ground up in political districts that favor the majority. This process should be about... shouldn't be about politics, but it should be about fairness. Don't get me wrong, both Democrats and Republicans are doing this all over the country. But Ohio hasn't witnessed fairness in decades. When first elected to the Ohio House, the legislative map for the 57th district stretched from the suburbs of Youngstown to Carrollton in Carroll County. In 2002, when the new map was redrawn, the 61st Ohio House district extended further south, including slivers of Mahoning County, Stark County, all of Carroll County and a sliver of Tuscarawas County all the way past New Philadelphia. The most populous counties in that redrawn district with a sliver of Stark County, which was now the newly configured 61st district. It had appeared from the district that was redrawn... it was drawn mainly to weaken the representative's political influence versus strengthening the political voice of citizens across the district. In 2002, while in the Ohio House, the majority eliminated the congressional district of then Congressman Jim Traficant. Now, that was an easy political move because Congressman Traficant had just been convicted of a felony and subsequently removed from the seat by a vote of his peers in the US House. However, the voices of Valley residents were now packed together into the 6th Congressional District, comprising 12 counties, one county wide, all the way down the Ohio River to Portsmouth and Scioto County. Speaker Larry Householder often referred to this district as the "sliver on the river." Mahoning County, the 10th most populous county in the state, was now cracked and packed into smaller

communities in an unfamiliar configuration drawn for political considerations and not for the needs of its citizens. There are some who suggest that the '02 [inaudible] map was fair because I won a seat in the 16th Congressional District against my esteemed colleague here who is an honorable gentleman in that race in the congressional district that hadn't seen a Democrat elected in 60 years. However, political reality soon set in after the 2010 election, Senator Schuring, when all the districts that saw different representatives soon put back to their original configurations were [?] their intended political representation. And in fact, the League of Women Voters of Ohio and Common Cause identified an important fact about that 2012 map. There was a sliver of Canton, they call it a puppet, I quote, a puppet shaped peninsula which was carved into the 16th district, a former district that I represented, that attached Canton to the district. The total population in that peninsula was zero. No other portion of Canton is in the 16th Congressional District. The zero-population area was attached to the 16th District, according to League of Women Voters, because it contained Timken manufacturing plants and their corporate headquarters, according to the League of Women Voters. Now there was no coincidence about that political move, however, I will draw your attention to that same 12 political map. A little nodule extending from the crack and packed 13th Congressional district that extended to the Stark County ultimately will be won by Congressman Tim Ryan. The majority conveniently drew my home, which was in Alliance, at that time, into the congressional district, attempting to pit us against one another, No one a part [?] of Stark County [?] is in the 13th Congressional district. My plea to all of you today, to my esteemed colleague, is to stop this madness. What I have learned by both winning and losing elections is that people want their elected representatives to reduce the political fighting and maximize their political voices in our capitol. This could not be achieved when partisan, partisans draw districts that favor political gains instead of gaining political influence for citizens of Ohio. The number of wave elections, national wave elections over the last 15 years is testimony in itself to citizens displeasure at this very process, drawing districts where a politician just has to worry about winning their primary election, has reduced the effectiveness of our institutions. Sure, it permits the majority to hold on to power, but it dilutes the discourse within these institutions and creates hyper-partisan rhetoric that weakens our ability to speak to one another. Fair district maps allow for consideration of opposing, opposing political views and the building of consensus, which is at the heart of our democracy. If we are truly about winning elections on ideas then let our campaign be about that, instead of a predetermined map that was delivered to maximize political opportunities. The data and demographics support the premise that the Mahoning Valley deserves its own congressional district and statehouse districts. Many of our citizens feel as if Columbus has forgotten about us. You have the chance to demonstrate that fair districts create fair government for all Ohio citizens. Thank you, Senator. I appreciate your time. [applause]

Co Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:14:23] Thank you, Mr. Bocchieri, are there any questions of Mr. Bocchieri? Seeing none, thank you so much, appreciate it. Please forgive me in advance if I happen to stumble a little over a few names, Janice Simmons-Mortimer.

Simmons-Mortimer [00:14:54] My name is Janice, I'm from the Ohio District 76 and the Senate district 18 in Hiram Township. What you just heard right there and what you heard this morning, you got a an earful talking about fair districts from a grand perspective, even from Mahoning County. What I like to talk about as a mom [?] how I feel during [inaudible] Portage County. So where I'm from, northern Portage County. [inaudible] We're a rural community, we're a college town and also have that suburban vibe if you're on the west side. [inaudible] what Portage County doesn't have though, is a strong advocate, a unifying advocate. And that's because we have three U.S. congressional districts and 2 Ohio House districts that carve up our county. What has that led to? I feel like it's led to

inaccurate [?] representation when it comes to things such as health care and access [inaudible] when it comes to resources like libraries systems that have such poor funding, I think Portage County is at least 3rd in least funding for library systems. And also public education. And that's where my heart is at and why I want to talk to you about. When I compare through Ohio Department of Education preparedness grade for students...[loud feedback]

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:16:41] They're at least working on it.

Simmons-Mortimer [00:16:45] A sign from God He's listening. [laughter] [applause] The Ohio Department of Education preparedness grades for students in northern Portage County school districts with those of the other districts with which we've been combined. Neighbors to the north, the impacts and differences are startling. Less than 50 percent of students in the three rural districts included in Portage County, less than 50 percent of students going to college, less than 30 percent graduate with a college degree in six years. One of those districts, in particular, Windham, has less than 20 percent of students who graduate with a college degree after 6 years. Less than 20 percent. Now, compare that with our neighbors to the north, in Geauga County. 73 percent of their students go into college. Fifty-one percent graduate with a college degrees in 6 years. If you take Kenston Schools, which is just north of where I'm from, which is an impressive school district, 86 percent of their students go on to college and 68 graduate with a college degree. So we have to look at our students seen as having a high school acting as a terminal degree. Ninety percent of students go into public education. That's why redistricting is so critical for us. The need for quality public education, public education is paramount to the future viability of our communities, of our workforce and of our community's success overall. Unfortunately, by cracking our county and taking our rural district and combining them with even more wealthy and affluent ones to the north, you silence our voices and render our opinions, with our representatives is just useless. Our own vocational school, which is a pipeline for quality jobs for a significant portion of the students in our area, isn't even in our district, and congressional [inaudible] Ohio House. You've taken away the community's voice even when it comes to the one pipeline a majority of our schools go to. Now, personally, I moved from Bainbridge into Hiram in 2010. I spent the last 10 plus years advocating from my home district. I have co-lead levy campaigns for new buildings, didn't pass. I have helped with operating levies which is a continual struggle for a farming community, in trying to pass. I've also personally helped bring students into STEM camps and programs elicit the idea of science. It is embarrassing to note that our science labs are less equipped than what my children had in the Kenton district in first grade. We've even done archeological digs for our students in middle school, again trying to build the idea of looking beyond Portage County. I have used my skills, I've used my time, I've used my money to try to work with the teachers and staff in Crestwood schools who are so dedicated to doing what they can do with the limited resources available to them, to give a quality education. I feel like I'm lucky because I have to ability to do that, not very families in Portage County can, that's why I'm coming to you. The most critical things we need you to do is to not split up Portage County. To not break up communities and take our voices away. Yes, the communities of Crestwood and Garrettsville and Windham don't have the population, affluence or clout that a Bainbridge or Chesterland have. We do have pride in our area. We do want a better future for our children. And, we believe that we can do it. You can do it if you give us a representative who also works and listens to us and is an advocate for better. Thank you. [applause]

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:20:58] Thank you. I'd like to take this time to recognize any other state legislators that are here today. Would you please stand all the

others, legislators, members of the House or the Senate, would you please stand to be recognized? Thank you. [applause]. Next, we will call up is Holly Oyster.

Oyster [00:21:51] ...do we need written testimony that I brought with me? Copies of it,

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:21:59] the staff will get that for me.

Oyster [00:22:16] Hi, my name is Holly Oyster, I live in Alliance, actually, outside of Alliance, an area called Smith Township. I often refer to our area as the red headed stepchildren of Mahoning County because we are clear at the far corner and I have to drive 40 minutes to an hour to do anything in my county seat. And I do not feel particularly represented when lumped with Youngstown. I'm here today to remind the commission that the work that they are doing right now will directly affect me and my neighbors for the coming decade. If the districts they draw are unfair, their actions will directly result in the negation of my rights as an Ohioan and an American to have my voice heard. In the last ten years, I have felt unrepresented and ignored by my elected officials. I am active locally, helping to organize volunteers interested in supporting progressive issues. I came to this out of frustration that policies being instituted by my government were completely opposed to everything that I believe in. I have reached out to my representatives about issues that are important to me, about bills that are up for consideration, about topics I feel should be addressed. The only response I have ever received was a form letter, and that was a rare occurrence. As a civically engaged Ohioan, it is my responsibility to pay attention to what my government is doing. And if the policies that polls are showing Ohio and support are being passed and implemented by my government. There are so many issues about which I care deeply that are not being supported by my government. For example, various recent polls show that 51.3 percent or more of Americans, depending on what poll you read, support abortion remaining legal in most cases. However, our state government continues to pass unconstitutional laws that limit access to women's health care and repeatedly pass laws criminalizing abortion and those who provide the procedures. This is a failure of democracy. According to the most recent data I have been able to find, Ohio is made up of approximately forty six percent... forty six percent Democrats and fifty three percent Republicans, however, our statehouse has Republican supermajorities in both houses. Republicans hold sixty-four-point six percent of the seats in the Ohio Statehouse and seventy-five-point eight percent of the seats in the Ohio Senate. My Ohio senator does not care what I think...that I am desperate for universal health care, that my husband and I are considering a paper divorce so that I can go on public assistance to afford the medicine my child needs, that our education system is an embarrassment that robs our children of a decent education. He knows his job is secure because the district he nominally represents is drawn in such a way that my voice is ignored, lumping me together with those with whom I have zero in common. My representative doesn't care that I want a vaccine mandate, that I'm worried about the health of my immune compromised teenager, that I'm horrified that our schools don't teach comprehensive sex ed, instead teaching abstinence only, despite hundreds of studies showing such curricula do not reduce teen pregnancy or the spread of STDs. He does not represent me. So far, the process for redistricting has been confusing and vague. Despite an overwhelming, overwhelming majority of Ohioans twice voting to support fair districts, I have little to no confidence that their districts will be drawn. I am here to help ensure that the wishes of Ohioans are followed. Who is working on these maps right now? When will we see them? We need time to be able to assess those maps and determine if they are fair representation of Ohioans and time is running out. I need to know that this process is going to result in fair representation as mandated by the United States Constitution. I need to know that my vote will matter again. I want to know that my community will be included with those that have similar life experience to

me. I live in Mahoning County but have an Alliance address. Most of Alliance is Stark County. If the district is drawn along the county line, I will be voting with people I have no connection with. I need my community in a district with those where I shop, do business and whose kids go to school with my kids. Anything else means my voice and the voices of so many of my neighbors will be silenced. And this is not on my written testimony. But I wanted to add I was going to ask where our governor is today, who is supposed to be here. But I just discovered on Twitter that he's at a Cincinnati Bengals practice right now. Thank you, Governor DeWine.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:27:15] Thank you. Thank you very much. Any questions? [applause] Next, presenter is Kathleen Gaige.

Gaige [00:27:36] Good afternoon to all of you and thank you for being here today. My name is Kathleen Shafee-Gaige and I'm a lifelong resident of Mahoning County, Ohio, and the chair of the Voter Services Committee of the League of Women Voters of Greater Youngstown. The league looks forward to a redistricting, a redistricting process which supports a robust democracy. Such a process would result in districts that are comprised of communities of common interest and that are geographically compact. Such districts, regardless of the party affiliations of the people who live in them, would enable elected officials to better represent their constituent's interests. Districts that do not support a robust democracy look like districts Ohio currently has. Many are not comprised of communities of common interests, and many are not geographically compact. They were drawn primarily to advance, to advantage one political party over all others. Mahoning County, by any definition, is a geographically compact area that consists of communities of common interests. As one of many examples, we share this wonderful higher education resource that is hosting this public hearing today. Yet, since the redistricting of 2001, Mahoning County has been divided into two congressional districts, making advocacy for what is best for the entire community difficult. Our battle should be waged over election, elected officials promoting the interests of this region, and that is done best when the county is included in one district. Now, I understand that the redistricting commission does not have a primary role in establishing congressional districts, but you will have a role if the Ohio General Assembly fails to approve new 10-year maps, according to the new established rules. And finally, I would like to emphasize the importance of the commission adhering to the guidance of representational fairness. As you know, this states that the newly drawn state Senate districts and the newly drawn state representative districts in the aggregate should roughly correspond to the preferences of Ohio voters over the previous ten years, as expressed in statewide and federal partisan elections. Now, looking at just a couple of these examples, former President Trump won Ohio in 2020 by a margin of 53/45. So are we a 53 percent Republican state and a 43 percent... excuse me, 53 percent Republican state and 45 percent Democrat state? Governor DeWine won the gubernatorial race in 2018 by a margin of 50/47. So is Ohio a 50 percent Republican state? Forty seven percent Democrat state? Whatever Ohio is, we are not a 76 percent Republican, 24 percent Democrat state, which is the current configuration of the Ohio Senate. [applause] We are not a 65 percent Republican, 35 percent Democrat state, which is the current configuration of the Ohio House. Now in 2015 and 2018. Ohio voters overwhelmingly supported new rules for establishing districts that are intended to make elected officials responsive to their constituents rather than districts that favor any political party over any other. The League of Women Voters of Greater Youngstown and I personally expect those of you responsible for enacting these reforms to adhere to the spirit of their intention. Thank you very much. [applause]

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:31:28] Thank you. Questions? Carol Canavan.

Canavan [00:31:42] Good afternoon, thank you to the commission for being here today to hear our perspectives on redistricting. I am also a member of the League of Women Voters of Canton and have been a member there for a well over 10 years. I live in Stark County. Again, one of those counties that has been chopped up a little bit. And we all know we've heard that this is damaging to us, the voters. I live in the 50th House district. My home is in Plain Township, North Canton schools, and by one street, the 50th district. I always think of myself as a North Canton resident, primarily because that is where my children went to school. I vote for the school levies and I go to a church right in the heart of this little town of North Canton. It's a very historic town. Hoover, you recognize the name, the 50th includes a large part of Stark County to the east. It is a more rural area in Stark County, but it includes Louisville, Alliance, and Hartville. I have communicated with my representative by email, but I have not met with him personally. And from what I can tell, he is, of course, doing as good a job as he can do as our representative there in Stark County. On the congressional side, and prior to the redistricting done in 2011, I knew who my congressman was. When I first moved to North Canton, I had the task of visiting our congressman, Ralph Regula, in his farm in Devar. We needed him to expedite passport applications so that a group of Stark County students and teachers could visit Russia under a program initiated by the Diebold Corporation. I was impressed by the accessibility of the congressman and his genuine interest in the project that the students were involved in. After 2011, I was amazed at how Stark County, the 16th District in particular, changed shape. I'm part of that peninsula that reaches down to the Timken Company. There are three other districts, of course, in the state, in the county as well. Which, of course, is quite contrary to what we know about [feedback] about what we know of effective representation. The League of Women Voters League of Women Voters is known for offering nonpartisan candidate forums, but it's difficult to get candidates to agree to come to North Canton or to Canton when it's just a tiny part of their district. Why should they be concerned about voters in that little peninsula reaching down to the Timken Company? Other candidates seem not to be interested in holding town halls because their state seats are safe. Candidates of the opposing party have difficulty securing sufficient funding and support to mount a strong campaign, especially in light of the extreme unlikelihood of success in a district arranged to support one party. This leaves voters feeling that their voices cannot be heard, and that leads to apathy and worse. Once when helping register voters at KSU Stark. I talked to a young man who told me flat out that he had no intention of registering to vote and no intention of voting ever. I asked him why and he told me they don't care what I think. My vote won't change anything. To me, that is the saddest statement of our younger generation. When we take away the hope of our youth that they can have an impact on their future by participating in our government and our democratic system, we are really chipping away at the bedrock of democracy. In 2015 and again in 2018, over 70 percent of Ohio voters in all 88 counties voted to have legislation that changes this process. We demand that districts be redrawn in this decennial year, are wonderful opportunity to make these districts fair, to make them truly represent the voters of Ohio. Time is wasting. You know that. We know that. We are wanting you to do the work that the voters of Ohio has demanded and we're watching. So please, get this. [applause]

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:36:23] Thank you very much. Any questions? See no questions, the next person is Mr. Percy Squire. I believe the mics may be working, (say again?) I believe the mics may be working.

Squire [00:36:54] Yes, sir. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the commission. I have submitted written comments for inclusion in the record. But I would like to summarize briefly a few issues that I am hopeful the commission will take into account

as it performs its duties that the chair outlined in its opening, in his opening, that you're obliged to do under the recent amendments to the Ohio Constitution. I won't belabor any details concerning the redistricting process. Suffice it to say that the Constitution has been amended, the State Constitution, that is, to require the approach to redistricting that you outlined at the outset, Mr. Chairman, with respect to the Ohio House and Senate. And I also understand the distinction between the redistricting process at the state and that which is required at the federal level. But I do want to say, and I would ask that the commission be mindful of the fact that as you undertake your duties with respect to redistricting, that by reason of the provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 as amended, that your obligation to engage in an intensely local appraisal of indigenous political reality in the Mahoning Valley as you determine where these lines should be drawn. That concept, and I'm not trying to get into a lot of legalese here, but I represent a class of voters in the Mahoning Valley that are protected by the provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 as amended. That class was formerly headed by a gentleman, by the name of Ezell Armour, who filed a lawsuit that resulted in an injunction and the declaratory judgment being issued against The State of Ohio, and that order is codified at five seven seven five FS one zero four four in the opinion of the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals from 1991. Mr. Armour, unfortunately, is no longer with us. But the representatives of that same class are here with us today, Miss Helen Youngblood and the Honorable Kenneth Simon. The appraisal of indigenous political reality in any jurisdiction where lines are being drawn is to be determined in accordance with the concept known as the Totality of Circumstances test. And that legislation sets forth a number of Senate report factors that should be considered in determining whether the political processes leading to the election of representatives of choice are equally open to members of the protected class. The first factor that the commission is required to consider is whether there's been a history of official discrimination in the affected jurisdiction. My clients, nor I, are here today to point the finger at anyone or to take the scab off old wounds, accusing anyone of the racism or historical mistreatment. But it has to be noted, and I'm here to ask you to take account of the fact that in the Armour case, in addition to a determination that there was a violation of the Voting Rights Act, the Sixth Circuit determined that there was a violation of the 15th Amendment. Now, the significance of that is a violation of the 16th and 15th Amendment means the court found not only that there was discrimination that resulted in the political processes not being equally open, but that it was intentional. And the fact that there has been a finding, found in an opinion of the United States Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit that the state of Ohio intentionally discriminated against the members of the protected class in Mahoning County, should serve as a point of departure and analyzing indigenous political reality today. And that is even more important today, given the fact that the census data was released so late that there isn't going to be much opportunity for this commission to engage in an intensely local appraisal of conditions in the Valley since 1991. So I have attached to the materials provided to this body, a copy of the opinion from the Armour case in 1991, which performs an intensely local appraisal of indigenous political reality in great detail and provides the history of the valley, what's gone on, and so forth. Unfortunately, many of the findings that were made in 1980.. 1991 continue till this day. Specifically, there's never been an African American elected to a countywide office in Mahoning County in history. There's never been an African American elected to countywide office in Trumbull County, in history. There is extreme racially polarized block voting in this jurisdiction. I won't go through all those factors, but they're listed in my materials. Now, in the interest of time, and getting to the bottom line here, what's the upshot of what I'm asking this commission to look at today? Basically, given the history that set forth in the materials that I provided and there's a copy of the Armour opinion here and I ask you to make it part of the record. We've also attached maps showing the distribution of African American voters in the Mahoning Valley. Ninety five percent live in the cities of

Youngstown and Warren. So it's our position that any Senate district that is drawn in the Mahoning Valley that separates the city of Youngstown and Warren, dilutes the votes of the protected class. Secondly, any U.S. House district that separates the city of Youngstown and Warren into two separate US House districts, dilutes the power of the vote of the members of the protected class and will not only violate the Voting Rights Act, but the injunction that was imposed in *Armor* that it's our position, is still in effect today. I thank you for your attention, Mr. Chairman. [applause]

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:44:52] Thank you for your testimony. We appreciate it. Thank you for bringing it to our attention. Thank you. We will do so. Thank you, sir. Next witness is Bill Patazak.

Patazak [00:45:23] I don't think I want to follow that. Well done, well said. That kind of leaves me speechless. [applause] My name is Bill Patazak, I'd like to thank the commission for being here today, Thomas Jefferson said information is the currency of democracy. And so coming here to hear the voices of our community are so important, and I'd like to once again thank you for doing that. I grew up here in Austintown, most of my life spent there, graduated from Austintown Fitch from this august institution. And so I've been invested in this community my entire life. While growing up here, I had many wonderful state reps, state senators, Ron Gerberry, Bobby Hagan, John Boccieri, just so many, Ken Carano, so many fine elected politicians that were available and accessible and very helpful, active in their communities. But I'm here today, I work for the Ohio Association of Public School Employees. I represent employees in schools except for teachers. And but my main role is I'm for the reason for being here is I'm the president of the Mahoning Trumbull Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO. I'm on the Ohio AFL-CIO executive board. And so I just want to tell you a little bit about all of my members and what gerrymandering has meant to them and how they've become disenfranchised. I have... So I cover Mahoning and Trumbull County and we've seen the change in districts, congressional, state Reps, state Senate. And it's just I have members who live across the street from each other. They work in the same place. They go to the same church, but they have different elected representatives. And I just like to say that it is not beneficial for our democracy when politicians of any party manipulate voting maps to keep themselves and their parties in power. You know, in several times over the years, somebody mentioned this earlier, Ohioans want fair play, fair districts and they voted twice in 2015 and 2018 by over 70 percent to to pass redistricting reforms. Elected officials should respect those votes by providing a transparent process and fair maps. And like the gentleman said earlier, we want to, we're asking that you ensure redistricting to be fair, transparent, nondiscriminatory and politically impartial. Maps should serve the voters, not the other way around, not the political parties or not the interests of parties, not the interests of candidates. It doesn't matter which party does it when there's gerrymandering, it's wrong. So I want to be brief to let everybody else have a chance to speak today. Thank you very much for being here today. [applause]

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:48:17] Thank you very much. Any questions of the witness? Seeing none, call the next person, Robert Clyde.

Clyde [00:48:35] Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the commission, and I, too, thank you for being here in Youngstown. I'm sorry, however, that there's not a map that we can look at that the census data did come in late, but with the miracle of technology, a lot can be done in a short amount of time. And it wasn't. So I'm wondering if there will be another hearing where we're able to look at a map and instead of discussing this without [applause] any sense of what we're what we're going to end up with? It would be much

more helpful if we could do that with a map. Now, I'm not ashamed to say that I'm a lifelong Democrat and I'm looking at a committee with two Democrats on it and the rest Republicans. And it troubles me. It's it's the way the state has been represented. It troubles me that that has been the case. My daughter served in the Ohio General Assembly as a state representative from Portage County, and she did that until she was term limited and she served with 33 fellow Democrats, maybe one year they were 35, but out of 99, that is a very small minority. And it was very difficult for her to work with Republicans as used to be the case back in the 80s, as I can remember myself, it's no longer, it had been the case. So I would like to see the end of gerrymandering. And I think that was the intent of the constitutional amendment. [applause] And hopefully we can have fair representation, which is called for by the constitutional amendment. I think that's it. I'll be short. And thank you very much for your attention.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:50:46] Thank you very much. Are there any questions? The next witness is Bria Bennett.

Bennett [00:51:13] I'm a little short so I will adjust this. Thank you, Senator Sykes, Auditor Faber and all the proxies that are here today, I'm Bria Bennett. I'm a resident of Warren, Ohio. I'm a lifelong resident of Trumbull County. I'm here as a Trumbull County Young Dems vice president. But most of all, I'm here as a fed-up Ohioan. DeWine and LaRose can make their way across the state to campaign to cut ribbons, to hand out vax-a-million winnings, but can't be here today to show up for the future of democracy in our state. [applause] By scheduling these meetings during the day and in the morning and then refusing to show up, they show that they don't really care about us, they just care about what they can get from us. So I thank you for those that are here today. Partisan gerrymandering is the process of unfairly drawing the lines so that a party in power can stay in power and can continue to be reelected. This is a manipulative and methodical drawing of lines. The lines that we currently see are cheating Ohioans. The absence of the people that are in charge of this process does not instill faith that the lines will be redrawn differently or that anything will change after what we have said today. And Ohioans have made it crystal clear time after time that our districts need redrawn. There's no reason that countless Ohio counties should be sliced and diced. There is overwhelming support for redistricting and you've heard a wonderful consensus of that today. So today, starting now, this is the time that we can redraw lines with bipartisan support. Now is the time where we can give Ohioans a fair shot at a fair election by having fair districts. I'll keep it short like everybody else. Thank you very much. [applause]

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:53:43] Thank you. Any questions for Ms Bennett? Next witness is Anthony Buckman. He's not here. Daniel Newberg. Reverend Nicole Pickens.

Pickens [00:54:43] Thank you for the opportunity to to be with you today. Thank you to the commission for the work that you are putting into this process. I'm Reverend Nicole Pickens. I am an ordained minister with the United Church of Christ, currently actually serving a United Methodist congregation. And I've had the interesting opportunity to to kind of cross some boundaries and get to know people in different in different contexts within the wider church. And I found that to be a real blessing. But one of the things I've seen in all of the congregations I've served in student pastoring and since since finishing my education and becoming a solo pastor, is that it is getting harder and harder for people to be able to connect with each other. Divisions are becoming deeper and deeper. I've served congregations in different locations in Ohio and I've yet to serve a congregation or to live in a community that is all red or all blue. Every, every community I found myself in

has been in that, it's been a mix. It's been that purple blend. And many of those places, especially in the church congregations, I've seen that people have have been committed to relationship for a long time together, even in the face of their differences, but that it is getting harder and harder because we are becoming more and more polarized. And as we become more polarized, as we as we do this, it gets harder and harder, not only for individuals in individual communities to connect, but for us to get things done as a community, as a government, as a state. And, I've, I've wondered about this, about what can we do about these things, and it's so easy to give in to the despair of saying this is just how it is. This is just the world in which we live in. But there are things that we can do. And one of the factors contributing to this polarization is gerrymandered districts.

Gerrymandering, because of the way that it breaks us up, makes it, for one thing, harder and harder for a great person of any party to get elected if they are not, if they're not matched up to more extreme sides of their own party. But it also contributes to, it makes it so you have to be more extreme. But it also makes it so that moderates find their voice more and more diminished. It makes it harder for us to get things done. It makes it, also, it gives us this tendency to think about governance is all about winning for our side. And that's not the way to meet the needs of all of the people in our world and all the people in Ohio and all the people in each district. If we value democracy, that we need to value all voices and we need to focus on not having power over the other. Because when we get caught up in that and then caught up in the idea of winning and our own side getting the best district for us, then it dilutes our ability to be able to connect with one another. It makes it harder for us to work for the common good. I believe that we don't have to give in to this temptation to try to have power over one another. I believe that we have the ability to do more, to do better, that we can, we can work to have power with, to not see power as something limited we have to grasp at, but as something that we can share and utilize to help others, so that we can all live sharing the abundance that we have. We do, we have so many resources. And by having fair districts, we can make it that much easier for us to share those resources and to seek the good of all. I know that as well as those dedicated to public service, that is what you are seeking to do, to do what is good for all Ohioans. And so I urge you to resist the temptations toward toward some sneaking in some kind of gerrymandering, sneaking in some kind of way to get advantage and to seek the well-being of all, especially those whose voices are marginalized or silenced. We can do this. Thank you. [applause]

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [01:00:05] Thank you very much, Are there any questions? Next witness is William Neff. Sarah Lown.

Lown [01:00:47] Good afternoon. Thank you for making the long trek to the corner of the state to hear our voices. My name again is Sarah Lown. I represent the Western Reserve Port Authority, which owns and operates the Youngstown Regional Airport and also serves the Youngstown Air Reserve Station. We provide economic development services for Trumbull and Mahoning counties, along with the honor of convening the mayors of the Mahoning River Corridor. We've been able to do that for about 15 years and we started doing it because we heard one thing from Columbus and DC over and over again, and that was that we are a fragmented community. We need to come together and have one voice so that you can represent us better. The mayors, after much wrangling, came together as one voice focusing on the revitalization of the Mahoning River. And we've been able to marshal the money to remove the dams and the contaminated sediments behind those dams. We anticipate significant economic impact as a result of that. Beyond the improvement of the Mahoning River, the Mahoning River, Mayor corridor Mayors Association has been able to come together on issues that they share as old industrial legacy cities. Their central business districts lie along the banks of the river, and they have

been slowly but surely revitalizing those districts and finding new economic opportunity as a result. These mayors need representation that is going to understand and advocate for their needs, as Mr. Squires put it, the indigenous political realities, I like that, so many things were good that you said but this was good, the indigenous political realities among the cities are very real and shared, and our mayors are speaking as one voice. One mayor will defer to another if an opportunity comes along that serves one city better for this year than next year and so forth. On a state level, we have been very represented by Representative Michele Lapore-Hagan because she represents all of the cities along the Mahoning River corridor. So she understands the issues we face and she's able to advocate for us consistently and with great professionalism. In Trumbull County, we are split up between two representatives, both good, but they are not able to speak as one voice, and they are fragmented in their ability to advocate for their own districts because of this lack of indigenous political realities they are challenged to face. I also want to lift up Miss Kathy Gaige for what you were saying about communities of common interest and the geographically compact nature of these districts being vital to our success. The Western Reserve Port Authority serves Trumbull County and Mahoning County, the Youngstown Warren Regional Chamber serves Mahoning County and Trumbull County, Eastgate Regional Council of Government serves Mahoning County and Trumbull County. We need representation that knows the issues faced by these economic development and infrastructure organizations and is able to articulate and advocate for them in Washington and in Columbus. It's very important to us. The communities of common interest rest along these river-sheds, these watersheds, for the Mahoning River watershed to the Grand River watershed, these are natural cultural alliances that that have their history, a shared history in industrial wealth building. We would like to be able to continue to do that. The lake to river also shares a common history. It's compact. There are shared communities of interest. There are areas of economic opportunity that have never been tapped. They've never been tapped because our political representation has been fragmented and there's been no voice to help build wealth in this portion of the state. And we're behind as a result of it. The state would benefit, and the region would benefit, by having a more compact geographic region and by uplifting communities of common interest. And I want to thank you for your time. I think with a new district that I describe, we would all win. Thank you for your time. [applause]

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [01:06:23] Are there any questions of the witness? Our next witness is Kayla Griffin.

Griffin [01:06:45] Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the commission, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on behalf of my community and specifically The State of Ohio members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, incorporated in support of fair and equitable process for drawing lines for congressional and legislative districts in the state of Ohio. I am Kayla Griffin. I am a resident of Ohio. I was born and raised in Ohio, moved to Cleveland to go to law school, started my career in Cleveland and sat on the snake on the lake. Came back to Youngstown and still are facing so many disparities when it comes to congressional districts. As you are aware, Ohio voters twice voted to amend the state constitution to adopt a more transparent and inclusive process to conduct redistricting. And while this process is compromised due to covid-19 and the late release of the 2020 census data, because of covid, the members of Delta Sigma Theta believe that Ohio has the opportunity and the ability to still develop districts that meet the demands of its voters. The goal of avoiding avoiding political gerrymandering districts is tantamount. Ohio in the past has drawn obviously gerrymandered districts that clearly had the sole intention of assuring partisan advantage of one party over another. This happened under the control of both majority political parties in the past, and it is not a practice that should

be revisited under the current circumstances. Gerrymandering allows politicians to pick voters rather than allowing voters to select their public servants. The current process for redistricting, if followed with good intentions, will allow a fair process to achieve better and truly reflective representation. This includes compactness, preserving communities of interest, boundary preservation and compliance with the Voting Rights Act. It is imperative that despite the limited time frame we are working with, the deliberate efforts must be made to successfully carry out a sound process for the submission of maps for public citizens. It is also imperative that we ensure that there is at least a minimum level of bipartisan support to adopt the maps. Failure to meet these objectives would represent a fundamental failure for the underlying interests of the voters. Finally, I would like to emphasize that the need for a majority minority district represented in the state of Ohio is imperative. As the census data indicates, our nation continues to become more diverse. Ohio is no exception, despite the loss of one congressional seat, I would hope that the solution to redrawing the district lines would not be at the expense of representations of color, People of color throughout our community. The members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., across the nation and here in Ohio are doing our part to represent the hundreds of thousands of alumni and collegiate chapters. We are individually and collectively engaged in educating the community about the important process. Additionally, we are here to assist citizens across the state and having their voices heard, we will be having map drawing competitions and submitting those as well. We encourage the community's participation through public testimony, submission of the maps and community education. Again, I just want to thank you for the opportunity to be heard. Thank you for your presence. And we look forward to fair maps. [applause]

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [01:10:49] Thank you for your testimony. Next witness is Chris DeFrank.

DeFrank [01:11:11] Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your time, I appreciate it. I'll be the first to admit I'm naive when it comes to some of the nuances about gerrymandering. I know the basics. And what I do know is this. It is tantamount to election fraud, is what it is. It's fraud. The GOP sees their days numbered. I believe in the youth today. I have faith in them. I know they are going to do the right thing as they get older and become voters. I know it. Tired of poor people. People of color being disenfranchised by a system that does not speak for them. It speaks for the rich white elite. And I've had it. I'm angry everyone here should be angry. My democracy is not working for me. And when a party sees they're not going to win an election and decide to change the rules in midstream. That's not a democracy anymore. I don't know what it is, but it's not a democracy. It's not my government. I've had it. I'm tired of repeating the same thing over and over and over again. I'm tired of writing the same letters, making the same phone calls and nothing changes. The people speak, they say, we want this. Elected officials look and they go, well, we see you want this, you want that...nah, we don't think so, because that doesn't benefit us. The people want what benefits them. That's the government's job. That's it. Sorry for yelling, thank you for your time. [applause]

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [01:13:11] Thank you for your testimony. Any questions? Representative John Patterson.

Patterson [01:13:36] Thank you, Senator. That's former State Representative Jeff Patterson. I also had put on my witness list of retired social studies teacher too I take great pride in that. And it's good to see you all again. And I want to welcome you to Northeast Ohio. But this really isn't Northeast Ohio. I live in Ashtabula County, another hour up Conneaut, you'll know where Northeast Ohio is, the outpost of this great state. But I

mention that for this reason, Ohio, you know, like you, we all travel around the state as legislators and, you know, the distances we're talking about and you know the diversity of this state. But I feel very strongly about gerrymandering for this reason, I am the Patterson of the Cupp-Patterson Fair School funding plan, [applause] OK, and all of you should take great pride in that because it was a team effort. And I, in true confession here, and I know we have a pastor, a couple of pastors here, I'm going to make a true confession. I spent more time, and Representative Ginter, you can verify this, in Representative Cupp's office when we were working on this than I did with any other legislator, save for my roommate, John Rogers, with whom I shared an apartment, simply because school funding was so complex. But we did it. The first phase is completed. There are two more cycles, shameful plug for the next two budget cycles, but we have to get the work done because it's about our kids. It's about what makes Ohio great. It's about what we love the most, and that's our children and our collective future. But I had to find a partner in this effort who was willing to work, who had the same attitude towards service, even though we differed in terms of our party affiliation. It can happen. It can work, but we have to give it a chance to work. So let me explain what this is about from a former legislator's perspective, Senator Sykes, I know you're happily married, right?

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [01:16:06] Yes.

Patterson [01:16:07] And very happily, correct?

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [01:16:08] My wife is here. So yes, for sure. [laughter]

Patterson [01:16:12] Yes, and I know Representative Ginter, I know you, and you would say yes? Thank you. And I won't put Senator Yuko on the spot because Pam is sitting next to him. But that would be... she left! So you can speak freely. Oh, she's here. So why do I make mention of this? Think about those of you who have been married, the give and take that takes place in that intense relationship. One partner can have blind spots when making decisions. I know I have a ton of them, and she readily, and those of you who know my wife, readily points them out and that makes for a stronger marriage. But what we have here is a marriage between all of us in this great family we call the State of Ohio, and it has to work with divergent voices. And in order to do that, we need fair districts so those voices are heard. It will make Ohio a much stronger state. And here's where the rubber meets the road. And, Auditor Faber, always good to see you, we served together on a subcommittee during finance and produced some great legislation that changed some issues that were haunting the state of Ohio, but we work together. My point to you is this, the way the districts have been drawn lend themselves to districts that either lean left, many of them lean left or lean right, and in the extreme, force potential candidates to run further left or further right. Now, I'm a former history teacher. I chaperoned a number of dances. Anybody ever do that? [laughter] Yeah. Junior high dances were simple. The boys went to one corner, the girls went to another, chaperoning was easy. That's in part, what happens when we have gerrymandered districts. What we need in the State of Ohio is a high school dance where you need a crowbar to separate them [laughter] because they're working together for a common goal, whatever that is. I leave that up to you. [laughter] My point is we all, to quote John Kennedy, Mike O'Brien, Representative O'Brien, we all breathe the same air. We all have the same goals. We all want Ohio to grow and be prosperous. We want to leave behind a legacy that is larger than what we ever can dream by ourselves. We need to work together, but we need the opportunity to do just that. And fairly drawn districts will provide that opportunity. Thank you and God bless. [applause]

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [01:19:22] My last witness slip, Bill Adams.

Adams [01:19:35] Hi, and thanks for being here. I was going to use the same American University quote from Kennedy. No, not really. That was a really tough act to follow. But this should take 90 seconds or less. I kind of timed it out. This is from the Daily Legal News, Thursday, August 19th, last week. Census data spurred GOP's largest partisan edge in decades. It says, I'm just going to read a few paragraphs about Ohio. You know, Ohio Republicans won 12 the 16 U.S. House districts in each election since the last redistricting, taking 75 percent of the seats, even though Republican candidates never received more than 58 percent of the total two-party vote. Quote, my eyes are going bad in old age, we have some of the most rigged districts in the country. Luke Feeney, a Democrat who is mayor of the south-central Ohio city of Chillicothe, asserted during an online forum on redistricting last month. Ohio's Senate president Matt Huffman, a Republican, said new redistricting criteria limiting the splitting of counties should put an end to oddly shaped districts such as the so-called snake on the lake that stretches from Toledo to Cleveland to squeeze together a bunch of Democratic voters. However, Hoffman maintains Democrats could have had more seats under the current map if they had run better campaigns in closely contested districts. Quote, Those who want to simply say, well, it's all because of what the districts are. Well, that's simply false. Huffman said it's not just about indexes and parties, it's about candidates. Well, as another 60s icon, John Lennon once said, just give me some truth. Thank you. [applause]

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [01:21:46] Thank you. Any questions? Seeing none, is there anyone else that would like to testify today? So looks like we have one, Janet Carson.

Carson [01:22:23] Thank you, Senator Sykes, thank you to the commission for being here. I want to speak to you today because I'm concerned for my state as a grandparent, as a mother, as a small business owner and as a voter, I am very concerned about the future of Ohio. I was born and raised in Northeast Ohio. I've lived here all my life, although I've traveled the world and seen elections in many countries. I've seen the size and prosperity of our state diminish partly because of our unfair districts. Ohio is a purple state, but we are not led that way. Our children go off to college and never return to their home state because they view Ohio as being regressive and lacking in opportunities. Parents and grandparents leave to follow their children to live in other states. This causes a problem for not only business owners, but for our tax base and for our future as a state that can be seen to be grown. We've been doing programs and incentives to try to get businesses and young people to come back to Ohio. They won't come back if they think their views don't matter. We must pay attention to what they are saying. When the people and the population diminish in the state, businesses suffer from lack of talented employees, taxes rise because of loss of revenue. And I ask you, how do we keep young people here if they feel undervalued and that their votes don't matter? Whether districts are gerrymandered to favor Democrats or Republicans, the public always loses. [applause] Please listen to the 70 percent of the voters of the state of Ohio who have voted twice to ask for fairer districts and better representation, so that votes may be heard. If you love Ohio, you'll put aside political pressures and make our districts and maps fair again. Thank you.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [01:25:16] Thank you for your questions at all. Well, we have exhausted all of the witness slips. I want to say that we are very impressed with the presentations that have been made today. Do we see, is there another person coming forth? Is it Nicole Lollie?

Coca [01:26:00] Sorry, terrible handwriting, Nicholas Coca

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [01:26:02] Coca, OK,

Coca [01:26:08] Well, first of all, welcome to Mahoning Valley. For those of you that are visiting and not one of our representatives. Thank you to the commission for coming to Youngstown State and for listening to public comment. I want to give you the perspective of this community as myself a young man, twenty-six years of age, I grew up in Austintown. As you came into town this afternoon, likely from all parts of the state, you passed by, Handles ice cream, founded by Alice Handel in 1945 and before that were the home of the Good Humor Bar, founded in the 20s. Did you come through Canfield? Drive past the fairgrounds where in just a few days, will be the home of the Canfield Fair, the annual Canfield Fair, one of the largest fairs in the state. And I think most of you know that, because with respect to the commission, some of you on the board and those you represent were there recently campaigning for the very jobs that have put you in this position. Did you drive down Market Street and pass an old pizza place? Actually, a very vibrant pizza place, founded by my grandparents in 1982, Italian immigrants raising a young family, my father included. Maybe you drove down 224 and passed by the site of the very first Arby's restaurant. While Mahoning Valley is rich in history, our economic conditions today are quite poor. In June of this year, Ohio's unemployment rate was right about on pace for the national average about 5.2 percent. The Mahoning Valley, all three counties, Mahoning, Trumbull and Columbiana were all in the top 20 in the highest unemployment percentage, the lowest of which is 7.4 percent. This is nothing new. The median household income for Youngstown and Warren is about half the national and state average. In other parts like Salem, higher, but still far below. Poverty levels range from twenty one percent, up to thirty five percent. So you might be asking yourself why live here in such a gloomy situation? Many of my friends and relatives celebrate when a college graduate leaves the area for a job. We're happy for them. But for a lot of us, for myself and many others, this is no celebration. To all of us here today, this is home and we are not giving up on it. The community, you're going to find the most selfless, generous, caring people with a work ethic that only the Steel Valley can produce. Teachers who work tirelessly in struggling districts to mold a generation of young minds, including myself. The Catholic priest who taught me how to use my voice, the small business owner, who took a leap of faith and provided for community that they knew did not have a lot of disposable income. For Mahoning Valley, the good times in America, OK, the bad times are devastating. Community built on small business suffered during the covid-19 pandemic immensely. But we endured. The old saying goes, Youngstown invented grit. We don't expect good things to happen, but we make things happen. This valley deserves the undivided attention of our legislatures in both Columbus and in Washington. We deserve a voice. No longer should we be gerrymandered apart, becoming an afterthought to the politician that inherited us as constituents, just some fraction of a community they could swing by during an election year. We deserve representatives who know the Mahoning Valley as their home as their livelihood. Representatives who know their constituents because their friends, family and neighbors. We're tight knit community of people who have always looked out for one another, quite frankly, because we've gotten used to looking out for ourselves. Look around you. You'll see there's hunger for growth, opportunity and improvement. This is a community with pride and a community you see not just what is, but what could be. I've had the privilege of traveling across the United States of America. I've seen the boardwalk on the Jersey Shore and the rocky beaches of San Diego. I've had barbecue and Texas, lobster in Maine, ridden ATVs in the desert of Sedona. I've witnessed the natural beauty of the Niagara Falls, but it's amazing. It's amazing the country we have. But throughout all this, I still find myself at times missing the Sunday sauce and the kitchens of our grandmothers, [?]Trumans Mill and Mill Creek Park.

The boat rides a Mosquito Lake. Let's be honest, Chicago deep dish got nothing on Briar Hill. I've seen the White House. It's nice, but have you ever even lived if you haven't eaten a blueberry donut from White House fruit farms? Or in my case, too. OK, fine. Six. [laughter] I implore the commission to give us the representation that we deserve. We're a unique community with unique needs to represent us, you have to be one of us. When they say call your local congressman, that process had better start by dialing 3-3-0 and [applause] in this community, we look out for each other because we have to look out for ourselves. It's about time we have the undivided attention of our representatives in Columbus and in Washington. Thank you to the commissioner and God bless Mahoning Valley.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [01:32:14] Questions? Seeing none, thank you very much, Reverend Kenneth Simon.

Simon [01:32:33] Chairman Sykes, and to the legislators and to this wonderful audience, my apologies, I did not intend to speak today, but I was moved by the young man who spoke so passionately. Um, I'm chairman of the Community Mobilization Coalition for the Greater Youngstown Area, a group of 18 minority organizations organized for the express purpose of voter registration, voter education and voter mobilization. We've been in existence for twenty-two years and affecting the political, hopefully, climate here in the city of Youngstown. I've been through this process before, along with many of us in this room, where we appear before our legislators. I've been down to Columbus appearing before a Senate education committee and giving testimony, and others have traveled distances to go down and testify. They're concerned people in this room who've taken time out of their schedules to come here and give their passionate testimony. And the passion that the young man displayed hits at the heart of all of our pain is that the sad reality is that we're going to have these sessions and we're going to listen to all of this testimony. And we're going to go behind closed doors and do what we've been doing, voting along party lines. And that's the sad reality and that's the pain that that young man was trying to convey. We spend all of this time in a formality and then we go back behind closed doors and we, we're not going to do the right thing, we're going to do what we've been doing, voting along party lines because, and it's not because we don't care, it's because we care about the wrong thing. [applause] We don't care about the people. I hope that you all would prove us prove me wrong. I hope that you would prove me wrong. But the sad reality is that's how it has been. I have been through hearings and hearings and testifying, and we just keep doing the same thing because we don't hear the people. We're loyal to our parties. And that has got to stop in The State of Ohio. Please prove me wrong. Thank you. [applause]

Co Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [01:35:51] Irene McCollum.

McCollum [01:35:53] Yes, I'm Irene McCollum, and he felt passionate after hearing the person before him and now I feel passionate after hearing him. So I came today with an article that I found online from Forbes magazine, and it's dated November 10th, 2020, and it was written by Kevin Anderton. And the title is Middle School Students, students solve the issue of gerrymandering and win a ten-thousand-dollar prize. And three New York middle school students around the age of 15 put together a science research project and took on the serious issue of gerrymandering that is involves the political party in power being allowed to alter voting district boundaries to help retain their position, and that it's an ongoing problem in the United States. So they put together a mathematical algorithm that could draw a fair and balanced district boundaries, and they won this award based on their scientific research that was submitted. And I think it's something that we should look into, basically. Could it be something so simple that these young students, these smart young

students came up with a formula, a mathematical formula that will truly take away gerrymandering and come up with districts that have no personal involvement with them and are based on what's best, the best district lines that could come. And they used Alabama as an example in their article. So that's just what I wanted to share, in case, you know, and in case it really could be something that's solved so simply, thank you for listening and thank you. [applause]

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [01:38:03] Thank you. And make sure we get a copy of that for our records, please. This is the final call, any additional?.. Well, I'd like again to thank you all for your participation, the presentations were passionate and informative. We are on a spin around the state. We're at Cleveland State this morning. We're going to be at Sinclair College and University of Cincinnati tomorrow. Every day we're covering two cities. We really appreciate the input. We are pledged. In fact, we've taken an oath, the members of the commission, to draft districts that comply with our new constitutional provisions. So we're getting the information from you so that we can improve fair districts in the State of Ohio. With that, I like to call this meeting adjourned.

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Ohio Redistricting Commission
8-24-2021
Sinclair Community College
Dayton, Ohio

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:00:03] My name is State Senator Vernon Sykes, senator from the Akron area and co-chair of the Ohio Redistricting Commission, I like to welcome you. This is a series of hearings that we're having all over the state, 10 in total. These are just the first hearings. There will be other hearings. We appreciate your participation here today. We'd like to start by thanking our host, Sinclair Community College. And we have words of greetings from Dr. Steven Johnson, president.

Steven Johnson [00:00:41] [not using a mic] Thank you. Senator Sykes, I'm going to stand here and welcome to Sinclair...How many of you are here for the first time? Welcome, Senator. Thank you [inaudible] So this is your district, so thank you so much for choosing to be here at Sinclair and for all the rest of our state elected officials, thank you so much. I have just a few things to say. You picked a great time. It's the first week of classes [inaudible] Sinclair, a lot of activity, we're getting back to normal. We are educating over thirty-one thousand [inaudible] education this year, thousands of such classes. And so, you know, the students are going about fifty-fifty online and in person. We had a great year last year right in the middle of...all this Covid. We had the largest graduating class in our history, nearly 8000 students to see eleven thousand [inaudible] degrees. We're hitting it hard. This fall started up...yesterday was the first day of fall classes. We started out with our 300 majors [inaudible] respiratory therapists [inaudible] increased the number of [inaudible]. We're also going to... This year, we're increasing the number of RN nurses. So, the biggest cohort in history of the college, you know, that's a long time, 135 years. We are now in 135th year. One of the oldest [inaudible] colleges in the United States. A lot of nurses will be coming out of here [inaudible]. And, you know, [inaudible]. And we just graduated this spring our first students in that area. So, I'm going to stop bragging about Sinclair and just say this. So glad that you chose Sinclair [inaudible] Conference Center. We have some 400 events like this. Exactly like those the various community events a year. So, we are very pleased to host...We love the host. So thankful that you chose us to host. If you need anything whatsoever, there's a whole bunch of us from Sinclair wandering around. So, if you need anything, let us know. We're happy to help. Thank you, sir.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:03:14] Thank you, Mr. President, for your comments and use of the facility. Certainly appreciated. We now like to call to order the Dayton regional hearing here of the Ohio Redistricting Commission. We would like to note also those that would like to testify if you would please complete a witness slip, they're available... staff available to give them to you if you need one. Thank you very much. Will the staff please call the roll?

Roll Call [00:03:46] Yes, sir. Co-Chair. (Present). Representative Phil Plummer, (Present) designee for speaker Cupp (Present). Matt Donahue designee for governor, Mike DeWine (present). Alex Belichick designee for auditor, Keith Faber, (present) Secretary of State Frank LaRose (here), Representative Kristen Boggs, designee for leader Emilia Sykes (Here). And last but not least, Senator Louis Blessing, designee for President Matt Huffman (Present).

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:04:26] A quorum being present, we will move forward. As we all know, in November of 2015, Ohio voters approved a constitutional

amendment which implemented a new General Assembly redistricting process and established redistricting... Ohio redistricting commission. The commission consists of the governor, the state auditor, the secretary of state, and one commissioner appointed by each of the legislative leaders of the two largest political parties of the Ohio House and the Ohio Senate, a total of four one from each of the caucuses. The commission has until September 1st, 2021, to pass a plan with the votes of at least two members affiliated with each majority party. If it fails, the commission has until September the 15th, 2021, to pass a plan by majority vote just for members. If it if it receives the vote of two from both of the parties, it would it would be in place for a 10-year period, if not only by a simple majority, it would be in place for a four-year period. As you know, we do this redistricting process every 10 years based on the census conducted by the United States Department of Commerce. And this year, last year, the census was completed, conducted and we have 11 million seven hundred ninety-nine thousand four hundred forty-eight citizens in Ohio at that particular time with a two-point three percent growth from 2010. Therefore, we have one hundred and nine... Approximately one hundred nineteen thousand persons for the House districts and three hundred fifty-seven thousand approximately for the Senate districts. As you know, drawing these lines and... Is more than just apportion the right to the correct number of persons to each of the districts. But it requires sometimes some complex requirements, which would include a representation of fairness. District population requirements. Permissible deviations, rules on how to prioritize splits of political subdivisions, additional district standards regarding favoring or disfavoring of political parties, and compactness. Because we have a deadline right upon us of September 1st with the state legislative districts, we are focusing mostly on those state legislative districts. We asked you to please limit your comments to state legislative districts. Again, we're having hearings all over the state. They are being broadcast and recorded on The Ohio Channel. We also have a website, www.redistricting...redistricting.Ohio.gov, where additional information is being posted about additional hearings where you can submit written testimony and also submit maps. It is important that we allow each person the courtesy and an opportunity to speak. We...looking at the number of witness clips that we have. We're going to limit you to four minutes. We will have a sign up at,.. One minute...do we have that sign?.. So, it won't be a hard and fast cut off, but please pay attention if you would also please forgive me as I stumble over names. It is not my intention to do that, but if it sounds similar to your name, please step forward. It is being recorded. Please talk into the mike so that everyone can hear so that we all have the information for future deliberations. At this time, we like to move forward with the hearing, the first person is Meredith Brinegar.

Brinegar [00:09:19] Thank you. My name is Meredith Brinegar and I live in Bellbrook, a Dayton suburb in Greene County. I'm also speaking on behalf of my nephew Matthew, who is in seventh grade and lives in Cincinnati. He's passionate about geography, maps and politics. He, a 12-year-old, can easily see how gerrymandered his U.S. congressional district is, Cincinnati shape is still a regular. It has been turned into a piece of jewelry featuring the country's worst offenders. He can also tell you about the snake on the lake. I'll keep my message brief. I voted, along with the vast majority of Ohioans, to create fair districts in 2015 and 2018. Now is the time to make this a reality. We know the criteria and we will be watching. We want elections that are determined by citizens, not politicians. Thank you.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:10:13] Are there any questions? [applause] Seeing none, thank you very much...

Kim Senft-Paras [00:11:15] [no audio] ...Passed with over 70 percent of Ohio voters voting in the affirmative for these ballot issues, both reforms passed in all 88 of Ohio's counties because redistricting happens only 10 years, it is imperative that the commission use this opportunity to remedy the gerrymandered districts made in 2011. The Ohio State government makes decisions that affect every aspect of my life, including environmental laws, infrastructure, taxes and voting rights. As members of our shared geographic area, my neighbors, friends and family share culture, history and economic policy concerns because of where we live. Centreville is part of the 41st House District represented by Andrea White, but we are nestled in Washington Township, which is represented by...which is represented by Tom Young, who acts for the 42 District. These communities share the Centerville City School District, the Washington Centreville Public Library System, the center of a Washington Park district, and the Washington Township Fire Department. As a community of interest, Centreville and Washington Township would benefit from cohesive representation from our government. Communities of interest do not necessarily share the same political viewpoints or support for certain candidates or political parties. However, redistricting lines must be drawn so that communities of interest are preserved to the greatest degree possible, so that they can effectively organize and advocate for their interest. Communities of interest should be the building blocks of redistricting. Over the last five months, I have worked with members of the local League of Women Voters to engage community members around our county to draw maps for their communities, outlining their own stories and drawing lines around the area they consider their community where they share values, customs and concerns. I hope you will review the maps we have submitted for Montgomery County during your deliberation of overall state district maps. For an employment opportunity, I moved from south... I moved to southwest Ohio from northeast Ohio. The infamous Ninth District, nicknamed the State Snake on the Lake, is a glaring example of the gerrymandered work done during the 2011 redistricting process. If the commission fails to create contiguous, non-gerrymandered represent... representationally fair maps, it will be complicit in creating safe districts, which result in predictable election outcomes, resulting in unresponsive elected officials, disengaged voters and dysfunctional government, which serves only those who made the maps. In summary, I am asking the Ohio Redistricting Commission to follow the law, set aside party allegiance and restrain themselves from power grabs by packing and cracking districts. Show your veracity, strength and transparency by championing accountability, demonstrating bipartisanship and embracing public participation. Thank you for your time and consideration of my request.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:14:36] Thank you, [applause] are there any questions? Thank you very much. Laurel Kerr.

Kerr [00:14:52] Good morning. I'm Laurel Kerr and I live in Washington Township, a suburb of Dayton. State House District 42 and state Senate District 6. Thank you for the opportunity this morning to share my testimony. It's important to me to share my testimony today because it has become clear in recent years that our lives depend upon a democracy that includes fair representation. Gerrymandering provides the illusion of democracy, but actually denies it, our representational system was hijacked in 2011 when state legislators drew gerrymandered districts with the clear goal of maintaining power. This has nothing to do with serving the citizens of Ohio. It is well documented that gerrymandered districts result in extreme voices of a party being elected as the election is usually won in the primary. Extreme voices do not usually reflect common sense and do not reflect the majority views of citizens. I would like to use gun safety as an example of how extreme voices of politicians elected, because of gerrymandering, have made our state less safe and a less desirable place to live. You may remember the mass shooting in

the Oregon district just two years ago. There was much said, at that time, about passing laws that would enhance gun safety. And the phrase "do something" resonated with many citizens, regardless of political party, with the hope that our legislators would enact laws to reduce fatalities. Instead, a castle doctrine that extends to any area where a person is legally allowed to be, rather than just their home or car, was passed. Allowing someone to shoot and kill based on a perceived threat, even if later... It was discovered the victim had no intention of causing harm. The duty to retreat, if at all possible, was removed. My state senator, Niraj Antani, formerly my representative, stated that high school seniors should be allowed to carry their long guns to school. This is a ridiculous statement, which he, to my knowledge, has not retracted. This was published in the Dayton Daily News. I think we can all agree that it is more likely, based on recently passed Ohio laws, that someone in our community will die because of a bullet. Even after 70 percent of Ohioans expressed a desire for changes to gun laws to better protect our families. Today, I am asking the commissioners to only accept state and congressional maps that fairly represent the voters of Ohio. Nothing more, nothing less. The life of someone you love may depend upon it. I thank you.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:18:33] Thank you very much. [applause] Stanley Hertel

Hertel [00:18:50] Good morning to the commission. My name is Stanley Hertel. I'm speaking as chair of the Social Justice and Peacemaking Ministry unit of College Hill Community Presbyterian Church at Cornell and Philadelphia drives in Dayton. We appear to...in right to support fair representative districts for all voters and to oppose gerrymandering or manipulation of the redistricting process for the gain of some politicians or political parties at the expense of others or voters generally, particularly minority voters. Every American should have the right to vote and have their vote have equal influence in the government that results...let me do this... We contact you because our faith tradition expects justice from the powerful, care for the needy and vulnerable, and love for the worth of all people in all their diversity. Accordingly, outsiders in the poor to be valued, everyone's vote should have equal influence. Workers are to be paid a fair wage, a fair marketplace is required, and greed and exploitation are to be avoided. These values are not limited to our Judeo-Christian faith tradition, but are found throughout American society. Our church is a racial and cultural rainbow that values all people were located in a mostly African American neighborhood in northwest Dayton. Many around us are lower moderate income. Our community has been targeted for numerous kinds of disinvestment, so often described as an employment desert, food desert, a health care desert and a retail desert. It could also be seen as a democracy desert because a number of institutional issues, including gerrymandering, belief in the responsiveness of government to the needs of people here is comparatively low. Election participation is low. Many do not believe that they should invest emotionally in a process that is stacked against them. This needs to change now. We Americans believe in a democratic system, meaning people choose their leaders. The best decisions are made with the approval of the most people and from the bottom up rather than the top down. The US Constitution provided the general framework but was relatively new system when it was adopted. So since then, people seeking power have studied how to game the system, generate unfair advantages that diminish the democratic process. One of these was the manipulation of electoral districts for partisan advantage named gerrymandering after one of its original perpetrators nearly 200 years ago. Since then, pretty much everyone who is able to get away with gerrymandering has done it, including both political parties in Ohio and elsewhere. Computers have made it easy to manipulate the same data dividing and combining voters for partisan advantage. A look at the Ohio maps adopted after the 2010 census shows bizarre shapes and

discontinuities that can have no purpose but to turn a small advantage in voters into a large advantage in legislative seats. Ohio voters have rejected this tactic. When they endorse these new procedures for this census, they expect [inaudible] districts and this commission to provide them. Gerrymandering creates uncompetitive districts discouraging and disillusioning voters who feel that the districting has determined the outcome and their votes don't count. They will disengage and not participate. This is harmful to democracy. Officials serve, not the voters, but those who draw the districts. Thus, the legislation the people need and what does not get passed, Dis...districts are competitive, politicians try to solve problems and must listen to voters. In this decade, few elections for Congress and the Ohio legislature have been competitive. Principals of Ohio law now say district drawn should give no advantage to any political party or candidate. Communities are to be preserved and there's limited division of existing political entities. Communities should be broadly defined to first include metropolitan areas who share economic and social interdependence. Elections are also covered by the Voting Rights Act and Civil Rights Act. Racial inequality in America's history has been enforced by various election mechanisms, including voter suppression and gerrymandering designed to minimize the political power of minorities. These efforts continue today and are unacceptable. Accordingly, we call on the commission to draw districts that are fair, compact, representative, competitive, unbiased and respectful of the rights of minorities. Gerrymandering must end. Thank you for your attention.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:23:57] [applause] Next, we have Ms. Maddie White. And I understand that you have some others you like to join you at the podium?

White [00:24:06] Thank you.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:24:07] Yes, yes. Come forward. Members of Delta Sigma Theta,

White [00:24:12] Thank you for their recognition and good morning to the gentleman and madam of the redistricting commission. My name is Maddie White. I am first vice president for the Dayton Union NAACP. I am also a member along with my sisters of the Ohio redistricting cohort for Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated. I want to thank you for providing the opportunity to be informed of the interest of communities, citizens across Ohio of an interest and an expectation in their districting. Across the last decade, Republicans have only won 54 percent of the statewide share of state legislative races, but they occupy about 75 percent of the Ohio Senate and 65 percent of the Ohio House. That is not fair. Our map drawers in 2011, cracked apart various communities to drown out our voices and pack together, other ones to diminish our overall impact on our political futures. Take Dayton, for example, and its surrounding communities, the city whose voters, especially in the black communities, tend to support Democrats. It's cracked apart in two Senate districts that carve up the city to drown it into surrounding rural and conservative districts. At the House level, the city is equally as carved apart, allowing for just one Democratic seat and splitting apart the black communities in Trotwood, apart from those in either Dayton or Huber Heights. Under a fair map, we'd have districts that actually serve our communities, not one that served our politicians. If the criterion for the process—compactness, preserving communities of interest, contiguous communities, boundary preservation, compliance with the Voting Rights Act are adhered to, their districting will be achieved. The current maps split apart our communities, diluting our votes and undermining our collective political power. Moving forward, we need to uncracked and unpack our cities to restore power back to the people where it belongs. Our communities must be kept together so that we can have real pathways to representation. We're not

asking for maps to be rigged for one party or the other. We're asking for a fair shot and be enabled to elect representatives of our choosing. I thank you that this is a process that you are engaging in, that we are engaging in, that is of the people, for the people, by the people. Future maps must reflect Ohio, its partisan makeup and its diversity. If we vote nearly 50/50 between Democrats and Republicans, that should be reflected in who's able to get elected to serve in our legislative bodies. A fair map would also, importantly, ensure that voters of color have adequate and proportional political representation, which is the essence of these hearings that we want you guys to please hear, consider, act and make decisions and the interest and the expectations of the people. In too many ways, Ohio's Black communities and other Communities of Color are left out of the conversation and they are the brunt of systemic inequities and failures and those have been echoed by the previous speakers. The same is true of the political process and how the lines are drawn. And I just want to make a note on the process while I am thankful for this process, because as you have heard, it is the democratic way. It is the constitutional right. I do want to say that the hearings that this commission is hosting are being held in the middle of the workday and only on weekdays. That means that too many Ohioans are being left behind in having their voices heard about what they need in the future maps moving forward. Hearings must be made accessible to all Ohioans. That means having hearings outside normal business hours, hosting them on weekends and providing virtual testimony options for people who either can't attend are not comfortable. So, again, I thank you for this opportunity and please consider that the decisions being made are going to affect the next decade. So not just us, but the future generations. Thank you.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:29:03] [applause] Thank you very much. Scott DiMauro.

DiMauro [00:29:20] Good morning, Cochairs Sykes and distinguished members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission. My name is Scott DiMauro. I'm a high school social studies teacher from Worthington. It is also my honor to serve as the president of the Ohio Education Association. On behalf of OEA and our 120,000 members, I thank you for the opportunity to address you today. The work done by this commission will have a large impact and a lasting effect. Since the last maps were drawn, Ohioans have twice voted to reform our redistricting process for both congressional and state legislative districts, OEA was an early supporter of both measures. Among the legislative policies and resolutions adopted by our members is a continuing theme of democracy. OEA believes that voters should have access to the polls and that citizen participation should be encouraged. It's what we teach our students, it's what I've taught my students and it's central to our character as a nation. Partisan gerrymandering subverts our democracy. It's designed to devalue the voice of the voters to rig the game. Drawing districts to favor one party over another is wrong, it leads to less competition and a less responsive government. It leads to more polarization and less cooperation among our elected officials. OEA is committed to fair maps because we know a more inclusive democracy means better decisions for students, educators and communities. As educators, we serve students from all backgrounds. Lawmakers who are responsive to the voters are essential in meeting student needs. We've seen the impact on school funding since 1981, Ohio Department of Education data show that the more competitive balance in the legislature, the less to the cost of education, has been shouldered by local property taxpayers. Greater disparities in the balance of power in the legislature have correlated with a greater funding burden being placed on the backs of local property taxpayers. The strong support of voters on the redistricting issue is clear. It resulted in a change to the state constitution. This body is a product of that change. Now it's up to this body to live up to the letter and the spirit of the law. We need a transparent process that results in fair districts. Through this redistricting

process, Ohio has a chance to serve as an example to the country about how to do this the right way. I call on you to put partisanship aside and listen to the will of the people through working together and compromise, you can rise to the occasion and produce fair representative districts. The delay on census data has made your work harder and timelines tighter. We understand that, however, this cannot be used as an excuse. What the voters of Ohio have every right to expect and demand is a bipartisan agreement that results in a 10-year legislative map. Anything less would be a failure of leadership. I thank you for your time and attention. Be happy to answer any of your questions.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:32:48] Are there any questions? Thank you very much. [applause] Mr. Ryan Leidel?

Leidel [00:33:05] I have Nothing to add.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:33:16] Diana Pressnell.

Pressnell [00:33:29] Good morning. My name is Diana, and I am a resident of Greene County. Last year I had the pleasure of interviewing one of the candidates for the House of Representatives. She was running for the 8th District. After that interview, I was struck by the struggle she faced in representing two vastly disparate populations within her district...or within that district. The southern portion of that district is the urban suburban areas of north Cincinnati, while the remainder of that district is quite rural. And speaking to her, it was clear that if elected, she would have constituents with vastly different needs. How would she successfully be able to represent them all? With that question in mind, it is time that Ohio's districts are drawn in such a way that an elected representative has the ability to best represent as many of their constituents as possible. It is time for Ohioans representatives to reflect the true will of the voters and not the will of any particular political party. We, the people, have spoken by passing laws to ensure fairer districts. And we will be watching to make sure you, the commission, have listened.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:34:49] [applause] Thank you. Janet Underwood.

Underwood [00:35:01] Hello, thank you for taking my comments. My name is Janet Underwood. I live at 108 East Hudson in Dayton. I am represented by the 39th House District and the 5th Senate District. And there's not much I can say that's different than what anybody else has said here today. And I left my notes in the back because I've been wearing my other hat as a photographer. But I just wanted to thank you for taking the time and making the effort to draw us fair districts this cycle and the people of Ohio voted two times to have better representation. We know what gerrymandering is, we expect you to do the right thing this time and I look forward to seeing the new maps. I hope you will take time to consider the maps that will be submitted to you by other people that have looked at them, because what we really need is maps that represent the communities that we live in. In Dayton, where our community is split in half so that our votes are diluted, and we need to have representation for our city so that we can get the resources that we need. And thank you very much. And I'm terribly sorry if my voice is shaky and I hate speaking in public. [laughter] Thank you.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:36:39] Thank you Ms. Underwood, Ms Stephanie Smith.

Smith [00:36:47] Good morning. My name is [cough]...my name is Stephanie Smith, and I'm from Clayton, Ohio, which is northern Montgomery County. Lots of people got up here

today and spoke very eloquently. I'm going to talk first about the first time I got involved in Ohio politics. It was 1969. I was entering my senior year of high school and Proposition 19 was being considered. That was to change the Ohio law to allow 19-year-olds to vote. The idea was at that time, if you're old enough to kill, you're old enough to vote. I was expecting a big sigh and "OK, Boomer..." after that story [laughter] given the age of the people behind me, I think they pretty much know what I was talking about. So that's sort of got me involved. Recently I have been working very, very hard on registering voters. I do this along with the League of Women Voters. I go to festivals, I go to community groups, I go to farmer's markets. I do everything I can to get people to register to vote. The most often thing that I hear when someone is not registered and I ask them if they would like to is: "no, my vote doesn't count anyway and the whole system is rigged." That's sad for me to hear. I grew up in a home where I had one Republican parent, one Democrat parent. I would tease them when they would go out to vote...aren't you guys just cancelling each other out? And they told me, no, this is what we need to do and we do agree on some things. So, this is what I grew up with. One of my most fun thing to do is registering kids, going into the high schools and registering the young people. They're so excited. They're so excited. When I was getting signatures for the amendment, people didn't really know what gerrymandering was. A lot of them, all I had to do was show them the map. And they said, that's crazy! I said, I know, will you sign here? [laughter] And they did. In addition to working and volunteering with the league, I am also a CASA. I'm a court appointed special advocate. I act as guardian ad litem for kids who have been abused and neglected. I've worked with these kids for the last 18 months. Their whole life is [inaudible] something. Their life was disrupted before this. Now it's even worse. And they asked me because I have signs on the car about voting, you know, what do you do that? And I said, I do it because I think it's important. And the kids I talked to, they don't understand that. They have, they say things like, I don't want to declare a party. You don't have to. These are things that you have to know, I'm asking you guys and women to follow through with the spirit of how this was done to make my job easier when I go out and register the kids to vote, that I can show them that the system does work. Thank you.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:40:23] [applause] Ms Smith, thank you very much, I graduated from high school in 1969, so I just want to say thank you for representing us...experienced citizens. [laughter] Kristin Beireis.

Beireis [00:40:50] I have provided a visual aid sort of make sure everybody has one of the a copy of that, there was a stack of eight with a map on the back. My testimony written out on top. That looks like it right there. No? I will try and use the one that I have in my hand and we'll see if that works. If you find it, please pass it out. Good morning.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:41:27] Good morning. Good morning,

Beireis [00:41:29] Mr. Co-Chair, Commission. I am Kristin Beireis and I am in House District 62 and Senate District 7. Thank you for having this forum and for allowing me to speak today. I'm very concerned about voting in our state when representatives are focused on things that don't impact the area their constituents live in. People don't want to vote and don't feel their vote matters. In my community, I live just one block away from the Montgomery County line in Warren County. My neighbors vote for different Ohio House and Senate legislators, yet we share the same exact zip code. My district stops at the northern end of Warren County at the county line, yet at the southern edge of the county, my Senate district crosses the county line and goes all the way down to the Ohio River. When people talk about manufacturing and what we need to do to improve this state, I'm thinking of Dayton, Ohio, where I spend most of my time. However, I don't get to vote on

representatives looking out for those interests. When representatives are talking about schools and how we can improve them, they are thinking Lebanon, Mainville and Mason. While those are in my county of Warren County, they are not edge communities around the city of Dayton. Much of what we do in Springboro City Schools is compared to Miamisburg and Centerville in Montgomery County. I define my community by where I spend most of my time. Where do I go shopping, eat and have friends? My life is in Springboro and Montgomery County. My husband and I eat dinner in Springboro, Miamisburg, Miami County in Centerville, all of which are in Montgomery County except Springboro. We shop in Springboro and Montgomery County. My friends and place of worship are in Montgomery County, I'm in community theater and I sing in choirs in Springboro and Montgomery County. My doctors are in Springboro, Montgomery County and Greene County. You get the picture. My life is Springboro and North. When you look at that map, you can see that the pink dots are all the places where my life is, and that's the blue part, which is Springboro and the green part north, which is all in Montgomery County. Yet you can clearly see that my districts are the pink and purple below, and that's where my district is represented. It is important to consider community when drawing maps, I could have gone to the Cincinnati hearing today because basically I'm lumped in with Cincinnati and people will be talking about my districts more at that hearing than they are here. But that would have more than doubled my commute to come and speak with you today. While I am grateful this hearing is available and I was able to make it, I do want to express a few of my challenges in being here today in hopes that it will serve to help design this process better as you're moving forward. Given the last-minute nature of the scheduling for these hearings, it left very little time for communities to get here to give input. Even today, I had to scramble to change my schedule to be here. I didn't even know where I was supposed to park or whether I would have to pay for that parking until Friday. It's also concerning that all the hearings this week are being held during the day when most of my community is working. I have had to scramble to have my voice heard today, I feel it's extremely important to have fair maps drawn and I voted for this process for that reason. I also voted for transparency, community participation. I ask that you make those top priority as you move forward. Right now, my voice is included with people who live by Kings Island and near the Cincinnati area. How can anyone speaking for those whose lives are in the Dayton area also speak for those whose lives are in Cincinnati? Please draw maps that are representative of their communities and the legislators who will serve them. Thank you.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:45:58] [applause] Thank you. William Davis.

Davis [00:46:20] Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, it's a pleasure to be here and to sit in on all the comments that people are making. My name is William Davis and I vote in the 40th Ohio House District and the 6th Senate District in Butler Township of Montgomery County. For over a decade, I have worked with other volunteers across Ohio advocating for universal, comprehensive health care. We commissioned an economic impact study that was released in 2019 stating that Ohio stood to save twenty-five billion dollars per year. That's B...billion... billion... with a single payer system. Despite years of effort to share the demonstrated benefits, it wasn't until 2019 that we were granted a hearing with a committee to present our economic study with thousands of signatures gathered over the years, we know there is building support in the state. Yet, because of gerrymandered districts being secure for the dominant party, we are not making the progress in the Statehouse that we should. We the people are unable to be heard over the party in power or the corporate money that put it there. A democracy defines a government by the people, we have a weak democracy because of unequal representation offered by skewed districts. People do not feel represented when their neighborhoods are carved out and put

in another district, conec...connected to another county. This discourages voting and is not how to foster a strong democracy. People on both sides of issues want to be heard and want representation that is responsive and fair to both sides. We need to end partisan bickering. And,.. and start working for the common good with respect to all views and much less weight given to corporations buying influence. This is why I ask you to support the spirit of the Ohio constitutional amendments related to drawing districts to be compact, competitive and to not favor either party. Thank you for your time and consideration of my request [applause].

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:49:01] Thank you, Joy Schwab.

Schwab [00:49:16] Hello, I'm Joy Schraub, I'm from Beavercreek, Ohio, and Greene County...and let me just say right off, I'm a boomer and I remember from my 1966 civics class in high school, they taught me that gerrymandering was wrong and that it was a ridiculous thing that was ridiculed for its political corruption that started in 1812. I was shocked to realize in the past 10 years that my state was severely gerrymandered. So I got active with fair districts and passed the legislation that, you know, is going to try to do something about this, the legislation that I hope you will take seriously and spirit and intent. What we need are representative government, you don't get this with gerrymandering. With gerrymandering, the most extreme elements of a party can win elections in a district where normally a candidate would have to take into account the full range of views, a wide-ranging opinion in that area...Let's see, according to Thomas Sutton, a Baldwin Wallace political science professor and director of the Community Research Institute. Gerrymandering or the drawing of state legislative lines do all but guarantee one political party with most seats. He says the result is that rural and Republican districts have supermajorities in both the Ohio House and Senate because of those super majorities that were created by gerrymandering, the actions of the Ohio legislature are often at odds with the majority of opinion in our state. For example, Ohio legislatures, especially over the past 10 years, have passed a couple dozen laws to restrict abortion in our state, including the extreme and unconstitutional so-called heart bill... heartbeat bill that bans abortion after a fetus' heartbeat is detected at about six weeks when most women don't even know that they're pregnant. They did... you passed this law in a state where the majority of Ohio voters believe that in most or all cases a woman should have the right to an abortion. Because of the passing of this unconstitutional law—it's tied up in the courts now, and Ohio taxpayers are being forced to pay the costs to, you know, fight for this unconstitutional law and to put up with it. That's just one example of, you know, the extreme dominating the supermajorities in the state because of gerrymandering. Responsible Republicans should want to distance themselves from these extreme views. But it's hard to do when a district is gerrymandering so that whoever wins the Republican primary will automatically win that district. This was also cited as a problem with gun laws in Ohio. Let's see, someone pointed out that 70 percent of the voters' desire to change gun laws to protect firearms. 90 percent of the people said said that...let's see. Oh, OK... when asked, do you support or oppose requiring background checks for all gun buyers? 90 percent of Ohio voters said yes, including 87 percent of gun owners and 89 percent of Republicans. You know, and yet we have laws in our state, you know, for Stand Your Ground and the Castle Doctrine and Ohio lawmakers are even considering a bill to eliminate training and background checks on those who carry concealed guns. You know, this just does not jive with, you know, what the majority of voters want in Ohio. Even the majority of Republican voters. So please, you know you know, I may not be here in the next 10 years. Let's face it. I would like to see this get done now, where for once and all gerrymandering is put to rest in Ohio and we have a fair and representative elections in our state so that we don't have these extreme positions being made into policy where we will have a fair and balanced

legislature that represents the total population of Ohio, including in my extremely gerrymandered districts in Beavercreek. Thank you. Any questions?

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:54:46] [applause] Any questions? Thank you very much....Bill Benner

Benner [00:55:07] Co-Chair Sykes, Secretary LaRose, designees of the other five commission members who weren't able to be here today, my name is Bill Benner. I'm the director of organizing political and legislative activity for the United Food and Commercial Workers Union, Local 75. And I'd like to thank all of you for allowing me the opportunity to be here today. We represent in our local union over 30,000 hard working grocery workers, pharmacy retail workers, food packing and processing workers. Folks in distribution centers and health care facilities and our members live, work and vote in every corner of our jurisdiction, which runs the entirety of the I-75 corridor from Toledo to Cincinnati. We also include parts of northern Kentucky, southeast Indiana. Serving the essential function of ensuring food, medicine and medical care and more are available...are available to all of our families, friends and neighbors, our members are a true community-based union and the backbone of the communities they serve. The members of our union worked tirelessly to ensure all of us have the essential items we need when we need them, and for the most part, they don't expect a whole lot. A fair wage, affordable and quality health care, some time with their family, right to negotiate for better and the ability to join a union to have a collective voice on the job. They really want what we all want, good schools for our children and grandchildren, roads and bridges that are drivable, clean, drinkable water, safe neighborhoods. And we know all these issues and many more come down to why we're here today—fair districts. But in order to have fair districts, we need a fair process for creating them. Now our members are busy. They work weekdays and evenings, they work weekends and most holidays. Our work schedules are written usually two weeks in advance. The meetings that were proposed by this commission are set during regular working hours Monday through Friday. Schedule of these hearings was posted about 10 days before today. All of this makes it near impossible for most working people, not just my members, most working people, to attend and voice their opinions. Light of the advancement in virtual meetings over the last year and a half, it would seem more possible than ever... we could have done things to accommodate more voices to be here today...the very people these hearings were intended to incorporate into this process. Ohio voters made their intent clear in 2015 and 2018 to make this a fair, open and transparent process. Well, it's clear more could have been done to make these public hearings accessible to working people. It is my hope that this commission will at least uphold their duty to create the fair districts we deserve. But I'm not going to hold my breath. Even more disheartening than the schedule, is that two of the seven actual folks tasked with being here and I thank you both for being here, actually made it. I also thank all of you who did dedicate your time to be here. We have seven folks designated to this commission that couldn't be here today. If I did something like that to my members, I'd be fired or voted out of office. [applause] When a pandemic hit, a global pandemic hit, my members showed up. [applause] Does not seem that those elected to perform this task have the same worry, and I think we should all ask ourselves why. One, thank you all for the opportunity to speak and encourage this commission to do better. Thank you.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [00:59:25] [applause] Questions? Thank you. Bill Ebben.

Ebben [00:59:46] Morning. My name is Bill Evans. I lost my son, Tim, to a fentanyl overdose. What does that have to do with redistricting? Well, let me tell you. Currently,

Ohio is not a red state or a blue state. But it's a rigged state. [applause] And this is costing, among other ways, 200 Americans their lives every day, it's costing serious money. When I say serious, we spent a trillion dollars over the last 50 years on a failed war on drugs. And it's worse than that because it makes... the war on drugs makes every Ohioan miserable. You know, we put up with prostitution, property crime, armed robbery, violence in our streets, high murder rates. And all of these problems are a direct result of the way we're doing the war on drugs. We just accept these problems in our lives while we do very little to help Ohio citizens, citizens who are addicted to opiates, often through the medical system, and through no fault of their own. When either party has a rigged stranglehold on our government, we no longer have a marketplace of ideas. This stifles our progress as a state and a nation, a slave-ish devotion to the status quo, prevents growth and ignores new ways to deal with our problems because of the stifling of the competition of ideas. Gerrymandering is rigging the system. If one party wins the battle to rig the system, it means for the next 10 years they don't even have to listen to the minority party. There's no debate in the legislature. The rigged party doesn't have to give any more than lip service to the ideas of the minority party and the millions of citizens they represent. More... They represent more people than the party that's in the majority. Now, Bill, you know, life's not fair, you know, I graduated in 1969, my draft number was eight. I you know, I've noticed that life's not fair. But you know what? That's not an excuse for not trying to get things to be as fair as they can. I have this idea. About how to change the war on drugs and I might be completely wrong. My son Tim was a Cisco certified network engineer who worked until the day he died. Tim died alone of an overdose because the war on drugs punishes addicts instead of helping them. It forces addicts and stigmatizes them so that they take their drugs alone. And they often die alone, even with Narcan in the room. Because there's no one there to give them the Narcan. I've been running, but I just wanted one term in Congress. So I could introduce this idea. All right, I'm 70, I gave it away with the '69 thing. One term, so I could introduce this idea and this idea, I couldn't even get anybody to listen when I was running because it was a joke, I went out there and people were laughing, oh, you're the Democrat that's running. Yeah, that's real funny. All I want is a fair fight. When I drive around in the district, I have to drive an hour, through two counties that are not in my district to get to a county that is in my district. I live in Westchester. I have to drive through Dayton to get up into Greene County. All I want is a chance to make America better for everyone, a chance to save 200 Americans from dying of a completely preventable overdose every day, 200 every day, 92,000 last year, which is 30 percent more than the year before. Gerrymandering is killing people. Gerrymandering makes a mockery of the ideal of one man, one vote. It kills the chance of a new idea being considered by Congress. I just want to stop 200 Americans from dying. I just want there to be in Ohio next Thanksgiving, fewer empty seats at Thanksgiving dinner table. Let's do the right thing. Thank you.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [01:05:04] [applause] Connie Crockett.

Crockett [01:05:17] If I may. Good morning to Mr. Sykes and the full committee. My name is Connie Crockett. I am a resident of Yellow Springs and that is in Greene County. I am a program officer with the Charles F. Kettering Foundation here in Dayton. And we are working with people around the world seeking ways to better democracy, make it work as it should. I am a patriotic Democrat who was raised by Republican parents. My parents experience with the Depression and World War II, taught them and brought me into a world where Americans could do great things together. Visiting the capital at an early age, I saw that democracy was a fair and equal contest between competing ideals. What I hold in common with both my parents and my employer, who is a former cabinet member in the Ford administration, is a very deep respect for the citizens' role in democracy. So I've

always taken voting seriously. I wanted to be like a person in the capitol and be a part of that contest of ideas. So I have run for my local precinct, I've served there, I've served on my state level committee, I have served as a village council member in Yellow Springs. And I have to say that working with constituents on a daily basis, so talking over the produce, et cetera, was greatly meaningful to me. I later took a master's in public administration from the University of Dayton, hoping to run for higher office. And I eventually did run for the state legislature and what was previously the 84th District. With that as background, I just wanted to speak to you as a former politician, one who has experience running in three counties that were drawn to elect a Republican. So I was a candidate in 2006 and 2008 in the old 84th, and I knew that the odds were terrible for my candidacy, but I ran so that people had some sense of choice on the ballot, if nothing else. The gerrymandered district, I think people behind me would recognize this, went from a corner of Montgomery County, Bellbrook, all the way up to Plain City and was equally crazy to the east and west. It was mostly made up of small towns very carefully excising any town of any significant size, which I thought was deeply unfair, because if you live in a small town, you need the bigger towns. It's it's it's how you function. It's where you go to work, et cetera. If I had to draw a district that would include my town, it's now the 73rd, I would focus on where do people... where do people work? Where do they, as others have said, where do they feel at home? And so therefore I would include in in the district, Springfield, Fairborn, Beavercreek and Xenia. I found that in running for office in three counties made up of small towns, that frequently people in small towns see their neighboring community as a competitor and they weren't very willing to...even the one town had a great idea, they weren't willing to work with another town to bring that to fruition. The last time I pulled up campaign signs, we drove over a thousand miles to do so. In a conversation with my husband, a former republican governor said to him, "Jesus Christ himself could not have won the 84th district as a Democrat." [laughter] So that's the challenge. What people in America are demanding right now is to feel represented. They want to be represented by race, gender and identity, and they do not see themselves in the statehouse. This is not a perfect example, but, we are a majority female state and the state house is 71 percent male. So count me among the people who don't necessarily see myself as represented. Something personal that I feel that you could all relate to as elected officials is that when you're running for office and you meet someone and they grab your hand and they look you in the eye and they offer you their faith, they say, please help us. It's extremely moving. And so to know, as I did, the odds of my winning office being very, very slim, I felt complicit in some sort of charade. And despite doing it a few times, I loved meeting the people. I'd love to do it again. But, you know, eventually it sickened me to the goal that I thought that politics was about in terms of the contest of fair and equal competing ideals. So what I found is that, voters do not recognize that even though they think their vote matters, that it may not that there's a foregone conclusion. And anyway, I didn't want to litigate my sad story, but I will say that I did want to speak to you today simply about my protest of ruling parties choosing their voters. Of voters, not having a full measure of control over who represents them in the statehouse. And that I think that our current system is not democracy as a free and fair exchange of competing ideas. So that's my testimony. And I thank you very much.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [01:11:55] [applause] Thank you very much. Michael Morat. Maylene Miller.

Miller [01:12:29] Good morning, sir. (Good morning.) I'm not a very eloquent speaker. I just learned about this. It's bad timing. I had to take off work just to be here. My name is Mrs. Miller, Leney Miller out of Riverside and I live near Wight-Patt. I came down here from Akron, Ohio, and went to the University of Akron. And I work locally. My husband's a

trucker and my son, he serves over in (inaudible). I'm sorry I'm shaking so...And we love this country. [applause] We love the Constitution. [applause] I'm very appreciative that I'm able to exercise my First Amendment right, I believe in my Second Amendment right all the way down to the Tenth Amendment right. I want to say there's been five political races. In Ohio and I was so concerned with 2020, I went and served at the polls and a lot of voters were asking if the machines were hooked up to the Internet. Now, I was told no. And after the election, I was very disappointed. But there's five political state races. The governor, the attorney general, the secretary of state, the auditor. OK? Were all won by Republicans, and I don't think you can gerrymander a state. Ohio is dominated by Republicans. Eighty-one of the counties are red, seven are blue. And I think it should be redistrict by Republicans, because Republicans wanted, they come out and vote, I vote. Lastly. I would like to see better meeting places so I can be more prepared, and that's all I have today. Thank you, sir.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [01:14:48] [applause] Thank you. David.

Davids [01:15:10] Co-Chair Sykes, secretary of the LaRose, members of the commission, thank you so much for this opportunity to testify today. My name is Steven David and I live in South Columbus in Ohio's 18th House and 15th Senate District with my wife and two children. So I'm a licensed social worker and much of my practice focuses on educating social work students and practitioners on the importance of voting and civic engagement. So when I do this work encouraging health and Human Services professionals to incorporate nonpartisan voter outreach into their existing services, I like to focus on how voting is a healthy behavior. For individuals, civic engagement promotes a greater sense of life satisfaction and can act as a buffer against psychological distress like depression. And communities that vote tend to have greater access to services that promote overall health. But despite what I think is a very convincing case for the benefits of political participation, we know that there is persistent disaffec...disaffection with this process. So national data shows us that feeling that your vote doesn't count or that doesn't really influence how decisions are made are among the top reasons that people give for choosing not to vote. And when we look at how our maps are currently drawn here in the state of Ohio, how can we blame people for feeling this way? When I'm talking to young people and social workers, someone invariably asks the question, but what about gerrymandering? And believe me, I have a slide about it in my presentation. But to me, the question itself is evidence that people know this is happening and they know that it is wrong. And we need only look at the over 70 percent of voters who twice demanded a better map making process to know that people want this to change and they want it now. [applause] So a great deal of time and debate has also gone into this question about the trust and integrity of our elections this year, and I would contend that there is, in fact, no greater evidence-based threat to the integrity of our electoral system than the practice of splitting apart and carving out neighborhoods to predetermine the winners. Elections only have integrity when political leaders are accountable to all their voters, not just primary contests where we race as far and as fast as possible into our partisan corners and then take disconnected ideas back to the statehouse. So in the end, I'm going to echo a sentiment that was said earlier that I'm, in fact, ask you to make my job a little bit easier. Make the case for voting a little bit stronger. Don't give my students and my community partners such strong talking points about the political system ignoring them because of spiraling, snaking maps that break apart their neighborhoods. Let's take away the doubt that so many Ohioans have that their votes don't count because the lines have been drawn to pick the winners. So by deciding to draw fair maps this year, you have this amazing opportunity to send this message that what's important to the state of Ohio is not

cementing partisan advantage, but actually reflecting the will and representing the interests of the people of the state. I'm happy to answer any questions.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [01:17:58] Any questions? Thank you. [applause]
Renee Westermeyer

Westermeyer [01:18:20] Hi, my name is Renee Westermeyer, I'm from Springboro, House District 62 and Senate District 7. After moving from base to base as an Air Force family nine years ago, we settled in Ohio because our kids called it home. Even though Ohio and the Dayton area has so much to offer, I sometimes regret our choice. In the relatively short time we have lived here, I have witnessed Ohio and its leadership slipping away from values that I and my family hold dear—the values of community, public health and safety, along with protecting our environment, inclusivity and human rights. My testimony touches on a few points on how my family, as well as countless other Ohioans, are directly impacted by a lack of fair representation due to gerrymandering. According to OhioGOP.org, Ohio House and Senate seats are held by their party 64 percent and 75 percent, respectively. Yet the voting public is nearly evenly split, with 42 percent Republican leaning and 40 percent Democrat. That leaves a large percentage of our population without fair or equal representation and no voice in our state's future. I am a survivor of gun violence. My husband and I were robbed at gunpoint. He was pistol whipped. And even though neither of us had lasting physical injuries, there were mental scars. My children have endured several school lockdowns due to active shooters on campus or near their schools. And again, there were mental scars. I had taken a group of out-of-town guests to Dayton's Oregon district earlier in the evening of the mass shooting. We all escaped without physical harm, but again, there were lasting mental scars and they fear coming back to visit. After the shooting, state officials promised to take action to keep us safer. Yet instead of passing a universal background check like 90 percent of Ohioans favor, our unbalanced legislator... voted to pa... legislature, voted to pass a Stand Your Ground bill instead. That has shown to increase murder rates in states with these laws by up to 50... 55 percent and was strongly opposed by the majority of Ohioans, as well as most law enforcement agencies. Recently, my daughter was an eyewitness to a shooting close to OSU. Again, there were mental scars left for her, and even though the victim was unarmed and non-threatening, the shooter was not charged because of the Stand Your Ground law and got away with attempted murder. I am also a strong advocate for the LGBTQ+ community in our state. I have family members and numerous friends that identify on the spectrum. In the three plus years I volunteered as an ally for our local transgender support group, I have seen the devastating effects that discrimination can have on a person or a community. Lack of housing options, services both by the government and businesses, as well as within our or school systems and universities is a detriment to individuals and our state. Even though there are some federal protections for job discrimination and at school levels, there is much to be done in other areas. For example, if an LGBTQ+ person applied for housing within Dayton's city limits, they are protected from discrimination based on city laws like 35 other states that have passed similar laws in Ohio. If that same person's application is rejected by a landlord based on orientation in Springboro or Centreville, both areas I've lived in, they have little protections under current state law. For this reason, the Ohio Fairness Act has been introduced in the state House and Senate ten times without even getting hearings until recently. This act is...has support from 68 percent of Ohioans as well as major businesses in our state. But due to the inequality of representation, this act has yet to pass and our citizens remain unprotected. Our lopsided, un-representational maps protect those legislators that are not willing to listen to the 90 percent of us that want greater safety measures for gun violence or by the 68 percent of us that believe in... it, is a human right to fair housing and services

by making it nearly impossible to vote them out. This also affects our state economically, since businesses like Amazon, for example, are reluctant to come here due to failure of our legislators to act on public safety and equality. All we, as Ohioans are asking for is a fair fight for representation, our voices to be heard, our votes to count. I urged the committee to consider this within the map drawing process. Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration. Thanks. [applause]

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [01:23:34] Thank you very much. Callia Tellez.

Tellez [01:24:14] Good morning, co-chair, Sykes, thank you for this opportunity to speak. My name is Callia Tellez and I'm speaking today as the environmental policy fellow at the Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund and myself as a concerned citizen. I was born and raised in Dayton, but I currently live in Columbus. Unfortunately, there is no opportunity currently provided for Columbus residents to speak at a hearing during this process. However, I can speak in Dayton not only because of my lived experience, but because environmental injustices maintained by gerrymandering exist in every city across Ohio. Environmental injustice is the disproportionate exposure of communities of color and low-income communities to environmental hazards such as air pollution, toxic wastewater and lead exposure. A clear example of this is House District 39, where the majority of Black and Brown Daytonians reside. In these maps, I've overlaid House districts with environmental justice or EJ screen data. EJ Screen is an environmental justice mapping tool that combines demographic indicators with environmental hazards to arrive at a percentile score. The darker shades on the map indicate block groups with larger numbers of low income and People of color residents along with higher environmental risk exposures as compared to state averages. In other words, it accounts for demographic and environmental hazard indicators. As you can see in front of you, District 39 holds a disproportionate amount of blocks that are in the 95 to 100 percentile for Superfund proximity, lead paint exposure and national air toxic assessments cancer risk. The environmental injustices faced by residents in District 39 is unacceptable. Without a functioning and fair democracy. Ohio will continue to perpetuate environmental injustice. The passage of environmental protection laws should never become a partisan political tool, as if you are not debating real human lives in our communities. Under our current maps, Ohio has many districts that crack apart communities and connect disparate communities with wildly different environmental experiences and resource access. The deliberate cracking of communities dilutes the power Ohioans have to advocate for their right to clean air, safe drinking water and a fair democracy. For example, district lines cracks the communities surrounding parts of Trotwood, Fort McKinley, Fairview and North Riverdale. So while these communities in District 43 are experiencing the same environmental injustices as those in District 39, their district has pulled out to the Indiana border, diluting their voices with Ohioans who do not experience the same hazardous exposures. But if I, a young professional living in Columbus who has the privilege to drive here to Dayton, back to my hometown, because it is my job and one of the few people to talk to you today about the environmental racism your government perpetuates in Dayton, then that is a shameful illustration of this commission's attempt to be accountable to all Ohioans. The creation. [applause] The creation of fair and representative maps must center the critical voices of Black and Brown and low-income Ohioans who experience more environmental, health and social injustices. And when I say center their voices, I mean hear firsthand from those actually experiencing the injustices, which at minimum, means offering opportunity to testify outside of work hours, holding hearings in close proximity to at risk communities, extending the hearing timeline and having our commissioners actually attend the hearing. [applause] Ohioans overwhelmingly want clean air, healthy public lands, safe drinking water and a bold action on climate change. Our

legislature should reflect the will of the people. And when we have districts representative of our communities, not partisan interests, our environment and our communities win. Representatives elected by and for communities will know the problems they face, including shared environmental injustices. I urge you to consider this critical perspective when advocating for fair maps and equal districts in Ohio. Thank you. I'm happy to take any questions.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [01:29:11] One question, on your environmental injustice you listed some items— lead paint was one what were the other two?

Tellez [01:29:19] Superfund Proximity and National Air Toxic Assessment Cancer Risk. These are all EJ Screen indices that can be found on the EPA's EJ Screen portal. Thank you. [applause]

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [01:29:44] Sheila Drennen. Sheila Drennen? Ken Picoult?

Picoult [01:30:17] Greetings. I appreciate the opportunity to testify this morning. Still morning. We're hearing a lot of the same kinds of things here today, and I think that's probably because it's the will of the people. That's why 70 percent of the voters of Ohio voted to create this commission. So what I want to talk about are safe districts. Our... our democracy, I would submit, needs competitive districts, competitive elections to work like it should. And right now it's not working very well. I think it's pretty clear. The Ohio people know this, that's why seven out of 10 of them voted to create this commission. That's why we're all here. In the 10 years since the last redistricting, 45 percent of the congressional votes in Ohio were cast for Democratic candidates. I know we're talking about state, but I'll get to that in a second. But Democrats only occupy... occupy one quarter of those seats. That's a clear distortion of the will of the people by the politicians who drew the maps. And since... and the main thing is, since 2012, not a single one of those 16 seats has changed parties, that's the definition... that's a clear distortion of the will of the people. And and it's the definition of safe, partisan, distorted districts. The same dynamic has played out in the statehouse. Republicans hold three quarters of the seats of the Ohio Senate and two thirds of the House. Those are also not fair representations of what the voters have asked for. So we've seen this play out in Montgomery County as well during the last decade. One House seat, 42, in the last election is a deeply red district in the south of the county, didn't get a Democratic candidate to enter the race. That's also happened a lot of times in the 39 District where we are right now, which is packed with close to 50 precincts that vote more than 90 percent Democratic. So in our region, we've seen Democratic candidates mount spirited campaigns in other gerrymandered districts against Republican candidates who barely show up but still win by healthy margins. So, these safe districts that I want to talk about deny voters their right to make meaningful choices in general elections. If the district is going to be won by a Republican by 10 or 20 points. Several things happen. One. It's really hard to get a qualified Democrat to run. Two, the only thing the incumbent has to worry about is a primary challenge from his or her right. Three, the candidates are pulled toward messages that play to the fringes of their party for the will of the vast majority of Ohioans who are more moderate on the issues is ignored. So, safe districts result in irrelevant elections, bad laws in Ohio— pushed by one party, gridlock in Washington and general disgust at our political system. We need more competitive races where good ideas get a true hearing. We need more competitive races where strong candidates of both parties are motivated to run. We need more competitive races to restore our faith in the ability of Ohio voters to have their voices heard. The people of Ohio have entrusted you to clean up this electoral mess. Please don't let us down. Thank you. [applause]

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [01:34:35] Thank you. Wendy Dyer.

Dyer [01:34:58] Hello, my name is Wendy Dyer, I live at 3813 Callaway Court in Bellbrook, Ohio. My house district is 73, my Senate district is 10, and my congressional district is 10. My comments are short because most of what I have to say has already been said more eloquently by someone else. However, I do want to reiterate one point. In the last six years, Ohioans have twice voted overwhelmingly to end partisan gerrymandering, the first time in November 2015, with 71 percent of the vote, the second time in May of '18, with 75 percent of vote. I realize that neither of these constitutional amendments talked about gerrymandering. They set up this commission and made rules about the process of redistricting. However, every person in this room knows that we, the Ohio voters, were voting to end gerrymandering and to thus provide fair representation to all Ohioans. [applause] As our elected officials, you must draw districts using the process defined in the Ohio Constitution by those amendments. You also must draw districts that are fair as the voters intended. You should not be looking to find ways to get around the rules. You should not be looking for loopholes. You should not be looking for ways to provide a safe seat for your political allies on either side of the... spectrum, you should not be planning to do this again in four years, the voters have spoken twice. Your duty, loyalty and responsibility must be to the citizens of Ohio, not your party's, not your donors and not a bunch of corporations. [applause]

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [01:36:51] Any questions? Thank you very much. Catherine Queener.

Queener [01:37:11] Thank you for being here. Thank you for listening. And thank you for allowing me to speak to you. My name is Catherine Queener. I vote in the Senate District 6 in House District 42 in the Centerville School District. If you overlaid all my political outlines, one on top of another, you would get a Venn diagram that would blow your mind. And I suspect that's true of everyone in this room. I would like to draw your attention to the issue of fair representation in my community. Ohio House District 42 is one of the five districts within Montgomery County, a county in which roughly 40 percent of voters are Black. Our five districts within Montgomery County were drawn to corral most of our Black voters into one of the five districts. This effectively means that our Black voters, 40 percent of Montgomery County, get 20 percent of the representation in Montgomery County. When you look at Ohio House District 42 on a map and my apologies, I did not bring a visual aid. I'm hoping you can look at it on a computer, as I did. When you look at Ohio House District 42 on a map, it is glaringly obvious that Jefferson Township and Trotwood had been drawn out to dilute their representation into District 43, overwhelmingly rural and White. The consequence of not fixing this problem includes reducing representation for a significant number of voters. I ask you to represent Ohioans who have twice voted to allow for fair redrawing of district maps. Again, I'm Catherine Queener. I live at 1758 Grant's Trail in Dayton, Ohio. Thank you very much. [applause]

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [01:40:00] Matthew Krog. Ryan Ivory.

Ivory [01:40:27] Greetings, Co-Chair Sykes and Secretary LaRose and fellow distinguished members of the commission. Thank you for allowing me to be here today to speak before you. I am Ryan C. Ivory and I'm here today on behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, Ohio Chapter Region 7, in which I am the director. And I say NASW believes that voting is the hallmark of a democracy. Yet we have seen a huge voting gap over the past 30 years as court decisions, voter suppression laws and

gerrymandering intentionally eroded the hard-won franchise, especially among marginalized citizens. NASW, believes that gerry... gerrymandering is a form of voter suppression, that ultimately disempowers communities, especially partisan gerrymandering, which is taking place in Ohio far too long, Ohio voters have the right to cast a meaningful ballot. Our ask today is that the commission ensure fair maps are drawn that reflect voter's dynamic and evolving preferences and maps that do not skew electoral outcomes in order to protect a particular party against changes in voter preferences. On behalf of NASW, Ohio Chapter and Region 7, we thank you for your time, leadership and commitment to ensure fair districts across the state of Ohio. [applause]

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [01:42:12] Derek Foward.

Foward [01:42:51] Good morning, Co-Chair Sykes. (Good morning.) Secretary LaRose. Commissioners, my name is Dr. Derek L. Foward, president of the Dayton Unit of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Well, I've served this community for the past 15 years in his leadership position. And also serve as vice president for the state of Ohio, for the NAACP and also serve in a couple of national positions, leadership positions nationally for the NAACP. And as I think about the redistricting process. And look at how it has an adverse effect on Black and Brown Americans. Has an adverse effect on poor White people. Has an adverse effect on many People of color. So when I think about the NAACP and how we have gone to market over these past five to seven years in terms of our 21st Century game changers, gerrymandering gives a very negative adverse effect on our way of life. You say, what do we mean? Economic sustainability. That's a chance to live the American dream for all. Every person will have equal opportunity to achieve economic success, sustainability and security. But when we continue to draw maps... that once again, I'm using this word adverse, because that's what it is, the adverse effect, on many Americans throughout the great Buckeye State of Ohio is shameful. When we look at the maps and think about how in, you know, the last decade, you know how now I want to be clear too, the NAACP is nonpartisan. The NAACP is nonpartisan, but however, we're highly political and are very engaged into the fabric of American society. So when we think about the demographic breakdown or the legislative makeup of the Ohio legislature. Being 54 percent Republicans. And about 46 percent African, I mean Democrats. But then when you think about the breakup of the entire state of Ohio, where you have 75 percent that occupy the Senate. Sixty five percent that occupy the House in terms of Republicans. One got to say to themselves, when can we as a state exercise leadership? When can we, as a state legislator—legislative body, the General Assembly, Ohio General Assembly exercise leadership or commission to exercise leadership to draw fair districts? Education. You know, a free, high quality public education for all, every child will receive free, high quality, equitable funded public pre-K and pre-K through education, followed by diverse opportunities for accessible, affordable vocational or university education. So when we think about education, our number two pillar, how can we achieve this, achieve that success when the districts are not drawn in a manner that we have our schools funded correctly? That's still maintains to be a problem for decades upon decades. When I think of last time in 2011 when the lines were drawn, they wanted to come down straight down the heart in the gut of Dayton, Ohio. They want to come straight down Hoover Avenue and split the Black vote, and, in fact, we were, you know, they were highly successful. Which is unfortunate. Because what it did, it took away one of our seats. As a Black man, I need representation. As Black people, we need representation. Health. Health quality [phone rings] OK Sorry about that, you know, health equality for all Americans, including, you know, high life and high-quality health care, everyone will have equal access to affordable, high quality health care. But as we know, people wanted to destroy the Affordable Care

Act. And that's primarily one side of the fence, one party. Public safety and criminal justice. Oh, Lord. Equitable dispensation of justice for all. Disproportionate incarceration, racially discriminatory sentencing guidelines, racially motivated policing strategies and racially influenced sentencing will end. And incarceration will be greatly reduced. We need to work towards that and we cannot work towards that, if we don't have the right people on the bus. Have you read the book, Jim Collins, Good to Great. We want to take our state from good to great. But we can't be good to great if we continue to practice gerrymandering tactics. We see Black and Brown men being slaughtered every day in the streets, and I'd be the first to say... I make zero excuses when Black on Black crime exist, I make zero excuses, so I'm the same way whether or that as a police officer attacking someone Black or whether that's a Black man attacking someone Black. But we need laws...how do we get those laws on the books, we get those laws on the books through this commission. Through drawing fair districts. Expanding voting rights and political representation. I believe that when our first vice president spoke a little while ago, she so eloquently stated about how the composition is made up in the statehouse. Is it equal? Is it just? Is there equality there? We ought to be ashamed about how we're going to market for the American people, for the great Buckeye's here. We're all Buckeyes, if you cut us we're all going to bleed the same red blood. So we need for you to go to market. To do what's right. For our last pillar, they're six pillars, our last pillar is expanding youth and young adult engagement. How can we get our youth engaged and involved? Even though we do, we have many youth programs. But if they're still not being represented right where laws are, where laws are made to be on the books in our legislature. It does no good. So we really call upon you to exercise leadership. Like Donehue. Boggs is not there, Secretary, LaRose, Vernon Sykes, Phil Plummer. Alex Bilcheck, Louis Blessing the third. We need for you to exercise leadership. And do what's right on behalf of all Americans within our Buckeye State. That's what we're calling upon you to do. To do the right thing, make the right call. Because they sure enough didn't do it in 2011. Sure didn't do it 10 years prior to that! How can we have one congressperson be in a seat for 20 years? Because, that's done because the the districts are drawn in such a manner that the person will forever hold their seat until the lines are drawn again. The same way with the composition of the legislature. You know, in the disparate impact. On, on the number of people who are representing Black people, Brown people, poor White people. Thank you for your time. We're just calling for when you do the right thing. Thank you [applause]

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [01:52:18] Thank you. Any questions? Toni Holmes.

Holmes [01:52:51] Greeting leaders, I am Toni Holmes, I am an Ohio real estate agent. I come and you all will hear jiggling in my voice as I'm passionate about this, I'm advocating for [inaudible] citizens. There was that of Dayton, Ohio. And the youth. OK, so we're speaking on... fair districts, right? What did it look like? What do fair districts look like? I tell you what fair districts [inaudible] Dayton, Ohio. Montgomery County. Hmm, Dayton public schools. I brung my daughter she just graduated from Dayton public school. She's back there. I brought her here for one particular reason. What do fair districts look like? I had a house to show. I had to cancel it because I had an e-mail saying we need you, we need your voice at this particular meeting. Because I advocate for many different areas, a single mother of three Black Dayton public, poverty, breaking chains like, all that, you know? So where do fair has.. I mean districts like for my daughter? If, as I canvass, back there this event, how many people of us [in audible] relatable, that been through the struggle, this fighting hard to get past, here. I think me and my daughter. I asked her the whole time I'm listening to it everyone, which they was marvelous, I watch, I'm watching my child just graduated from a Dayton public school. You know what she was doing on her phone the whole time? You know why? Because growing up Black in poverty, we are taught that

politics don't matter for us. Things going to happen to us no matter what. We are used to fighting. We are used to the struggle and we are used to surviving. But we are not knowledgeable about politics. That's why you get those lacks of votes, because you don't have people in the inner cities pushing it. It is not about Republican or Democrat. It's about putting their leader in there that cares for all. I know it's quite rare, but it can happen because they get dismissed. How do we advocate where we need to be advocated at? How do we raise awareness where it matters? Because right now it only matters with the wealth. You have poverty, middle class, y'all see me do this right? Because I don't believe in middle(?) class, I believe in poverty, inequality, that's it. When you go into those other communities, districts, their school teaches them about the importance of politics, laws, how to make a difference. We don't get taught that. All we get taught is how to go to college, hopefully, or get another job working our butts off. And we would never become on that level because it's not meant for us to be there. We're not taught to go make a difference, and if you want to hear— you want to make them here you?.. Go vote. Well, make them see you? Go speak. We not taught that. Pay opposition, right? And no one is ignorant to these results, not at all. Recidivism is real. So we have we have this map, right, and what we have always been taught is division. We're not taught collectively, so we fighting, what? Individually? That's it, we're looking at this map and I'm only looking at the map on this little thing that they gave me when I walked in, this little thing. Again, we are reminded how we segregated. That's it. Reminded, so we are reminded that we're alone again and going to remain what?.. uneducated? We learn and get taught the bare minimum. So you have this Dayton, Ohio with these fair districts, right? You have people going to jail, youth...they don't get no help. You sit there, you put a youth in Dayton in front of a judge, you know what they look? Black. Poverty. And, uneducated to the justice system. Easy [inaudible] right? Know why I'm able to say these things is because I was a victim of it...which is fine. I don't blame nobody but myself. I feel like God gave me and put me in those positions to be able to stand right here in front of you all today to advocate. To show it's a gap, it's not about this map, the map is nothing but a visual proof of segregation, like always. It's a reminder. Voting is a reminder. I was I just now started back voting, I stopped, I stopped voting because I was like, oh my God, my vote don't matter. It doesn't count. We, because we get nit hard all the time, whether we put whoever in a position or that seat...nothing is done. So we sit here and have these meetings, these these events just to hear us talk. We're just talking. When are we going to implement something that important to the communities, our communities? Because at the end of the day we all human. There is no red, blue, black, white, good district bad district...it's all human, imperfect humans. And once we start realizing that [applause] we can come together united to make a bigger difference, because right now we just talking. I'm Toni Holmes and I'm the Ohio voter. Thank you. [applause]

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [01:59:44] Thank you. LaPearl Winfrey.

Winfrey [02:00:03] My name is Dr. LaPearl Logan Winfrey, you've heard earlier from my sorors [?], I miss Betty White, who is a fellow member of the Ohio of Delta's Ohio redistricting cohort. I come to you today representing Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated, the Dayton alumni chapter. Political awareness, and that's just the sorors [?] I think we have some other members in the other room, I don't know if they're able to join us on this side so they we can all be together. Political awareness and involvement is one of the programmatic thrusts of Delta Sigma Theta. So we thank you for this opportunity to address the very consequential matter of redistricting and fair districts. We believe that the people should choose their representatives, not the elected officials, choosing whom they will represent. The latter leads to extreme marginalization and an imbalance in power, as you have heard repeatedly. Gerrymandering has happened under the control of both

parties, both major political parties in the past, and it is not a practice that should be revisited under any circumstances. That is why Ohioans in all 88 counties voted twice to amend the state constitution, as you certainly aware, to improve the process of drawing district lines both for Ohio legislative districts and for U.S. Congress. Some years ago, the average Ohioan probably did not know what gerrymandering was, let alone care much about the redistricting process, but now your constituents are paying attention. We know that it is harder to draw a gerrymandered map than to draw a fair map. This year, citizens are taking part in a mapmaking competition sponsored by Common Cause, the League of Women Voters and other strategic partners. This competition will produce fair maps drawn in accordance with the new redistricting rules. The legislature thus can no longer pretend that the maps they produce are the best or the only possible options.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [02:02:34] Excuse me just a minute, ladies. You may come forward if you like.

Winfrey [02:02:41] Thank you. Certainly a presence in numbers.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [02:02:47] I'd like the colors

Winfrey [02:02:51] are the ladies in?

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [02:02:56] I'm an Alpha myself. All right,

Winfrey [02:03:00] The fine nine[?] Is in the house. (Yes), bipartisan maps would be the best outcome for the people of Ohio. And accordingly, that is our expectation and goal. The members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. represent more than 1000 chapters worldwide. We are individually and collectively engaged in educating the community about this important process. Additionally, we are here to assist citizens across the state of Ohio and having their voices heard. I thank you for your time and consideration and look forward to hearing how you plan to accomplish fair maps.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [02:03:42] Thank you very much, [applause] appreciate it. Jerome Sutton.

Sutton [02:04:08] Thank you for coming today. And allowing us to speak. My name is Jerry Sutton, I live in the village of Yellow Springs, consequently Ohio 73rd House, 10th Senate, and 10th U.S. Congressional District. I would like to start by offering an amen to what all my fellow speakers said today they did a great job. I wish to emphasize the issue of one person, one vote. Why? A few years ago, while I was at a League of Women Voters meeting, my Ohio State representative pointed his finger at me and said, Jerry, your vote doesn't count. You live in Yellow Springs, a liberal village in a very conservative county, it will never count. I was chagrined. However, upon reflection, I knew he was right. My vote did not have weight within Ohio. He caused me to take out a Republican primary ballot the next time because there were more people I wanted to vote against than I thought my vote could help. So, I don't propose that Yellow Springs, as unique as it truly is, should be its own district. But, you know, I would use it as an example of the larger issue and I'll address the current congressional district is the problem. We've heard before that we have the last presid... presidential election, President Biden won fift... 46 percent of the vote. And that was made up of seven of our most populous counties of the largest cities primarily. He won those seven counties. He did not win any of the other 81 counties. One may ask then, if he got 46 percent, why aren't Democrats represented in Congress or in the statehouse in a similar proportion instead of 25 percent or 33 percent? Why not 40 or 50 percent? And

we know the reason we've heard that g-word a number of times today. In the 2011 redistricting effort, none of the Ohio districts contained... the Ohio Democratic districts, by default, contained a...an entire integral county. They all contained fragments of counties, one fragment, two fragments, up to five fragments of different counties. So, what I'm asking is, you have that the 15 and 18 amendments to our Constitution, they set forth some criteria, one of which at the congressional level, is let's have integral, each district have an integral county. And I would ask that you look at that and then if the population supports it, have it as a separate county, have it as a separate U.S. congressional district. It's a tough job you have. I don't envy you, you have competing requirements, you have long, boring meetings,

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [02:08:25] Not so boring, not so boring.

Sutton [02:08:27] But I commend you for your activities and thank you for the opportunity.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [02:08:32] Thank you. [applause] Lindee Keaton, Valarie Lee, Peter Maxwell. Debra Saunders.

Saunders [02:09:42] Good morning.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [02:09:45] Good morning.

Saunders [02:09:49] I'm Deborah Saunders and I reside in Dublin, Ohio, in the Columbus area. And my Ohio legislative districts are Senate 16 and House 21. As a voter in Ohio, I have been waiting for this time to come. Supported by very clear and overwhelming voter declarations in both 2015 and 2018, certainly a topic that we've heard frequently in the messages today from voters, you know, we want and expect appropriate change to occur as a redistricting process is conducted with a recently released 2020 census data. Unlike the clandestine, secretive process that occurred in 2011, we call on this Ohio redistricting commission to meet the redistricting obligations that promote fairness in voter representation within the districts, transparency in the process, and also sufficient time for the people of Ohio to review the proposed district maps and provide comment. The districting that occurred in 2011 impacted where I live, resulting in nonsensical mapping. State Route 33, which runs directly in front of my property, is in a different House district, 24, than mine, I'm in 21. If you look at the map, you will see that it resembles kind of a lollipop carve out where the roadway is just a thin stick of the lollipop. There are no voters there. There are no homes there. And it leads to a group of residences that are what I call the candy of the lollipop. And it's the, obviously the purpose of the bizarre mapping it. The obvious and sole purpose was to create a narrow conduit for what I call landgrab just north of me. These districting practices have divided neighborhoods. They provide no continuity for community, and they speak loudly of special interest for partisan politics. These practices have had great negative impact on our lower income and marginalized communities within Franklin County. We know that redistricting can be equitable and can represent the voters of Ohio fairly. And this occurs when districts are structured sensibly without rouge carve-outs, extensive chops or splits or stretched over a large territory. Fairness occurs when each vote does matter because either party has a chance at winning, because when our votes count, either party has a chance of winning. Unlike what has experienced from the last redistricting where election outcomes have been known long before Election Day. In this age of greater data availability, with data analyzes and modeling, considerations for the fair composition of each district and partisan balance of districts in our state can occur readily—we know that. I stand with my fellow constituents in Ohio and I implore this commission, as we do, to demonstrate a strong willingness to work

with the mandates of the voters. And by working with us, providing a redistricting process that is evident and understandable, is fair for each voter, enabling every vote to count and allows a public review of the proposed maps before moving to legislative approval. Thank you.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [02:13:38] Thank you. [applause] Any questions? Thank you very much. David Youngkin

Youngkin [02:14:01] Good morning. (Good morning.) Thank you for letting me speak today. My name is Dave Youngkin. I live in Washington Township, Montgomery County, in the great state of Ohio. House District 42, Senate District 6. My background is a business owner. I operated my heavy construction equipment company in this area for 25 years. I'm not accustomed to speaking publicly, but I'm going to try and I'm going to cut it short, I know time's getting short because I can't help, at this point, but echo a lot of points that have been made eloquently and passionately so far. First point I'd like to make is regarding an earlier comment. In 2020, almost 50 percent of the vote for the national presidency was 50 percent, Democrats a little less. In 2010, it was over 50 percent. So it's not OK for one party to rig elections in Ohio. We're all clear eyed that districts have been shaped shamefully gerrymandered. Lines are drawn to create particular outcomes by packing groups of like-minded voters exclusively into a few districts or spreading them out across many to dilute voting power. The candidate in the red district has to be the most to the right, candidate in the blue district, has to be the most to the left. Extreme candidates don't compromise for the greater good. [applause] Or they won't get reelected. Polarization gets worse. Anger and hostility towards the other group grows uglier and faith in our government sinks lower and lower. It's tempting to create district maps that help one's political party have more power. In the long run, what's really important? Power? Or protecting our sacred democracy? Thank you for your time and hearing today how anxious we all are for fair representation as intended by our Constitution and precious for those who have sacrificed so much to protect that right. It's my sincere hope that this committee will make the brave choice. To reverse this painful divisiveness and set a new standard of fairness and inclusiveness that will begin to reunite, reunite us all. Thank you.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [02:17:19] Thank you for very much. Any questions? At this time I did notice a Senator did come in, an additional senator, Mr. Senator Huffman. Are there any other state legislators here? Thank you Senator. Charlene Baylis. Ellen Bensen. Helen Geyer.

Geyer [02:18:34] Members of the commission, good morning, thank you for hearing my testimony. My name is Helen Guyer and I live in Bellbrook. My neighborhood is a mix of Republican and Democratic voters, but we have consistently had Republican representation over the last decade because of gerrymandering. Let's start with the baseline understanding. I think it's pretty clear from all the testimony today that not only my district, but all of Ohio is egregiously gerrymandered. That needs to change now. I want the blatant gerrymandering and the extremist archly conservative legislature that has resulted from it, gone. Truly competitive districts are necessary and vital to a healthy democracy. We must have fair districts because it is the only way we can be ensured that we will have good government. Without any competition, corrupt incumbents who could not care less about the majority of their constituents, keep getting reelected because their reelection is always guaranteed. These legislators have no interest in, and accordingly do nothing to help, all but a handful of their constituents. Instead, they are strictly focused on pandering to the extreme hardcore base that votes in primaries in order to keep themselves in power. The result of that gerrymandering has been a legislature that does

not represent the interests of my community, the women of Ohio seeking to exercise their right to reproductive freedom. I want to see fair districting in Ohio because I want fair representation for the women of Ohio. The election of corrupt, archconservative and power-hungry individuals inevitably leads to extremism in legislation. And indeed, we saw an abrupt right turn in the way the legislature started legislating after 2011. A prime example of this extremism was the legislation that banned abortions in Ohio after six weeks of pregnancy at a time when most women don't even know they are pregnant yet, which was based on rank ignorance, religious extremism that has no place in government and ignoring very basic science. It also ignored the will of the majority of Ohio voters who believe that abortion should be safe and legal and that the exercise of that right should not be encumbered with senseless, needless and thoroughly unreasonable restrictions. This legislation only came about because of gerrymandering. I submit that no legislature, elected through a truly competitive process, would have passed this law because such legislators are actually answerable to their constituents in a way that few legislatures, legislators in Ohio are today. I must also say that so far the redistricting process in Ohio has not been encouraging. It's clearly being done once again in a rather opaque and clandestine manner. This commission was only formed at the very absolute last possible moment. The first meeting was a nonevent in which nothing was done. Half the members are only here today by proxy. So, so far, not good. I hope to see better and many have commented on the fact that all of these hearings are during working hours, I had to rearrange my schedule to be here today. That's not encouraging at all. This process must be utterly transparent to have any validity whatsoever. [applause] Otherwise, it will be mired in litigation and Ohioans will again have to wait for a truly representative legislature. They should not have to wait any longer. I urge you, in the strongest possible terms, redistricting in Ohio must be done fairly, transparently and in a nonpartisan manner and must result in competitive districts. Otherwise, it will be a completely pointless exercise, except for the extremists who will be the only winners. Make every district competitive. Let fair competition reign in Ohio so its voters win. Thank you. [applause]

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [02:23:37] Thank you. Jeff Hardenbrook.

Hardenbrook [02:23:37] Good day, Co-chair Sykes and LaRose and other commission members and the general public. Thank you for being present. We have a great country. You have a very important opportunity to impact the state of Ohio and our future going forward and for future generations. There's so many things that challenge us today. And we've just seen in the last year how fractured and how delicate our democracy actually is. And many of the speakers today have have spoken to you about how the gerrymandered districts have pushed moderates out of our political process and empowered extremism, and the tension, the stress, the divisiveness, the polarization that has brought about and heightened both in our state and in our nation. You have a great opportunity to exercise leadership with the power the citizens of the state have given to you. I, I do have a little bit of testimony to present to you in the form of a congressional map, a U.S. congressional map. I used the calculator, the population data available online and the general ideas of keeping district counties contiguous unless population exceeded the the threshold set by dividing our our population state population by 15 districts, basically. The resulting map I have is is fairly simple. It looks like to me it would result in five to six party fairly safe districts for each party and probably two or three or four that would districts for US Congress that might be in play. My point is I did it in a night with a calculator. Anything that's available online, as far as population, the three largest counties in our state, Franklin, Cuyahoga and Hamilton, of course, would have to be split. Each of those congressional districts are going to represent roughly three quarter, three quarter million Ohio citizens. So you're going to have those three counties split. That's a given. But the

map I did only has only 9 of our 88 counties split. That's a much better map than we had from 2011. During a break or something, I go out and get enough copies to present and leave with your your clerk. This is not, it doesn't have to be, it doesn't take a lot. I'm just telling you, it doesn't take a lot to provide fair representation to the citizens of Ohio and basically that's all we're saying. Do the job the citizens gave to you in the voting that we've done on these two amendments. Do your job and thank you for your time and wish you health in the coming years.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [02:27:17] Mr. Hardenbrook, you may also submit that map online at the Web site. Thanks. We'd appreciate it. Nathaniel Lathy.

Lathy [02:27:26] Hello to all of you. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. My name is Nathaniel Lathy. I live in central Ohio, Hilliard. Being here, it's great to be in Dayton. I was in Xenia a week ago with Green County Republicans. It's always great to be involved. I know some if you want one person on this board that's seen me at a meeting before I have asked him a question so he knows I like to stay involved. But I would like to say that it is a thrill to be here. It this, I've never been to this college before the first week of college, it's great stuff. Reminds me my first week back in 86 at Ohio State because of all of you, I'm not embarrassed to mention the year. But also I just want to say that I also like what Maylene Miller said, but I think this, I agree with her. I think one problem is, though, it's only half right. All all these speakers, both parties do not represent the people. That is the problem. And that is the issue, not this redistricting district redistricting thing, this gerrymandering. In its head elections the Democrats blew it. You had a governor who was elected with more than 70 percent of the vote and he did not get reelected. And you lost a seat on the apportioned board. The National Health Care Act gave the Republicans the apportionment board. So it is not any issue of gerrymandering or redistricting. We have two parties. They're not accountable to the people. The primary process often involves people with no challengers. I heard about the heartbeat bill. You know why it took so long for the heartbeat bill to get passed? A Republican governor vetoed it twice. It came another Republican governor, and he put in place these mandates that are strangling small businesses. And now we want to open up our economy. Both parties are poor. And I think it's ridiculous to try to make it one tilted more toward the Democrats. And that's what this is an effort to do. Both parties are bad. We do not want a blue state. California and New York are laughing stocks. Why would you want to make it like that? I speak for the businessmen who could not make these meetings. I speak for the unborn who have no say. They are people too. We have the right to work. They have the right to life, life, liberty, pursuit of happiness. That's what this country was founded on. We want liberty, not so radical agenda. And I don't see any example of moderates doing anything to stop radicals putting these things coming in from Washington and so forth. So I asked all of you to continue with the process. I asked people who are not happy to get involved. Sure, life isn't fair. I don't like going out in 85, 90-degree weather knocking on doors when no one answers, when people want to watch their made for TV Olympics and not talk about who's running for Congress. I don't have a congressional representative right now. He retired and went off to the Chamber of Commerce, so we have to run, but people don't want to talk about it. I want to talk about it. These people want to talk about it. We need to get involved. And I'm going to continue to get involved, going to these meetings. I also think gun control is an important right. It's a freedom. My heart goes out to anyone who's had problems with addiction or that they have been victims of a home invasion. But we need rights to defend ourselves from these evils. That's one of our rights. We need honest elections. We should be having paper ballots with the problems of these machines. It makes me sick to think that Trump won this state by eight points, but he may have won it by 15. We need a better count. [laughter] We need we have fraudulent states. I'm sorry. I take this...

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [02:31:41] ...He has a right...

Lathy [02:31:42] I ask for additional time.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [02:31:43] He has a right.

Lathy [02:31:44] I sat and listened to these people for an hour and a half. They can listen to me for four minutes. I think it's fair that we have our say in this election and we had a say in the presidential election. We want we want any kind of resistance to Washington that we can get. And I don't want to go the same way as these other people as these other states have. They're laughing stocks, the audits need to go in for all 50 states. Also on the issue of drugs, open borders are a big problem, Ohio needs to be doing its part to help defend the border in Texas and New Mexico. That'll keep the drugs out and think about the rights of Christians too, that's the one religion is acceptable in this country to put down. But I'm a Christian. I'm proud to be a traditional Catholic. And I'm going to continue to fight for the unborn. I'm going to fight for the traditional family. And I think that's what needs to be done. We've heard a lot of talk today about all these things that need to be done to change the system, it looks to me like they're trying to rip it to one party. But I have to ask you, are the Democrats really getting the job done. These, these...all we keep hearing about is the problems and the problems still exist. What about why can't we if we have two Republican bodies in the legislature and a Republican governor who said he supported right to work, why don't we have right to work law? Why am I represented by a union that does not show my interests at all? That doesn't seem right. But the thing is, I keep fighting for what's right. I don't worry about what's fair and what's not fair. I think more people in office who are not politicians, they only care about getting elected. We need people who want to go out and meet with the people. I's a guy (?) for running for governor in the primary side. That's what he's doing. He's putting himself on the line. Maybe more people can run. More things can do. It's not fair the culture is tilted toward the left. So I turn the TV off. We have propagandists out there in the media. They're not media. They're just putting an agenda forth. So I again ask for you, freedom. That's what we need. And I will take any questions.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [02:34:08] Are there any questions?

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [02:34:14] Thank you, Co-Chair Sykes and [inaudible], as the chief elections officer for the state of Ohio. I think I should maybe correct a couple of things that just ask you if you're aware of the facts.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [02:34:25] Be careful, we're not here to debate.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [02:34:28] Sure. Understood.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [02:34:29] Please.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [02:34:31] You mentioned that there should be paper ballots. 100 percent of the ballots cast in Ohio have a paper trail that is auditable. You mentioned that there is problems with voting machines. I hope that you're aware of the voting machines in Ohio are never connected to the Internet. They're prohibited by law from being connected to the Internet and that they're inspected and certified by both Republicans and Democrats before each election. You mentioned the need for an audit. I hope that you're aware that in November of last year we conducted a post-election audit,

as we do, following every election conducted by both Republicans and Democrats. And when we did, there was an accuracy rate found of ninety-nine point nine eight percent when we compared the paper trail to the electronic record. Were you aware of those things, sir?

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [02:35:12] Please, no questions to him. He's here to give information to us. You could give information. No questions to him, please. Thank you.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [02:35:21] Thank you, sir.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [02:35:22] Thank you. Michael Eckert. We have come to the last witness. OK. Yes, yes, yes, absolutely. Let me ask I was going to ask, is there anyone else that would like to speak here today? Make sure we have your witness slips, can you come forward, please?

off mic [02:36:19] Can we have your witness.

Donna Long [02:36:20] Oh, yes, yes, yes.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [02:36:27] If we could take the time now, may I collect all the witnesses slips that we have left, anybody else that wanted to speak? Because we're going to need to cut this off, I have, we have to make Cincinnati yet today, so. So I assume that we have all of the witness slips. Thank you very much. And if you want to speak, if you could just raise your hand when we finish, we'll make sure you have an opportunity, please.

Donna Long [02:37:10] Good afternoon and thank you so much for the time. My name is Donna Long. And today I'm representing YWCA Dayton, where I serve as director of advocacy and outreach. I'm also a member of the YWCA Ohio Council, a coalition of 14 sister YWCAs across the state championing women's rights and human dignity. We are dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. The YWCA is the oldest and largest multicultural organization promoting solutions to enhancing the lives of women, girls and families. And like you, transparen..., transparency and fairness are important to us. And I am appreciative to have the opportunity to weigh in on this process. I'm here to testify in favor of fair maps in Ohio. This year we have an opportunity to do right by our communities. These maps will make decisions for political actions and advocacy for the next ten years. In a rapidly changing Ohio, we need fair representation so that our communities can survive and thrive. In Ohio, YWCA has a legacy. We serve many marginalized people focusing on childcare and housing as our main priorities and eliminating racism. Women, especially women of color are particular impact by redistricting. We hope that the redistricting, redistricting, redistricting reforms of 2015 and 2018 will help curate fair maps, but intend to keep a watchful eye on this process. We are constituents and we are advocates. Transparency and fairness is important to us. We advocate for fair mapping for the following reasons. The last 10 years of political decisions did not accurately represent the growing Asian Americans, Black Americans or Latino Americans in Ohio, leaving these populations susceptible to unfair policies. Fair maps will provide healthy competition for politicians who have been sitting comfortably in the process for far too long, appealing to the fringe. And it will introduce new actors' interests to represent new groups of people for public governance. And third, transparency is a right that should be afforded all Ohioans in the political process of public governance. At YWCA, we focus on the well-built, well-being of

women of color and eliminating misogyny that happens all too often to disproportionately impact this demographic due to the policies in which they are not considered. According to the census, Ohio's growth in concentrated areas is due to part... in part to Black, Asian and Latino communities. These are populations for whom we advocate. Who needs are often overshadowed and left out of the political process. Their needs and desires... desires should have adequate fighting chance and political process, and their voices represented at the table. Because we service these communities, we can help the commission identify where they are as communities of local interest. In light of the most recent attempts to change voter laws, voting opportunities, anti-protests, bills and other forms of undemocratic legislation which therein the very sanctity of our democratic process, we at YWCA, Dayton and the YWCA Ohio Council feel very strongly in favor of fair mapping. I can answer any questions,

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [02:41:19] Any questions? [applause] thank you very much. Mary Jo Groves.

Groves [02:41:38] Hello, thank you for your attention and thank you for allowing me to speak, Mr. LaRose, I'd like to thank you for your wonderful use of facts and evidence. I am here not as a Black or Brown person. I'm not Hispanic. I'm neither Asian. I have no organized religion, I subscribe to at this point. I am here, not in my professional garb. I am here, though, as a physician with my experience to direct a challenge to each of you, and I'm dressed in ordinary human garb because that's what I am going to treat each of you to consider as you make this decision. So many people have articulated so well the concerns of the 70 percent plus people who voted in Ohio twice now to get fair legislative districts. I also support the rights of the man to whom, with whom most of this room disagrees, for his right to express himself and also to be heard with his vote. That's what we're here for. So let me share with you what I'm what I would like to say as a physician. I have had the privilege in many decades, over many decades of practicing in the Springfield area where I live, and the privilege of helping people live longer and better lives. I've also had the privilege of caring for people at the end of their lives. And while it might surprise you to know that 80 percent of us are not going to go quickly, there's a myth in the public that we're all going to die boom like that. Fact is, only 20 percent of us or so go that way. The other 80 percent have a fair amount of time at the end to consider their lives. And I'd like to challenge each of you as individuals today to consider what this decision is going to mean to you for your own personal integrity, the rest of your lives, and specifically at the end of your lives. So I'd like you to think for a moment about Ebenezer Scrooge being warned about what the future might look like for you. And I'd like to tell you this, as a person who sat at the bedside of many people as they're dying. People don't get excited about the things they wish they'd done better. They get excited, they get upset. They're in crisis because of the things they wish they had done better. So as you make this decision, which for many of you may be the most momentous decision of your lives, I'm going to challenge you, will you and your integrity at the end of your life say I perpetuated the brokenness that I found? Or will you indeed, with gratitude, joy and the clarity that comes at the end of life, say I left the world a better place. Thank you for your time. [applause]

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [02:44:39] Melinda Zimpher.

Zimpher [02:44:44] Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Melinda Zimpher. I live in West Chester, Ohio, and I'm speaking as an individual, not as part of any organization. I'm a mother, a grandmother. And my career has been centered around writing... teaching, writing, interpretation of composition and literature at a university level. And I've been the owner of my small of a small business, my own public

relations and marketing company. Now that the 2020 census data has been returned, you have the opportunity to create new districts that better reflect the political preferences of Ohio voters. Please create fair districts that allow voters to select our legislators rather than those safe districts that allow legislators, legislators to choose their voters. The Republican Party has held a trifecta of power in Ohio for 23 of the last 30 years. You dominated the governor's seat, the Senate and the House. Is our state district maps have become safer for Republicans. I'm sorry to say that our state legislature has become increasingly more radical. What Ohio what have Ohioans received lately during these these last few years? A pandemic response initially lauded nationwide for its compassionate common sense. But it was derailed, stopped in its tracks due to pressure by selfish citizens and far right legislators more concerned about their personal rights to not wear a mask, then they were about being good neighbors and doing their part to save the lives of innocent babies, the sick and the elderly. Ohio now has more than 20,000 fatalities from covid-19, and we have had the keys in our hands from last spring to flatten the curve. This is not been a good job. What else has happened lately during Republican dominance in Ohio? Legislators added clauses to voting laws that made it more difficult for minorities and the working poor to vote. Lawmakers have passed gun laws that expand concealed carry rights versus legislation that would help stem gun violence. And legislators passed HB 6, a nuclear energy buyout law that is not only a billion-dollar tax on Ohioans to prop up nuclear power and quash green energy solutions, but it's been the focus of a 60 m... 1-million-dollar bribery and fraud case that's being investigated by the FBI. Shameful. This all comes at a time when the entire world as it urgently concerned about the harmful effects of carbon emissions and are warming changing climate. Majority Ohio legislators are burying their heads in the sand by refusing to acknowledge the urgency to act, to mitigate climate change and take advantage of the chance to create many, many thousands of green, sustainable manufacturing jobs that could help ensure a brighter future for our children and our grandchildren. When one political party rules with impunity... impunity, democracy falters. So does creativity and innovation. And as we see, ethics. Creating voting districts for Ohioans and fair congressional districts will help ensure that we get the smartest, most creative and ethical lawmakers on board no matter the political party. I asked you today... ask you today to create voting districts that reflect the geography, political and racial makeup of people who live here. We need fair districts that encourage voters to participate in our system, not suppress them or prevent them from voting. When more people are empowered to participate in the political process, we'll build a stronger representative, representative democracy and a better chance for unity. I urge all Ohioans to educate themselves about these issues, study the redistricting maps and weigh in about redistricting too. Thank you for being part of our new solution to unify Ohioans. [applause]

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [02:49:45] Thank you, at this time, having no further witness slips, I want to thank you all for... Oh. Ms Grace Dean,

Dean [02:50:09] Hello, my name is Grace Dean. I am the daughter of state representative Bill Dean and I'm not representing anyone. I was just told, you know, I need to come here because this was important and I believe in that. And so I have just been listening to what everyone's had to say for the past three hours. And a lot of it I didn't agree with and some of it I did agree with. You know, when I hear about I just got done last night, I was at Miami Valley South Hospital witnessing my best friend give birth to her baby. So when I hear women talk about the right to abortion, it makes me very, very sad to know that women want to support that. But I still support their right to say it and I support it up here to say it. And so while I'm listening to a lot of people and I see the signs that says fair districts, I'm listening to people and it sounds really, really great. Like, of course, you want fair districts

no matter what side you're on. And I heard a lot of people talk about how they want everyone to reach across the aisle and work together. And so I almost believed it until the man back there was speaking and they all laughed at him. And that wasn't fair because everyone else got their time to speak up here and nobody laughed at them and everyone gave them the respect that they deserved until someone says something that they didn't agree with. So they don't want fair, they want an advantage. And as a young person who's twenty-three, I almost believed what they were saying too, because fair sounds good, fair districts, it sounded good. But then I realized they showed their hand when they laughed at someone who didn't think the same way as them. They didn't want to reach across the aisle. I was outside when someone was talking. They called Republicans idiots. It's not fair. They want an advantage. And so as a young person looking at this and seeing this incredible display of honestly immaturity, when you're listening to someone voice their opinion about something, it's not fair what they want. They just want it advantage. So I would just, you know, hold people accountable. If you want fair, then that means listening to other people's sides of what they believe. And so if you really want that, you have to have it for free speech. You have to have it for elections, too. And if you don't want it for free speech, but you want it for elections, then you probably don't actually truly believe that. So that's all I have to say.

Co-Chair, Senator Vernon Sykes [02:52:40] Thank you. Thank you all for your testimony and your time here today. I'd like to say to the members of the commission, are there any comments that anyone would like to make at this time? If not. We have been duly challenged by our oaths of offices and by the expressions of the constituents of the citizens of Ohio, we are now adjourned.

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Ohio Redistricting Commission - 8-27-2021- Akron

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Gary Miller, University of Akron [00:00:00] NSF is a high research university with one hundred and fifty year history in this part of Akron, in this part of Ohio. As a public university, of course, Mr. Chair. We're obligated to promote the democracy transparency in government and civil civil discourse and participation, and so we're very excited to have you here. I hope most of you know we have one of the most unique ways of doing that with the Ray C. Bliss Institute, a bipartisan research, teaching and experimental learning institute on campus that promotes understanding and government. And we also promote understanding in the judicial process through our school of law. And just to let you know this coming year will be hosting the, in the Brennan courtroom, the US Army Court of Criminal Appeals and the Supreme Court of Ohio in late October working on campus. We're very excited about that. Our students are very much involved- I just want to take a minute, Mr. Chair, to introduce Grace Kucinich and J.P. Garcher. These are our president and vice president of our Student Government Association over here, here and learning about the the way government works and they're getting it demonstrated today. Very pleased, Senator, that you're here and Leader Sykes. We're very, always a great pleasure to work with you. I want to also thank Representative Roemer for his attendance and Senator Schuring from down in Canton, who we hope to work with closely. And of course, Casey Weinstein, Representative Weinstein is back here, he's back in the back there somewhere. So we're very proud to have you on campus. Please let us know if you need anything and thank you all for your commitment to the state of Ohio and to this great democracy. Thank you.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [00:01:51] Thank you, Mr. President. Again, thank you for the university of Akron. In addition to Representative Casey Weinstein, who's in the back, who's already been recognized, we also have the Senate Minority Leader Kenny Yuko. And State Representative Tavia Galonski. If you would like to testify today before this panel, if you would please complete a witness slip. The witness slips are at the front door so that we could record your presentation. Thank you so much. Will the staff please call the roll?

Staff [00:02:41] Yes, sir. Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [00:02:43] Present.

Staff [00:02:44] Representative Bill Roemer, designee for Speaker Cupp.

Representative Bill Roemer [00:02:47] Here.

Staff [00:02:48] Matt Donahue, designee for Governor Mike DeWine.

Matt Donahue [00:02:51] Present.

Staff [00:02:52] Alex Bilchak, designee for Auditor Keith Faber.

Alex Bilchak [00:02:54] Here.

Staff [00:02:56] Jeanne Chadley, designee for secretary Frank LaRose.

??? [00:02:59] Present.

Staff [00:03:00] Akron's very own, Leader Emilia Sykes.

Representative Emilia Sykes [00:03:02] Here.

Staff [00:03:03] And last but not least, Senator Kirk Schuring, designee for President Matt Huffman.

Senator Kirk Schuring [00:03:06] Here.

Staff [00:03:08] Thank you. That completes the roll.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [00:03:11] Quorum being present, we will proceed. As you know, in November 2015, Ohio voters approved a constitutional amendment which implemented a new General Assembly redistricting process and established the Ohio Redistricting Commission. The commission consists of the Governor, State Auditor, Secretary of State, and one commission- commissioner appointed by each of the legislative leaders of the two largest political parties of the Ohio House in the House Senate, four in total, one from each of the caucuses. The commission has the, has until September the 1st to pass a plan with the votes of at least two members affiliated with each majority party. If that fails, the commission has until September 15th to pass a plan by majority vote. Maps that are passed with the votes of two members affiliated with each majority party are valid for 10 years, and maps that pass with a simple majority are valid for two general assemblies, four year period. The redistricting process is done in conjunction with the United States Census, conducted by the Department of Commerce at the national level and for the 2020 Census, Ohio has 11,799,448 people, a 2.3 percent increase over 2010. That would indicate that for all of the 99 house districts, we would have 119,186 persons, and for each of the 33 Senate districts, we will have 357,559 people. As you know, redistricting is more than just portion. The numbers, certain number of people into a certain certain number of districts. It requires a lot of details and requirements. We've outlined those requirements on our website and they would include things like representational fairness, district population requirements and permissible population deviations. Rules on how to prioritize splits of political subdivisions and additional district standards regarding favoring or disfavor on political parties and compactness of districts. Again, that information is available on the website. Additionally, the board must comply with the Ohio Constitution and any applicable federal laws, including the Voting Rights Act. We have, the commission has a website at www.redistricting.ohio.gov, where you can get information about this process or about any future hearings. You can also submit your written testimony if you'd like or even submit a plan. The meeting is live streamed and will be recorded by the Ohio Channel. Since we have deadlines upon us, September 1st and September 15th for the state legislative districts, we'd like to ask you to limit your comments as much as possible to focus on the state legislative districts. However, if you have other comments, we're open to that as well. We've got a lot of people to testify today. It will be important, so we can be courteous, we ask that you limit your comments to four minutes. And we have a timekeeper, my aide Traevon Leak, senior aide, and he will notify you when you have one minute left and when your time is up. We won't be a hard cutoff, but please adhere to these requirements. The first witness we have- Are there any comments that any members would like to make at this? Thanks a lot. Betty Doney. Beth Doney? Please forgive me if I struggle with any names. It's not on purpose.

Doney [00:07:42] Beth Doney.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [00:07:43] Doney.

Doney [00:07:48] Definition- definition of leadership in the Merriam-Webster dictionary, "a person who has authority or influence." Leaders motivate. Leadership is doing the right thing.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [00:08:04] Thank you.

Doney [00:08:05] Leaders are confident. Leaders influence. Leaders innovate. Leaders get results. This commission has been tasked with drawing districts for the Ohio House and Senate. We cannot have this commission or the Ohio General Assembly create maps that are rigged for a particular candidate or partisan outcomes. Summit County has been divided into four districts, does that make sense? The answer is no. We need to be represented as one congressional district so that our particular interests and issues are represented and heard in Columbus. Surely, surely, more logical and less political maps can be created. We expect better maps to better represent our community. Constitutional amendments approved by voters in 2015 and 2018 indicate voter support for fair, transparent decisions that encourage a more competitive, encourage more competitive elections, by limiting gerrymandering. Again, a leader motivates, influences, is confident, innovates and does the right thing. This is your opportunity to be the true leaders of all Ohioans to create fair and equitable districts. We expect and deserve your best nonpartisan efforts. Thank you.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [00:09:59] Thank you. [Applause] Are there any questions? Thank you very much. Kelly Goshe.

Goshe [00:10:26] Members of the commission, and those sitting in for members of the commission, thank you for allowing me to speak today. My name is Kelly Goshe, and I reside in Ohio Senate District 24 and Ohio House District 6. I believe that most of what needs to be known about the effect of Ohio's gerrymandered districts can be summed up in a statement made by my own state senator. In a 2019 interview on WCPN, my senator was asked why he had not proposed a certain policy, which was supported by 80 to 90 percent of Ohioans. He said simply, "I didn't propose it because that policy is a nonstarter with the Legislature. They won't support it." Let me say that again. My state senator admitted loudly, publicly and perhaps inadvertently, that the Ohio Legislature would not vote on, debate, or even get a committee hearing, to legislation supported by 80 to 90 percent of Ohioans. We do not live in a representative democracy if our representatives don't have to represent us. Now, most witnesses today will ask that you create balanced districts in the interest of fairness so that all Ohioans are represented. That is democracy, and I support that wholeheartedly. But as my father loved to tell me growing up, life isn't fair. So I am not asking you to create balanced districts for the sake of fairness. But I am asking you to create balanced districts for the sake of our economy and for the sake of competition. The biotech and health care industries are hugely important for our state. But when Ohio makes national headlines for a bill that would force its citizens to re-implant ectopic pregnancies, which is a medical impossibility, the doctors and researchers that the health care and biotech industries need don't want to move here. When Ohio makes national headlines again, because an expert witness, invited by our legislators, testifies that vaccines make us magnetic, the scientists and engineers needed by our aerospace and defense industries don't want to move here. When H. B. 6 cripples investment in the development of renewable energies, companies that could bring thousands of jobs to our state don't want to move here. Ohio has struggled with the brain drain for as long as I can

remember. And it's not hard to see why. So how do we fix it? How do we create a legislature that will represent its citizens and that puts forth legislation to propel our economy? Well, we could spend \$50 million on another new marketing campaign. Or we could simply start by making districts that are balanced and competitive. Competition drives innovation, competition drives growth and adaptation. If our representatives actually have to compete for their positions, then we will get better representatives. [Applause] We will get better ideas. We will get better laws. And we will get a better Ohio. Thank you for your time. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [00:14:13] Are there any questions? Thank you very much. The next presenter is Julia Studd-Adair. And on deck, we would have Brian Saxe. Saxe.

Studd-Adair [00:14:42] Hello. Thank you to everyone here for taking the time to listen to me. My name is Julia Studd-Adair, and I'm about to start my sophomore year at Twinsburg High School. Although I'm only 15, I have a keen interest in the American political system. I started college early, so I've had the benefit of learning about the U.S. government, American politics, the role of the census, the drawing of district lines and gerrymandering. The current congressional district map is clearly gerrymandered. Specifically, one party has drawn the map in such a way that has asserted a supermajority in the state legislature and the House of Representatives. This is unethical. Over the last 10 years, a troubling pattern has emerged. In 2012, Republicans received 51 percent of votes that controlled 75 percent of U.S. House seats. In 2014, Republicans received 60 percent of votes and continued to control 75 percent of U.S. House seats. In 2016, Republicans earned 58 percent of votes and again controlled 75 percent of U.S. House seats. In 2018, Republicans only earned 52.3 Percent of votes, but still controlled 75 percent of U.S. House seats. And in 2020, Republicans earned only 56.5 Percent of votes, but still controlled 75 percent of U.S. House seats. To be clear, while Republicans have only obtained 52 to 60 percent of votes in the last 10 years, they control 75 percent of U.S. House districts. This is antithetical to the spirit of American democracy. A fundamental foundation of American democracy is free and fair elections. Elections in Ohio have been tainted because elected officials have chosen their voters instead of voters choosing their elected officials. This is corruption of the most sacred aspect of American democracy. We need to restore the integrity of our elections, and the first step of that is drawing fair district lines. I'm a proud member of Gen Z, and while I can't vote yet, many of us are paying significantly more attention, than policymakers may realize. It is easy to identify the manipulation that has taken place. Indeed, when looking at congressional districts, there is no other rational explanation for why the district maps look the way they do. Policymakers need to keep in mind that people like me can vote soon, and we're looking for elected officials who practice integrity. [Applause] In conclusion, I implore you to advocate for the drawing of congressional maps that fairly represent the residents of Ohio. Once again, thank you for listening to my concerns and have a nice day. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [00:17:09] The school [indecipherable]. [Applause] Thank you. Brian Saxe. Saxe. And Kristin McNamara on deck.

Saxe [00:17:34] So I'll keep it short, which is hard because I'm a minister, so I like to go on. But as a minister, I know what it's like to have a job where everyone has an opinion on how you do it, whether it's "Minister, I want to hear new hymns. Why aren't we getting the old hymns? I really like that sermon. That sermon was too political. It's not why you come to church. It was perfect, it's exactly why I come to church." But at the end of my day, at the end of the day, my job isn't to keep people happy. It's to a higher responsibility. To

bring the wisdom of the past into the present day, no matter how much that wisdom might clash with modern ideas, concepts or what people want to hear. Right now, you all are working for a higher purpose. And I ask you to take it seriously. In our democracy, there's no higher purpose than ensuring people are represented in government. I know you're being bombarded publicly, which is ironic because that's what I'm doing right now, and privately, with people trying to steer you one way or the other. I would ask you to take time to discern who is asking you to serve your higher purpose and who is merely out for personal gain. What does a map that serves your higher purpose look like? And most importantly, what does a map look like that you can be proud of? And that all of Ohio can be proud of. Thank you. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [00:19:25] Thank you. Kristin McNamara. OK. Kyle Herman. And on deck, Amy Chaika.

Herman [00:19:52] My name is Kyle Herman, and I'm from Stow, Ohio, just northeast of Akron. I'm so glad that Ohioans passed constitutional amendments for nonpartisan districts that don't break up cities and counties, so that we won't have these confusing maps in Summit County that make us feel detached from our representatives. I'm a former high school history and civics teacher, and it's hard to teach when our system of government doesn't work the way it's supposed to in the textbooks, or the way our founders intended, because of partisan gerrymandering. Young people like my former students are disillusioned and giving up on democracy because our system is rigged. I'm a poll worker and I can testify that votes in Ohio are counted accurately. But that doesn't change the fact that our elections are already rigged, by partisan districts. When [Applause] When, the outcome is predetermined by a pre-selected voter pool, the whole process loses integrity. I currently work on pro-democracy programs in Iraq and Lebanon for an international nonprofit, and I'm taking time off from my job to testify today. In my professional experience, I've seen how politicians in other countries learn from the United States to create their own rigged districts to maintain power. And this leads to further corruption and a lack of accountability. Over the past decade, democracy has been backsliding globally, including here in the United States. The Economist's Global Democracy Index downgraded the United States from a full democracy to a flawed democracy, and one of the major flaws is our gerrymandered districts. Similarly, Freedom House recently warned of a crisis of confidence in our system, with fifty five percent of Americans seeing democracy as weak. And one of the top concerns was gerrymandering of legislative districts to protect parties. Democracy professionals can't do our jobs providing assistance abroad if a rigged maps here in Ohio make us a global laughingstock for failing to uphold democracy at home. Our veterans served in places like Iraq and Afghanistan in order to give them a fighting chance at democracy, and we do them and ourselves a disservice by undermining democracy with rigged maps. [Applause] Rather than spread democracy abroad, we're putting ourselves at risk of losing democracy at home when so many votes are rendered meaningless that Ohioans, especially the next generation of young people, feel like it's pointless to participate. Fair maps in Ohio are essential to make us a shining city on a hill that other countries want to emulate, rather than as a blueprint for corruption or as an example of what not to do. Ending gerrymandering is the first step toward more competitive elections and more accurate representation to restore faith in our system. Earlier this month, a candidate won a primary in a gerrymandered district with only 37 percent of the vote. Even though 63 percent voted against him, Ohio doesn't require a majority to win, and we don't have runoffs, which leads along with gerrymandering to more extreme polarization. But Ohio could change that by following the example of Maine and Alaska, by switching to instant runoff elections or ranked choice voting. [Applause] With a ranked choice voting, all districts could become

more competitive because more candidates can run when they don't have to worry about splitting votes or the spoiler effect. So when you're drawing the maps, please keep in mind that the political landscape can change over the next decade, so you might as well let voters actually determine the outcome instead of drawing lines with the intention of limiting choices in order to install one party or the other. I'm sure you're tired of hearing what gerrymandering is bad, but we wouldn't have to remind you if we could trust that you and your bosses would just do the right thing. [Applause] Just a couple of days ago, a party chair from one of Ohio's largest counties said the quiet part out loud, that his party should look out for its own members and rig the maps because voters value a spine. You know which voters really value a spine? The 70 percent of us who passed constitutional amendments to require fair, nonpartisan districts. [Applause] So please earn our trust and follow the letter and the spirit of the law. Thank you. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [00:24:29] Thank you. Amy Chaika. Chaika.

Chaika [00:24:36] Chaika, you got it. You got it, thank you.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [00:24:40] And Anastasia Birosh, on deck.

Chaika [00:24:46] Thank you to the commission members and alternates for being here, and thank you for this opportunity to speak. My name is Amy Chaika. I'm from Stow. I'm here today to present the statement of citizen and voter Deborah Barber of Kent, who is passionate that her testimony be part of the spoken record of these critical commission hearings. And she was unable to be here today. She says thank you for allowing me to speak today through my representative, Amy Chaika. My name is Deborah Barber. I vote in the 75th Ohio House District in Kent, Ohio. The overarching issue that I believe needs to be addressed is the illegality of gerrymandering of our districts and the suppression of the rights of voters to choose the best candidates to represent them. In my county, which is Portage, 43.5 Percent of voters voted Democratic in the last presidential election and 55 percent voted Republican. Our legislators, House District 75, 76 and Senate District 18 are all Republicans, in Ohio, 42 percent of registered voters are Republican and 40 percent are Democrats. However, Democrats in Ohio are represented by 42 legislators, while Republicans are represented by 89. That translates to 32 percent Democratic legislators versus 68 percent Republicans statewide. This essentially means that voters cannot choose their representative based on their merits, but they are chosen for us based upon gerrymandering, which often leads to elections of the most extreme candidate who does not need to be accountable to the electorate. The Greater Kent community brings a wonderful diversity of residents, a wealth of cultural and educational opportunities, and we place value on human liberty, social justice and our natural surroundings. We work to preserve the environment; there are many organizations that support our parks and trails, help keep our river clean and emphasize using alternative energy sources, sources of energy. We need our elected officials to support our values and goals. The consequences of not repairing our gerrymandered districts is that voters will continue to not be represented, their voices will not be heard, and our democracy will continue to be sidelined because of partisanship. Be bold and realize the voters constitutional mandate for fair districts in the great state of Ohio. Thank you.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [00:27:15] Thank you. Anastasia. Anastasia Birosh. And on deck, Rosanne Winter.

Birosh [00:27:35] To the Ohio Redistricting Commission members and co-chairs, Senator Vernon Sykes and Ohio House Speaker Robert Cupp, who I guess isn't here today, I want

to say Senator Sykes, Representative Sykes, thank you, first, for showing up. Because to me, [Applause] to me, that means that you take the work of this commission, requested by 70 percent of voters, seriously. It tells me that the Governor and his cronies don't. So thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony, and verbal, to how Ohio Redistricting Commission. My name is Anastasia Brosh. My pronouns are ze, zir and zirs. And yes, we exist. I currently vote in Ohio House District 70, Ohio Senate District 22, and Ohio Congressional District 16, in Brunswick City. Brunswick is divided between two Ohio House districts, 69 and 70, and two congressional districts, 70 and 16, 7 rather, and 16. I think, just in my opinion, it's time that Brunswick be in one Ohio House district and one congressional district. We don't even have 40,000 people in the city, and yet it's meticulously divided. You know, I'll say, Representative Darrell Kick planted the seed for this testimony five years ago in 2016. I drove down to Ashland from Brunswick to attend a listening session that newly elected Representative Kick was happening at various locations throughout the district. I asked what his thoughts were on gerrymandering and how Ohio could avoid it going forward. Well, he punted the question to a more seasoned aide, and, sorry, more seasoned aide who assured me that Ohio's districts, as they were, where as fair as they could be. I then asked why Brunswick was in two Ohio House districts. The aide's answer centered primarily on population equity and very little else. I left that listening session feeling unheard and ignored. The feelings of being unheard and ignored are more significant now in 2021 than in 2016. I feel that Representative Kick doesn't take redistricting seriously. One case in point involves the Medina Gazette article dated August 4th, 2021. In that article, Representative Kick is quoted mentioning that redistricting was an important item on his agenda, saying they're going through the census data now. But sadly, the US Census Bureau didn't release the redistricting data until August 12th. Hmm. Leaves a question in my little mind. Nine days after he made the comment at the Medina County Commissioners meeting on August 3rd. I, along with many Ohioans, supported redistricting reforms in 2015 and again in 2018. Please, please, when this commission begins redistricting, I ask that the process is fair, transparent, nondiscriminatory and politically impartial. I also ask that Brunswick City be allocated to one Ohio House district and one congressional district. Finally, I have hope that this process will be open and bipartisan, as mandated in the Ohio Constitution. In closing, it gives me great pause when my representative is more beholden to his political party than the people he is supposed to represent. It also gives me pause when the Governor chooses to attend a Bengals, a Bengals photo op, rather than attending to the serious business of this commission. I fear that no one in power in this state cares about the fairness, transparency and bipartisan work continued to create districts that provide fair representation. Thank you.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [00:32:46] Thank you. Next, we have Rosanne Winter and Thomas Hack on deck.

Winter [00:32:59] Good morning. I am Dr. Rosanne Winter, and I'm the president of the League of Women Voters of the Akron area. The League of Women Voters of the Akron area has served the citizens of the Akron area and most of Summit County, in which Akron is located, for more than 80 years. We know the area's people, issues and assets well. The Akron area is anchored by the city of Akron population just under 200,000. The surrounding area relies on and shares numerous assets with the city, including medical, commercial, educational and recreational facilities. Our community is striving to thrive amidst a host of difficult to solve circumstances. Loss of corporate headquarters impacting support of community development. Rising costs due to aging infrastructure. The continuing struggle to address the effects of prescription drug and other addictions. Increasing gun violence and pandemic related educational setbacks for students, among

others. While well understood by our city and county leaders, these issues need attention and support at the highest levels of government. The ability to address these needs adequately has been deluded by the current dissection of Summit County into four U.S. congressional districts. Think about it. Out of sixteen Ohio congressional districts we are in four. With more than 540 residents, all of Summit County could be encompassed in just one district. And with a population of just under 200,000 citizens, Akron City would certainly not need to be divided into more than one district. [Applause] However, not only is it divided, it is split by another district right down the middle. As a result of this division, the 11th Congressional District splits not only Summit County, but the city of Akron as well. Wandering from Euclid through Cleveland, East Cleveland, Bedford, south through Seven Hills, Broadview Heights in Richfield, finally entering the Akron area and the city of Akron, parts of the city are in two different districts. This strange configuration was by design, by packing black and other minority voters from Cleveland and Akron together in one district, the only minority majority district in Ohio, was formed. Voters are confused as to who their representative is. In the latest special election primary to fill the seat vacated by Marcia Fudge, many citizens showed up at the polls, only to find that they were ineligible to vote. Why? Because they live in a district different from that of their neighbors across the street and different from where the ads were coming from, Cleveland. Marcia Fudge's seat, like all 16 in Ohio U.S. congressional seats, was constructed to be a safe district. These safe seats were designed to yield a predictable outcome. Twelve Republican and four Democratic representatives. As a result, most Ohioans have been represented by the same congressional representative for the last nine plus years. And yet, for many in Summit County, it took this primary to learn in which district they live. These voters and their community are easily forgotten by those elected to represent them. This point is driven home by the fact that not one of the four representatives in Summit County lives in Summit County. Members [Applause] members of the redistricting committee, those of you who are actually here, what we are asking of you is to keep the Akron area whole. Give us a chance to elect one representative who thoroughly understands our people, issues and assets. Thank you. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [00:37:33] Thank you. Thomas Hack. Then on deck, Georgina Carson.

Hack [00:37:52] Members of the commission, my name is Tom Hack. I live in the 14th Congressional District and I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today. I'm going to read from an article which I believe illustrates really what's going on today and through the process and how things are laying out with regard to the redistricting. This is from August 13th and it is "Eric Holder refuses to join non-partisan gerrymandering reform effort." Former Attorney General Eric Holder has refused to work on a bi-partisan gerrymandering reform in Maryland, and Maryland is kind of the reverse of Ohio. It says "eight districts, seven of them Democrats, one of them is Republic, Republican. Even though he runs an advocacy group that calls for an end to bi-partisan redistricting. Maryland Republican Governor Larry Hogan appointed a bipartisan redistricting commission in January to address the state's bizarrely shaped congressional districts, which he called the most gerrymandered in the nation. Hogan's office confirmed to the Washington Free Beacon that the governors asked for Holder to coordinate on a bipartisan redistricting reform in recent years, but that the former attorney general declined to help. Holder's Chairman of the National Democratic Redistricting Committee, lobbying, a lobbying organization he founded with former President Barack Obama that opposes Republican redistricting efforts across the country. Holder, who in 2019 wrote a letter to the Wall Street Journal that he advocates for citizens or nonpartisan commissions to redraw electoral lines so neither party benefits has remained silent on on gerrymandering efforts from Democrat states

such as Maryland, while he has criticized what's going on in Republican states. What's going on is that the Democrats understand better at least, than I perceive most Republicans, this is about power. And when they have the advantage, they want to, they want to ice people out who disagree with them. In our situation, we need to support the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of Ohio, and we need to support people who actually believe in those, in the founding that America is good, America's Judeo-Christian values, private property, the freedom of speech and things along those lines. It is our obligation to preserve those things as much as possible. Do not be naive, what they, what they're trying to do is to take our electoral damage that we have achieved by because we have gotten more votes and also through redistricting, redistricting because of the migration of population from blue states to red states. They want us to give up our advantage. They want us to pretend that it's about fairness and in being right when in reality, if they had the opportunity, they would do exactly the opposite, as demonstrated by Attorney General Holder, not representing, not really being for redistricting in a fair way in Maryland, where he'd be there, if the shoe were on the other foot, there would be no question in my mind they would arrange things so that we would, that would minimize our representation. It is it critical, is absolutely critical that we maintain the foundations of America, that we recognize what's going on. And I am OK if we end up with two four year redistricting maps because of the process that we currently are in and that represents America, the Constitution and our way forward. Thank you very much for your time. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [00:41:35] Thank you. I want to make note of please allow, give common courtesy to all of the witnesses, even though they may not agree with your opinion. Everyone deserves an opportunity to express themselves. Thank you. [Applause] Georgina Carson. On deck, Tara Mosely-Samples.

Carson [00:42:08] Good morning, thank you for giving me the opportunity to talk. This opportunity for redistricting is a win that we, the people of Ohio, gave Republicans. Ohio and spoke and voted red. As President Obama once said to Republicans, actually in 2009, shortly after his inauguration, elections have consequences. In this case, the consequences are that Democrats have not earned more representation via the ballot box. What they want is disproportionate representation. This is not about equity and equal outcome. This is about fairness and equal opportunity. But most of the Democrats you're hearing from here don't want fairness, they want an advantage because they lost. If the roles were reversed, you can bet that Democrats would use the redistricting process to their full advantage, as Republicans should. The reality is that Ohio is much more red than it was in 2010. Ohio is now dominated by Republicans, and this needs to be reflected in the redistricting. If it isn't, you're telling your constituents that elections are meaningless and our votes don't matter. Caving to the mob isn't the right thing to do. I keep hearing people use the word democracy. We aren't a democracy. We're Republic, if we can keep it. May God bless you and give you the strength to do the right thing despite tremendous pressure not to. Thank you. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [00:43:37] Thank you. Councilwoman Tara Mosely-Samples. And on deck we have Julie Ward, Julie Ward.

Mosely-Samples [00:43:56] Good morning. What is the definition of fair? Well, the adverb is "without cheating or trying to achieve an unjust advantage." Similar words of fair: fair minded, open minded, honest, upright, honorable, trustworthy, impartial and unbiased. Good morning, I'm Councilwoman Tara Mosely-Samples, the proud councilwoman for Ward 5 for the City of Akron. I'm here today to speak to this body about fair redistricting in

the state of Ohio, but more specifically as it relates to Summit county. Currently, Summit County has four congressional districts. For those who don't know, many in this room probably already do, our breakdown: the 11th Congressional District is currently vacant with no current representation at all. The 11th Congressional District represents portions of Cuyahoga County and Summit County. The 13th Congressional District, who is represented by our congressman, Tim Ryan, represents portions of Mahoning, Portage, Stark, Trumble and Summit County. The 14th Congressional District, Representative Dave Joyce, represents portions of Cuyahoga County, Portage, Trumble and Summit County. Do you see where I'm going? 16th Congressional District, represented by Anthony Gonzalez, represents portions of Cuyahoga, Medina, Stark and Summit County. Why is that? How is that fair to the residents who live in these respective counties? Let me give you a brief example of how we here in Summit County have been affected by gerrymandering and why fair redistricting in Summit County is crucial. August 3rd, special election for the 11th Congressional District to fill the vacancy of now HUD Secretary Fudge. Not only is Summit County part of a district that runs through Akron, depending on what Ward, or what street you live on, it covers hairline portions of the Bath, Bath Township, Richfield, Richfield Township. Again, depending on where you live, literally, there are residents of Summit County who live homes or even streets in or out the district. True story. Ward 5, Precinct J. Depending on what part of the precinct you reside in, determines who your congressperson is. Example, If you live on the 700 block of Beardsley, you are in the 11th Congressional District. If you live on the 1,000 block of Kling Street, you are in the 13th Congressional District. These streets are 0.9 miles, less than a three minute drive from one another. Again, they are both in Ward 5, Precinct J. Further parts of 6, F are going to the 11th Congressional District. Out of 100 eligible voters for the special election, zero people showed up in that precinct to vote. Why is that? Because they didn't even though they were in the district. Summit County deserves fair and equitable representation. Summit County deserves someone who knows the community, someone has been here putting in the work. Someone who is accessible and available to the residents in Summit County. I would like to close by saying the numbers support us having fair and equitable representation of our own, fair and equitable representation decided by the people, by the people, not by whichever party is in control. Thank you. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [00:47:55] Julie Ward. And on deck, Gary Gale.

Ward [00:48:01] Thank you for allowing everybody to speak today. I will say before I start, I'm very new at this. I'm not very eloquent, so please excuse my lack of, well, just my lack in doing this. One question I would like answered, and this just may be my lack of being able to find out information. Is how long has the legacy format that was used or is being used for these redistricting meetings? How long? How old is that information? Because we're obviously not using up to date information because it's not available yet. So nobody has asked how old that is, how old the information is. Just something that I think might be nice to know. Something else that I think is important is equal outcome makes a voting process null and void because it has who already decided what the outcome should be before it starts. Equal opportunity to vote allows the people to have a choice. So although people don't often define the difference, we need to make sure that people understand the difference between equal outcome and equal opportunity. In many situations, the differentiation is never made. The Constitution of the United States is an incredible document. You don't know what you have. I didn't grow up in this sort of country, the same thing for, the Constitution for Ohio is an incredible document and should be adhered to by everybody in a position of power. I will quote again, as Miss Carson did, that President Obama said elections have consequences. So, the fact that that works for some people who are in power, but may not work when somebody else is in power, is concerning to me.

It is about power. It shouldn't be about power, it should be about the will of the people and their ability to vote. You are lucky to have your votes. You are lucky to represent the people you represent. My husband has given up making phone calls over things that concern him in Ohio because often when he calls our representatives, they just say, no, that's not what we're doing, we're not interested. He's given up calling. Please represent the people. And remember that the Constitution is important. If getting a better Ohio just means making ways for the Democratic Party to speak louder and yell louder than it's not right. If getting a better Ohio means the same for the other side, that's not right. The one thing I will say is that these hearings have been ridiculous. They've all being held on college campuses. What sort of people do you find on college campuses? None of them has been held in community centers. None of them have been held in career centers. None of them have been held in a situation or an environment where the audience is not predominantly Democrat. Please don't forget the giftings that you have here in America. They are wonderful and you're losing your Democratic Republic. You don't have a democracy. You have a democratic republic. But you're losing it. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [00:52:52] Thank you. Gary Gale. And Sarah Badawi on deck. Can you set it toward that screen over there? Yes. We appreciate it.

Audience [00:53:38] Can you tell him to speak into the mic?

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [00:53:40] Can you speak into the microphone, please?

Gale [00:53:47] Chairman Sykes, members of the commission, three of which I've met before, I'm going to make some comments, I may be doing something relatively historic today. I'm representing the Democratic Party in Stark County and we have a map that is majority Republican because we believe that communities, not parties, are what you determine what you do. In 2011, congressional redistricting, Stark County was butchered. We were put into three separate pieces. We were actually, on a per capita basis, more butchered than some of us. None of this would have happened, had Senator Schuring won in 2008. We would still all be together. And for that, we are sorry. Right now, Sixty percent of our district is the district where it's majority farm country. Thirty percent of our county is in a district that goes all the way up to Lake Erie. It has Mr. Gonzales. You only, the remaining five or six percent is in a district with people who are like us. We believe they should be rectified by appointing Stark County into a congressional district with Mahoning and Trumbull, where we share a common ancestry, common life experiences, common economic status, and most importantly, common problems. In these three counties, the college education rate for those over 25 years in 2019 figures was only 18.7 percent to 22.2 percent, whereas the national average was 29.9 Percent. Also in 2019, while the national per capita income was \$35,977, the per capita income in these counties ranged from \$26,935 to \$29,945. While in recent decades, Ohio overall has gained population and increased job opportunities, that is not what's been happening in these counties. I think about what happened is Lordstown and Hoover and Ford Motors and Republic Steele and numerous other companies in these three Counties. That does not include the outsourcing of jobs for local companies such as Timken Bearings and in DBO. So we have places now where we have fewer residents making less money, and Kirk, you can maybe explain this to them because you live it every day. These three counties deserve representation, that understands and can deal with our problems. And the hypothetical district that we've drawn, it includes all of Stark, all of Mahoning, and more than 90 percent of Trumbull County. If we were to attribute all of Trumbull County, we would have been eight, eight or nine thousand or with a maximum limit for an ideal district. This district has 786,640-786,164 residents based on the 2020 census. So it's only 466 fewer than the ideal. All of

these counties are contiguous. We did not split a single township or a single municipality. We had, we strictly adhered to what's in Senate Joint Resolution 5. Unlike most of the maps I saw in your website, it's a competitive district. The district is 46.7 percent district democratic and 41.89 percent Republican. Either party can win in that district if they run a good candidate and a good campaign. We would ask that you give careful consideration to putting these three counties, which have joint ancestry, joint economics, join education, together and we'll have someone who understands our problems. Thank you very much. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [00:58:16] Thank you. Sara Badawi, and Cazzell M. Smith on deck.

Badawi [00:58:33] Good morning. My name is Sara Daboll Badawi. I live in Akron and I vote in the 34th Ohio House district and Ohio's Senate District 28, so I'm especially glad to see my representatives, Minority Leader Emilia Sykes and Senator Vernon Sykes here today. My representative in the U.S. House for Ohio's 13th Congressional District is Congressman Tim Ryan. Though I live and vote in overwhelmingly Democratic Akron today, I graduated from high school in overwhelmingly Republican Findlay in Hancock County, so I know that the Buckeye State truly contains multitudes, and fair redistricting is essential for making sure all those voices are truly heard. I'm here today as a voter, but especially as an educator. I taught middle and high school history, civics and government for 15 years in the United States and overseas. Now I work with students and teachers across the country in my job with a national, nonpartisan civic education nonprofit. Before becoming a teacher, I worked as an organizer and policy advocate in Washington, D.C., challenging U.S. foreign policy to better protect human rights and sustainable development. All of that to say I have spent my entire professional life actively believing in, engaging with, teaching about, and encouraging others to participate in democracy in the United States. Today, I want to focus on addressing how partisan redistricting, or gerrymandering, by any political party, undermines my work and any teacher's work with and for our students. A few days ago, I was working with colleagues on revising a lesson plan by our organization, to be shared with teachers nationwide, that give students the opportunity to analyze public policy using a case study. They're asked to examine the goal of the policy, consider its opponents and supporters, evaluate its advantages, spot its disadvantages and evaluate whether or not it's likely to be effective. It's a really smart lesson that stretches kids critical thinking in meaningful ways. But as I reviewed some of its introductory language with these hearings on my mind, the message of the lesson felt problematic at best and disingenuous at worst. Here's what it says, "Government policies can profoundly affect our nation and your life. In a democracy, you have a say in government policies and proposed policies. It's important that you take a critical look at them." I think it's safe to say that a voter from any party can agree with the gist of that introduction. And we know that voters across party lines in Ohio have repeatedly called on our elected officials to make that statement less aspirational than it is today. Ohio voters overwhelmingly supported redistricting reforms in 2015 and again in 2018. Both reform efforts won in all 88 Ohio counties and by more than 70 percent of the vote. Anything that passes with that kind of majority in both Hancock County and Summit County is nothing short of an unequivocal call and a resounding, powerful directive to this commission. [Applause] That might be the only thing that many Ohioans agree on besides beat Michigan. But what about the part of the lesson that says in a democracy you have a say in government policies and proposed policies? In the context of eye-popping partisan gerrymandering in Ohio, that claim is a myth for millions of people in this state. For us educators who want our students to be able to believe and participate in the promise of democracy, unfairly drawn districts make liars of us. Because no matter what the policy

issue is, whether it's vaccination mandates, school funding, talking about racism, protecting the right to vote or protest, grappling with the fallout of a public utility bribery scandal, dealing with the opioid crisis or safeguarding the waters of Lake Erie, in a state so marked by partisan gerrymandering, only very, very few people actually have a say. [Applause] I'm asking you to follow through on the mandate you have been given by Ohioans of all political stripes, so that educators like me can talk to our students about participatory democracy with a straight face and a clear conscience. This goes for this commission, and I would send the same message to the Legislature as they draw Ohio's U.S. congressional districts. It's an often repeated truism in conversations about partisan redistricting, that in a democracy, voters are supposed to choose their representatives, representatives are not supposed to choose their voters. Voters in Ohio know this, and I'm asking you please to follow through on their calls to you. Keep redistricting fair and transparent, nondiscriminatory and politically impartial. Let all of our voices be heard in hearings like this one. Please ensure those voices are included in the process. Fulfill the promise of the redistricting reforms placed in the Ohio Constitution. On behalf of me, all my students over the years, and kids and teachers in Ohio classrooms today, thank you for providing the opportunity to address you today. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [01:03:46] Cazzell Smith. And Joseph Blubaugh on deck.

Smith [01:03:54] Thanks to allowing the public a chance to weigh in on the process of redistricting. It is important to hear from experts as well as citizens. We truly want transparent map making, a transparent map making process. We know that drawing redistricting maps must deal with the challenge of being in compliance with the Voting Rights Act and the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment, which prohibits states from drawing district lines in a way that dilutes the voting power of minority groups or powerbrokers pass redistricting reform to get rid of gerrymandering. The resounding cry is we won't accept gerrymandered maps. The maps that will be drawn should reflect the spirit of redistricting reforms in two thousand, in 2015 and 2018. Ohio deserves fair maps that keep communities together. In conclusion, just want to remind everyone that redistricting reform received over 70 percent of the vote statewide and passed in all 88 counties. The people have spoken. We want our voices heard. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [01:05:04] Thank you. Joseph Blubaugh, and on deck, Michael Blinkhorn.

Blubaugh [01:05:15] Thank you. And I know my last name difficult to pronounce, you pronounce it correctly. Thank you very much. My name is Joseph Blubaugh. I live in North Canton. I live in Senator Schuring's District and I also lived in his House district when he was in the House. I'm here just to ask you basically to do what you've been constitutionally told to do by the voters in 2015 and 2018. As other people have mentioned, you know, a vast majority of Ohio voters want redistricting. And I'm just asking, want fair redistricting, and I'm asking you to follow through with their desires. You know, my calculations, although they're not scientific, I come up with right now Ohio's about 52 percent Republican and 46 percent Democrat. And, but the State House is 71 to 29, so that's like a 20 percent variation from what Ohio is. And our congressional districts are even worse. So I'm just asking you to challenge yourselves to make districts that will, as closely as possible, follow the population of Ohio. Don't challenge yourselves to try to skirt the rules and make, you know, negotiate, you know, different ways to to continue gerrymandering. Challenge yourself to, after the elections next year, they will, the State House and our congressional district representatives will be as close as possible to what the population is.

And if you do that, you will have done your job well and you will have, you know, done what the voters asked you to do in 2015 and 2018. And you will make Ohio a model in the country for listening to the voters. Thank you. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [01:07:11] Thank you. Michael Blinkhorn. And Jessica Epstein on deck.

Blinkhorn [01:07:34] Good morning, and I thank you for this opportunity to speak before the commission. I wanted to say that the lovely lady with the English or British accent sort of stole my thunder with her comments. My name's Mike Blinkhorn. I'm a Summit County resident, Copley Township. Been here all my life. U.S. Navy veteran and I've retired having worked 42 years for the Akron public schools. After hearing all, all the talk this morning of gerrymandering and such, I decided to get up and throw my two cents in. One minute here. I was going to talk about the, where these meetings have been held, at the universities. I feel that there could have been a more neutral place for you to hold these. But such is life. Life isn't fair. I'd like to urge the committee to support, and it's my understanding that a redistricting plan or map has not yet been brought up, correct me if I'm wrong, but to support the current Ohio legislatures, whatever they decide to bring forth for adoption. Ohio is a majority Republican state. Voters in the state elected state Republican House for the Governor, Secretary of State, Supreme Court. Majority of the county local government is a clear majority, with county commissioners being Republican and even down to the local level with mayors and local courts, majority of Ohio is conservative. I feel it is being disingenuous, the talk of gerrymandering, when in fact it's just that Ohio has a majority Republican state. As one person quoted earlier, if it was a Democratic state with Democratic leaders, I really feel that most of the people wouldn't be here because their side's in control. That's just a fact of politics, you know? You know, and they took my thunder here, too, but it's been said by a great politician, once uttered, elections have consequences. And right now, Ohioans have spoken in a more conservative tone. And I just hope you take that into consideration with your deliberations on redistricting Ohio. We've lost his seat, so that makes it even harder for you guys. You got a tough job and you can't make everybody happy. So I thank you for your time.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [01:11:28] Thank you very much. Appreciate it. [Applause] Jessica Epstein. And Karen Leith on deck.

Epstein [01:11:52] Good morning. My name is Jessica Epstein. I am a constituent of Tallmadge, which is part of Ohio House District 36 and Senate District 28. I was raised in Green and I have lived in the 330 all my life. I am here today out of privilege because my career as an I.T. professional for an affordable housing developer has allowed me to be here on such short notice. I also intended on bringing my young daughter today with me so that she could have a chance to be a part of this process. I wanted her to see her mom engage in a democratic process that will impact her school and her community for the rest of her childhood. But without a vaccination available to her yet bringing her to a crowded room didn't feel like a safe choice. And unfortunately, there's no virtual testimony option for her to participate today. I'd like to start by telling a story about an experience my family had looking for affordable housing and relocating my grandmother back from Florida to Ohio. My family quickly learned that someone on a fixed income making 30 percent of the area's median income is going to have a very difficult time finding affordable housing. Waitlists to get into LIHTC communities like the kind my company provides can be years long and tax credits available for this housing is limited. At the same time, we were desperately trying to find a place that is affordable for my grandmother to live, Senate President Matt Huffman was inserting components into the budget bill that would significantly increase property tax

valuations for subsidized housing. Tax valuations are needed to ensure housing is affordable for people like my grandmother. In a discussion with my mom about this through tears, she's asking me, "What am I supposed to do?" Where is my mom supposed to live? I told her call your representatives, your House representative, your state representative. I've told her this before. And her answer is always the same. "Year, right, what's that going to do? They're not going to listen to me." My mom is a lifelong Republican who lives in Green. Her Ohio House district representative is a Republican whose hometown is Green. If she doesn't feel represented and she hasn't for years, who does? No one. Because when we have gerrymandered districts, we don't have checks and balances. Our voting power is diluted and we are left with unaccountable politicians running in uncompetitive elections who freely enact laws that don't serve all Ohioans. Now is the chance to draw new maps, fair maps, that will increase voter turnout, encourage bipartisanship and better ideas, maps that show we can be a true democracy that represent the will of Ohio people. Senator Sykes, you said in a hearing earlier this week that it is the commission's intention to draw fair maps. But intention is not action and so far we've seen little action. Action should have been taken months ago to convene these hearings, convene this commission and host these hearings at times and locations that are accessible to working people. Front line workers. [Applause] Front line workers like my husband, who was an educator, is unable to be here today, deserve to be represented in these hearings. They deserve inclusive access to the ballot box and they deserve to be represented in our districts. Every person that has shown up at these hearings is taking action to ensure maps are drawn that represent our communities. Some members of this commission could not be bothered to show up this week. Members and substitutes have asked speakers few to no questions. The lack of engagement in this process is disheartening and unacceptable. I took action today because I am taking this redistricting process seriously, and my question to the commission is, will you please take this seriously and draw fair maps? Thank you. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [01:17:14] Thank you. Karen Leith.

Leith [01:17:16] I think she left her mask, you might want to come get that.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [01:17:22] The previous speaker. I think you left your mask. And Angie Aurent is up on deck.

Leith [01:17:43] Good morning, and thank you for this opportunity. To the members and their substitutes of the redistricting commission, I am Dr. Karen Leith. I reside in House District 37 and Senate District 27. I am a Hudson resident. My comments are based on two broad experiences. First, I have been a League of Women Voters member for 41 years. I have been part of the campaigns to put the issue of drawing maps on the ballot and even locally cheering our last effort in 2018. It's been an important part of my membership of the League of Women Voters. Currently, I work on advocacy, especially issues that allow every voice to be heard and respected. Second, I am a retiree from the Catholic Mission of Summit County, one of the five social justice offices of the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland. I spent 30 years affiliated with the Catholic Commission, the last seven years as executive director, bringing the most vulnerable voices in Summit County to the table. Our mission was making sure that all voices were heard and respected. Both of these organizations operate totally in a nonpartisan venue, so I'm on those two experiences, these are my observations and comments. As a resident of House District 37, I know the benefits of a fair and compact district based on the importance of issues at the time. Our district keeps flipping back and forth between Republicans and the Democrats. As a result, over the years, our representatives and our candidates have been

very responsive to the people of the district. Basically, anytime we've called for dialog, they have been there. We don't always agree and you can look at our history that there isn't always going to be agreement. But we do come away with a better understanding of the issues and what's happening, why people are saying what they are and why our representative is voting the way he or she does. I want fair districts because I want every single Ohioan to have that exact same experience. [Applause] That's what it means to be in a representative Democratic Republic. Now with Senate District 27. My response is the same; we are grouped with a rural section of Wayne County instead of our county seat, which is Akron. We have a council form of government in a unified park system. We belong together, not separate. We shouldn't be pulled out of Summit County. And having worked with and for people of Summit County, I know the importance of keeping communities together. As someone who has worked over the years to help people find their voice, I too, am very disappointed in this commission, in the process that's been used. We have been calling since April for these hearings to start and this was really important [Applause] in terms of making sure every voice has been heard. You had not allowed for working people; I know a lot of professionals who are not here, I know a lot of hourly workers who can't jeopardize their jobs and be here. And not everyone, and thank you to the University of Akron for free parking. [Applause] That not everyone has discretionary income to even come to a hearing and pay parking. You know, if all representation truly understood the people of Ohio, these hearings would have been very, done very differently and at many times. So I hope this commission takes seriously the fact that over 70 percent of the people in 88 counties voted for a new process, and I hope this commission starts representing those voices. Thank you. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [01:22:45] Thank you. Angie Aurent. And Mary Kenley on deck.

Aurent [01:22:58] That was close. My name is Angie Aurent, and thank you for allowing me to speak to you. I vote in David Joyce's district, in Hudson, Ohio, and I'm represented by Kristina Roegner. Is Kristina here? Sad. I have lived in Ohio for over 50 years and have watched as politics have become more divisive, more disrespectful and especially more partisan. Sadly, I and many of my friends and family feel more and more disgusted by our politicians and are outraged by the corruption, lies and lack of transparency. This effectively means that it is up to you, you that the committee to restore our faith in democracy. You can do this by please, please, simply just doing your job. This means listening to your voters, the same people who put you in office. These voters, in all 88 counties of Ohio, voted in favor of Issue 1, fair districting, three years ago. 75 percent of the voters, a huge majority, voted for fair districting. You need to listen to their voice and their vote. This country, this state needs to trust their elected officials. To earn that trust, you need to be far more transparent. Please do not hide in closed meeting rooms. Please don't drag your feet. Please listen to the people that you voted, that voted you into office. And please don't just bow down to your party's interest. As Americans, we are so tired of partisanship. Research shows that both Democrats and Republicans in office spoke more often in line with their party's goals than what their own constituents want. This is a slap in the face of those who voted for you. Show your constituents that you care about their opinion and their desire to restore fair voting in Ohio. You can do this by getting to work, even pulling all nighters if you have to. We are counting on you to do the right thing. Please do your job. Thank you for your time and consideration. [Applause].

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [01:25:42] Thank you.

Aurent [01:25:47] I would also like to ask the people in this room who are not wearing their masks to put their masks on. [Applause] If the Republicans had gotten behind vaccines and masking this COVID 19 would be gone. Thank you. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [01:26:12] Mary Kenley. And Richard Beck on deck.

Kenley [01:26:24] Good morning, my name is Mary Kenley. I appreciate the opportunity to speak. Just briefly, speaking of fair. First of all, why are all these meetings only at colleges and universities where most of the people that are there are Democrats? How was that decision made? I'm just throwing that question out. Secondly, Ohio is considered a Republican state, yet Ohio voted for Obama in 2008 and 2012. How would you explain that? Again, that, just addressing the fact of fairness. So how would we explain that? And that's, and I appreciate the opportunity to say those two things, and that's all I have to say. Thank you.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [01:27:25] Thank you. Richard Beck. Then Casey Boyd-Swan on deck.

Beck [01:27:37] Hi, I'm Dick Beck, and I'm pleased to be here. Kirk, I've met you before in a rotary meeting and I appreciate your being on this commission. Bob Cupp, I've seen you and I appreciate you being on this commission because of what you've tried to do with public schools and all that. And I do think that it's nice to have Frank LaRose represented too. I'm now a Democrat. When Ohio was gerrymandered Democratic, I was a Republican. So I really am a retired United Church of Christ pastor. And I've always been, I've been in Ohio much of my life. I've usually been happy to be in Ohio, and I still think from the point of view of the environment that it's good to live in Ohio right near the lake. But I'm embarrassed right now to be a citizen of Ohio because of the gerrymandering that's going on in the ways in which it's rigged. [Applause] And I'm embarrassed as a pastor, too, for that. That's just, I imagine that you were all embarrassed sometimes to be in your political parties. I know you have a very difficult job. I'm trying to figure out how it works for you, especially you Republicans. Do you get a map that's given to you by those powers that be that are like AIEC and the legislative thing and just give you what you are almost required to pass? Or do you, are you really allowed to change it? I don't know. But I'm hoping that that you will work at it. I'm sure, largely because I chair the Portage Trail Group at the Sierra Club, which is an environmental group which cares about the future of the planet. I have five grandsons, ten, eight, six, four, two and one on the way. And I'm concerned about the future of the planet, and I do think that gerrymandering has really hurt, in Ohio, the environmental issues. So I'm hoping that we can get some representation of people who care. Speaking of all of that, I know that the Republicans used to be the party of conservation, and now they're opposed to it, and I don't understand that completely. So it's very disappointing to me, and I know that Democrats don't always support the environment, either. Enough. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [01:30:16] Casey Boyd-Swan. And Deborah Shankland on deck.

Boyd-Swan [01:30:35] Thanks so much for allowing all of us to speak here to you today. I'm going to keep it a little long because I'm a professor, so that's easy for me. I also brought printouts, though, just like when they bring syllabi to you so, that you can read it yourself if I don't finish. So I'm the Associate Professor of Economics at Kent State University and I really wanted to come here today to talk to you about math, because who doesn't love math, right? This commission is tasked with an important job drawing Ohio's

House and Senate districts. While this job is one which must be completed every 10 years, yours is a particularly unique one, as this is the first redistricting to take place under new legislation approved by the people of Ohio. The language of this legislation appears relatively straightforward. I'm going to read now from Article 11, Section six. The Ohio Redistricting Commission shall attempt to draw a General Assembly district plan that meets all of the following standards. Part A, no General Assembly district plan shall be drawn primarily to favor or disfavor a political party. Part C, I missed B there on purpose, General Assembly districts shall be compact. Part B of this legislation is what my comments today will focus on interpreting from the perspective of an econometrician analyst. B, the statewide proportion of districts whose voters based on state wide state and federal partisan general election results during the last ten years favor each political party shall correspond closely to the statewide preferences of the voters of Ohio. Developing an analytic strategy as it pertains to determining the proportion of districts which correspond to each political party requires several decisions regarding the use of statewide state and federal partisan general election results from the previous 10 years. There are three strategies which I'm going to explore for you today. One strategy would be to use the population of eligible elections. More specifically, you examine the proportion of voters which correspond to each political party across all statewide state and federal parties in general elections, and then create a General Assembly district plan which aligns with these proportions. The proportion of voters aligning with each political party can be calculated, well really, in a variety of ways. A simple approach would be to average the proportions across all individual observations, which are eligible elections. One drawback to this approach might be that it assigns equal weight to each election distribution, regardless of, for instance, proximity to the present. This could be problematic if there were a significant shift in the state population in more recent years, which alters the proportion of voter preferences by political party. There are two ways that you could address something like that. The first approach would be to narrow down your case selection to only those elections which most closely reflect current voter preferences. This approach could entail inclusion of only the most recent statewide state and federal partisan election distributions when you calculate voting party preferences. In other words, instead of including all statewide state elections in the calculation of your proportions, only those recent elections for each office would be used. This is relatively easy to calculate. The following estimates are calculated to only include the most recent statewide state and federal partisan election for each office. This reduces our sample from 16 elections, which occurred between 2011 and 2020, to 7. One for Governor, one for Attorney General, one for Auditor of State, one for Secretary of State, one for Treasurer, one for President and one for U.S. Senate. The party level average, using this reduced sample, estimates that about 47.59 percent of voters indicate a preference for the Democratic Party candidate, while 50.88 percent of voters indicate a preference for the Republican Party. You might notice that that doesn't sum to one hundred percent. A more complicated approach would be that you could weight the elections based on time proximity to the most recent census. This calculation approach could be legitimized as being more reflective of the current state population. However, determining the most accurate reading strategy would be relatively difficult to do and would require the use of samples from, for instance, American Community Survey to use during non census years. This is a problem because data from non census years is drawn from a sample, not from a population, so it may not represent population shifts correctly. While presently the legislative language doesn't really indicate that proximity to the current time is a criterion for data weighting or for sample selection, so specifically, the legislation stipulates based on statewide state and federal partisan general election results during the last 10 years. Nothing to say that more current elections should be weighted more favorably. A second strategy would be to randomly sample the population of eligible elections. Random sampling strategies are typically used under the

following circumstances when you're performing any sort of analytic analysis. One, when collection of data on the population of interest is just not possible. Oftentimes, this is due to an inability to accurately identify the individual members of the population of interest. The second circumstance's collection of data on the population of interest just isn't feasible, right? So oftentimes this can be cost prohibitive and the nature of collecting data on all available individuals of interest just, you can't capture all of it. Neither of these circumstances [indecipherable] in the current case. The population of eligible elections is already observed and it's already very small. Your and is 16. So relying on random samples from the population, meaning just picking up at will elections to decide your proportions, doesn't really make a lot of sense, and it runs the risk of creating significant bias in your estimated distributions. So, for example, in two random samples where I selected 4 of the 16 elections for use in calculating party proportions, significantly different part party averages were estimated. In the first random draw, the Democratic candidates average voter percentage was 42.63 percent, while the Republican candidates as average voter percentage was 54.63 percent. In the second random draw for the Democratic candidates, average voting percentage It was 47.23, while the Republican candidates was 50.24. So you can see through random draws, you can get very, very different results. A third strategy would be just to target specific elections to include the calculation of voter party preferences. So, for example, to use gubernatorial elections as indicators of voter party preference. This is similar to a sampling approach that I discussed before, where the goal was to narrow the sample down. Justifying a targeted sample approach would be really quite difficult to do. First, the legislative language doesn't indicate that that's what you should be doing. It says, based on statewide state and federal partisan general elections results during the last 10 years. It doesn't say the gubernatorial elections or Secretary of state. All of the 16 elections that I use, my calculations are statewide state or federal partisan elections. Now it may be the case that some of these were left out. I went back through and looked at all of the elections that occurred between 2011 and 2020 to make sure that in fact, there were only 16 that could be qualified a statewide state and federal partisan elections. In 2011- I got all of this information off of the Secretary of State's website. I have a link that is in the online version I submitted. In 2011, there were statewide elections, but none were explicitly partisan in nature. All were state issues that were up for consideration, so there's no way to really indicate party preference from voters. In 2012, there were two federal partisan elections, one for president and one for U.S. Senate, both of which are currently in the analytic sample. In 2013, there were no statewide state elections. In 2014 were five statewide state elections, gubernatorial, Attorney General, Auditor of State, Secretary of State, and State Treasurer. All of those are included in my current sample of 16. In 2015, there were no explicitly partisan elections. In 2016, there were two federal partisan elections, one for president and one for U.S. Senate. Both of those are currently in the sample. 2017, again, no statewide state or federal partisan elections. In 2018, there were five statewide state elections- Governor, Attorney General, Auditor of State, Secretary of State, State Treasurer and then one federal partisan election, U.S. Senate. All of those are included in the analytic sample. And then, finally, 2019, no elections, 2020, one federal partisan election, president, and that's currently in the analytic sample. This indicates that these 16 [indecipherable] of 16, our observations, our analytic sample of 16 is in fact the correct sample that aligns with this legislative language. Given the above outlined considerations, a relatively straightforward determination of voter preferences by political party can be concluded by using all eligible elections between 2011 and 2020 and calculating averages based on individual election distributions. I've done that in the handout that I've given you, you can work on Table 1. There are five different calculations. Calculation 1 is the most simple. This is just using all of your observations and what are the averages by party. This approach might be problematic in that for this one, it actually sums the total count of voters, not the proportion

of voters that was won. And in doing so, it essentially ignores any voters that did not vote for main party candidates. It may be the case, though, given language in the legislation regarding redistricting, that could be deemed appropriate to calculate percentages because right, you are only looking at the two parties, according to the legislative language and in the case could be argued otherwise. Either way, regardless of which method of calculating it, it's all fairly close to the same. You're all right around 45ish percent for Democrats and 53 percent for Republican parties. In conclusion, I would like to offer some words of caution regarding the use of data and statistics as pieces of evidence for those making decisions on behalf of the public. Mark Twain popularized the phrase "There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies and statistics." Data and statistics, in and of themselves, are important tools for public policymakers to be able to make decisions which have a positive impact on the lives of those they were charged with serving. However, those same tools can be wielded in a nontransparent and improper way. Academics producing research, which is often used by policymakers to aid in decision making, understand the importance of this and it's one driving force behind the peer review process. As you can probably discern from my testimony, and abundance of analytic choices sit behind any statistics that you encounter. The legitimacy of these rests on whether or not those in a lot of choices were made explicit or were justifiable. Hopefully, I've demonstrated both of these characteristics in my discussion and analysis for you today. Thank you. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [01:43:01] Any questions? Deborah Shankland.

Shankland [01:43:11] My name is Deborah Shankland and I live in Brecksville, a city suburb south of Cleveland. I'm grateful to be able to address the commission today. I would have preferred to attend the Monday hearing in Cleveland, but I couldn't make the last-minute arrangements to do it. I don't think I'd be wrong to estimate that at least five times as many citizens would participate in these hearings if we were notified sooner and more opportunities were given to accommodate individuals who work standard hours. So I'm honored to speak for at least some of those individuals, as well. Members of the commission, we are in crisis. All of us here and our children and grandchildren are under existential threat of climate catastrophe, as well as a global pandemic. These crises demand not just individual actions, such as changing light bulbs and washing hands, but also strong actions and policies at all levels of government. What is our leadership at the Ohio Statehouse doing to address the climate crisis? They passed, and still have not repealed, House Bill 6, a gift to the fossil fuel industry, which is being paid for by every one of us in this room. To avoid the worst effects of climate change, some of which are evident today, we should have decreased and then ended our reliance on fossil fuels decades ago. We should have done everything possible to scale up renewable and clean energy sources like solar and wind, instead of doing everything possible to quash those positive job creating industries with bills like the recently introduced Senate Bill 52 and House Bill 118, as well as House Bill 6. I'm a scientist. And trust me, the worst is yet to come. As a single woman living alone, I'm also very concerned about the exponential increase in mass shootings, domestic terrorism and the proliferation of guns in our communities. More guns do not make us safer. The majority of Ohioans of all political affiliations want common sense gun laws, like those proposed by Governor DeWine, which include background checks, red flags and secure storage of guns in homes occupied by minors. What did our Statehouse pass instead? Open carry on without a license or training, concealed carry of any deadly weapon and stand your ground, which passed on April 6th this year. These laws, and abortion restrictions, are the priority of our legislators. But clean air, protecting our natural resources, allowing virtual testimony during a pandemic? Our elected officials have no time for those. They've been very busy putting together the state's budget, a

budget in which a policy and a new commission were created to promote fossil fuel extraction in our state parks, forests and wildlife areas. Will the royalties from extraction help to fund needed maintenance of our state parks? No. They're going to be used to promote further oil and gas leasing on our public lands. How does our Statehouse so brazenly ignore the wishes of the people and further actively promote policies and laws that damage our health and well-being? It's simply and effectively done through gerrymandering, and if that doesn't work to maintain their grip on power, they impose voting restrictions. When our representatives are not beholden to the people, they are open to the forces of corruption. Now, I know that there are many good and hardworking legislators that want to see Ohioans thrive for generations. They are why I'm here today. I implore you to use fairness in redistricting, to make the process transparent and to give the people time and ample opportunity to review and comment on the maps that are yet to be proposed. We know what has happened in the past, and we are watching you today. Thank you. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [01:47:40] Thank you. Mary Robbins. And Sarah Yuronka, on deck.

Robbins [01:48:06] Greetings to the committee and to everyone here, it's so exciting. I appreciate the opportunity to be heard today and the self-inflicted compressed schedule that the committee had to keep during this period of gathering testimony from the voters. I thank you all who have gathered here today, but I'm so disappointed by the lack of committee members and, you know, having designated representation. Will they hear our voices? I am Mary Robbins, a long, lifelong resident of Summit County, mother of five grown children. I am here because I love my Highland Square neighborhood. I love the city of Akron, Summit County, my state of Ohio, and our magnificent Democratic Republic of the United States. Ohioans mandated an improved system as we have heard over and over, in 2015 and 2018. The critical deadlines have been crunched because of the pandemic, making this a more difficult process, and aggravated by the lack of action by our public officials to get the ball rolling in a more timely manner. It could be thought that maybe people are dragging their feet. You know, maybe they don't want this to work. I know, it could happen. I'm fairly new to Ohio politics. I'm a newbie, sort of. I always voted and so forth, but I've been rather traumatized by what I find happening at our state capitol. OK. For example, these public hearings, of course, should have been scheduled a long time before and not during business hours. How can we shut out so many educators and professionals and people that just can't get away that have, you know, daytime responsibilities? The redistricting commission was not even appointed by the governor until very late in the timeline, when it could have been working all summer gathering public testimony. The desks- this is all happening despite Ohio's pleas to get started on the public commentary, as well as other important pre-work to ensure a fair process. I know, many times I called the governor's office and the voicemail was full, so I couldn't say anything to him. And it's not that I don't like our governor. I've admired many things he's done, but it upsets me that we're not having this public discourse. As a result, more citizen participation is being curtailed. And, I know this, you know, even the redistricting committee members have had trouble fitting it into their schedules. And the fact that Governor Devine was at the Bengals training camp is not a good look. So hear in Summit County we're broken into four congressional districts, thereby diluting our regional voice to make known our wants and needs. Our map is a total travesty, and many citizens are confused about who our representatives actually are. I know I was. Some county has no singular voice. Lawmakers have consistently avoided tackling our gun violence issues when we have overwhelmingly pleaded with them to please, please do background checks, and the things that the other people have mentioned today. And the first energy

thing, I mean, there's nothing more you can say about that. I don't want to go into it even. It's maddening to the voter to see nothing done on important issues. And over and over, these are not decided by common sense of the majority rule, but decided instead by representatives elected in gerrymandered districts and party bigwigs. The United States was founded on citizen voice and involvement. Gerrymandering is an insidious attack on our principles of democracy, which have disastrous effects on a country's future. Ohio votes 55 percent Republican OK, but they get 75 percent of the vote, or seats. Is this fair or rigged? We must get back to debating and coming to solutions together. We'll get a better example. So we're demanding a place at the table of government and please see that every effort is made to fulfill the spirit and letter of the referendums. Do not fall back to that four year fallback positions, where then everything goes to litigation and another election cycle happens, nothing is changed. That would be really aggravating. As our representatives, we expect no less from you. Just please do your jobs, I implore you. Thank you so much.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [01:53:35] Thank you. Sarah Yuronka. And Daniel Suvak on deck.

Yuronka [01:53:51] The perils of mask. Good morning. I appreciate the committee being here in Akron today, and I especially appreciate that we have two of the representatives of the committee here. House House Minority Leader Sykes and Senator Sykes, the rest of them proxy. That is also very disturbing because this is a very heated issue, and I believe that every person on this committee should hear the voices of Ohioans. This has not been transparent, even though that we voted for it to be transparent. Have there been things done behind the scenes? Senator Sykes? We don't even know if there have been maps already drawn or if there have not been. There has not been transparency. As everyone has said, all Ohioans have voted that they want transparency, they want fair districts, they want it to represent us as Ohioans. I have worked in politics in Ohio for over 30 years and I have heard the voters many times. I have canvased, I have walked, I have called, I have been at rallies. And over those 30 plus years that I have been doing politics, I will tell you that the voters are more and more and more disengaged because they do not feel that they have a voice. As many have said here. They do not even know their representatives and not because they don't want to know, but because they, because it is so confusing. We have to look it up and they don't even know. And as people have said, they went to vote and they thought that they were going to be voting and they weren't. This process has not been, as we have heard over and over, has not been fair and transparent. There are people that are not able to come to any of these hearings, anywhere across the state, because of it being between 9:00 and 5:00. When people work 9:00 to 5:00, they can't come to these hearings. Some of our employees are allowing us to come and some of us are just taking the day off to come. [Applause] So it is, it is deplorable that you, that the committee, has not had meetings up until this point. We have no virtual options. We have everything that's been crammed into one week and we found out at the end of last week that these were were happening. So I want you to know that we, as Ohioans, want fair and equal districts. We want them for every Ohioan, Republicans and Democrats and independents so that we have a voice in every election. I understand that power begets power and people want to stay in power when they are in power, and I understand that from a political standpoint. But Ohioans have told you they want to be better representative, better represented. Please take that into consideration when you're drawing the maps. Thank you.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [01:56:53] Thank you. Daniel Suvak. Jim Teague on deck.

Suvak [01:57:07] Good morning, thank you. And logistically, it might have been advantageous to give us such late notice and limited time because if more people knew in advance, you might have had to rent First Energy Stadium for all the people who are interested in this issue. And thinking about the importance of the redistricting process, I was struck by the words of John Adams in 1774, who I think was anticipating some of the abuses our other speakers already talked about today. He said, "Representative government and trial by jury are the heart and lungs of liberty. Without them, we have no fortification against being ridden like horses, fleeced like sheep, worked like cattle and fed and clothed like swine and hogs." [Applause] Fairly drawn districts are essential to representative government, so I plead with members of all parties to draw on your patriotism to enable us to continue the democratic experiment. It is true that skewing district boundaries have led to electoral advantages. But voters also respect honest and impartial leadership. In this petition, and ballot initiatives have shown, there is enormous voter interest in redistricting. Why not choose to be elected based on merit rather than cartographic trickery? [Applause] We heard a very erudite testimony from the economics professor at Kent State, getting down to drawing the actual lines. I would urge the commission to rely on the work of political scientists who have spent years refining the tools used to create fair districts, including our own Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Service at Ohio University, which was funded with the \$478,000 contract from the Ohio Legislative Services Commission, to crunch data into a database useful for drawing fair maps. And I wouldn't just trust the data crunching, though, as my fellow Stark Countian showed there are other overriding issues, cultural issues, economic issues, that really require you to look beyond the numbers. Although the people who have developed these models have spent a great deal of time and I think will lend a real aura of objectivity to the process, something we desperately need. Thank you again. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [02:00:10] Thank you. Jim Teague. And Arrye Rosser.

Teague [02:00:23] Good morning, Commission, I want to thank the members for giving me this opportunity to speak. I'm from House District 76, you're the representative of the District, and Senate District 18 in Portage County near Mann Way. I live in the country in Charlottesville Township. One of the previous speakers gave us some excellent reasons why gerrymandering needs to be done away with. She made the point that it was good for the economy and it was good for competition. I agree with that. Those are excellent reasons. But I'm going to give you one that has been touched upon, I think a little bit, that's even stronger, in my view, the most important. Our democracy is in grave danger. What we saw on January 6th in the capital is something I never thought in my lifetime, and I've lived a few years in this country, I never thought I would see an attempted coup. And that's what it was. A group that was trying to install a candidate that was not reelected, and they were trying to install him or the candidate was that was elected. That's a coup in the United States. We read about those around the world. We see governments overturn. We just saw the one in Afghanistan tragically, and we don't think it can happen here, but it can happen here and that danger is not over. And what does gerrymandering have to do? Well, it doesn't cause that solely, but it plays a part because it promotes extremism. If you're in a district that's that's Democrat or Republican, your competition is not on the other side. And with ideas, your competition is on your own party. And what's tended to happen, at least, that I focus on the Republicans, but it could happen in the Democratic district, they keep going far to the left or farther to the right. And you get these people in office that have really proposals that make no sense. People trying to ban schools from requiring masks, for example, in a pandemic when masks save lives. Our children's, our children under 12, our grandchildren, who can't get vaccinated. Now they're going to

be put at risk because of so-called personal freedom. You don't have the freedom to spread disease. No rational society can [Applause] can allow citizens to say, I have the freedom to infect someone else. It's like saying I have the right to drive drunk because I might kill myself. I have the right to do that. But you don't have the right to kill someone else. And that's what these are doing. You don't have that. You cannot [Applause] We cannot run a society like that. We've gone, we've gone off the rails. We've lost our mind. So anyway, I think gerrymandering is so important to get rid of because it would be a step to getting really extremism that we have and starting us put back on a course of sanity for all, for Democrats and Republicans. You know the point, I'm not sure what the point was, but they were saying that several speakers that you know, this state is mostly Republican now. And why go away with gerrymandering, the Democrats would do it. Well, that was the whole point of why the voters over 70 percent adopted these constitutional amendments of the congressional level and for the state level. To get rid of it. And if it was over 70 percent, there had to be many Republicans that voted for it, just as well as Democrats. [Applause] So this is a bipartisan process, the voters are saying on both sides, we don't want gerrymandering anymore. Again, I thank you for your time. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [02:04:06] Thank you. Arrye Rosser. And Iris Meltzer.

Rosser [02:04:17] Hi there, thank you for this time. My name is Arrye Rosser. So good try on the name but not quite. I am a career civil servant. I'm not here representing the government, but I've served my country for 28 years. I care very passionately about their government. I do. I own my own house. I live a 3536 Homewood Avenue. Please don't come visit me. But I own my own house for about twenty five years. It's located in Ohio's 14th Congressional District, near the borders of Stowe, Cuyahoga Falls and Hudson. I'm actually a Stowe resident. It takes me about 15 minutes to drive to Akron or Kent, 30 minutes to get to Fairlawn or Montrose, and about 45 minutes to get to Cleveland. And that's pretty much the radius that my family spends most of its time. Cuyahoga Falls, which is largely in District 13, is six houses away from me, six houses away at the end of my street. My mail and my electricity go through Cuyahoga Falls, even though I live in Stowe. I go to the grocery store in Cuyahoga Falls. I walk the dog. I use the library. I see the doctor. I visit parks. I attend events. I eat out there. My son ran cross-country when he was in high school and we'd go to meets there. This is pretty much like where my family's daily life has played out. In contrast, Conneaut, Ohio, and I had to really get out the map last night to see about my district, but Conneaut, Ohio, is an hour and a half away from me. And in a quarter of a century of living here, I have trouble recalling even ever going to Ashtabula County, other than to pass through on the highway. I have rarely visited anywhere east of Kirtland, which is the area that is the majority of Ohio District 14. And yet I vote with these people and not the people on the other side of [Indecipherable] with me. Representative Dave Joyce, and perhaps a deep love of the great Lake Erie, are maybe the only thing we have in common. My husband, John Fitzpatrick, and I are both involved in civic life. We're both board members of the League of Women Voters of the Akron area. He's on the board of Summit Arts Space. I volunteered to write for a park related column for the Devil Strip newspaper. John works in Cleveland, I work in Brecksville, but we're mostly oriented to the concerns of Akron. We care about Summit County's economic prosperity, social justice, land use, water issues, hospitals, arts community, library system and culture. We pay special attention to things that impact the Cuyahoga River, Cuyahoga Valley National Park and Summit Metro Parks. I want to be part of a congressional district that represents all or most of Summit County and perhaps includes Kent and parts of southern Cuyahoga County. But I really feel like the integrity of Summit County is important to me. And it's nonsense, really, to think that if I drove to the mall, now that Chapel Hill is going downhill and I go to Summit Mall occasionally, I have to drive through three congressional districts

just to do that. There's only one reason in my mind of why Summit County has been divided up, and that's to dilute our voice. And it's offensive and it's wrong. And at the state level [Applause] Thank you. I want to see U.S. and Ohio State districts as competitive as possible, and I want politicians who have to work for their votes and are motivated to make compromises. I want to see districts that results in a ratio of Republicans to Democratic seats that's proportional to how the electorate voted. And I originally thought maybe in the last election, but I heard that Professor, I defer to her math, and this is just, this is supposed to be a representative democracy, and I just want to be fairly represented. Thank you.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [02:08:15] Thank you. Iris Meltzer. And Martin Belsky on deck.

Meltzer [02:08:25] Thank you. Please know that there are many people here today who will not be testifying, although they too seek fair maps. As you can see from the signs that they are holding up. [Applause] My name is Iris Meltzer, and I live in Kent, which is in House District 75 and Senate District 18. However, today I am speaking from the vantage point of being the president of the League of Women Voters of Ohio. The Ohio league has been working against partisan gerrymandering for nearly 50 years. First against the unfair maps drawn by Ohio Democrats and most recently against maps drawn to create an unfair advantage for Republicans, because it is human impulse to manipulate maps to maintain power. That's why nonpartisan groups like the League of Women Voters are critical to this process. League of Women Voters' members from across Ohio played a key role in collecting signatures for the ballot initiatives in 2015 and 2018 in support of fair maps. We educated voters on the impact of gerrymandering in our state and the initiative was passed, as you have heard, overwhelmingly in all of our 88 counties. As a venerable, nonpartisan organization, we want to create a democracy where everyone's voice is heard equally and equitably. Our democracy is hurt when politicians of any party manipulate voting maps to keep themselves and their party in power. Simply put, partisan gerrymandering takes away voter choice and fuels partisan polarization. When incumbents are all but assured of their reelection, they do not need to serve their voters and instead play to party extremes and big donors. First, we call upon you to uphold the letter and the spirit of reform by creating a transparent, bipartisan and open process. And we want the outcome of this process to be new maps drawn in a way that residents are represented fairly regardless of race, background, zip code or income. Despite delays in the census results caused by the global pandemic, this much shorter window to draw maps cannot be used as an excuse to shortcut the public's expectation for transparency and robust public engagement. [Applause] A transparent and open process with at least three public hearings on draft maps, before they're adopted, allows for a more honest and fairer outcome, because it provides an opportunity for map makers to learn the wishes and needs of voters across the state. An open process also requires officials to publicly explain the basis for their decisions and allows the public the opportunity to hold their elected officials accountable. The lines drawn this year will determine how communities are divided, how resources are allocated and how voters are represented for up to the next 10 years. The League of Women Voters of Ohio asks that you respect not only the letter, but the spirit of the constitutional amendments for both the drawing of our legislative maps, but for our congressional maps as well. We want maps that are compact, respect local government subdivisions as much as possible and are not drawn to favor one political party or candidate over another. We ask you to put democracy above your personal or partisan interests and bring fair legislative maps to the people. Thank you for your time.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [02:13:09] Thank you very much. Martin Belsky. And Karen [Indecipherable] on deck.

Belsky [02:13:21] Good morning. My name is Marty Belsky, and I'm Randolph Baxter Professor of Law at the law School here, and the former Dean. First of all, I have a lot of colleagues and students for the comment that this is a predominantly democratic group of people, the University of Akron, [Indecipherable]. But let me sort of move on and indicate more my background. In the 1970s, yes, I am ancient, in the 1970s I represented a Republican district attorney, Arlen Specter, who challenged the democratically created legislature. In the 1980, I represented a Republican legislator who, I'm sorry, a Democratic legislator who is challenging Republican apportionment procedure in Florida. I want to convey something completely different with you, then you've heard so far. It's a little thing called the law. Yes. Elections have consequences. But elections have consequences unless they violate the law. And that's what I'm here to talk about. Way back in the late 18th century, the governor of Massachusetts decided that he wanted to district his state in a kind of a strange way. So he created a number of districts which looked like snakes, very much like my congressional district, which was lead by now Secretary Fuge. He, his name was Elbridge Gerry. The snake was a salamander. Hence, gerrymandering. But what I'm saying to you now is even though at the federal level, the Supreme Court has determined that gerrymandering is not justiciable, cannot be heard, you have a thing called the Ohio Constitution, you have a thing called the Ohio legislation, and you have other requirements set out by the Constitution, by legislation and by case law. Straightforwardly, the Supreme Court of Ohio will look to see what you're doing. And what are the standards that are going to apply, compactness, contiguity, keeping communities together. In each of those situations, those specific provisions, those specific ideas, were put into legislation or the constitution or case law to minimize the impact of partisan gerrymandering. If you do your job, and follow the specific dictates of the legislation, of the Constitution, and case law, you're doing your job well. It will not be challenged in court or if it is challenged, you'll easily win. But if you don't do your job well, there'll be chaos. Thank you for your attention. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [02:16:00] Thank you. Karen [indecipherable]. And on deck, Rajyalakshmi Alladi.

Alladi [02:16:41] Since Karen is not here, I'm going ahead.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [02:16:45] Yes, thank you.

Alladi [02:16:46] Yeah. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you. My name is Rajyalakshmi Alladi. I live in Aurora and work in the 76th Statehouse district and 18th Senate district. Today's the last day of the hearing and my testimony is not going to be any different than the others. I'm here because I want my voice, too, to be heard on this issue. America is supposed to be the role model of democracy to the world. Even the fact that I can stand here and present this testimony is a testament to the fact of democracy operating as it should. But what bothers me is that why is it that all of us have to turn up and present testimony at all, saying we need fair districting? Why do politicians need prompting to make this all a fair process? What are they afraid of? [Applause] Is it that if districting is done fairly, they will lose? I suppose it is naivety to assume the politicians would have faith in their own policies and let that speak for themselves instead of rigging the districts. Unfair maps, weird shapes, packing and cracking the districts, end up giving power to those who are overriding the wise ambitions of their constituents. It ends up serving the special needs of only those few. The legislators effectively do their well as

they're all in safe districts. For my part, I care deeply about making voting accessible to all, which is the bedrock of democracy, women's reproductive freedom, guns sense laws, and allowing science to rule in matters of public health. Right now, it appalls me that the so-called policy makers are furthering bogus science and putting at risk people's health and lives. There is not enough opposition to this taking over in the Statehouse. I know most people are also interested in seeing changes. This will, however, not see the light of day if the districts maintain the way they are now. As we all know, it's the wish of the people of Ohio that the maps be drawn fairly. I was one of the many, many people who worked hard to collect those petition signatures that made this into a reality. Now that we're here, I would ask that please show up, please play fair and do the right thing and shape history in the right direction. Thank you for your time.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [02:19:20] Thank you. David Guran. David Guran. John Beatty.

Guran [02:20:03] Hello, my name is David Guran. I live here in Akron, northwest side. I don't live on campus, I'm not a student and another employee at the university. I will begin my testimony with five technical issues, then I'll discuss the process as it is, and finally, the likely outcome of this commission. First, the goal of district maps ought to be to form competitive districts. Two, these hearings ought to be held an evening. There'll be further hearings as required. Three, there needs to be transparency of the process. All communications between members of the commission need to be released to the public. And, excuse me, four, this needs to be the disclosure and consulting firms and individuals and campaign staffers that will be working on the maps for the commission. All of those people need to disclose their identities and their relationships with the commission. Five, we need to make available to the public the mapping software that is used by the commission, for the public to make their own maps and to check the maps of this commission. The commission must include analysis of the maps by demographics, by race and ethnicity, by age, especially for children between 18 and 17, because they will be voters within the next 10 years. Now first, I want to thank Representative Sykes and Senator Sykes. After hearing, at the end of the hearing in Lima, they pushed Co-Chair Cupp to finalize the rules of this commission. However, he declined to finalize those rules. He keeps pushing those off to another day. When the last maps were made in 2011, they were the second most gerrymandered maps in the US. People in gerrymandered maps who support the out party in a particular district, those voters of the out party often consider not to vote because it just doesn't matter. Then potential candidates of the out party, either party, often consider not to bother to run for office. For a it doesn't matter. For districts like, for example, disgraced former Speaker of the House Larry Householder, he only had a write in candidates running against him in 2020. Unfortunately, the Republicans have an, still have an opportunity to continue the [indecipherable gerrymandering maps because the commission will miss the September 1st deadline, which is this Wednesday. Within the amendments of, the members of the Republicans can vote for four year maps that will just continue gerrymandered districts. And the governor, who's missing in action, remember him? Yeah, and has not been in any of these hearings. Therefore he's not demonstrating leadership, on this issue. And like voters who don't show up for elections for over six years, they get removed from the rolls, and then they can only submit a provisional ballot. Well, I suggest that Governor DeWine's vote be provisional and [Applause] decided by the state Supreme Court, whether it's should count or not. But most likely, Secretary LaRose, Auditor Faber will fall in line with Republicans, Huffman and Cupp, to pass a four year gerrymandered map. Throughout the years that, I believe the Republicans already have planned to do this four year map. In addition, in the past, there have been sweetheart deals between Democrats and Republicans that have occurred to protect their incumbents

districts. Let's not do that, please. It's sad to say that the four Republicans that will produce a gerrymandered map for the next four years are likely to do that. I'm trying to reduce my speech here. But I wish you prove me wrong. But the likely outcome is we're going to get a four year map that's going to continue to be gerrymandered. Thank you.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [02:25:54] Thank you. John Beatty. And on deck, Eric Brown.

Beatty [02:26:06] Good afternoon, commission members and representatives of those who are not here. My name is Reverend John Beatty. I'm a United Methodist clergyman retired, but my calling from God was not just for the time that I was a pastor, but for my life. So I remain involved in serving people. I happened to be a citizen of Congressman Tim Ryan's District, Congressional District 13. My state senator is Senator Sykes and my zHouse representative is Representative Emilia Sykes. I appreciate their service to our folks here. However, Representative Ryan lives in Youngstown. Marcia Fudge, our previous person for congressional, well, for congressional seat, lives in Cleveland. Anthony Gonzales, I think lives in Hudson, I think. And David Joyce, I don't know where he lives, way out, out in Trumpland. I want to say a couple of things about why I'm here. I was a Republican for 18 years. And then I went to college, and as a representative in Congress would say, I was brainwashed. I think I was enlightened. Because [Applause] because the Christian organization on campus had four deputations. The first one was to Washington, D.C.. The second one was to New York City to study the UN and world problems. The third was sent to Atlanta to study segregation. And I remember the group having to sit out on the curb because the black member of our group was not allowed to eat in the restaurant where people were at. And the fourth was a visit out West, where we heard that there were problems with my church's American Indian School. We are beginning to find out the genocidal results of Indian schools in Canada. And those schools were also here in the U.S.. So I come knowing that God's love, when it becomes public, becomes justice. God's law is that you cannot put your thumb on justice to create corruption. We've been through the worst example of corruption in the history of Ohio. And Senate Bill 6 is the perfect example of ungodly corruption. And that has come directly from gerrymandered districts, in my opinion. [Applause] Thank you.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [02:30:22] Thank you. Eric Brown. And on deck, Mimi Hanlon, Hanlon, Hanlon

Brown [02:30:41] All right, good afternoon. My name is Eric Brown. I live in Bath Township and I will keep my comments very brief because I want to talk specifically about the U.S. congressional districts. As many people have said here in Summit County, Akron, Ohio, we are touched by four congressional districts. This is your opportunity to right the wrong that was done 10 years ago. Living in Bath Township, I reside in the 11th District. I am unrepresented. That is my feeling. And I think it's time for this commission to recognize Summit COunty, to recognize the city of Akron, as critical to the process. Thank you.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [02:31:32] Thank you. Mimi Hanlon. And on deck, [Indecipherable] Matthews.

Hanlon [02:31:45] Thank you. I'm Mimi Hanlon. I am representing myself, but I am a poll worker and want to talk to you about the results of the 11th U.S. congressional primary that I witnessed just a few weeks ago. I grew up in Columbus, Ohio, and then moved to Hudson when I was 14, lived in other states for years, came back here and have lived in the Stowe-Monroe Falls area for 22 years. I became a poll worker when the powers that

be decided to save money by combining voting locations. The end result was my children were in school, I waited an hour and a half to vote in Stowe at the Silver Springs Lodge, ran out when I realized I would not get to the front of the line before they were out of school, got them moved to a babysitter and came back to vote. I called the Board of Elections the next day and said, I can do better than this. So I've been volunteering as a poll worker ever since. [Applause] Let me tell you something, and I'm sure there's a lot of other poll workers here. Out of 88 counties in Ohio, you have a group of people that come together every time that there is a vote in Ohio, and we put aside our Republican and Democratic ideologies to work together to make voting an exquisitely wonderful experience for every person who walks in the door, every Ohioan. We try our darndest to make sure that they're happy. I will tell you what happened in the primary voting a few weeks ago. I rotate around, the Summit County Board of Elections tend to send me wherever they need workers. And I was assigned to a spot that I had never been before. And in, during the course of the day, we had probably two to three times as many people trying to vote as were eligible to vote. Why is that? Gerrymandering. They came in and said things like my relative, my neighbor, my friend, my coworker, they all said to vote today and what I'm trying to explain to them, or all of us try to explain to them, that they weren't eligible to vote because of where they lived. We didn't have maps of Summit County's four way division of US congressional districts. We had to keep saying things like Marcia Fudge's District is the one that's voting today, but you maybe you live in Anthony Gonzalez, maybe you live in Dave Joyce's, maybe you live. They didn't know and they got mad. They got mad at us, but they're going to be mad at you. OK. Down the road, if you don't do the right thing and get this fixed. We are the fourth most populous county in Ohio. We're divided four ways. And you heard someone earlier in this group of very, very engaged voters who erroneously thought that Anthony Gonzalez represents Hudson. He does not. It's Dave Joyce, and Dave Joyce is not here. He doesn't come here. I'll tell you one little personal story. A few, a few years ago, I ended up at a building that's just a few blocks from here. It's the federal courthouse. It houses also an IRS office that used to be able to give help to people. You could walk in and take a number, wait your turn, get it questions answered. I was there as a small business person, sole proprietor, can't afford fancy schmancy tax advice. And they were telling me, you've got to file these forms, these forms, these forms, these forms. I said, Is there anyone I can complain to about doing this? And they said, yes, we used to have our own congressperson here in Akron, and I used to send everybody in your situation right upstairs to see her in her office. But no such luck when our congresspeople are all over northeast Ohio. It's not fair to us, and the voters may be upset with us and saying things like, you're preventing us from voting, and we're having to explain, we're not preventing you from voting, believe me, call the board of elections. Call your representative. We're bending over backwards to tell us who you are, but they're going to turn their anger on you, if this is not fixed. So word of advice. Thank you so much for your time, and I wish everyone was here.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [02:37:16] Thank you. [Indecipherable] Banks Matthews. Laura Jachs.

Jachs [02:37:41] Hi, good afternoon. My name is Laura Jachs. And I'd like to start with the concept that a picture is worth a thousand words. And if you take the picture of our currently districted map and you show it to a small child, maybe around kindergarten age and you say, does this look like a normal, fair way to split up this puzzle? And they will fall over giggling. Now, I love the sound of children's laughter, but not when it comes to a reflection of our current redistricted maps of Ohio. Several speakers previously have said that, I guess, people here today who may be representing the Democratic side of this debate are just here because they want power. You know, they're not here for fair districts.

They want, they want power. And that doesn't make sense to me because of course, it's about power. The biggest power that an American citizen has is the right to vote. [Applause] And if we live in a district where our vote doesn't count because it's been so gerrymandered that there is no way to be fairly represented, then we are powerless. Our power has been taken away from us. Also, I've heard that, you know, as several speakers today have said that Ohio is now dominated by Republicans, and the view on that seems to be so why bother changing the districts. You know? And of course, the logical argument to that is, well, if that's true, then why not change the districts? The districts clearly need to be drawn. I mean, I don't think anybody could logically disagree with the fact that the districts clearly need to be drawn in a, you know, non divided, cohesive map. And if the majority of voters are Republican, the Republican politicians will keep their power. It's no big deal, you know? So the only reason to continue with the gerrymandered district is if somebody is afraid that maybe that's not so. And maybe we're going to lose our power if we have evenly split districts and fairly divided districts. I have to say, right now it feels a bit like screaming into the wind to come here and to have any discussion on this. The saying that we want to have fairly districting maps. And it feels like screaming into the wind because essentially we are asking those people in power to prioritize democracy over personal gain, over personal power. And in some cases, over greed. But that is what we're asking. We're asking for every politician in Ohio to dig deep. And to ask themselves, what is their legacy going to be? Is their legacy going to be standing up for democracy, which is a very long term gain and something to be proud of, or is their legacy going to be the short term gain of a few more years for their personal power? So I ask you, and those that you are representing, to please follow the mandate given you by Ohio voters. We want fair districts where the politicians don't choose their voters, but where the voters choose their politicians. Thank you. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [02:41:45] Thank you. Elliot Forheim. And on deck, Tristin Cain.

Forheim [02:42:19] Competitive district maps are a bedrock of good government. When district maps are competitive, elected officials are accountable to the voters because the threat of losing an election is real. A competitive district map means that the elected officials are accountable and that accountability is the best guarantee of good government. On the other hand, gerrymandered uncompetitive district maps corrupt our government. Gerrymandering makes districts uncompetitive, and the lack of competition destroys the accountability of elected officials to the voters. What incentive to government officials have to deliver to the voters when they know that they will never lose an election? As everyone knows, incumbent politicians and the political party in control immediately after the completion of the Federal Census, when the district maps are scheduled to be redrawn, have an incentive to gerrymander. We here in Ohio know this because it happened in our state 10 years ago. The maps that the redistricting is produced in 2011 were, according to prominent US election law experts, the most effectively gerrymandered partisan biased district maps in the country during the past 10 years. Ohio voters, however, don't need any experts to tell them that the government in their state has been partisan, biased and corrupt during the past 10 years. They know. Those voters acted in 2018 and 2015 on that view and passed both Issues 1 by, in at least the case in 2018, a 50 percentage point margin, 75 percent to 25 percent. As a result of those amendments, Articles 11 and 19 of the constitution of our state prohibit any district map that favors or dis favors either political party. The voters of Ohio demand, deserve and require good government. As such, members of this commission, please do your jobs and produce competitive district maps. Thank you.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [02:45:05] Tristan Cain. And Soloman Frielich, on deck. We are, we are winding down. I'd like to thank everyone for their attendance on this case. [Indecipherable].

Audience [02:45:25] I don't get to talk?

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [02:45:26] Yes, we have [Indecipherable] with anybody that wants to speak will have an opportunity to speak.

Mullins [02:45:32] Greetings, commissioner, actually Towanda Mullins of Copley Township. Tristan was to represent our organization, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated. I am also a proud Army veteran. As a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated, First Vice President of the Akron chapter, also a proud member of the women's, the League of Women Voters for Akron chapter, and other advocacy is here in this city. Political awareness and involvement is very vital to our organization as we were there in 1913, for the women's right to vote march down Pennsylvania Avenue. Our organization. Our founders, told to get in the back, what are we doing here? Uninvited, unwanted. But we stayed. This is another vital point in which we will continue to utilize the power in our voice, and the service within our hearts. As a member of Copley Township, with sons that graduated from Copley High School, college graduates as well, along with my husband, it is imperative that I speak to you today. And I will shorten this because I do concur with everyone that's been at the mic this morning, and I think you fellow residents. Ohioans did vote twice to approve the process of drawing the district lines, both for Ohio legislation districts and the U.S. Congress, in overwhelming numbers. We know that. Years ago, the average majority of Ohioans didn't even know about gerrymandering. Our organization is working hard, because I'll tell you, our culture and a lot of the members in this community, don't even know what it is. We're highly embarrassed at the District 11 vote. It was echoed earlier by a poll worker - didn't even understand because signs were playing it with the certain zip codes within this community. That is embarrassing. We know it's hard to draw a gerrymandered map, we get that, tailored to produce particular outcomes. We are demanding a fair map. The current 12 to 4 U.S. congressional map is the product of a lot of hard work to manipulate. A lot of us are speaking to manipulation this morning. This year, we're taking part in mapmaking competitions. We will not be silenced. The competition will produce fair maps to be drawn in accordance with the new redistricting rules. The Legislature can no longer pretend that the maps they produce are the best and possible reasons for residents in our communities. I want to leave you with this: we know democracy is not a spectator sport, and you know what? It works well when we all participate. That is how you really win. Thank you

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [02:48:59] Thank you. Soloman Frielich. And Michael Abrams on deck.

Frielich [02:49:17] Good afternoon, my name is Solomon Frielich. I'm a 28 year old climate change activist, nature photographer and member of Sunrise Movement, Cleveland. I'm speaking today on behalf of Sunrise Movement, Cleveland. Sunrise Movement, Cleveland is part of the Sunrise Movement, a youth led movement to stop climate change and create millions of good paying jobs in the process. The recently released Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report tells governments that the only way to avoid the worst case scenario for global heating is by ending fossil fuel extraction, dramatically reducing methane emissions, quadrupling solar and wind capacity and tripling renewable energy investments all by 2030. More than 6 in 10 Ohio voters support climate action. More than 6 in 10 Ohio voters believe expanding renewable energy

should be Ohio's number one energy priority. However, in 2019, the Ohio Legislature passed HB 6, making Ohio a leader among governments that are supercharging the climate crisis instead of ending it. "On July 21st, 2020, the FBI unveiled charges against the former Speaker of the Ohio House, Larry Householder, and four political operatives for racketeering and bribery related to the passage of HB 6 and the effort to block citizens access to the ballot, ensuring a referendum to repeal HB 6 would fail." 133rd, end quote, and 133rd Ohio General Assembly Scorecard, Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund 2021. "According to federal prosecutors, the scandal was likely the largest bribery money laundering scheme ever perpetrated against the people of the state of Ohio." A majority of Ohio voters oppose HB 6. We know that every political decision not only determines the conditions of our day to day reality, but whether we will have a livable future on a planet that's already in peril. For too long, Ohio's elected leaders have stolen our power to choose who best represents us. We do not have a democracy without it. The Republican Party's leaders have gerrymandered their way out of having to prove themselves capable to voters. They know they only have to prove themselves capable of taking extreme positions, like denying climate change, lest they lose elections to challengers from their own party. There is proof that in the last thirty nine years, Ohio has been gerrymandered. There's statistical techniques for demonstrating the probability that a district map was drawn to gerrymander. Some of the techniques that test for unequal opportunity that are now applied to gerrymandering were invented in the 19th and early 20th centuries, such as mean minus median in 1895 and T Test in 1908. It seems that what scientists and engineers accomplished in the second half of the 19th century and first two decades of the 20th century, like experimentally demonstrating the greenhouse effect in 1859, suggesting a link between carbon dioxide levels and temperature in 1896 and suggesting that burning coal will cause the atmosphere to heat up in 1912, could benefit us all if we, if only we could see it. In Ohio, in 2018, the median Democratic vote share was 41.7 Percent. This is a quote sorry, "In Ohio, in 2018, the median Democratic vote share was 41.7 Percent. The average Democratic vote share was 47.7 Percent and the difference was 6.0 percent. The chance that this difference would have arisen by nonpartisan processes alone is 1 in 212,105." Princeton Gerrymandering Project. The Ohio Constitution states General Assembly districts shall be compact. I looked at the current General Assembly district maps, and it seemed to me that at least six House districts and six Senate districts were not particularly compact. They are, there are statistical methods for determining compactness, and these can be applied to individual districts. I obtained calculations using methods for every current district of the Ohio General Assembly from geospatial software company Azavea. One method is called Polsby-Popper, which calculates the ratio of the area of the district to the area of a circle whose circumference is equal to the perimeter of the district. A value of zero is the least compact, whereas one is the most. Confirming my hunch, House District 78, 72, 57, 81 and 91 have Polsby- Popper values of .16, .17, .2 .2, .29, .33, respectively. For comparison, the 10 most compact Ohio House districts, based on this measure, all have values exceeding .48 and all Ohio House districts range from .07 to .78. Also confirming my hunch, Senate districts 2, 20, 27, 19, 30, and 26 have Polsby-Popper values of .8, .19, .21, .22, .22, .32, respectively. For comparison, the 10 most compact Ohio Senate districts, based on this measure, all have values exceeding .27, and all Ohio Senate districts range from point .08 to .66. The representatives of these districts have all contributed to our water being contaminated, our air being toxic and our jobs being dangerous. Because they have all locked climate action. They have halted wind and solar development, increased fossil fuel extraction, increased utility rates, forced communities to build new construction with dangerous gas lines, deregulated all polluting industries and made voting a lot harder for people who might take issue with their leaders taking \$60 million in bribes to allow corporations to continue heating the Earth for profit. [Applause] The following are bills and laws they supported. In the 133rd General

Assembly, HB 6. In a June 2019 letter to the Ohio Senate Energy and Utilities Committee, Andrea Chu, Regional Organizer with Food and Water Watch, wrote "I urge you to oppose House Bill 6. As it stands now, it is a heinous piece of legislation that moves Ohio into the past rather than the future." While other states like Illinois are embracing renewables, Ohio is being peddled a coal and nuclear bailout bill poised as a clean energy bill. HB 6 eliminated Ohio standards for clean energy and efficiency that Chu described as having, quote, "saved Ohioans millions of dollars in energy, reduce energy waste and carbon emissions and provided many green jobs across the state." HB 798 would have delayed HB 6 provisions, but wouldn't have repealed HB 6. This doesn't fix any of the problems caused by HB 6. The only way to do that is to repeal HB 6. HB 680, at least as initially conceived, would have made it more inconvenient, more confusing and more expensive to vote. SB 1 would have required that agencies reduce the regulations in the Ohio Administrative Code, which includes environmental regulation by 30 percent. We believe that forcing government to eliminate 30 percent of governing hurts Ohioans. SB 234 would probably have ended wind energy development in Ohio, by giving townships the power to prohibit wind farms. In the 1334th General Assembly, HB 201 is a ban on municipal natural gas bans. It's terrible that Ohioans are being forced to continue using a fossil fuel that is making them ill and making their houses and buildings susceptible to fires. SB 52 would probably end wind and solar development in Ohio by giving local governments the power to prohibit new solar wind projects. No such power exists for fossil fuel projects. Just including the legislators representing the 12 districts I identified as noncompact, yes voters and sponsors on these bills include Larry Householder, Ron Hood, Dick Stein, James Hoops, Darryl Kick, Brian Stewart, Kevin Miller, Shane Wilkin, Theresa Gavarone, Tim Schaffer, Frank Hoagland, Dave Burke, Kristina Roegner and Andrew Brenner. Redistricting, if abused, threatens to destroy the foundation of democracy, the power of the people to choose their leaders and advance their principles. Can the people choose leaders who are able to put those principles into action? It depends on who's, it depends on whether those leaders can govern based on those principles. It depends on to whom those leaders will listen. A powerful donor class or the people. We are faced with a climate emergency that we must act on today. But instead of adopting this mantle, our leaders are choosing to take actions with lifelong negative consequences for us all. Why? How can we ensure that the people's voice can echo through the halls of power? How can we ensure that when the people send leaders to Columbus to fight for them, these leaders don't fight for donors and extremists instead? How can we ensure that when the people send leaders to Columbus to deliver justice to keep fossil fuels in the ground, to end lead pollution, to hold corporations accountable for violations where ecological rights, to hold police accountable for brutality against black people, to protect workers rights, to give land back to indigenous earth protectors, to end utility shutoffs, to stop evictions, to house the unhoused, to guarantee free health care to every resident.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [02:58:03] Sir, excuse me.

Frielich [02:58:03] To heal the planet and to protect our vote, those, our right to vote. Those leaders don't build walls, blocking every path to justice instead. We think this commission starting today can lay the groundwork for achieving these goals, this is the last paragraph, excuse me. They should follow the new constitutional requirements without any intent to retain or gain partisan advantage. They should make districts a lot more compact than they are in the current map. They should draw maps in such a way that the statewide preferences for political parties of Ohio voters should be fully apparent from who occupies the Ohio Statehouse. They should draw maps in such a way that elections for General Assembly seats can be competitive once again. Voters, not First Energy and not

legislators who don't care what Ohioans think, need to be in charge of Ohio so they can set a course for a future of justice and peace. Thank you. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [02:58:56] Michael Abrams.

Abrams [02:59:09] Good afternoon, Commissioner, thank you very much for having this meeting here today. I drove up from Bolivar, Ohio, to talk to you. I'm not as eloquent as a lot of people I've heard today. They've brought up some very good points. My perspective is it's all about partisanship. And there was too much of that going around. I'm a fan of Ralph Regular, he has done so much for this country, let's say years ago, because he did so well working with both sides of the aisle. With the gerrymandered maps we have now, we have less of that. We need people working together on both sides of the aisle. I don't- [Applause] It's just, yeah. I'm done. Thank you very much.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [02:59:59] Thank you. Was there anyone else who would like to testify today? Please come forward and make sure we get a witness slip.

Rubin [03:00:08] I turned in my testimony to the website and I was one of the first ones to give my witness slip to your helper today.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [03:00:20] Thank you. Please go forward.

Rubin [03:00:22] Senator Sykes, Senate Schuringg, and the members of the Redistricting Commission. My name is Connie Rubin. I reside in North Canton, in House District 50, Senate District 29, and Congressional District 16. I've voted in Ohio for 48 years and during that time I've registered voters, served as a poll worker, testified, written hundreds of letters to my legislators and congressmen, and have run for office. I wear this white outfit today in honor of Ohio and American suffragists. Yesterday marked the anniversary of adoption of the 19th Amendment, which allowed women to vote. [Applause] One hundred and one years later, you hold in your hands the ability to make our vote reflective of the public will, or to make our votes meaningless. In 2011, you chose the latter. As you know, in 2015 and 2018, Ohio Republicans, Democrats and independents rebelled against the rigged system you created, and supported a new process which we hope will force you to adopt fair new districts reflective of the moderate political views of the majority of Ohioans and of our statewide voting patterns. I commend you for having these hearings around the state and would encourage you to begin providing additional such opportunities for a citizen input on legislative issues, at least twice a year. Not everyone can come to you in Columbus on weekdays. Another 21st century alternative would, of course, be to allow online testimony via Zoom. But I digress. We're here to talk about fair, legislative and congressional districts. Today I would like to share with you how I will judge the fairness of districts you ultimately draw and adopt. Fair legislative districts should no longer result in a veto proof supermajority in either the House or the Senate. This state is much more evenly divided. In House, districts should reflect our 54, 45, whatever it is, Republican Democratic divide. Fair districts will be ones which allow for a change in party, especially when incumbents are term limited out of office. Given the political makeup of the state wide electorate, House districts should probably be 30 percent safe Republican, 30 percent safe Democratic and at least 30 percent that could go to either party, depending upon the abilities of the candidates. Ideally, no district would be a safe district for any incumbent. [Applause] It is my opinion the districts favoring either party by 10 percentage points or more are inherently unfair. When dividing counties, please use major arteries as dividing lines so that districts can be easily described and identified by their voters. Whenever possible, don't divide townships, cities or villages, and keep whole school districts or keep

school districts whole. The Ohio Department of Development has applicable statistics regarding Ohio's population, and I'm not sure that anyone's talked about this today. Eighty percent of us live in metropolitan areas. A fair legislative map would mean that eighty House votes come from those metropolitan areas. A fair map would also assure that at least 20 House members and 6 Senate members are minorities, reflecting the 21 percent of their population in our state. With regard to congressional districts, 8 districts should be Republican and 7 districts, Democratic. Any other result will be patently unfair and subject to lawsuit. Because this hearing is your next to the last, it's worth repeating some of the admonitions of previous Ohio voters who have testified. Not here, but in other hearings. Gerrymandering is disenfranchisement. Please keep Elbridge Gerry in his tomb. The gerrymandering of 2011 has created polarization that is tearing us apart. This new process offers the opportunity to create districts that will encourage cooperation and dialog to revitalize our communities, not tear us apart. The polarization created by our current districts has left both urban voters and rural voters feeling unheard and disrespected, the drawing of legislative and congressional districts are a process which deserves to be done in public, subject to our state's strong sunshine laws. And, last but not least, creating fair maps is a matter of your will, and a matter of your integrity. We hope you will demonstrate both.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [03:06:27] Thank you very much. You can step forward please and give your name.

Woods [03:06:31] My name is Dennis Woods. And thank you, Senator Sykes, for the work you've done to address the problem of gerrymandering. The party in power should be embarrassed to gerrymander because it's an admission that you can't win on your own merits. Gerrymandering is also a blaring and arrogant declaration that you intend to ignore or even work against Ohioans, and you expect to get away with it. Nowhere is that more evident than in the shameful passage of House Bill 6 in 2019 that handed out financial favors to two of the most polluting coal fired energy plants in the nation. I know my representative, Mr. Roemer, explained to me that he voted for House Bill 6 because he didn't want Ohio to be an energy importing state. I now purchase my electricity from Indiana, where I can get wind powered energy. This year, House Bill, 201 and Senate Bill 52, protected the methane industry in the face of Ohioans objections and thwarted the development of clean energy, which Ohioans and Ohio industries say they want. These bills are in direct opposition to what Ohioans want. A survey by the Yale School of the Environment showed a majority of Ohioans want Congress to do more to address climate change. Two thirds want strict limits on carbon dioxide emissions. Two thirds want utilities to be required to generate more energy from clean sources. Two thirds want fossil fuel companies to pay a carbon tax. Three quarters of Ohioans want carbon dioxide regulated as a pollutant, and 82 percent want financial supports for solar energy. And yet, year after year, Ohio government ignores our wishes and needs. Ohio falls further and further behind their neighbors in the development of clean energy, worsening air quality and water safety, and producing the affordable electricity manufacturers want. How did Ohio end up with irresponsible, unresponsive and corrupt officials who vote against our interests? Because elected officials are beyond our reach, unaccountable, protected behind gerrymandered district lines that assure their reelection, despite voter disapproval. Clearly political gerrymandering has allowed those officials to trash our state and threaten our future and remain in office to do it again and again. The new congressional and state legislative district lines should be drawn so that every candidate must win votes by appealing to voters, representing their opinions and respecting their wishes. Otherwise you are putting your voters in danger and our voting rights are a sham. Thank you. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [03:10:25] Thank you. Please state your name.

Cochran [03:10:31] I'm Dr. Steve Cochran. I'm impressed you're still awake. Maybe a little dazed, but awake. I'm a primary care physician, practicing medicine in Ohio for 40 years. No news to anybody, we're in a pandemic. The virus we call COVID-19 is both highly contagious and is often fatal. It has severely disrupted both our economy and our social well-being. It has caused intense grief for a large number of Ohioans due to loss of loved ones. And what is really sad about all of this is a lot of these deaths were totally avoidable. The pandemic continues to place huge demands on the medical system. Our hospitals are sometimes so overcrowded that doctors have been placed in the position of having to decide who gets critical care and who doesn't. You could show up at a hospital suffering a heart attack or having suffered severe injury, and you may not get into the intensive care unit. We know from a large number of scientific studies, we can normalize our lives. We can protect the health and lives of fellow Ohioans, if we can get enough people vaccinated, if we all wear masks in public settings, if we maintain social distancing. We have miserably failed to do this. And a lot of this is because, as you've been hearing and hearing, some of our state legislators seem to be isolated from the needs and desires of their constituents, because of gerrymandering. They seem to be beholden to cranks and conspiracists who want to peddle unfounded misinformation over rational scientific recommendations. I'm proposing that we consider gerrymandering as a disease on our society, and it's time to cure it. Thank you.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [03:13:00] Thank you very much.

Wagner [03:13:16] Good afternoon.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [03:13:17] Good afternoon, make sure you state your name, please.

Wagner [03:13:19] OK, sorry, I submitted a slip, but that must have got lost in the shuffle. So. Chairman Sykes, members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission and their representatives, not good morning, it is now afternoon. My name is Mandy Wagner. I am from Canton, Ohio, and am a constituent of Representative Oelslager and Senator Schuring. Some of you may also be familiar with me as I have lobbied members of this body many times over the past decade. I am a 20 year veteran public school teacher and an administrative leader of the grassroots organization Action Together Stark. But today I'm speaking as an individual. Why I'm here today is why we're all here today. Ohio's district lines are a mess. Ranked second worst in the country. Woohoo, right? We're not number one. Obviously, this is a problem and needs to be fixed. Ohio citizens spoke loudly about this very matter in 2015 and in 2018, taking a stand against gerrymandering by overwhelmingly supporting two redistricting reform measures. And it's no mystery why that is. When it comes to who represents me in the Ohio House, in a half mile radius from where I live, my neighborhood has three different representatives. If I walk two tenths of a mile north, my neighbors are represented by Reggie Stolfus. If I walked two tenths of a mile south, those neighbors are represented by Thomas West. Every morning on my five mile jog around the neighborhood, I literally run through three Ohio House districts. That's ridiculous. It's clear what the political agenda was when drawing these maps. Representatives picked their voters. That, however, is not how it's supposed to be. Voters should get to pick their representatives, officeholders shouldn't pick their voters. So what does this mean? The lines are drawn. There's no question it's wildly unfair. But how does that affect Ohioans? How has that affected me in those I care about? As I mentioned earlier, I am a public school teacher. I also mentioned that I may look familiar because I've

been advocating for education issues for the past decade. According to an article published in The Columbus Dispatch, in 2010, Ohio ranked 5th in the nation for education. In 2016, you're 23rd, among 50 states and the District of Columbia. Currently, according to a recent report in U.S. news, Ohio ranks 31st in the country for education. So how does that happen? Well, in 10 years, this body has ratified policies that were proven disastrous. And now we are fighting to undo all of that. State testing? It's a mess. State report cards? A mess. And that's why you see my face all the time. We must fix this. And even school funding is a mess. In 1997, in DeRolph vs. State, the Ohio Supreme Court declared the state school system unconstitutional. Specifically citing four major flaws in the system. That was twenty four years ago, almost a quarter of a century, and only this year has there been an inch of progress to fix this broken system. Folks, this is what happens when there is no accountability. Our districts are too safe for our politicians. Therefore, they have little incentive to listen and be responsive to the needs of the state, the needs of our community. For those that live in my community and send their children to Plain Local Schools, if we have a need or a concern, we have to lobby three different representatives for our voices to be heard, for our needs to be met, ranked, or met. Ranked 5th in the nation in 2010, 31st in the nation now. The evidence is there in how effective this system has been. School funding hits especially hard for me personally, and I'll try to cut, make this short, because of school funding and the budgets, I've been laid off two times in the past seven years. And so imagine, pounding the pavement with 20 years teaching experience, a master's degree, working on my second masters, looking for work in a pandemic, in a profession that isn't adequately funded. Needless to say, finding permanent work is impossible. Last year, I worked a one year contract while a teacher was out on leave. And this year I am working a year long sub position in another county, an hour and a half on the road each day in attempt, I'm sorry, a twenty thousand dollar pay cut. I suppose I can always find a second job so that I can afford to work my first job, though, right? Seems to be the American way these days. Teachers are fleeing this profession and it's no wonder why. You're funding and your policies make it impossible to do our jobs, even to keep our jobs. In fact, our system would not function at all if not for the overtime of our teachers, administrators, bus drivers and other staff. But I'm not here today to convince the members of this committee to do the right thing. We all know by tweets from a Republican lawmaker who shall not be named what their agenda is. It's the same agenda they had 10 years ago, evidenced by the way this process is running. Our elected officials knew this job was in front of them. They knew what had to be done. They should have been planning on getting out in front of this most important issue facing our state. These district lines will most assuredly determine the state of our state for the next ten years. And what do we have? The governor dragging his feet to convene the committee, committee hearings scheduled during the workday, making it impossible for working individuals to attend and have their voices heard. And where are the drafts of the maps? We know they're out there and yet we have nothing to speak to today other than hypotheticals. So we stand here and just beg and plead for you to do the right thing. What we want, what the Ohio voters said, is that we want a bipartisan process. We want you to work together and end the partisan gerrymandering. We want a transparent process. We want fair maps. We want you to live up to the promise of redistricting reform. Voters want and expect a 10 year bipartisan agreement. But I fear that won't happen. So my appeal now is to the audience, both here and those tuning in remotely. Pay attention. Show up. Keep speaking up. The process isn't over. So be ready. I'm ready. Thank you.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [03:19:46] Thank you.

Schufar (?) [03:19:56] Good afternoon, Commission, my name is Thomas Shufar. I, like her, I'm a Canton resident of nowhere but well spoken, well said by her. Real quick, my

points are going to be tightened. Hopefully accurate. Yes, we do have election integrity issues. We do have situations where we have gerrymandering, as it is seen by some, others see it not as such. We do have boundaries. Boundaries are not walls. Boundaries are not walls. Anybody that is a citizen in our state can vote. They don't know who they need to vote for, who their representative is. It's as easy as ordering a pizza pie or getting anything from Grubhub. You can go online, you can even make a phone call. We're all aware of this. It's not rocket science. You can find out who your representatives are. People have some soft excuses that they're using as rocks against their fellow citizens. Don't do that. You're responsible for yourself, as the commission is trying to be responsible and responsive to the people. Thank you very much for having this hearing. It's important. We appreciate your time. We appreciate the integrity that you do have. Broad brushes have been used against you. I'd like to put a broad brush out there for you. We do thank you for your time, your service. You have people that work with you. With you. People do not work for you. If they're working for you, we're in the wrong era. We're going to be working with each other to make this state even better than it's ever been. We have people that are voting in their districts that vote. We have people living in their districts that don't vote, that can vote. Nobody's telling them that they cannot vote. They're not informed, that's not on you commission, that's not on me, Mr. Citizen, it's on that person's own responsibility. So I would just like to thank you once again to know that laws are to be followed. The Board of Election is there for these people to find out whom they're supposed to be voting for. Because once again, boundaries are not walls. They're not preventing anybody from voting. Their own ignorance may be, but that's not on you and that's not on me. And for the gentleman that says, yes you know, we're saving lots of lives and all this COVID stuff, and I will jump on that. I've got news for everybody: at some point in our life; it is going to end. We are responsible for that. And we have to be mindful to ourselves, wherever you are in your life and in your walk, Christ died for you. That's the Lord Jesus Christ. We're going to be responsible and we're going to find him. So to anybody that's out there, find your way, get out and vote, do your job. You're responsible for you.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [03:23:30] Thank you. [Applause]

Wen [03:23:45] Good afternoon, my name is Xao Wen. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson and Commission, I'm here today on behalf of a 501C3 nonprofit organization based in Akron, Ohio, as well as Asian Services in Action or ASIA for short. ASIA strives to empower and advocate for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and to provide AAPIs and other newly arrived immigrant and refugee communities access to culturally and linguistically central information, health and social services. I have lived and worked in Akron, Ohio, for six years. Today, I'm urging you to do everything you can to keep Asian American and Pacific Islander, AAPI, communities in the North Hill neighborhood together during this year's redistricting process. Our community is the fastest growing major racial group in the United States. The U.S. Census Bureau's new demographic data confirms that what already know to be true, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are growing in size all across the nation and are driving our country's population growth. In Ohio, specifically, the Asian American population has grown by 55.3 percent since the 2010 census and 160,000 more people. Asian-Americans now comprise almost three percent of the total population of the state of Ohio. It is important to state that Asian community in the North Hill neighborhood is diverse in terms of its culture, culture and languages. In this district, the top countries of origin include Bhutan, Nepal, Burma, Thailand, Afghanistan and my community, the Korea community. Each of our languages and culture is unique, in the specific community of North Hill where I live. Asian-Americans comprise at least 26.2 percent of the total population of the area. The African-American community comprised about 2.3 percent,

and the Hispanic community comprised about 6 percent. If the commission will like I have a copy, I have created a map in [indecipherable] showed the geographic boundaries of this community and I can give it to you. It is also important to say how - thank you - how the Asian community ensured that essential food and supplies were available for all of us throughout the pandemic. Almost all of the Asian Americans that live in the North Hill work in food production facilities and/or factories that produce a majority of the food and supplies that kept all of us safe and supported during the pandemic. Our population growth needs the opportunity to increase our political voice and power. The Asian [indecipherable] populations in this community is 23.1 percent, so we need to make sure that this neighborhood stays together. Elected officials cannot afford to ignore us. They need to engage our communities to be able to address the policy and allocate their resources to dismantle systemic inequities, to add anti-Asian hate. Thank you for your time, and thank you so very much for considering the shared needs and interests of our community. Have a good day. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [03:28:04] Thank you very much.

Fante [03:28:15] Morning. Or good afternoon, members of the commission and the fill ins. My name is Dan Fante. What we have here, in my opinion today, is a classic failure to communicate, as they said in 'Cool Hand Luke'. I submitted my testimony online. I submitted my witness slip online, but I had a sneaking suspicion it ain't going to work. So I made a copy of everything, brought it in here. I was one of the first five people in this room between 8:30 and a quarter to 9:00. I give my stuff a couple of these gentlemen here. And it ain't even there. Because you have to say, is anybody not spoken yet? How did we get to this point? I married, a father of two to all children, I have two grandchildren. I'm retired from Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 94, as a pipefitter welder. I am presently a member of Ohio, a board member of the Ohio Alliance for Retired Americans. I am here to testify in favor of fair districts. The current state legislative and congressional maps have led to a more polarized Ohio. These politically motivated districts allow the most extreme politicians to win. In most cases, you know who is going to win the seat by the outcome of the primaries. Luckily, Ohio voted overwhelmingly and to end gerrymandering in 2015 and 2018 for redistricting reform. The people of Ohio on fair maps have shown by over 70 percent support of all these two ballot initiatives, which you've heard over and over today. But this is how democracy works. It's a government of the people, by the people and for the people. Voters want transparency and engagement through public hearings that are convenient for the public to attend and to be a part of the process. It's a shame that all of these commissions hearings and happenings during the work day. For the past year and a half, we've called our workers heroes. But then we don't even give, allow them the space to for them to be heard on something important as redistricting. The new maps must not favor one political party over the other. It should hold communities together, not split them apart, also make the representation fairer and make districts that reflect the preference of how Ohioans actually vote. We've heard this before. You know, we got our congressional district just 12 to 4. That's seventy five percent in favor of one political party. I don't think that's what people voted for. I don't think it is. And I know you don't think it is. If you do it, probably on a different planet. I find it hard to believe that meetings haven't already taken place. We have no idea. Nothing, we don't know. Where's the transparency? Has any of the parties [indecipherable] in secret meetings on redistricting? I can't believe that we've never done anything yet. Well, I'm going to do this this quick, but it could be. In Stark County, we're split into three congressional districts and not one representative lives in Stark County. That's crazy. I reside in the 7th Congressional District and I've never, ever been able to meet my representative in person. Now, for a couple of the few and the biggest fiascos of gerrymandering, and you heard a little bit about it, but I'm going to give

you a little different slant. In Ohio, we deregulated the Public Utilities Commission in the late 90s. That was huge. Huge. John Kasich, former governor, is quoted in the Akron Beacon Journal in April of 2014. And I will quote, "I will tell you, it's a challenging time in a state that has gone through this whole business of trying to figure out what deregulation actually means." Kasich further added "the ideological effort to deregulate, I'm not so sure it's the smartest thing we have done in the state of Ohio, but we are where we are. We can't go backwards now, so it's onward in a deregulated environment and we got to figure it out." The result? House Bill 6. What you did, and I don't know if you were there, I know Kirk was there, I don't know how he voted. We deregulated the electrical industry, so all these suppliers, Ohio Edison, Ohio Power, Toledo Edison, Dayton Power Light, all of them, created the generating capacity. They created a distribution system. They, yep, they maintained it. It works for good. Now, all of a sudden, we're going to deregulate it. And that's been over, what, twenty one, twenty two years ago? You correct me if I'm wrong, I know it's going to be that long. And we created a bunch of resellers. And all we get there the other day I get a damn phone call from somebody. I'm seventy seven years old, I'm getting confused. I don't know whether to switch, stay here or there. It's all chaos. We don't need to do that, we had a good system. But I got to changed. You know what? It still ain't fixed. But that's what we ended up with. That's crazy. Another one is the defunding and the degrading of the public health care system in Ohio and this country. It's a total shame. This has led to not doing enough research, development and fighting diseases that are hurting and killing our citizens in Ohio and the country. Another example, Citizens United vs. the Federal Election Commission, in which the US Supreme Court ruled in January of 2010 5-4 that the free speech clause of the First Amendment prohibits the government from restricting independent expenditures for political campaigns by corporations, nonprofit corporations, unions, wealthy billionaires and committees established for the purpose of fundraising, which are PACs. Here again, Citizens United is a conservative nonprofit organization funded by corporate donors. Result? Tons of dark money. These are few examples of corporate think tanks and their corporate donors and their lobbyists have been able to get legislators to pass. They write the bills and they pass it on to the legislators to enact them. So when we talk about elections, this is what happens. We don't elect our representatives. The corporate think tanks, the corporate donors and their lobbyists elect them, not we the people. This has been the way it's been in Ohio for over 30 years. People would be shocked, but some have mentioned it already in this room, to know how many bills in Ohio and other states and United, in the US Congress, are written by conservative, corporate funded think tanks like the American Legislative Exchange Council, short ALEC, and others that are corporate writing bill mills. Right now, there are four bills that I know of in the Ohio House and four bills in the Ohio Senate that have ALEC origins all over them. Don't take it for me, now. Just go to the website ALECexposed.org and search Ohio and see how many elected Ohio representatives and senators are currently dues paying members of ALEC. And then you can go in and see how many former members of the Ohio Senate and House were members. Thank you for allowing me to give testimony on this very important topic, and please do everything you can to pass fair state and congressional district maps that reflect the prevalence of how Ohioans actually voted. Thank you very much. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [03:35:47] Thank you.

Jurosz [03:35:53] Good afternoon, my name is Nathan Jurosz, and today, what I wanted to share briefly was just kind of my thoughts on today. It looks like I'm the last testimony, so it sounds like we'll be off on our way. I live in North Akron in District 13. I know just crossing three blocks and then now in District 11, go a little further and I'm back in District 13. I was reminded by a quote by John, by John McCain that said about Americans that

there is "more that unites us than what divides us." I think that most of us want our candidates who listen to us, let us know that we exist and let us know that we are heard. When I started voting first time in 2014, the values that were shared in me when voting was not for party, but for the person. The way the districts are now, it feels as though each candidate is advocating for their party's loyalty and not their constituents loyalty. Throughout this session, you heard many people talk about fairness. A few people ironically talked about power being important than fairness. But I feel that as a instructor teaching leadership skills to youth with my master's degree in organizational leadership, one part of leadership is also the values that we share. I do not want Democrats to gerrymander districts in their favor, nor do I want Republicans doing the same. [Applause] What I want is a system that is fair and balanced for every person so that instead of about party lines, it's about ideas and discussion and integrity and character. None of you here today are at fault for the way the districts are now. You inherited this. What that means is you have the opportunity to set the example for the nation of what a fair district state can look like. I ask that you consider your legacy above a short term political gain. What if Ohio had fair districts and set the example for the entire nation? I have so much pride in Akron, in the state and in this country, and I would love for each and every one of you in this Commission to do the same and to set that example. Not for partisan agenda, but to leave a legacy that was for the people of this state. Thank you again for your attendance, I know you have another commission coming up in a couple, in a few hours, maybe less than two hours. And I appreciate those of you who are in attendance. I do appreciate the surrogates that are here, but I do want to just express that I feel there's a lack of genuineness when our leaders are not here to see us and talk to us. So I hope that you convey that, but that we miss seeing them, although I enjoy seeing your faces, I would like to be speaking to the people who are the ones I voted for or that were elected. Have a good rest of your evening and I hope you take this into consideration as you plan the districts of Ohio. Thank you and have a good rest of your day. [Applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [03:39:00] Paul Woording. Emel Scalise. Xao Wen? Kathleen Arthur.

Arthur [03:39:28] I think it's good that I'm like the last one to speak, because when I'm, it's short and sweet. It is that we in Ohio must have a democracy that is fair and just for all where each citizen has a voice, their vote and their vote is their voice. Do not stifle voices by overpowering with political power and control. We must have fair districting for all citizens of Ohio. It's just. We must. Thank you for being here. I'm so glad to see the Sykes' because I talk to them often. Thank you.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [03:40:14] Thank you very much. Was there anyone else who would like to speak today? Is there anyone else who would like to speak? Seeing, hearing none, anyone from the panel would like to make any comment? With no further business, we are adjourned.

Ohio Redistricting Commission - 8-27-2021- Mansfield

<https://www.ohiochannel.org/video/ohio-redistricting-commission-8-27-2021-mansfield>

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [00:00:00] The hearing will come to order now. And before we begin our official business, we would like to thank the Ohio State University Mansfield Campus for hosting us today and give Dean Norman Jones an opportunity to address all of us.

Dean Norman Jones [00:00:19] Thanks so much, we just want to say very briefly that we're honored to have our panelists here and our guests. We're happy to support the electoral process and excited about the work that you're doing. So thanks for coming. I also want to introduce Dr. Dorey Diab, president of North Central State College, who's just going to say a word for a moment. We are both jointly co-located on this campus and work closely together.

Dr. Dorey Diab [00:00:44] Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for being here. Welcome to our campus and thank you for exercising your citizen's right and to participate in our government processes. Welcome again!

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [00:00:57] Well, thanks to both of you for being. [applause] Thanks to both of you for being here and for working together on a closed co-located campus. I think that's a real plus wherever it occurs, and thank you for providing the educational opportunities for both young people and older people on at this location. So appreciate your work. Thank you. As people arrive who would like to testify, we ask that if you haven't done that already, to, please fill out our witness slip that's on the table outside the the hearing room and provide them to our staff so that we know who would like to present that testimony. At this time. We will take attendance and ask the staff to call the roll.

staff [00:01:54] Thank you, co-chair Vernon Sykes.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [00:01:57] Present.

staff [00:01:58] Co-chair Robert Cupp.

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [00:01:59] Here.

staff [00:01:59] Gov. Mike DeWine's designee Matt Donahue.

Matt Donahue [00:02:03] Present.

staff [00:02:03] Auditor Keith Faber.

Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:02:05] Present.

staff [00:02:05] Jeanne Chadley, designee for Frank La Rose.

Jeanne Chadley [00:02:10] Present.

staff [00:02:10] Representative Beth Liston, designee for leader Sykes.

Rep. Beth Liston [00:02:14] Here.

staff [00:02:16] And Senator Jay Hottinger, designee for President Huffman.

Sen. Jay Hottinger [00:02:20] Present.

staff [00:02:20] Roll Call is complete.

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [00:02:21] Thank you. I would like to introduce several legislators who are not on the commission but are here in person and we appreciate their attendance. And I'll just ask you to stand when I call your name so everybody can see who you are. Representative Jarrells in the back. Representative Lightbody. Representative Russo. And, Senator Yuko. The Senate minority leader, thank you all for coming. A bit of an overview before we begin testimony. In November of 2015, Ohio voters approved a constitutional amendment which implemented a new General Assembly redistricting process and established the Ohio Redistricting Commission. The commission consists of the governor, the auditor of state, the secretary of state and one commissioner appointed by each of the legislative leaders of the two largest political parties of the Ohio House and the Senate total four, one from each caucus. The commission has until September 1, 2021, to pass a plan with the votes of at least two members affiliated with each major political party. If that fails, the commission has until September 15th, 2021, to pass a plan by majority vote that is just by four members. Maps that are passed with the votes of two members affiliated with each major political party are valid for 10 years, a decade, and maps passed by majority vote are valid for two general elections or four years. Ohio's legislative reapportionment process, as in all states, occurs in years ending and one such as 2021, which are also the years in which the federal census figures are released by the U.S. Department of Commerce. The census figures released this year indicate that Ohio has a population of 11,799,448, a 2.3 percent growth from 2010 under Article 11 of the Ohio Constitution. Each of the 99 house districts should contain 119,186 persons, and each of the 33 Senate districts should contain 347,559, with a five percent deviation allowed up or down. Anyone who has researched or undertaking the drawing of legislative districts knows this process involves far more than simply putting roughly the same number of people in each district. Article 11 of the Ohio Constitution contains specific rules governing the construction of districts, including several layers of sometimes complex requirements, including district population requirements and permissible population deviations, which I just mentioned, rules in how to prioritize splits or political subdivisions such as counties, municipalities and townships where necessary. Additional district standards regarding favoring or disfavoring political parties and also compactness of districts. The board must, the commission must comply with the Ohio Constitution in addition to all applicable federal laws, including the Voting Rights Act, because these hearings are held for the purpose of receiving your input in the process. Prior to maps actually being available, we are not going to go over the details of all of the law. However, we encourage you to visit the commission website at www.redistricting.ohio.gov, which provides additional information on the redistricting process under Article 11. The purpose of today's hearing is to gather information, comments and input regarding the upcoming reconfiguration of the House and Senate district lines. Under a new congressional redistricting process adopted by the voters in 2018, the Ohio Legislature has the first, the Ohio Legislature has the first opportunity to draw congressional lines through the enactment of a bill that would be signed by the governor. If it cannot do so the process falls to the Ohio Redistricting Commission. Therefore, we ask that all witnesses today limit comments and testimony to the most immediate task of the Ohio Redistricting Commission, which is the adoption of Ohio House and Ohio Senate district lines. We're here to listen today. We're not here to debate you or one another. We're here to get input

from Ohioans on the state legislative redistricting process and how it impacts your communities and your representation in the Ohio General Assembly. Today, we have a limited amount of time for the hearing and want to give everyone an opportunity to provide input. We're scheduled here for three hours and we ask witnesses to limit your testimony in the interest of time and out of courtesy to other persons who want to testify, who wish to address the panel. And we're asking that be limited to around four minutes. A few other items before we begin. These proceedings will be recorded by the Ohio channel, so the commission, in its deliberation, may consider things said here today, as well as the other six, no, nine hearings that have been held. So please speak clearly and loudly enough for the panel and the audience members to hear. Additionally, we'd ask you, of course, to be respectful of other witnesses and attendees. If you have written testimony. Please submit a copy to our staff so that it can be included in the official official record of the proceedings. Members of the public who cannot attend in person may also submit testimony on the commission website. I would also like to acknowledge that the House Minority Leader, Emilia Sykes, has arrived and would like to give you recognition. So we will now begin with our first witness here today, and that person is who gets to be first Tommy rhat from Ghana.

Dr. Tommie Radd [00:09:26] Hello. I think this always needs to come down a bit for me.

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [00:09:31] Hello.

Dr. Tommie Radd [00:09:32] Hello, my name is Dr. Tommie Radd. I vote in Ohio Senate District three, House District 19 and Congressional District three. The reason I'm here is to highlight the detrimental impact that partisan gerrymandering of our Ohio House, Senate and congressional districts have on my community and state. Over years, I've worked with many nonpartisan groups, including Common Cause, League of Women Voters, Ohio Voice, All on the Line and Fair Districts. Our goal is to reset Ohio and the Congress to preserve and protect our constitutional Democratic Republic. My community, Gahanna is a diverse community of approximately 36,000 people, evenly split along party lines with a large number of independent voters. Gahanna Jefferson Public Schools includes portions of Jefferson Township, Mifflin Township, a number of Columbus precincts and all of Gahanna City. Our school district is split with three Ohio House districts 19, 20 and 25, and two Ohio Senate districts 3 and 15. Gahanna City is split between two congressional districts, 3 and 12. This has to stop. Our city and schools deserve one unified voice for representation at all levels of government. Gahanna citizens have submitted a map for this unification to this commission. This loud demand for fair districts is exemplified in the Gahanna vote. Ohio Fair House and Senate districts issue one in 2015 passed with 79 percent of the vote. Ohio Congressional Fair Districts Issue one in 2018 passed with 81 percent of the vote. Four of every five Gahanna voters overwhelmingly said enough is enough. This is a democracy issue and one of fairness and representation. When stories like my community's are replicated statewide, the impact is a supermajority at the State House and the Ohio representation sent to Washington, DC. You now have the power to fix this threat. Ohioans voted for you to fix this unfairness and stand for all people now. This redistricting commission has a responsibility to draw fair mas per the letter and the spirit of our Ohio constitutional amendments, as demanded by the voters. we expect public hearings to review the maps prior to approval. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

[00:12:39] Thank you. Any member of that panel have any questions? All right. And our next witness is the Reverend Joel King Jr., also from Gahanna.

Rev. Joel L King, Jr. [00:13:13] Good afternoon, commissioners, and to this audience this afternoon, and Ohio State University and North Central Campus share this campus together for a long time since I've been on this campus, my dad used to pastor here before he passed in the Mount Hermon Baptist Church in Mansfield, Ohio. I'm Reverend Joel King Jr. from the Gahanna, Ohio now part of both Mansfield and Columbus, and I vote in now in the House District 19, Senate District three and Congressional District three. The reason I'm here is to demand fair voting districts for my community and the state. I serve as a leader in the Columbus NAACP, the Baptist Pastors Conference of Columbus, the Baptist Minister Allies of Columbus. I'm a life long advocate for all citizens for the basic right to vote in Ohio and around this country. The unfairness of our current Ohio House, Senate and congressional districts is one of the barriers to the vote because it discriminates against minorities and vulnerable citizens of our city, of our state. Our history of unfairness and lack of assessment to vote is far from a new story that's being told right now in our country. There has been a blatant unfairness for all generations, past and present. We need to stop this partisan gerrymandering of districts now in this day and age. This is a critical first step to guarantee the basic right to vote for all Ohioans in Ohio, and I urge you as a committee to make the difference in your efforts as you lead this day in these hearings around our state and make the difference in our community that our people can be fair and be justified and have one district voting in one city, not several districts in one city. And make this, and I hope that you will make the grand stand to make a difference and make good trouble in Ohio. Thank you. [applause]

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [00:15:25] Thank you. Thank you, Reverend, are there any questions from the panel? Thank you. Our next witness is Melissa Saul, also from Gahanna.

Melissa Sull [00:15:48] Hello, my name is Melissa Sull from Gahanna Ohio. I vote in Ohio House District 19, Ohio Senate District three and Congressional District 12. I applaud the commission for allowing public comment in this process. It is limited and late, but a significant improvement over the secretive partisan gerrymandering process of 2011. I'm looking forward to the hearings following the introduction of the proposed maps, public deliberation and the opportunity for the public to weigh in on the new district lines are key to the reforms passed in 2015 and 18. My local Gihanna Jefferson School district sits in three Ohio House districts as a result of the 2011 process. This fractures the voice of my community. I believe that policies impacting our schools, voter choice, women's rights and the state budget are all negatively impacted by the politically motivated decisions of 2011. Cracking and packing Ohio communities has created inequality and serves only those who crave political power. The warped shape of Ohio districts favors incumbents and money over the will and well-being of Ohioans. It leaves us with extremists when we need dialog and showmen when we need statesmen. I have contributed to one of the many maps submitted to this commission for consideration. Our map, like many of the other submissions, is designed to keep communities together. Please respect the will of the people who have voted repeatedly and in great majorities to end this harmful and mean spirited practice. Thank you [applause]

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [00:17:50] Rather than me continuing to ask members of the panel if you have questions, if you do have a question, sort of signal me so we can do that. Otherwise we'll just move on to the next witness and and that would be Karen Prelipp from Norwalk, Ohio.

Karen Prelipp [00:18:27] Thank you for allowing me to speak to you. My name is Karen Prelipp. I vote in Ohio House District 57, Ohio Senate District 13 and Congressional

District seven in Norwalk. I want to draw your attention to the issue of gerrymandered districts, resulting in legislators' lack of concern for the minority party's issues and viewpoints. When I call my representatives offices, my remarks are met with a lack of interest at best and attempts to discredit me at worst. I was even told Mr. Stein was not voting on a particular bill when I knew for a fact that the bill was on that morning's calendar for voting. His aide said Mr. Stein has not even read the bill, so it can't be up for a vote. I expressed a great deal of concern and frustration that my legislator was going to vote on something he was not even briefed about. Attempts to contact my other representatives are met with silence or a form letter stating their view with no mention of my comments or request for information. This effectively means I do not have anyone who represents me. This is the consequence of Ohio's extremely gerrymandered maps. A true democracy, a representative government means the minority have a voice. Currently, we do not. I ask the commission to draw maps that do not provide predictable results. More than 70 percent of Ohioans have voted for fair districts. You were charged with this with providing these maps. Will you meet your congressional mandate? Thank you for your time and consideration of my request. [applause]

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [00:20:32] Thank you for being here. Our next witness is Andrea Yagoda from Delaware, Ohio. Welcome, Andrea.

Andrea Yagoda [00:20:54] Co-chairs, members of the commission, thanks for offering me the opportunity to speak today on redistricting. My name is Andrea Yagoda. I've been a resident of Ohio for 47 years. The last forty three of those years have been in the same location in Senate District 19, House District 67. My current representatives have been in office 11 and 13 years respectively, having switched houses after reaching their term limits. Gerrymandering has had a dramatic impact on my life. When I first moved to my home, activism was definitely not on my to do list. But over time, I became active in community efforts to limit development and to prevent the construction of an upground reservoir. I even ran for public office. When I retired, my focus shifted to legislation. I started writing my representatives, calling their offices, emailing them, but got no response. Not once, not ever. I did, however, get blocked from my senator's tweet, a Twitter feed, no acknowledgment other than an automated email and a voicemail, which basically tells me that I should not expect a response. How can that be? I pay my taxes. These officials work for me. Gerrymandering. When your election is guaranteed, you had the luxury of ignoring your constituents. So I stopped calling. I stopped emailing. I stopped writing. What was the point? I became apathetic. I withdrew from my community. Because of gerrymandering, my vote was diluted and did not account for anything. Voting became an exercise in futility for me. Yes, at times we had candidates who ran against these representatives, but they were merely names on the ballot. I put a footnote in my written testimony because that's changed in the last couple of cycles. I fully understand running a campaign takes a lot of time and money and a lot of personal sacrifice. But who wants to make that commitment? When the results of the election are predetermined. As time progressed, I became angry. I was tired of taxation without representation, so I chose to vote against every levy on the ballot, whether it was schools, seniors, sheriff, fire, highways. I chose in anger to vote against my community and in effect myself, but I did not care. I encourage others to do likewise, rationalizing, for example, that if the schools were in dire financial straits financially, the General Assembly would have to address school funding. Then that anger turned to fear. I resumed my act as, activism on a larger scale. None of the activities I was involved in, although better for my community, gave me any voice in governance, so I decided to take my voice directly to the statehouse. I had envisioned that committee hearings would be an opportunity for robust exchanges of opinions and ideas. What I found was a group, not all, of politicians who made us feel

unwanted, who were rude, disrespectful at times confrontational and downright mean spirited. They made it clear they did not want to hear us. Another exercise in futility. How can we be treated this way? How can the bill pass when hundreds of opposing testimonies are submitted versus one proponent? Gerrymander. Gerrymandering. Listening to sponsors of certain bills? I'm convinced they have not read them. I've given you examples in my footnote in my in my written. How can we be governed by outside groups who draft legislation, not even being read or understood by its sponsors? Gerrymandering. We need people policies, not primary prevention policies, which is what gerrymandering has given us. For the three Ohio, for the Ohioans who testified previously at other hearings that say we should be more Republican in our districts. Let me just share some facts. I'm sorry I'm going to go over. In 2018. Only fifty five point seven two of those registered actually voted in this state. Not all voters, however, cast votes in the statewide election. There was a drop off from, a drop off of one hundred and ninety seven thousand votes in the governor's race to three hundred and thirty seven thousand eight hundred and sixty one in the auditors race. DeWine got fifty point thirty nine percent of the vote. Cordray got 46. I mean, I'm sorry. Yost got fifty two point sixteen. Sprague got fifty three point twenty six. Faber got forty nine point sixty six. LaRose got fifty point sixty five percent of the vote. Believe it or not, the state race that garnered the most votes was the rates for the Attorney General's Office. And Dave Yost beat his opponent by a margin of one hundred and eighty seven. Eight hundred and forty seven votes. Of the votes cast on issue one, those who voted to end gerrymandering exceeded the nays by seven hundred eighty three thousand three hundred and seventy eight votes. [applause] I'm tired, I am tired of packing and cracking. I'm tired of closed door deals. I'm tired of having no vote, no voice, no influence, and I'm tired of having my vote diluted and I'm tired of the lack of accountability by those who are supposed to represent us. All of us, their constituents, not just the radical bases. Please do not mistake being tired with apathy. I, and so many others have worked so hard to even consider giving up now. I want every member of this commission and the General Assembly to remember that Ohioans of all political persuasions voted to end gerrymandering. We voted for fair districts, compact, contiguous counties, transparency, citizen input and representation. Representational fairness. Democracy demands it. We demand it. Every vote should count and be treated equally. This is how a functioning democracy works for all of us and all of us as Americans would want that. Thank you. And I would gladly take any questions. [applause]

staff [00:28:05] Senator Craig was walked in if he wanted to introduce him.

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [00:28:16] Before we proceed with the next witness, I'd like to introduce and recognize being here Senator Craig, please. [applause] Represent the Columbus area, almost all of Columbus, right? All right. Next witness is Mindy Hedges from Radnor, Ohio.

Mindy Hedges [00:28:59] Co-Chairs Senator Sykes and House Speaker Cupp, members of the newly formed redistricting commission. Thank you for allowing me to speak. My name is Mindy Hedges. I know you heard me yesterday in Lima. I have a little more to say. I live in a rural area of Ohio in one of the fastest growing, richest counties in our state. Most people would be thrilled to live here, but it creates many problems for those of us who still cherish rural living. The growth is coming at us fast and furious. The zoning issues in our county have gone crazy and are overwhelming our farming communities. As a result, we have no one watching out for our farms or our natural preserves or our environment or our beautiful farm communities. Our representatives are not fighting for us as it appears. What they care about is the riches and the growth. But Ohio is failing in that. Also, our population is shrinking because many of our young don't see Ohio for its job

opportunities or as a state that has laws that are democratic or that take all Ohioans into account. Because of the way we are gerrymandered, our laws only serve... So sorry. I've lost a page.

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [00:30:29] That's OK. Take your time that's happened to all of us

Mindy Hedges [00:30:31] only served one party, only served to enrich that party and only serve to enlighten their businesses and their passions, not those that have made Ohio the beautiful state that we are. When a state is gerrymandered as badly as Ohio, there is a vastly uneven voting history which leans one way towards one party, regardless of how that state is aligned politically. Presently, Ohio should align similarly to the results of the last gubernatorial election, fifty point four percent Republican to forty six point seven percent Democrat. Or has Andrea had told you, all the rest of it is almost 50 50. This is how the state should be this district. Currently, Ohio is split 75 to 25 percent. Republican to Democratic representation, which is nowhere near the public's voting record or to their desired outcomes for legislative action. In addition, the public drastically notices that our representatives know, they no longer have to campaign or even ask their constituents how we feel about issues like vaccines, voting rights or redistricting as their positions are actually secured not by the voters, but by their gerrymandered seats. This is how our country was designed. This is not how our country was designed nor formulated. partisan gerrymandering is inconsistent with the democratic ideals enshrined in the Constitution since the founding generation vehemently denounced it. In the extreme form it takes today, with districts drawn to give the controlling party a stranglehold on power. Gerrymandering represents an unprecedented threat to our democracy. Patrick Henry, for example, crafted a district to separate James Madison from his political supporters, but newspapers decried Henry's scheme as a violation of the right of free people to choose their representatives. In the action that gave gerrymandering its name, Massachusetts Gov. Elbridge Gerry in 1812 signed a districting bill designed to give his party a decisive political advantage. Opponents objected to that law, inflicted a grievous wound on the Constitution. It subverts and changes our form of government and silences and stifles the voice of a majority. The machinations of Henry and Gerry, adamant opponents to the Constitution, hardly exemplify that spirit. The next two centuries saw continued objections to partisan gerrymandering as a violation of our core constitutional principles. For example, in 1870, Representative and future president James Garfield criticized the practice and objected that no man, whatever his politics, can justly defend it. In 1891, President Benjamin Harrison condemned gerrymandering as a form of political robbery. He declared that its overthrow of majority control by the suppression or perversion of the popular suffrage represented our chief national danger. Our framers were keenly aware of the corruption of the English system of parliamentary elections in which they referred to them as rotten boroughs. Americans in the revolutionary age scorned the British, in which defenders claim parliament would act wisely, even if it was not directly representative. Instead, our founders embraced actual representation as a Central American system. Elected representatives would have close ties to the constituencies, and they would be responsive to the popular democratic will. Their commitment to actual representation was to be unimpeded by contrived barriers between the electorate and its representatives. This was fundamental and widely shared when colonists shouted no taxation without representation, they were stating a view of the legitimate governance very much relevant to anti gerrymandering. And nobody thought representation meant a government imposed permanent minority status of a gerrymandered system. Madison understood the abuses that would come from state legislatures trying to entrench their own faction. Madison said whenever state legislators had a favorite measure to carry, they would take care. So to

mold their regulations as to favor the candidates they wish to succeed. He warned at the constitutional convention. Inequality and legislatures would lead to inequality and congressional representation. He continued, it was impossible to foresee all the abuses that might be made of the discretionary power. partisan gerrymandering violates the framers core principle of actual representation. It likewise conflicts with the First Amendment right to meaningful political speech and association. And with the 14th Amendment extension of constitutional responsibilities to the states. Viewed through history, partisan gerrymandering is not an accepted feature of our American system, and the extreme gerrymanders we see today go dramatically further than anything we have seen in the past. They sabotage fundamental constitutional values for those defending partisan gerrymanders, contrary to their sweeping claims. History is not on their side, and it should not be on the side of any of our elected officials. Ohioans are leaving our state in droves, in part because of the partisan way ohio is gerrymandered. Let's fix this together, please. I ask you to consider my testimony. Thank you. [applause]

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [00:36:24] Thank you for your testimony. Our next witness is Craig Schwartz, thank you. Have you come up and state your name for the record, so we have it correctly. And you are from Upper Sandusky?

Craig Schwartz [00:36:41] Yeah, I have chicken scratch. Dear members of the commission, thank you for allowing me to testify today here in Mansfield. My name is Craig Swartz and I am a resident of Upper Sandusky. Currently chairman of the Wyandot County Democratic Party. However, the views expressed here are my own and not behalf of the wind out Democratic Party, nor that of the Ohio Democratic Party. This is my statement. What happened to my Ohio? When did the common threads that bound us together split apart? Where are its leaders? Why can't Ohioans demand more? How do we unite in truth going forward? These are deliberately subjective questions which would require hours, if not days, to answer in an objective and responsible manner is possible, but which are very much on the minds of all Ohioans in one form or another these days due to the long list of catastrophic events occurring in just the past decade plus, including the crash of 08 right up to the pinnacle of corporate and government colluding corruption called HB6 and of course, the pandemic. It has now been exposed to all the disc, total disconnect occurring between our elected representatives and large parts of state and the electorate, with HB6 as leading example of laws that are passed without any effective and honest communication between elected officials and their constituents. The redistricting that occurred after the 2010 Census simply allowed lawmakers to pay little heed to constituents, particularly those codified into into the minority. This is what gerrymandering has wrought. The Ohio I remember coming back to, prior to the new millennium, a mere 20 plus years ago, was still a state considered by many to be the bellwether of the country. To voters, ideas, leadership and a real commitment to public service mattered more than partisanship. Ohioans historically are a mixed bag filled with various peoples and cultures capable of producing high achievements in athleticism, art, education, export exploration, industry, science and even politics, I'm trying to make your time limit. Among those achievements began the weaving of numerous threads that bound Ohioans together with a solid work ethic, sense of civic pride, and a will to accomplish more. Common and widely shared values such as these made any city bred, suburb born, or rural raised Ohio and right at home anywhere in Ohio. And those same values were expressed by Ohioans and their public demands for fair political districts in 2015 and 2018. Which brings us here to today. Ohioans have rightly rightly recognized that the skewed sketches wrongly done after 2010 have warped our body politic out of the balance we used to enjoy so prominently on national stage. Gerrymandering has allowed demonization of political affiliation to fester and spread across Ohio like an inoperable tumor. Ohio has become

unrecognizable in the face of so many emotional torments, pitting its inhabitants against each other to the point we no longer regard each other as friends and we no longer trust ourselves. In the midst of all that has happened leaders stopped leading because they could afford to, thanks to gerrymandering. And when they stopped leading, they stopped listening, except to their paymasters upon whom political ideology is meaningless. Federal and state legislatures, in our part of northwest and north central Ohio rarely hold public meetings, and when they do, they are typically announced in a few days advance notice on social media with very limited hours. And that's if in rural Ohio, you have internet. Otherwise, a local print media, limited scope, limited scope and resources deliver scant information on an important statewide issues to rural communities. In order for the political process to overcome years of deception and in some cases, dereliction, that has led Ohioans to distrust their own, Ohioans will need to demand much more of their leadership at this time of redistricting. And that's because even after the new lines are drawn, the old misinformed beliefs that still remain gerrymandering help foster. You cannot redraw bigotry, ignorance, pride, prejudice and racism out of existence. They're going to be there, but they can be better addressed this time if Ohio's leaders make it so. I'll skip a little bit, and I'm going to go through my ideas real quick on how we could do that. Hold on, hold public officials accountable by having them hold a set number of public meetings per quarter that are advertised weeks in advance, public officials are used to filing mandatory finance documents. This would be another mandatory requirement for public office. Level the playing field among political opponents during campaigns as much as possible by allowing candidates from independent parties that are legitimately organized or even nonpartisan independents to have the same filing requirements as a Democratic or Republican candidate, party's candidates. By lowering the threshold for independent candidates to run for office, you are encouraged, encouraging future leaders to help shape new discussions among the voting population. That in turn informs incumbents to be more open, refined and responsive in their own campaigns. Re-energize the Ohio electorate, the electorate in connection with adopting new districts by changing Ohio's closed primary system to an open primary by which independents can participate in that election, giving independents who constitute the majority of Ohioans an added voice will help our leaders formulate their policies and views more closely adhering to their constituents desires. We hold forth that every vote count. But we do not do so for every voice when numerous voices are silenced, then the voters are hearing less than the total truth. Gerrymandering reduced our capacity for free will by limiting our choices. So to counter it quickly, it would be prudent to add more voices and help uniting Ohioans in their quest for truth. The idea that conservatism and liberalism cannot coincide is absurd. They are not mutually exclusive and this need not be a zero-sum game. Liberalism means freedom, and while our notion of they succumb to the whims of time, it's core remains the same, I can choose. Conservatism is not incompatible as it holds a decision making devolve down to the lowest conceivable entity that is the individual and the local community effect, when infecting the populace. It's their freedom to choose. However, our ability to choose and choose wisely, has been severely limited by gerrymandering, lack of public access to elected officials and the outright public corruption of large swaths of voters. Members of the commission, the task at hand is to restore the flower of our democracy, whose fragrance long dissipated once promised hope. And whose former luster inspired dreams for many, but now in all its faded glory, it reeks of cynicism and despair, with only lust remaining for the privileged few. Let's do it right this time commission and bring the people back as well. Thank you. [applause]

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [00:44:14] Thank you for your testimony. Our next witness is Merrill. Merrill Newman, I think have you come and state that for the record, so we'll have it correct. Neiman. From Bexley, Ohio.

Meryl Nieman [00:44:47] So members of the commission, thank you for affording me this opportunity. My name, as you said, is Meryl Nieman and I'm from the Columbus area of Bexley. Before I begin my substantive testimony, I must point out what a privilege it is for me to be able to be here today. Most people don't have the luxury of being able to attend a hearing during the workday. Even many members of the commission, apparently. Given that and the rising COVID infection rates in Ohio for future hearings, the commission should allow for virtual testimony and offer evening hearings to broaden and equalize access. I also must note, as I referred to, that the lack of commissioner attendance at these hearings thus far has been deeply disappointing. I hope going forward, this community districting process will be more open, participatory and productive. Now for the substance of my testimony. No matter our color, background or zip code, I think most of us can agree that voters should pick their leaders. Leaders shouldn't pick their voters. Whether we're helping a neighbor schedule a vaccination, hosting a Buckeyes watch party or planting a neighborhood garden. Nobody knows our communities better than the people who live in them. That's why every decade to determine how we will choose representatives and influence policies on issues we care about, like health care and the economy, and funding allocations for schools, hospitals and other services, we come together to draw new district lines. These electoral maps are supposed to ensure each of our votes have equal weight. Each of our voices are equally heard and each of our communities has equal access to government resources, or at least that's what's supposed to happen. But 10 years ago in Ohio, a handful of consultants met secretly on a weekly basis and carved up our neighborhoods into a hodgepodge of misshapen districts to serve the interests of the politicians who paid them rather than our communities. I'm here because this year we have the opportunity, indeed the obligation to establish a stronger, fairer foundation for the next ten years. 2021 is the first time Ohio will be drawing maps using the new rules Ohioans demanded and voted overwhelmingly to approve in 2015 and 2018. These rules were designed to eliminate our current rigged electoral maps and replace them via a transparent process that allows the public to offer meaningful input and in accordance with guardrails to ensure voting districts are drawn to keep communities together, rather than to divide and silence us for certain politicians own personal and partisan benefit. This is an odd redistricting hearing in that the commission isn't sharing any draft maps for us to review. And that's quite concerning, given, as you've mentioned that co-chair Cupp, that we're only days away from that first legally mandated benchmark. I'm confused about how you're going to be making decisions on maps that supposedly haven't even been created as yet in just a few days. Hopefully, this isn't a sign that the commission is just going through the motions of fair restricting that we're a" here in some sort of elaborate charade. But regardless of your intentions, even if some of you have been meeting in secret and again drawing draft maps that would serve your own personal interests, this time we have law on our side. The constitutional amendments we passed with over 70 percent of the vote. And we'll be watching. If necessary, we will be on social media, we'll be at the State House, we'll be at the courthouse. We will do whatever we must to protect our freedom to vote, ensure all our voices are equally heard and call out anyone who tries to impede that freedom or suppress those voices. We will see that you follow the rules that are now engrafted in our state constitution and that Ohioans get the community districts we deserve. So thank you again. I would welcome since this hasn't been a very participatory process so far, but I'd welcome any questions that you may have or any comments on the timing or the map drawing process.

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [00:50:09] Questions for the witness from the panel? Hearing none. We're here to listen. That's probably why you're not hearing questions. thank you.

Meryl Nieman [00:50:16] Thank you. [applause]

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [00:50:31] Our next witness is Benita Khan, also from Bexley, Ohio. Welcome.

audience member [00:50:37] Mr. Chairman, could you please request that all those present, including commission members, wear masks?

Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:50:48] We're six feet away.

Benita Kahn [00:51:06] Good afternoon, my name is Benita Kahn, and I live in Bexley, Ohio, which is House District 18, Senate District 15. Thank you. And Congressional District three. I am testifying today because of the history of unfair practices, lack of transparency and failure to allow, much less accept, public input when drawing maps after the 2010 census. These unfair practices resulted in Ohio voters passing by 71 percent and 75 percent, amendments to the Constitution for a redistricting commission to draw new legislative and congressional districts. Ohio voters wanted to ensure transparency and real public participation in the redistricting process and the creation of districts that are compact, contiguous and do not favor or disfavor either political party. So far, against the clear will of the voters, the transparency and public participation have not been met as shown by the significant delay in appointing members of the redistricting commission. The failure to schedule public hearings in Columbus, which happens to be the most populous city in the state, and the failure to introduce maps to the public prior to the hearings. The impact of the 2010 unfair districts has been clear. The gerrymandered districts skewed heavily in one political direction have resulted in many Ohio voters, including myself, having their voice and vote limited in Congress and lost at the Ohio Legislature. Congressional districts are currently split as everybody has, or several people have mentioned today, 75 percent Republican favored and 25 percent Democrat. The House Senate is split, 75 percent Republican, 25 percent Democrat and the Ohio House 65 Republican, 35 percent Democrat. This skewing does not reflect voter split in Ohio. Since 1856, there has never been a 75, 25 percent party split in presidential elections in Ohio and only three times since that 1856 date has a party gotten 60 percent or more of the vote in a presidential election. Ohio's gerrymandered districts have resulted in politicians taking extreme positions to win primaries, knowing they will win the general election due to heavily skewed districts. This has eliminated the incentive to compromise at the Legislature on issues important to most Ohioans. When you see the percentage of these polls on issues, the skewed districts have also split communities with similar values such as Clintonville and Bexley, residents who live a mere 10 miles apart and are both in urban areas. But Clintonville is in a congressional district that includes areas over 60 miles away, doesn't include Bexley, and is 60 percent rural. It is not possible for one representative to fairly represent these diverse interests. Rather than Ohio voters having the freedom to elect officials who represent the voters issues and positions, the officials have created districts with selected voters who represent the officials position. In closing, there is a couple of things I want to say. One is and this I just noticed as I was sitting here. If you look at the commission, there are two women. But if we had the actual commission representatives, we would have one woman on this panel. If you look in the audience, I would say we have over 50 percent women, if not more here today, I urge you to listen to the women of Ohio who are your voters. [applause] I want to emphasize the importance of having a transparent process with public input that is recognized and taken into account when creating these new districts. This time, the districts must be compact, contiguous,

and not favor or disfavor either political party. We, and especially we women, cannot have fair representation if voters voices are silenced. [applause]

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [00:56:26] Thank you for your testimony, our next witness then is Lindsey Coco Burge from Mt. Gilead, Ohio, and I'll have your state your name for the record. So we get the pronunciation correct.

Lindsey Kohlenburg [00:56:53] I have one. I'm Lindsey Kohlenburg, and you got that pronunciation correct. Thank you. Good job. I live in Mount Gilead, Ohio, and I want to address the commission members and their designees. Thank you for hearing us today. I really appreciate the opportunity and to address the need for proper and fair redistricting for the Ohio Legislature. I live in Morrow County that is now Ohio Legislative District 87 and Ohio's Senate District 26. I'd like to tell you a true story about a conversation which I found to be concerning. I was part of a team of volunteers who were working with a candidate for office for the Ohio Legislature. It was 2014. On a hot summer weekend in July, our volunteers set up a booth at the Mount Gilead Sweetcorn Festival like we had at the Cardington Festival in June. Both are small towns in Morrow County. The volunteers had also knocked on doors in Bucyrus, Galion, Upper Sandusky and certain parts of Marion, with plans to do more of the same on behalf of our candidate. The incumbent official, who also attended the festival that day, stopped by for a chat as he was familiar with our campaign. After exchanging pleasantries, he said, Why are you going to all this trouble? Don't you know, I will win by 60 points? I remember the exact spot on Main Street where I was standing at the time. Call me naive. As I reflect on that scene today, I call myself foolish. We continued with our campaign, however, but the incumbent officials prediction turned out to be true. As I've watched other Ohio Legislature and Senate election cycles, this trend is indeed true and predictable. Cycle after cycle, the point spread is the same. While Morrow County does tend to vote for one party, I believe the candidates with different views are discouraged from spending the money and the time it would take to overcome the disadvantage presented by the district lines that appeared to lasso the voters, instead of uniting communities. Think of the loss of the diversity of ideas and creative solutions a more robust discussion would bring to the everyday problems that face Ohio families. I noticed something else. It seemed that my Ohio district office hours were not regularly held. They were ill publicized or held during business hours when most people in Morrow County are at work. I know our population is small compared to other towns in the district, but we all pay taxes and do our concerns have less importance? Do some elected officials feel they do not need to listen to their constituents? After all, they'll be elected anyway. I hope the commission understands that Ohioans do want to be active in state government, but were quickly discouraged from doing so. When we do the same thing over and over again and expect a different result, we call that crazy, right? Well, when we gerrymander district lines, why do we expect to create engaged citizens? As you know, Ohioans voted for a constitutional amendment to end gerrymandered districts by 71 percent. That was in 2015, and that was a mandate, in my opinion. I urge the commission to remedy these inequities and allow Ohio citizens like me to truly partner with our elected representatives. Once this is accomplished. I believe our officials will be more motivated to hear the concerns of all their constituents. Better ideas and policies may come to fruition and then better serve the needs of our communities. Thank you very much for your attention. [applause]

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [01:01:32] Thank you for your testimony. Your your testimony will be uploaded to the to the site, then. Patricia. I'm not sure I can get this right, so we'll ask you to also put it for the... Keen? Or something like that. From Mount Vernon.

Patricia Keen [01:02:12] Keen is correct. My name is Pat Keen, and I live in Mount Vernon in Knox County., my Ohio District - Senate district is 19 in my Ohio House district is 68. I voted for redistricting reform in 2015 and 2018 because I think District maps should be drawn so that they meet the criteria of compactness, continuity and community integrity. Very importantly, they should also be drawn so that no party is advantaged or disadvantaged by the maps. I think districts should keep counties, cities and townships whole. My current state district is shared with suburban Delaware County and parts of urban Franklin County. Voters from these other counties do not necessarily have the same concerns as voters from rural Knox County. Voters from urban Franklin County are not necessarily represented well by a legislator who also represents suburban and rural voters. I think that districts should be drawn to be impartial. Several other people have mentioned this, but the state of Ohio had approximately a 55 Republican to 45 percent Democratic voter split in 2020. However, due to gerrymandering, the representation in the Ohio Senate is approximately 76 percent Republican and 24 percent Democratic. In the Ohio House the split is approximately 65 percent Republican and 35 percent Democratic. This does not fairly represent the will of the voters of Ohio. Another result of gerrymandering is that legislators end up in safe districts, and this lead can lead to members who do not believe they have to be accountable to represent all their constituents. Districts that are most closely represent the proportion of the citizens would lead to legislators who would feel accountable to all their constituents and a General Assembly that is more representative and accountable to more citizens. You have the power to draw maps that are fair, nondiscriminatory, keep communities together and are politically impartial. The people voted overwhelmingly for a reformed process of redistricting. Please fulfill the promise by creating maps that serve the voters, not the political interests of any party. Thank you. [applause]

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [01:05:00] Thank you for your testimony. And now we'll move to Brian Miller from Gambier, Ohio. Also somewhere in Knox County, I believe.

Brian Miller [01:05:22] That's where it's going to sit. Representative Cupp and Senator Sykes, thank you for allowing me to testify today. Hold your.

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [01:05:39] [inaudible] I know that's pretty low, so.

Andrea Yagoda [01:05:42] Thank you. My name is Brian Miller and I live in Knox County. Which is in the House district 68 and Senate District 19. I am an advocate for a government that serves the public by listening to them and responding to their needs. Gerrymandering in Ohio has undermined these goals by creating illogical and unwieldy House and Senate districts that disenfranchise voters. We need new Senate and House maps that are compact, keep communities whole and give voters a choice. My county is mostly agricultural and rural. The neighboring territory on all four sides is rural also, and one can drive 10 minutes from the edge of the county in any direction and still be in farmland and with very few signs of suburbanization. Senate District 19 includes Knox and Delaware counties, as well as a long, narrow finger that extends south into Franklin County. The physical terrain needs and, excuse me, and issues of the rural north and the suburban south don't mesh. An elected representative can best speak for the interests of a district that has common threads of history, tradition and culture, rather than one that is manufactured from disparate threads. Excuse me. District, House District 68 is comprised of Knox County and the eastern half of Delaware County, which forms a dogleg shaped piece that extends east and south. Neither the House nor Senate district is compact. Knox County should be placed in a district of mostly rural character that is compact and, if possible, avoids county splits. Gerrymandering, gerrymandered districts such as a Senate

District 19 are designed to keep one power, one party in power in perpetuity with little chance for the other party to win the seat. The elected representatives need not pay much attention to the views inconsistent with the mainstream of his party or her party. Yet for democracy to succeed, our elected officials must listen to and be representative of the voters, all the voters in the district, not just those of the same party. When a district leans too heavily to one side or another, that is less likely to happen. The new maps should result in districts that are more competitive, paving the way for elections in which candidates of either party and candidates with with views outside the party mainstream are more likely to win a seat. This way, legislators are more likely to listen to diverse voices and interests in their districts. I urge you to keep these principles in mind when you work to create new maps and elicit the voices of the voters of Knox County and all of Ohio. Thank you for your time and consideration of my request. [applause]

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [01:09:21] Thank you for your testimony. Next is David Pickett from Columbus. Welcome.

David Pickut [01:09:54] Good afternoon, my name is Dave Pickut, I'm from Columbus, Ohio. I provided a, some visual aids there. Sorry, I don't have copies for everybody. I've lived in Columbus for 51 years. I care very much about my community, I care very much about all of Ohio. And it does my heart good to hear so many citizens come forward today and deliver a consistent message. [get closer to the mic] I'm sorry. Deliver a consistent message that we're tired of gerrymandering and we want a government that works for the people. I live in Ohio District 24, which describing it quickly takes a piece of northwest Columbus goes west to Hilliard, goes down south to Darbydale, Galloway, parts of Grove City. This is so blatantly gerrymandered it. It just has never represented everyone there. Fortunately, in November, we elected a new representative who's doing a much better job than the past ones. So that was encouraging. if you just think about those three areas and how they're different. The area that I live in is is urban and suburban. When you go west to Hilliard, it is a one of the highest growth areas in the country, so they have some very unique needs to be met. When you go south to Galloway, Darbydale, you know, it's a primarily rural small town area dealing with trying to control development and you know, the same issues, the types of issues you would have there. So it's just very hard for a single representative to effectively represent everyone. I submitted a more reasonable configuration for District 24, and there are numerous tools available today to allow these districts to be configured in a fair manner, and everyone in the audience has access to these tools also for analysis of what ever is finally submitted to the public. So in summary, I just want to say that when you look at Ohio's history and one of the graphics I provided there is if you go back to 1969 and look at the Congressional Districting then it made a lot of sense and pretty simple to follow. When you look at what we have today, it's just beyond comprehension. So Ohioans have spoken overwhelmingly that gerrymandering should be ended. Your constituents are asking that you make changes and please don't fail them. Let's work together in a bipartisan manner and get this taken care of to strengthen our democracy. The entire country is watching what's going on in Ohio. Thank you. [applause]

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [01:13:00] Thank you for your testimony. And now we'll turn the microphone over to Rob Thompson from Oberlin, Ohio. Welcome.

Robert Thompson [01:13:28] Good afternoon, commissioners and my friends for fair districts. I'm Rob Thompson from Oberlin, Ohio. I vote regularly in Ohio's 56th House District, 13th Senate District and 4th Congressional District. I do not vote in national elections with my county neighbors 16 miles away in a farming community of Rochester. But instead, I vote with people in the farming community of Minster who live one hundred

and sixty miles away. Why? Similarly, there are communities in Ohio that are split into three different State House districts. Why? I don't think our current state and congressional district maps gerrymandered as they are serve Ohioans well. Current maps make it difficult for a legislator to represent all of their constituents. The maps favor politicians with extreme views, left and right, who can win their party's primary election. Extreme entrenched views can lead to bitter rhetoric, little compromise and poor governing. With these problems in mind, in 2017, I collected signatures at my church on city sidewalks and parking lots to make a change in the way Ohio maps are drawn. After 60 plus years, this was my first foray into active politics. Redistricting is a big deal to me. I was pleased to see reforms passed by a large majority of Ohioans. Now we're counting on you to complete the process. I'm hopeful that a new day in Ohio politics and government is about to dawn. Imagine a future where we have state and congressional representatives who are well-versed in all of her constituents specific issues and needs, who don't have to travel so far across the district to meet with voters. Representatives who are more moderate, who can understand more diverse viewpoints, who are more open to compromise. I think compromise will lead to bipartisan bills that serve more people and to a better functioning government. Here are some specific suggestions. I hope you'll start with the mindset that all politics is local. As former U.S. Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill rightly stated. Local means communities. Mapmaking is all about lines and lines are drawn in around and sometimes through communities. So when developing new maps, please consider the community maps developed by citizens working with fair districts and other groups. It's important to keep our communities intact in voting districts. When developing new maps, please consider the maps submitted by Ohioans directly to you and through the district map competition sponsored by fair districts. There are a lot of smart people out there who can assist you, consider this as helpful crowdsourcing. I too decided to try my hand at using the publicly available map software, and I've submitted a new map of my county, Lorain County, for your consideration. I believe it keeps similar communities together and has one of the three districts that has 30 percent, 36 percent nonwhite, making it more possible to have a representative who is a person of color. Most important, please keep in mind that this is a bipartisan effort with the emphasis on BI. In your mapmaking process, please have Republicans and Democrats working together from the start. Make it a communal effort. Please don't have Republicans submit maps and Democrats submit maps and then try to come up with something in the middle. Don't be like other states with map making conditions that already at the outset have split everything along party lines. Ohio citizens established a bipartisan commission and expect you to work together to draw fair maps. Please demonstrate that the process is fully deliberative and bipartisan. Please become a real community of map makers and keep us informed of your activities. In conclusion, fair maps... With fair maps with districts that are compact, follow county lines and do not divide identified communities and are politically competitive are necessary for positive change. You commission members have this challenging, awesome task in front of you. I will be thinking of you, praying for you and hoping, along with all Ohioans for maps that we can be proud of. Thanks for listening. [applause]

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [01:18:11] I thank you for your testimony, and we are going to move to Sean Burns from. Right here in Mansfield, Ohio.

Sean Burns [01:18:38] Thank you to the commission for letting us speak today. My name is Sean Burns and I live in Mansfield, Ohio, which is a Congressional District 12, and the state level, Senate District 22 and Ohio District two. Currently, the 12th Congressional District is manipulated to favor one political party. Mansfield resides in Richland County, which is divided into two separate congressional districts. Dividing Mansfield and the surrounding communities, breaks up neighborhoods and people with common goals and

interests. Creating districts in this manner has resulted in a district supporting one political party ideals, blocking out opposing ideals or opposing views. Our current congressional representative resides nearly two hours and 70 miles from Mansfield and Richland County. There's no reason for the representative to speak or listen to opposing constituent views when your district is set up to elect only a person from one political party. Our 12th Congressional District has seen this with the last two elected members of Congress that have refused to speak to constituents from opposing political parties when invited to events to present their positions. I have personally witnessed our current representative turn his back and walk away from constituents when asking him questions regarding his stance on an issue. Why should a representative listen to an opposing political viewpoint when your election is secured by a block of voters that has been gerrymandered to favor only you and reduced competition from opposing political parties? In 2015, Ohio voters overwhelmingly supported state legislative redistricting reform, and in 2018, voters followed up by passing congressional redistricting reform. These reforms were placed in the Ohio Constitution, and both reform efforts won in all 88 counties by more than 70 percent of the vote. These reforms focus on encouraging bipartisan mapmaking and establishing rules that focus on keeping communities or political subdivisions together. I voted for these reforms and care that the maps are drawn according to the wishes of the Ohio voters. No one wants people that have different viewpoints not to be heard. All we are saying is that voices should be representative and a fair and balanced manner. Please keep redistricting fair, transparent, nondiscriminatory and politically impartial and fulfill the promise of redistricting reforms placed in the Ohio Constitution by the voters. Thank you. [applause]

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [01:21:34] Thank you for your testimony. Next is Richard. I think it's Gunther from Worthington, Ohio. And I'll ask you also to state your name on the record, please. So we get the pronunciation correct.

Richard Gunther [01:21:58] Good afternoon. I'm Richard Gunther, professor emeritus of political science at Ohio State University. I was one of five negotiators who wrote the first draft of what is now Article 11 of the Ohio Constitution. That --.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [01:22:16] Closer to the mic, please? Closer to the mic, please.

Richard Gunther [01:22:18] That set of reforms was approved by a vote of 87 to 10 in the House, 28 to one in the Senate and by 71 percent of the Ohio voters in the referendum of 2015. I'd like to take this opportunity to highlight three important points concerning the changes that we made in the Ohio Constitution or that were already embedded in Ohio or in federal law. First, incumbent protection is no longer enshrined in the Constitution of Ohio. Prior to 2015, there was Section 7(D), which did indeed stipulate that redrawing lines should remain as close as possible to the previous lines. One of the very first things that we agreed to in our negotiations was that this had to go. That retaining that provision would basically make permanent the previous gerrymander. Second, representational fairness is an important component of the Ohio Constitution following our 2015 reforms. Article 11, Section 6(A), by the way, I should have passed out the text of my remarks. I'm sorry. This, by the way, includes a typo it says Article 6 (A), it should be Article 11, Section 6(A) states

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [01:23:54] does happen from time to time, doesn't it?

Richard Gunther [01:23:57] Your fingers get too fast on the keyboards. No General Assembly district plan shall be drawn primarily to favor or disfavor a political party. The following section Section 6(B), which I wrote, unequivocally states what a fair map actually should be. Now this language, is not very elegant, but it is quite precise. The statewide proportion of districts whose voters based on statewide state and federal partisan general election results during the past 10 years favor each political party, shall closely correspond to the statewide preferences of the voters of Ohio. In other words, the number of districts leaning towards one party or the other should reflect the preferences of Ohio voters, as expressed in statewide elections over the previous decade. Now I've done a quick calculation of this, which you will see in the appendix that I've added to my remarks. This covers seven elections United States Senator, President, Governor, Secretary of State, Auditor, Attorney General and Treasurer. And over the previous decade, Republican candidates for those offices have received fifty four point three percent of the vote. Democratic candidates for those offices have received forty five point seven percent. To ensure that one political party is not unduly favored over another. The partisan makeup of Ohio's districts should mirror the partisan preferences of Ohio's voters over those 10 years. Section 9 incorporates a number of very, very specific points concerning the potential involvement of the Ohio Supreme Court, and it sticks very closely to the language in Section 6(B), which gives you the same percentages that I mentioned a moment ago. Section 8 includes language that it requires, in case there is, in the absence of bipartisan support for a plan, requires that there be a detailed explanation of how the map that is ultimately adopted does or does not correspond with the voting preferences of Ohioans over the previous 10 years. In short, the Ohio Constitution, following the referendum of 2015, includes numerous elements that specifically reinforce the notion of representational fairness. Finally, federal law requires that legislative districts cannot violate the 1965 Voting Rights Act and that they be drawn in a manner to ensure that voters of color can elect representatives of their choosing. Minority vote dilution by packing or cracking must be avoided. Both of these kinds of gerrymandering are unconstitutional violations of the Voting Rights Act. It is important to note as well that there is no current legal requirement for Ohio to draw majority minority districts in order to comply with the Voting Rights Act. The United States Supreme Court has ruled that a state and relevant community must meet certain preconditions for such a district to be drawn. And Ohio currently does not meet those conditions. A legal opinion rendered by the Ohio Legislative Service Commission on December 11, 2017 concluded quite specifically, no judicial decisions currently require Ohio to adopt minority majority congressional districts. If Ohio did so voluntarily, this is part of a packing strategy. That action might be challenged as unconstitutional racial gerrymandering, which is a violation of federal law. Now, the 2015 amendments to the Ohio Constitution were endorsed by an overwhelming majority of citizens and representatives and senators in the General Assembly in 2015. I am confident that the Ohio Redistricting Commission will adopt district boundaries for the Ohio House and Senate in a manner that respects both the letter and the spirit of those reforms. Thank you. Are there any questions? [applause].

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [01:28:29] Thank you for your testimony? OK. Do we have any questions for the witness? Thank you for detailed testimony and the written copy. Next is Laura Robinson Boyd from Columbus.

Laura Robertson-Boyd [01:29:08] Thank you, Co-Chairs Cupp and Sykes, members and representatives of the redistricting commission. Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Laura Robertson Boyd. I live in Columbus in House District 26 and District 15. Hello, Senator Craig. I'm here today to speak both as a representative of an organization and as an individual voter. I'll share examples of how extreme gerrymandering has harmed

Ohio voters by giving an outsized voice to minority opinions and created a legislature that does not need to be representative of its constituents. I am the volunteer local group lead for the Columbus chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. We are a nonpartisan, grassroots movement of American mothers and others fighting for public safety measures that respect the Second Amendment while protecting us from gun violence. Since our organization's inception in 2012, we've been showing up to the State House to advocate for common sense gun safety measures, such as background checks on all gun sales, which 90 percent of Ohioans, including 87 percent of gun owners support. But in the current supermajority controlled legislature, such commonsense measures cannot even get a committee hearing. After the tragic Dayton mass shooting on August 4th, 2019, when Ohioans pleaded with Gov. DeWine to do something, he proposed to increase safety measures in the strong Ohio bill. But the supermajority controlled Legislature would not hold hearings on that bill and instead passed Stand Your Ground, a measure that's been proven to increase gun homicides, which was opposed by law enforcement agencies, prosecutors and a whole host of Ohioans. Due to gerrymandered districts, legislators don't need to represent the voices or concerns of their constituents. Instead, they do the bidding of lobbyists like the Buckeye Firearms Association and the NRA. This is not representative government. Fair districts will give us more voice in the issues that matter most to Ohioans, not lobbyists. I'm also here today as a parent of two young adults, registered voters who currently attend college at Ohio public universities. Both of my kids identify as transgender. So I want to represent the concerns of transgender and LGBTQ Ohioans. Earlier this year, Governor DeWine proposed a \$50 million marketing campaign to advertise Ohio as a welcoming and progressive state to attract and keep younger workers. But Ohio is anything but progressive, since gerrymandered districts have allowed extremist views to dictate our policies. And Ohio was certainly unwelcoming to the LGBTQ community. For the last 10 years, The Ohio Fairness Act, which would prohibit discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation, has been introduced in the Legislature again and again. This measure is supported by Ohio businesses so they can attract a diverse workforce. Yet the bill has never moved since the district lines were last drawn to give an outsized voice to conservative views. What's worse are the current legislative attacks on transgender Ohioans. Bills targeting trans athletes and outlawing medical care for trans youth are part of a nationwide trend among conservative legislators trying to score political points by othering people like my children. These dangerous and discriminatory bills have passed into law will make Ohio an unsafe place for transgender Ohioans and young adults like my kids will not stay here. They will take their skills and tax dollars to more welcoming inclusive states where they don't have to worry about legislators denying them basic human rights. These are just a few examples of why it is so important that Ohio's district lines be drawn more fairly to represent the voices and concerns of all Ohioans, not just minority opinions, so that Ohio can truly be a progressive and welcoming state. I urge you to fulfill the promise of the redistricting reforms placed into the Ohio Constitution and draw new district maps that serve the voters, not the political interests of parties or lobbyists. Thank you. [applause]

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [01:33:24] Thank you for your testimony. Next is Reverend Kurt Walker. Welcome.

Rev. Kurt Walker [01:33:53] Good afternoon, members of the commission, my name is Reverend Kurt Walker. I'm a resident of Amherst, Ohio, which is part of the District 56 of the State House of Representatives, currently held by Representative Joe Miller, Ohio State Senate District 13, currently held by Senator Nathan Manning and U.S. 4th Congressional District, currently represented by Congressman Jim Jordan. I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts on the work of the commission, but also to speak to

those members of the commission who are members of the General Assembly, who will be about working drawing new districts for the United States House of Representatives. As you know, Ohio voters approved a constitutional amendment implementing a new General Assembly redistricting process in November 2015 and a separate constitutional amendment prescribing a new congressional redistricting process in May of 2018. The US congressional district I live in is not compact, it is packed and it is cracked, resulting in a high probability that one group of voters will have less influence than another. That all voices will not equally be heard at the ballot box. This is not representative democracy in action. As I know, most of you have heard or observe, the U.S. congressional map of the 4th District looks like a duck. You may have noticed as I speak, I have a slight Southern drawl. I am originally from Kentucky and moved here with my wife and son some years ago. So each of us could answer a call to the ministry. Except in instances of the game of college basketball, I have learned to embrace the lovely people of the Buckeye State. And will wholly support efforts to draw a more compact district that looks more like a Buckeye than a duck. In my opinion, aggressive gerrymandering results in the politicians picking their voters instead of the voters picking their representatives. My prayers are with the commission and the General Assembly as they go about the work they have been called by God and the citizens of Ohio to do to serve the people of Ohio, thank you for your time.

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [01:36:19] And thank you for your prayers, we definitely need those this complex work. Next is Jalina, I should have tried to pronounce this first Majestaronavich. All right. We'll have you come forward and you can pronounce it, for the record, from Columbus, Ohio. Welcome.

Jalina Mastarovich [01:36:52] Hello. Hello. Hi, my name is Jalina Mastarovich. I'm from Columbus and I live in Senate District three. My own district is split up in a way that doesn't make much sense. I could drive and leave my district and then reenter it again all within 10 minutes. Gerrymandering is bad for everyone, not just for the opposition party. Even the party in power is affected negatively by gerrymandering. It forces candidates to adopt more extreme views in order to capture the votes at the margin of the party. Just like a monopoly in business leads to overpricing gerrymandering in politics leads to overrepresentation. Competition is good both for business and for politics. It keeps politicians accountable, which is the whole point of democracy. I hope you will keep this in mind as you draw your maps because with gerrymandering, Sorry, with gerrymandering in the long run, no one really wins. Thank you for hearing me out. [applause]

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [01:38:08] Thank you for your testimony and thank you for the conciseness of your testimony. We actually can hear it three or four times in the same amount of time, so next is Benjamin Turner, also from Columbus, Ohio. I guess I don't I don't need to add the Ohio, I just need to name a city, you know where that is, right, Senator Craig.

Ben Turner [01:38:39] All right. I'm Ben Turner from Columbus Senate District three. I work in the community where I live. I'm lucky to drive five minutes to get to my job, so you can also see why I'm pretty angry about having to drive all the way to Mansfield for this, OK? I'm used to a five minute drive. Y'all are killing me. All right. My brief commute, I leave one district, enter another, exit that district and return back to the same district as my home address. How does that make sense? Since the 1800s, politicians have been drawing lines like these to make it easier to win elections. Gerrymandered district maps are oppressive. Ohioans and Americans all over the country are ready for you to join us in acknowledging this reality and to change it. When communities are divided, there's increased political polarization and voter suppression. The people feel ignored, annoyed

and hurt. They lose faith in their officials. The erosion of the spirit from the lack of opportunity and transparency for community input and redistricting process and politicians choosing voters seems more fascistic than democratic. Gerrymandering is destroying democracy and American quality of life. Keeping communities together is the lifeblood of democracy. Redrawing our communities will allow Ohioans to advocate for the the issues that affect our lives. So we need to know that our cities, towns, neighborhoods and streets are intact. We want all federal, state and local election district boundaries to be redrawn based on recent census data, and we want to erase the gerrymandered maps and draw new ones that better represent our communities. We want non oppressive, competitive and bipartisan maps. We want our votes to count. We are asking that you honor your oath and hear your constituents. Ohioans want to be able to advocate for people to make decisions about their own bodies, not the government. Renewable energy, anti-racist policies, criminal justice reform, better schools, better mental health services, regardless of race, religion and creed. Thank you for hearing my concerns. [applause]

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [01:40:39] Thank you for coming.

staff [01:40:40] This looks like Greg?

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [01:40:54] I'm going to need some help on this one as well. The first name is Greg. The second last name is to Jovanacar from Galion, Ohio. We'll have you come forward and pronounce your name on the record for us.

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [01:41:18] Welcome. My name is Greg Jevnacar, and I have a Galion address, but I live in Morrow County. Kind of. That's messed up, too. [laughter] I live in a 12th Congressional District, the 87th House District and the 26th Ohio Senate District. I was born in Cleveland when it was the largest city in Ohio, and now I live in Morrow County, which is one of the smallest. So I've been everywhere. In recent years, I've been a election poll worker and became more politically aware of it in 2009 with the soaring debt and in the. What in the what I... What I saw the culture being subverted on many levels, I was disheartened with the results of the 2020 election believing there was a substantial irregularities. We need a forensic audit, but that's another story for another day. But I do fear that many Americans are not voting because of the perceived irregularities. But that's enough for that. I'm puzzled with some of the groups that are for a congressional district redistricting, but they oppose simple things like voter ID. True absentee voting for those people that really can't get out to the polls and paper ballots. But again, that's that to me is fairness and equality. I have one idea to throw out to commission and this came to me just the last couple of days is why don't we start with the largest county and then from there from the midpoint of those counties? Count out the population, and that would be the first district. And then go around to the to the, for example, like Cleveland is... This is the the congressional districts and I and I know you want to talk about the state. But for example, Cleveland has a 1,200,000 people. That's one point eight representatives. So you get two representatives from that, from that population. And they would have to go to an adjoining county, the closest to the midpoint of Geauga County or Cuyahoga County, and pick up the the population there. That seems to fair. I agree with you. Gerrymandering has probably been done by both parties, and it's it's not a good idea because looking at my county, Morrow County, it includes parts of Franklin, and that's quite a ways away. So I think if you if you follow that kind of idea of. Start with the midpoint. And create the districts from that, from there, it would give you the continuity of of the that you want contiguous, contiguous and impartial and just to comment on. Keep referring to, you know, to our country as a democracy, we are not a democracy. We're a constitutional republic. Constitutional Representative Republic and I keep hearing that everywhere. And Ohio is a

red state. You know, all the all the the presidential, the Statewide office, except for one senator have all been Republican, so. That's all I had to say. Any questions?

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [01:45:24] Oh, thank you for coming to testify and providing us your ideas. [applause]. Next, we have Catherine Luxton from Columbus. Catherine, Welcome.

Kit Logsdon [01:46:03] Katherine Logsdon, many people call me Kit. I live in the 15th district, I'm the congressional orphan here. I submitted written testimony that probably should get to all of you. I just all I want to say is that I, I firmly respect the needs of the small town and the rural districts, and I think that they should have representation in Congress by those who know the issues of their of their constituents in those communities. But I happen to live in an urban community that used to be somewhat rural part of Franklin County, but now it is very, very diverse urban community. And I would just like to say that I would like to see our district redistrict because it is now obsolete. And I won't bother with the rest of it, you can.

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [01:47:08] Well, thank you for your testimony and thank you for bringing a colorful graphic to illustrate.

Kit Logsdon [01:47:14] I just needed to represent the 3rd District in Franklin County since 12th and 3rd have been well represented.

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [01:47:23] All right, thank you. [applause]

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [01:47:31] Gary Kennedy from Mansfield, Ohio. You did not have far to drive to get here today.

Gary Kennedy [01:47:56] No, actually not at all. My name is Gary Kennedy. I'm a professor emeritus of mathematics at the Mansfield campus of Ohio State. I thank the commission for coming to Mansfield today and patiently listening to the views of Ohioans. You are charged with constructing a redistricting plan based on the results of the 2020 Census. I urge you to go even further by establishing a redistricting process that can be applied repeatedly, not just in this one census cycle. There are objective criteria for evaluating district maps, and there is an academic literature about this subject. The literature spans the academic areas of political science, public policy, statistics and mathematics. The criteria include compactness, respecting natural and political boundaries, uniting communities of interest and partisan balance. And to a surprising extent, these desirable qualities can be quantified. I urge that the commission and its staff acquaint itself with this literature, and in my written remarks, I have listed several websites that can be used as a starting point for learning about this topic. Although the time allotted for this process is highly constrained. This being the end of August and you're being required to produce a map by the first day of September, I recommend that the commission conduct its business in the following way. First, establish a set of objective criteria for evaluating proposed district maps. Secondly, apply these criteria to all submitted maps and then finally choose that map, which rates highest according to the criteria. I further urge the commission to stand by its work after producing a fair and workable map, its members should vigorously defend it against attempts to override it and to reintroduce partisan politics into the process. Thank you. [applause]

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [01:50:21] I have a question.

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [01:50:22] Professor, Professor Kennedy, we have a question.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [01:50:28] Thank you so much for your testimony. As a mathematician, one of the questions that we have that we have to grapple with is the concept of repetition, that representational fairness is one of the criteria that's listed in the Constitution. A previous professor spoke of that. Would you be willing to provide your interpretation or analysis of of representational fairness over the last 10 years? Would you be willing to also look at that?

Gary Kennedy [01:50:57] I would be willing to look at it. I don't feel that I'm prepared on the spot at the moment.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [01:51:02] Oh, no, no, not at this point. No, not right now. Oh, I'd be happy to do so later today. [laughter].

Gary Kennedy [01:51:09] Yes. Okay.

Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes [01:51:12] Thank you. We'll share that information with you, and thank you very much. Thank you.

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [01:51:19] Thank you, Professor Kennedy. We appreciate your being here. Next is Kelly Hall from Columbus, Ohio, Columbus, which is in Ohio, right? Senator Craig.

Kelly Hall [01:51:43] All right. Hello, good afternoon, my name is Kelly Hall, I am the central Ohio fellow organizer for Planned Parenthood Advocates of Ohio. I'm also a student at Ohio State, the Columbus campus, and my state senator is sitting right here. So thank you so much. As a lot of folks have stated this year, we're coming together to determine how Ohioans will be represented and how funds for schools, hospitals and other essential services will be allocated. Fair maps are the next step to achieving civil rights, equality and liberty and justice in Ohio. I'm here to speak today about the intimate and very real relationship between fair districting and reproductive rights. Simply put, we cannot achieve reproductive rights and equity for all in Ohio if we do not have fair districting and we haven't had that. Time and time again, our elected officials have carved up our communities to divide us and silence certain voices for their own political game. Since the Supreme Court's 1973 landmark decision in Roe v. Wade, we've witnessed state legislatures enact more than 1000 restrictions on abortion. And Ohio has been no exception to this trend. Since the implementation of Ohio's rigged legislative maps in 2011, a total of 30 new harmful and unnecessary abortion bans have been passed by extremist politicians at the Ohio State House. 24 hour waiting periods, clinic closures, forced ultrasounds and requirements to provide medically inaccurate information has made abortion even harder to access than ever. The anti-choice crusades, as I like to say, led by Ohio's extremist politicians, are simply unrepresentative of a large sector of Ohioans and most Americans, and they harm all of us. Most of all, they are actively harming Ohio's low income communities and communities of color whose access to affordable reproductive health care and abortion is most eroded by these severe restrictions. Abortion is legal in Ohio until 20 weeks of pregnancy, and the majority of Ohioans support this broad precept. Furthermore, a 2016 nationwide survey, excuse me, conducted by the National Institute of Reproductive Health revealed that 76 percent of Americans believe abortion should be legal and supported. [applause] And according to the Pew Research Center, roughly half of all Ohioans shared in a 2014 poll that they believe abortion should be legal in all or most

cases. If there is broad support for abortion in our state and in our country, how have Ohio State legislators been able to pass such extreme and restrictive laws governing the right to abortion? The answer, unfortunately, lies in the maps. 2011's extreme partisan and racial gerrymandering has left Ohioans unrepresented by unpopular antiabortion policies and politicians, maintaining the anti-choice Republican supermajority has been the main goal of redistricting processes in the past. But it doesn't have to be. This year's community districting process is our opportunity to restore our communities and keep them whole. It is our chance for a future in Ohio where abortion is a protected human right, fully accessible to all. We demand that Ohio, that the Ohio Redistricting Commission leave partisan and racial considerations out of the districting process and our constituent, constituencies will be watching to make sure. The diversity of Ohio's communities and geographies makes our state some of the most fertile ground for a competitive democracy in America. We should accept no less than 44 Democratic House seats and 14 Democratic Senate seats in order to work towards achieving justice and accountability from our Ohio legislator, Legislature. With our state's democracy reinvigorated, all Ohioans can feel empowered and represented in the electoral process. Isn't that the way it's supposed to be? I welcome any questions you have for me today, and I thank you for hearing my testimony. [applause]

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [01:56:09] All right, thank you for offering testimony today. Next witness is Sarah Fernandez from Mansfield, Ohio. Mansfield in Ohio.

Sarah Fernandez [01:56:41] Hello, thank you for being here today. My name is Sarah Fernandez, and I am a voter in Ohio Congressional District 12. I'm here as a representative, or as a resident of Mansfield, to give testimony in support of fair and ungerrymandered districts in this state. The voters in the Mansfield area are split into two congressional districts, and this has caused our voices and our votes to be muted in many issues. It is imperative that the redistricting committee create maps that allow my community to participate in our government. The lack of a solid voting community in Mansfield means that our community is divided into sharing our concerns with two representatives who also have constituents and very different demographics. By breaking the Mansfield, Ontario, Madison communities, the particular needs of our community are getting overlooked by less populated populated areas facing different needs. Mansfield was once a manufacturing city, and while there are still many factories in the area, the pay is often less than needed, and not union protected. The growth here in Mansfield has been in the medical field, in the retail field, and they are now a major source of employment and growth over the last 10 years here. Within this community, we have branches of some of the biggest hospital systems in the state, including Cleveland Clinic, Nationwide Children's, Ohio Health, and Akron Children's, as well as many trusted local offices with practices that see generations of families. This growth is important, and in order to protect this growth, we need representatives and legislations, and legislators, that encourage progress. One current issue as an example are the infrastructure bills being considered at the federal level. Mansfield could certainly benefit from many items on these bills. One area that I would particularly like to see improvement on is our public transportation. Transportation in this area is commonly cited as a barrier to getting and keeping a job. The ability to provide money for better public transport in our county and in the city would be a major boost to our local economy. As the district sits right now, attempts to inform local voters about the issues are complicated because two different representatives are getting a message from only half of a community. Our voices are not being heard as a collective. I understand that there are many factors involved in creating a new district map. I do, however, request that this commission consider the needs of communities when making these districts. The idea of fair districts doesn't just mean that political parties have more equitable chances. Fair district means that the citizens are better equipped to participate in local politics. This area

deserves candidates in voting districts that allow us to fully represent our unique community. Citizen partnership, participation is ideal. When more people engage in the government and community, everyone prospers. This community should be dedicated to creating districts that encourage active citizens. The committee has a duty to provide all Ohio, to prove to all Ohioans that their votes matter. Finally, I would encourage you to listen to continue to listen to the public, the citizens commission that has given you maps and the various organizations that have come together to support fair districts. Thank you. [applause]

[02:00:19] Thank you. Thank you for your testimony. Next witness is Shelly Ilinka, I think. And we'll have you pronounce it on the on the record. Is. Is Shelly still here? I don't have any town or anything, so I don't know how to tie it any closer. All right. In that case, we will call Tim Olantilon from Columbus. Colin Marozzi from Columbus. Welcome.

Collin Marozzi [02:01:37] Good afternoon. My name is Collin Marozzi, and I'm a policy strategist at the American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio. Thank you to the Ohio Redistricting Commission for this opportunity to testify and the interest of time I will forego the rest of my introduction. As the commission turns for the first time in Ohio's history to the task of drawing fair and representative maps, we remind you of the need to comply with the following. First, Ohio's 2020 census data reveals several trends that make the composition of the state of Ohio noticeably different than that in 2010. The majority of Ohio's counties shrunk in population in most rural areas, but also city centers like Cleveland and Toledo. Meanwhile, the population has boomed in Ohio's capital and the suburbs surrounding Columbus. Population has also grown in the Cincinnati metropolitan area, the Columbus and Cincinnati urban and suburban regions made up for the population losses elsewhere. Franklin County grew by more than hundred and sixty thousand people, a thirteen point eight percent increase. Neighboring Delaware and union counties both grew by more than 20 percent. However, Ohio's population in total only grew by two point three percent, more slowly than the rest of the nation, resulting in the loss of a congressional seat. The fact is, if not for a sizable population growth in Ohio's minority communities, the state would have ended the decade smaller than it started it. The commission must account for these demographic shifts when drawing new maps. Ohio's stagnating population should incentivize this commission to create fair and representative districts and end the blight that gerrymandering has inflicted on the people of Ohio, according to public testimony to this commission. The people of Ohio feel left behind. Victims of a gerrymandered system that perpetuates partisan extremism stifles competitive elections, and it emboldens legislators to neglect their constituents. Chris Warshaw, associate professor at George Washington University, wrote on the effects of gerrymandering has on political attitudes. And his research found data that, quote, "suggests that partisan gerrymandering not only distorts the link between elections and the Legislature, it undermines Americans faith in democracy itself." End quote. In light of witness testimony, it is evident Ohioans faith in their government and representation needs to be restored. Next, we want to focus the attention of the commission on its obligation to comply with Article one, Section 6 of the Ohio Constitution. The new requirements in Article 11, Section 6 were passed through ballot measure issue one in 2015 with overwhelming public support, winning over 71 percent of the vote. Not only does the Ohio Constitution mandate compliance with Section 6, Compliance with section 6 is the only way to ensure this commission's legitimacy in the eyes of Ohio voters. The population and jurisdiction splitting rules of sections three and four are but a means to an end. Creating a General Assembly map plan that complies with the standards prescribed in Section 6 is the ultimate goal. The end product of this commission must be a map that provides for proportional partisan representation, and that does not primarily favor one political party over another. In this era of intentional extreme

partisan gerrymanders, Ohio's Section 6(A) provides our citizens with an essential safeguard by removing any one political parties desired outcome from this process. In addition, Sectio mandates that the commission draw a General Assembly map in which the statewide proportion of districts reflects the statewide partisan vote share over the last decade. In 2015, millions of Ohioans supported issue one, not because it allows for 10 percent variance in Ohio's ratio of representation and not because it creates a procedure for determining incumbency following Senate boundary line changes. The millions of Ohioans who supported Issue one did so because it promised to deliver fair, proportional and bipartisan districts, and fulfilling that promise should be the goal of this commission. We compiled data from all statewide partisan elections between 2012 and 2020. This data provides not only a close look into the statewide partisan preferences of Ohio voters, but also demonstrates how far our current map deviates from the essential protections of Section 6(B). In 2020, Republicans received just over half of the votes for statewide partisan races, but won nearly two thirds of the State House seats and more than three fourths of the state Senate seats. This level of variance violates the new rules established in Section 6(B), as the current map has afforded Republicans disproportionate representation in both the State House in the state Senate. In fact, over the past decade, Ohio Republicans have never had less than a six percentage point advantage in the State House and a 10 percentage point advantage in the state Senate. Since 2014, the statewide vote share for Republicans has dropped, while their share of seats in the General Assembly has grown. Tables one and two at the bottom of my testimony, which was submitted online, demonstrates the discrepancy in statewide election vote totals and the allocation of General Assembly seats over the past 10 years. Section 6(B) requires this commission to create a General Assembly map with minimal variance between the vote share for all statewide partisan elections and legislative seats. And we look forward to finally ending an era where the representation in the General Assembly does not match the will of Ohio voters. Lastly, we remind the commission of Article 11, Section 1(C) which charges the commission to seek public input on the proposed plan because meaningful public input requires community members to first critically analyze the proposed map. We ask the commission, share the proposed map in a form that supports public interaction, such as a machine readable electronic ESRI shaped file or a CSV block equivalency file. Meaningful public input also requires adequate time between a maps introduction and the constitutionally required public hearings. Adequate time is needed to conduct a thorough review and analysis before informed comments can be delivered to this commission. We ask the Commission to allow for days, not hours, between the maps' introduction and the subsequent hearings. Thank you to all the commissioners for your service in this vital task for our democracy, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [02:08:56] Thank you. [applause] Seeing no questions, we will then call Tammy Wilson as our next witness from Delaware.

Tamie Wilson [02:09:27] Hello. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Tamie Wilson and I'm from Delaware, Ohio. From the 12th Congressional District. I came across this tweet the other day and it just gave me such extreme alarm, and I just want to read it to you. It says, "this won't be my most popular tweet, but Republicans should look out for Republicans. And when drawing the lines of apportionment, we won. Obama taught us that elections have consequences. This is a red state. Treat it as such, voters value a spine." That tweet? To my surprise, it was actually made by the chair of Hamilton County's GOP, Chairman Alex. So it just really disturbs me. I mean, we are here to discuss redistricting and fair representation. The Declaration of Independence, it claims that all men are created equal. The First Amendment of the United States Constitution gives us the freedom of speech. The 14th Amendment addresses citizenship rights, equal

protection under law, and the 15th Amendment prohibits the government and each state from denying a citizen the right to vote. The Civil Rights Act banned discrimination from disadvantaged groups. It is well known that upper income voters tend to cast their votes Republican, while those at the bottom of the income ladder tend to vote Democratic. Redistricting in favor of Republicans, as stated in that tweet by the chair of the GOP, is a way of discriminating against lower income and minority voters, which goes against our Civil Rights Act, the first 14th and 15th Amendment. Franklin Roosevelt's proclamation said, "We are a nation of many nationalities bound together by the unity and freedom and equality." Our founding father, Thomas Jefferson, he worried that officials might come to believe that public office was theirs by right. It is evident that tweet shows his fears have come to fruition. Not all Ohioans are Republicans, so we need fair districts to give voice to all people. We also must have districts that draw represent, that are drawn so representatives are in close proximity to their constituents. My representative lives over two hours away. I've never met him. He's never met me. He doesn't know me or the community, our needs. Therefore, he doesn't represent us. He hasn't been to my city, but he has been to Texas to visit the border, which is why I am seeking election to the U.S. House of Representatives to represent the 12th congressional district of Ohio. Redistricting is necessary to reflect the population of communities, and the voice of the people can be heard. Redistricting was not created so politicians can choose their voters that will guarantee their victory in elections. It is absolutely imperative that we have fair district lines, so the voices of all people can and will be heard in our elections. Our new district lines should be a bipartisan reflection of the community so the people can choose who they want in office and may the best woman or man win. I respectfully request that you expedite this process so I and other candidates may have the opportunity to serve and meet our constituents without knowing the district lines. Of course, we do not know who our constituents are. I thank you for fulfilling your duty to serve Ohioans. I know you guys are tired. It's been a long day. I appreciate you doing your duty with honesty and integrity and united we can get it done. Thank you.

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [02:14:00] Thank you for your testimony and the dramatic conclusion. [laughter] The next witness is Catherine Goldman from Mansfield.

Catherine Goldman [02:14:29] Thank you very much for coming to Mansfield. I have to tell you, first of all...

audience member [02:14:33] I can't hear you, talk in the mic.

Catherine Goldman [02:14:33] My name's Cathy Goldman. OK, thanks. I'm afraid to touch it now. My name is Cathy Goldman, I'm from Mansfield. I've lived here since I was 10 years old, and I can't tell you how shocked I was. First of all, to see that you all were coming here. Nobody comes here. And that's partly because of gerrymandering. Right? I will tell you, I came... I'm a 65 year old white middle class woman. All right. I have there's a voting block that I'm a part of that is becoming a little more left leaning than we have been in the past. It's an important voting block, and I want to tell you my history so you know a little bit more about that voting block. I came to the Fair Districts movement back when I first heard about it, collecting signatures for the petitions to get the amendment on the ballot. I can't tell you how easy that was. Now, I don't know if you know we live here. Well, some of us, I think there's been previous testimony. Mansfield's kind of split up, you know, are we are cracked and baked or whatever the heck it is that you all do. But. We have a crazy design of a district. We went all the way up here in Mansfield were obviously stuck up into to dilute whatever's going on in suburban Columbus and then all the way down east of Columbus and south again to dilute any liberal leaning in Columbus. But when I

went around trying to get signatures for the petition, if you could get somebody stop long enough to talk to a stranger, all you had to do was say, "See the map? We're here to do something about this map. Does this map look fair to you? Does this map look like anybody cares what you in Mansfield think?" No, clearly. People aren't dumb. All they had to do is look at that map and know somebody is deciding something. And it's not me. It's not me, the voter. I will tell you there was only one person and I collected hundreds of signatures. There was only one person who ever said no, and I hate to generalize, but it was a 60 year old white man out from the country, and he straight out said to me, Hey, this is working really well for me. Why? Why would I do anything different? Good luck to you. No way I'm signing your petition. So what does that do? We're not dumb, right, people are not dumb. So what that does is it sows the seeds in people like me who feel like we don't, we can't be heard with our vote. Nobody cares about our vote. We have been manipulated to a situation where our vote doesn't matter. So what do we do? How do we be heard? What are our options? You know, protest is where this one went, OK? And at the time, Pat Tiberi was our congressman, federal congressman, the affordable care... I don't even know some kind of a health issue. Indivisible 12 kept staging town halls. Pat Tiberi refused to attend. It was so hilarious that they got to the point where they made this thing a Flat Pat. I don't know if you're familiar with the little children's book, but there was a Flat Pat who would stand in attendance at these meetings and Flat Pat would stand there dumb. Well, there was a group of people who decided it was time to follow. Where is Pat Tiberi going instead of town halls? I went to one of them, I was, out of district at some kind of a dinner while a town hall was being attended. There was, you know, 10 or 12 of us waving a few signs. It wasn't a big deal, but he knew we were. There the next week, I'm a lawyer, I'm a member of the Chamber of Commerce here in Richland County. And the Chamber of Commerce had invited him to a luncheon. I attended the luncheon. You know, wolf in sheep's clothing. I had my little suit on. He didn't know what I was, and he makes repeated smug comments about how smart he was to avoid the protesters this time. They didn't know where he was and they weren't here today and wasn't that smart of him? Well, amazingly, because I was the wolf in sheep's clothing, I got called on. I said, You know, honorable representative, do you realize why people are following you around and protesting? Do you realize that it's because you won't hear them? You won't listen to them. You only will listen to people here at the chamber. You will only listen to your little tiny base constituency, not the other, that the rest of us is. And you know what he did? He laughed. He just flat out laughed. He didn't care. And he thought it was funny. So, however, many years, 10 years ago, when these lines got drawn. There was some thinking going on, there was motive and there was an intent. I'm an old prosecutor. I've prosecuted murder cases. The, so I think about things with respect to criminal mental state, criminal intent and what they are. Negligent homicide, that's a knowing mental state. You know what you're doing. You didn't necessarily intend the consequence. Murder is purpose, purpose to kill. Aggravated murder is with prior calculation and design. And what happened here in Ohio 10 years ago was aggravated murder of voting rights. [applause] You all have the chance to fix that. You all have the chance to engage in restorative justice. Admit that was wrong. Do the right thing. Be fair, your mothers expect that of you. And we all mothers here, you know, are my voting block full of mothers expects the same? And I ask you, please, that's it. Thanks. [applause]

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [02:21:39] All right. Thank you, we have five more witnesses here for the time, so if we can can move along. That would be great and yet still say what you want to say. Next witness is Sherry Reese Vaught from Mansfield? And we'll have you put your correct pronunciation of the record.

Sherry Vaught [02:22:15] Good afternoon, commission. My name is Sherry Reese Vaught, and I'm a resident of Mansfield and I'm a teacher at Prospect Elementary, that's not very far from my house. And I left my second grade class and rushed over here to tell you that people in Mansfield count. I feel strongly that as a teacher in public education, that. I'm sorry... I'm going to feel strongly that we all people should have a right to have a voice in our country. That's one of the reasons I became a school teacher was because an educated electorate is important. And we've heard lots of people already today say and just the lady last, say that people that are educated. It's possible for you to look at what's going on and realize that we're not being represented. And so I'm here. I can say a lot of things I say, I put my stuff in online, so you'll have my stuff. But all I want to say is that I want you to count all of us. I want all of us to have a right to vote and to have our votes count. That's the most important thing. And since I live here in Mansfield, I will say this. Since Mansfield, I do a lot of voter reg and and do things for League of Women Voters. And so many times people tell me that it doesn't matter. They won't take the time to register to vote because they don't think their votes matter. And maybe I'm old school and maybe I'm idealistic, but I do think our votes matter and I try to get them to do what they need to do. But this kind of gerrymandering really separates people from their vote, from from the processes that can create a more just society. I do want to say that I don't think that... We just heard about Mr. Tiberi. When when representatives don't feel like they have to work for their, for the vote, they can become complacent. We've heard others talk about how people have to become more extreme and gerrymandering hurting even the people that are in power. And that seems so right. When representatives have to work a bit for votes, when they have to fully represent their districts, they may be more willing to work to find solutions. They may work across partisan lines, and that can create less polarization, both in Congress but also in society. So. Compromise is the backbone of democracy. I teach my second graders that. We talk about being fair and listening to the other person and trying to come up with something that we can both live with. And gosh, if if second graders can do it, I really hope we can get that. [applause] And I want to say this, I don't say this because what you're getting ready to do is not easy. I do not envy your positions and I, with others will be praying and thinking of you as you go through this process. But I want you to know that it's important and I wanted, and I left school so that you could hear that from me. I'm glad there are other people here. So John Dewey, the father of public education, I gotta end with that, said that democracy has to be born again in every generation. And education is its midwife. I firmly believe that. And I really, really hope that you will work hard to find bipartisan maps that work from Ohio that give everybody a right to vote and be heard. Being born rich or poor, brown or pale in the city or in the country, the countryside should not decide if a citizen has a vote that counts. Thanks again for this chance to speak to you. [applause]

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [02:26:30] Thank you for being here and thank you for being a teacher. We all know teachers, that inspired us and helped us along the way. Next witness is Eric Miller, also from Mansfield.

Eric Miller [02:26:51] Thank you. Thank you for the time you've spent with us today. I've spent much of my life working to protect the animals that are native to Ohio. And yet, as I talk to you about the job you're going to be doing, I'm going to say something that I've never said before in my life. No snakes, no ducks. No salamanders. Thank you. [applause].

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [02:27:29] You didn't put your occupation on there, but you may be a poet, I'm not sure. Next witness is Timothy O'Hanlon from Columbus. We

believe he may be written only testimony at this point, so it'll be on the record. Next witness is Stephen Garret from Centerville, Ohio.

Steven Garrett [02:28:07] Good afternoon. Welcome, ladies and gentlemen of our Legislature. I testified 10 years ago before a very similar hearing. I did that in Florida because I was a Florida resident back then. Midway through the decade, we relocated here. I was chagrined to see what happened after the redistricting in Florida, despite my own efforts. And I was chagrined to see what was happening in the state where I lived previously as well. I'd like to share with you some of my testimony from that previous hearing. I think it's still very relevant. Sometimes some of it because the ideas are enduring, some of it because what I had hoped for and advocated for has not come to pass. I've heard many concerns raised about redistricting that it respect and honor federal civil rights laws and that it respect and honor the voters wishes for compact districts. I echo those concerns. I've also heard concerns that these goals were in conflict. I urge you to recognize this is a false dichotomy, meaning both goals may be more challenging than treating it as either or, but meaning both is assuredly possible. But beyond this, I challenge you to champion diversity within the districts you draw, not of age or race or any demographic at all, but diversity of ideas. Our nation is in desperate need of intelligent, considerate civic debate, and the surest way to squelch that is to craft districts in which the outcome of a general election is a foregone conclusion. Uncompetitive districts debase the value of each incremental vote, rendering it virtually meaningless. Competitive districts raise up the value of incremental votes and encourage citizen participation. Uncompetitive districts teach our children that those in power can act to protect their own interests at the expense of the people's. Competitive districts, place the people's interests first and encourage our children and all citizens to reflect on what truly constitutes their interest. Uncompetitive districts breed distrust, cynicism and apathy. Competitive districts enliven debate, engage voters and bring accountability to the fore. Many may say that these are fine ideals, but that you will choose instead to create districts to protect your own security and office. My friends, I submit that such thinking reflects another false dichotomy. I suggest that security in office is completely compatible with competitive districts. I submit to you the true job security for a public servant rests in consistent delivery of exemplary public service. And that this is what makes it possible for her or him to consistently win vibrant, competitive and contested elections. Ladies and gentlemen, your unwillingness to craft competitive electoral districts would be the clearest possible evidence of your own suspicion that you are unworthy of office, that you would not win a tough, well contested election in a competitive district. I fear you may and choose instead to craft districts that if you'll forgive me, any jackass or respectively, pachyderm could win. Show your belief in your own worthiness and show your belief in your constituents whose government this is. Craft districts that are respectful, honorable, legal, compact and competitive. I thank you. [applause]

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [02:32:00] Thank you for presenting testimony today and next witnesses, Amy Burns from Mansfield.

Amy Burns [02:32:17] Thank you. I first want to thank everybody in the audience for staying. I know a lot of people have left, I forgot to fill out the form, I submitted my testimony by computer. I didn't know I had another form to fill out. So anyway, I finally got that done and I have a chance to speak. Thank you for people who came from Columbus, from Mount Vernon, from all parts of the state to hear this. And thank you for giving me a chance to to speak now. I live in Mansfield, Ohio. That's Congressional District 12, which is represented by Troy Balderson. And Senate District 22, represented by Mark Romanchuk. And I see I see the names of two of the of the members of the commission. So I want to I

want to say thank you for coming. Thank you for representing the missing members. And because there are people missing, I do have packs of postcards if you want and you haven't already written to them. I have packs with their addresses so that they can hear from you directly and not through their through their representative. So I have plenty of these with the addresses ready. The district maps that were created in 2010 in Ohio split Richland County into two districts. The 12th is served by Troy Balderson, who lives in Zanesville, 70 miles away, and then the 7th District is served by Bob Gibbs, who lives in Wooster. And we never see that guy. Ohio's... And he lives like, not that far away. Troy comes, though, you know, to get the money. Ohio's current maps have resulted in 12 of the 16 districts. Seventy five percent of them are represented by one party, essentially allowing the Republican Party to pick their voters instead of allowing voters to choose them. This is not how democracy is designed to work. Ohio's gerrymandered map essentially silences my voice in our democracy. It allows politicians with extreme positions and views to enforce those positions onto all of their constituents. How can someone from as far away as Zanesville, which is Muskingum County, 70 miles away? Here's Mansfield. And who represents at least seven other counties between there and Richland County support the unique needs and issues that impact our struggling city with failing businesses, struggling schools, industries and racial tension. How can Gibbs, who lives in a district that is made up of 10 largely rural counties, cornfields, represent the urban parts of Richland County. Balderson and Gibbs campaign on caring about job creation and the economy. But then they completely dismiss, dismiss those issues in Richland County, instead denying the impacts of gun violence, the science of COVID, the legitimacy of the last election and who have an obsessive focus on women's bodies in their votes. Since 2010, District 7 and 12 have offered supremely qualified Democratic candidates who have been unable to compete because the current maps are rigged in favor of the party and control. Nobody here is saying that people with different views shouldn't be heard. All we are saying is all voices should be represented in a fair and balanced manner. Currently, wholly conservative voices are using a rigged system to force their agenda in our state. Those voices should not be the only voices heard in districts that are made up of many, many counties. Thank you. Anybody who hasn't gotten these just fine me after. [applause]

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [02:36:36] Thank you. Thank you for being here to present testimony. And we're going back because Shelly Bylica by that was, of course, missed earlier, so we're giving you the opportunity to speak to the commission.

Shelly Bylica [02:36:54] Yes, thank you. Mask on or off?

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [02:37:07] You can take it off while you're speaking.

Shelly Bylica [02:37:11] All right, thank you. Well, good afternoon, my name is Shelly, but like it and I am a lifelong resident of northern Ohio, I've been a registered voter in Shelby for the past 13 years and I've also been a voter and Ashlyn and Portage counties. And I am here to relay various experiences that I had working in a local library here in Richland County that have led me to propose that we make sure that districts are redrawn in ways that make it easier for voters to meaningfully participate in democracy. Please redraw boundaries in districts and more geographically concise patterns and equidistant fashion around public spaces where people can gather to deliberate, discuss and debate the issues of the day. Please consider districts which roughly follow county lines and other existing jurisdictions. I worked as a reference librarian for eight years in a small town in Richland County. One of the most annoying questions that I would receive was Who are my representatives? Then I looked at the map and saw that districts were drawn ways that were long and narrow and wide and what? The ways that the lines have been drawn are

not very user friendly. And I really have come to feel that this is detrimental to civic participation. Lines are drawn in ways, and if they were intentionally and drawn in ways that grossly neglect easy recognition of districts by constituents, it has one horrible effect that cannot be overlooked. To exclude people from meaningful and informed civic participation. Please fix this now. Easily recognizable legislative districts, which feature centrally located gathering places and, you know, you have to remember, I have largely lived in more small town and rural places here in Ohio. And you know, now unlike cities where you have convention centers and whatnot, if you're trying to draw a rural district, the center is not always that well-defined. There may be a city, there may not be, so on and so forth. But I really, really need to emphasize the need for in-person places for people to meet and talk face to face. I've come deeply concerned about the dehumanization that has come about when people's civic participation is largely via social media. In real life, if I am having problems with a friend, family member or boyfriend or whatnot and it's been through a text based communication, I say, OK, let's make this a phone call. If a phone call doesn't work, I'll say, Hey, let's do it. OK, OK. So I only have one minute left. But yeah, but, no, we lose the face to face communication in our civic discourse. We start to lose our humanity. We start to lose our humanity. We lose our common ground. We lose our common ground. It's a breeding ground for the level of division that we are seeing in this country, and America's enemies are happy to hop on these fault lines to be ready to divide and conquer us. Let's not let them do that. Let's redraw districts that are geographically concise, that have meeting areas in the middle. Make it parks. Make it stadiums. Make it public libraries. When I used to work at the Library here in Richland county, there was an older lady and a middle aged gentleman, the lady, I'll call her Karen. This gentleman, I'll call Mark. They used to debate politics and football over newspapers every single day. It was annoying. But then, as years rolled by, I came to realize that they were modeling something important. They were modeling friendly debate. Time came when this lady, you know, they reached an age. She was starting to get too old to come into library anymore. I would. I heard that Mark would stop by Karen's house every now and then. Stop and see how she is. Well, we lose this in these online forums. So even in rural districts, please consider drawing them around some sort of centers where people can meet in person. And please consider turning a blind eye to things such as rural, urban, Republican or Democrat. Please care more about how well this democracy functions than who necessarily wins next election. I thank you so much for your consideration of these ideas and being here to listen to all these today.

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [02:42:44] Yeah, well, thank you for attending and some very interesting, important observations. Thank you.

Shelly Bylica [02:42:49] You're welcome. Any other questions? [applause]

Co-Chair Speaker Robert Cupp [02:42:57] All right. Are there? That's the all the witness slips we have. Is there anyone else who wishes to offer testimony today? Who's here to do that? All right, if not, seeing none, please note that written only testimony submitted through the website for this hearing will be posted on the commission website and distributed to all members of the Commission. As an administrative note, all written testimony received as today, as of today, not previously attributed to a hearing date or location will be entered into the record for the Mansfield Regional hearing. And before we adjourn, I would first of all, like to thank all of you for coming and presenting your testimony to the commission, but also the Ohio State University, Mansfield campus and Dean Norman Jones for hosting us today in this site. Is there any further business to come before this regional hearing of the 2021 Why are redistricting commission? Seeing none, we stand adjourned. [applause]

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House Speaker Robert Cupp [00:00:00] Being time for, scheduled for, the meeting of the Ohio Redistricting Commission, I will call the Commission's meeting to order. First., we will have a roll call and will staff please call the roll.

Clerk [00:00:14] Co-chair Cupp (present), co-chair Sykes (present), Governor DeWine (here), Auditor Faber (here), President Huffman (here), Secretary LaRose (here), Leader Sykes (here).

House Speaker Robert Cupp [00:00:30] With a quorum present, we will meet as a full committee, next item of business is the minutes. In your folders are the minutes of the last meeting. Anybody need a little more time to look them over or is there a motion to accept the minutes.

Senate President Huffman [00:00:48] Motion to accept the minutes.

House Speaker Robert Cupp [00:00:48] Is there a second?

Sen. Vernon Sykes [00:00:52] Second.

House Speaker Robert Cupp [00:00:52] It's been moved and seconded. Are there any objections to the minutes that are laid before you? Seeing none, the minutes are approved, without objection. We'll will move on to adoption of the rules. At this time I would entertain a motion... at this time, I would entertain a motion to adopt the rules that have been circulated to the members' offices yesterday that are in the folders before you. Is there a motion to adopt?

Sen. Vernon Sykes [00:01:21] So moved.

House Speaker Robert Cupp [00:01:21] It's been moved, is there a second? (Second) It's been moved and seconded before we take a vote on it, I just wanted to sort of verbally list some of the highlights of the rules. If there are highlights to rules, um... rule nine contains the procedure for presenting a plan to the commission. Anyone can submit a plan for consideration to the commission. The plan should contain visual representation of the proposed boundaries, and the plan could be submitted through the website at www.redistricting.ohio.org or mailed to the Ohio Redistricting Commission, c/o the Clerk of the Ohio Senate, The Ohio Statehouse, Columbus, Ohio, 43215. And rule 10, the important points in rule 10 are that any meeting of the at any meeting of the commission, a sponsor of a complete General Assembly plan, may present the plan to the redistricting commission. The rule allows for a ten minute presentation by the sponsor, a five minute comment period from the public. A majority vote of the commission is required to allow the sponsor or public to exceed the time limits. Members of the commission are permitted to ask questions of the sponsor, and members of the commission may request expert testimony about the plan. Also, there's a provision for amendments to the plan, any member of the commission may offer amendments to the plan. The co-chairs may offer amendments on behalf of the sponsors who are not members of the commission, and the commission is not required to vote on every plan presented to it pursuant to the constitutional rules. Article 11 on selecting a plan as the Redistricting Commission's proposed General Assembly district plan, which of course is different from a plan that is submitted by an individual to the redistricting commission for consideration. The

Redistricting Commission will select one plan to present to the public as its proposed General Assembly District Plan for boundaries of the 99 House districts and 33 Senate districts. Any member of the commission may move to select a plan presented to the commission as the commission's one proposed General Assembly District Plan. And a simple majority vote of the commission is required to select the proposed General Assembly district plan. Rule 10 provides that there are three public hearings after the commission introduces its proposed plan. But before adoption of the plan, the commission will hold three public hearings on three separate days to seek public input into the plan. And members and co-chairs, on behalf of the sponsors, may move to amend the plan at any stage, and amend the plan at this stage as well. And then finally, adoption of the plan by the redistricting commission at the next meeting. Following the three hearings, redistricting commission may vote to adopt the proposed plan. To reiterate, the ten year map requires affirmative votes of four members, including at least two members of the commission who represent each of the two largest political parties in the General Assembly. The four-year map, if the commission is unable to achieve the requisite vote for a ten-year map, the commission may adopt a four-year map by a simple majority vote of the commission. So those are some of the highlights that contained in the rules before us. Are there any objections? We have a motion and second, any objections to adopting the rules? Seeing none, the rules of the commission will stand is adopted without objection.

House Speaker Robert Cupp [00:05:39] All right, we're now moving in on the agenda to other business. I think first we need a motion that the expenses incurred by the commission members and their designated staff for mileage and supplies in conjunction with the regional hearings held August 23 through 27, 2021, be reimbursed with the approval of both co-chairs. Is there a motion for that?

Sen. Vernon Sykes [00:06:06] I would so move.

House Speaker Robert Cupp [00:06:08] Is there a second? It's been moved and seconded, any objections? Without objection, the motion will pass. The co-chairs office will provide further information at the conclusion of the meeting for those who need reimbursement. All right. Is there further business to come before this meeting of the Ohio Redistricting Commission.

Sen. Vernon Sykes [00:06:35] Mr. Chair?

House Speaker Robert Cupp [00:06:36] Mr. Co-chair.

Sen. Vernon Sykes [00:06:37] Mr. Chair? I'd like to present a map from the members of the Ohio Senate Democratic Caucus. Will the staff please pass out the materials that are being submitted to the commissioners. Before you is a map that is our -- that in our estimation, not only meets our constitutional requirements, but follows the spirit of reform that Ohio voters have demanded of us. We heard loud and clear from the public last week during our road show that we need to meet our deadlines, have an open and transparent process, and share maps with the public. I asked Randall Routt, minority caucus policy adviser, to be here today to briefly summarize the map and how it was crafted. Before Randall gives a summary. I like the members of the commission and the public to know that this map has not been vetted or viewed by any outside groups organization. This is a starting point, and members of the Senate Democratic Caucus urge the members of the commission and the public to provide feedback and suggestions. I'm eager for the public assertions of maps to begin and look forward to other members of the commission

submitting maps or offering amendments to our map at this point. Mr. Routt, would you give your overview.

Randall Routt [00:08:19] Thank you, Senator. My name is Randal Routt. I'm a minority caucus policy advisor for the Senate Democratic Caucus. I know many of you from a number of years working in the Senate. Co-Chair Cupp, Co-Chair Sykes and members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission. Thank you for the opportunity to speak about the redistricting plan as presented to you today. I'd like to take some time to walk you through how this plan was generated in compliance with and in the spirit of constitutional reforms to the Ohio redistricting process. To to draw the House map, we first looked at the largest county in the state by population. Franklin County, as required by the Ohio Constitution. Franklin County has a population of one million, three hundred twenty three thousand, eight hundred and seven, which allowed us to create 11 districts within it. We drew the remainder of the county within one additional district. We then repeated the process for the other 21 counties in the state with more than one house ratio representation. In other words, for the other 21 counties in Ohio whose populations are large enough to contain more than one house district. We did so from the largest county to the smallest, resulting in the creation of the first 77 districts. Two additional districts encompassing entire counties, Richland and Wayne, were then created. Finally, the remaining 20 districts were created by combining whole counties, municipalities and townships. As you will see, our house map fully complies with all constitutional redistricting requirements. It does not illegally split a single contiguous municipality or township in any district in the state. It splits counties as little as possible and only allow for population requirements. Only 12 of 64 counties with one, less than one house ratio representation are split between two districts. Our map also makes zero illegal community splits. We use the same process for the Senate districts, each of which must encompass three House districts. We started the process with the -- with the 24 counties in the state comprised of at least one house district, which resulted in the creation of the first 28 senate districts. We then drew the remaining five districts by minimizing county splits. In our map, only seven of eighty counties with less than one Senate ratio representation are split between two districts. In regards to representational fairness, the Ohio Constitution, Article 11, Section 6 also requires that districts closely match the voter preferences for candidates as expressed in statewide partisan elections of the past decade, or as we heard from last week's testimony, representational fairness. In short, our General Assembly districts should roughly match the way Ohio voters have indicated their preferences over the past decade. We calculated this in two ways. First, we use data from the 2021 Ohio Common Unified Redistricting Database to determine the total Democratic and Republican voteshare. We then looked at the simple vote totals of each eligible election, each partisan statewide election from 2012 to 2020, which resulted in a ratio of 45.9% Democratic and 45 per -- 54.1% Republican voters split over 10 years. For the purpose of map drawing, this would mean that a map would most closely match the call of Ohio voters, would include 45 likely Democratic and 54 likely Republican seats in the House of Representatives and 15 likely Democratic and 18 likely Republican seats in the Senate. Our house -- our House map includes 44 likely Democratic districts and 55 likely Republican districts. Our Senate map includes 14 likely Democratic districts and 19 likely Republican districts. And the issue of compactness, as you heard repeatedly last week in testimony, the Ohio Constitution also requires the General Assembly district are compact and kept communities of interest within the same district. It's important to note that many subdivisions are irregularly shaped, simply not contiguous. The map before you minimizes these community splits to the greatest extent possible. Some of these districts we see, like in Cincinnati, they have this little tail going in Cincinnati, that's part of the city. So we try to keep the city together there. In summary, this map plans adhere to the spirit of reforms passed overwhelmingly

by the voters of Ohio. And with, as with federal law, including provisions concerning the protection of minority voting rights, is merely a starting proposal by the members of the Senate Democratic Caucus. No outside group or organization had reviewed the maps before, before you in advance of our submission to the commission and the public today. In addition to my testimony, I'm providing more detailed description of our plan and additional materials, I'd be happy to take any questions. And we also have our consultant, Chris Glassburn, with Project Govern, here to help answer any questions for you as well. Thank you very much for this opportunity.

House Speaker Robert Cupp [00:14:16] All right. Thank you. Thank you for your presentation. Are there questions from members of the commission for the witness? Seeing none, thank you.

Randall Routh [00:14:27] Thank you.

House Speaker Robert Cupp [00:14:31] Is there any member of the public that wishes to testify at this time on on this proposal? Alright, see, none that will stand as a first consideration of the proposed map. Is there any further --? Go ahead Senator Sykes. Leader Sykes?

House Minority Leader Emilia Sykes [00:15:04] Thank you, Mr. -- thank you, Mr Chair, to the chairs of the committee. Last week I asked the question when we were in the Lima stop about when we could expect a map from the commission so we could start having the public hearings. And under our responsibility in Article 11, Section 3, it says that the commission to put forth a map before the deadline in subsequent paragraphs. The deadline is tomorrow. My question to the co-chairs and perhaps to the remaining members of the committee is, again, what is the pleasure of this committee, this commission, in putting forth a commission map by which we can all talk about? Or the members of the public can communicate with us about? We heard hours upon hours of testimony of people asking and requesting for that transparency and the ability to comment on the maps. And so I would like us to discuss at some point or have an answer before we leave today as to when the commission will put forth a map that people and members of the public can comment on.

House Speaker Robert Cupp [00:16:15] Other members may have some other comments, but the, a map is, is being developed carefully with regard to the data and the constitutional requirements, it is unlikely to be available before September 1st. Had the census data arrived on time, we probably would have had a map weeks ago. But because this is a new process and one which requires a fairly careful compliance with new constitutional requirements, I do not see a map that that I am... aware of that would be coming before the commission before September 1. And that, I think, would also fall within the constitutional provision that there is a fallback, if a map isn't adopted by September 1, that there is a additional process to go through in order to develop a map. So I think in this case, being careful and deliberate is a virtue when we're doing something this significant, which will have an impact for hopefully at least a decade. (Follow up?) Leader Sykes.

House Minority Leader Emilia Sykes [00:17:44] Thank you, Mr. Chair, appreciate that response and I do hope we are thoughtful and consider and work towards it in your map. You did refer to maps being drawn currently, using the data, it being delayed. I can only speak for myself on this one. I have not been privy to any of those conversations. And so, again, my question that I mentioned from last week, which I am carrying over this week, who on this commission is participating in that? I am I am not aware of such activity and

have not been contacted about the data that you are looking at or considering in these maps that the commission, that I am a member of, is considering to put forth. So is this a, so I guess I'm restating the question from last week. Is this a commission map by the majority party? Is it just by the legislative leaders? Is it just the Republican legislative leaders? And what can I expect in terms of participating in that, if anything at all?

House Speaker Robert Cupp [00:18:43] Well, thank thank you for the question. But as you know, maps are proposed by any, anyone, any member of the public. In fact, there's a contest, I believe, to draw a map, and the deadline is somewhere after September 1st. So the commission itself is not drawing a map, but we would expect maps to be presented to us for the commission's consideration, such as the map was presented here today. (Follow up, Mr. Chair). You may proceed.

House Minority Leader Emilia Sykes [00:19:15] Thank you. So if I could read for you Article 11, Section C, paragraph 2, which says, "the commission shall release to the public a proposed General Assembly district plan for the boundaries of each of the 99 House of Representative districts and 33 Senate commission districts. The commission shall draft the proposed plan in the manner prescribed in this article." So I think that's pretty clear that it is the commission who is responsible for putting forth a plan to, and as it subsequently says, for it to be considered to have those three hearings that we just voted for in the rules, in rule 9. And again, I would just like to, for the third or fourth time, inquire as to when as a commission can we expect this, or if we don't have an answer to that at this very moment, perhaps we can set a date on our next commission meeting and figure this out.

House Speaker Robert Cupp [00:20:13] I do not know when other maps are going to be presented, offered to the commission for consideration, but we obviously have a time deadline ticking of September 15th with a lot of procedure before that, which I would expect to be, to be met. So I don't have any timeline here today, but certainly willing to work with the, with the co-chair and members of the commission to begin to set those timelines. Senator Sykes, co-chair Sykes.

Sen. Vernon Sykes [00:20:46] Mr. Co-Chair, in addition, one of the main reasons we put forward the map today is to indicate that maps can be presented and we are hopeful, you know, talk with you just, just now hopeful that we're going to be able to put a schedule together so that we will have adequate time, and the public will have adequate time. We would have several hearings, not maybe just three hearings, but will have several hearings so that we can meet our deadline and hopefully have a bipartisan plan.

House Speaker Robert Cupp [00:21:26] We did have a conversation, and that is certainly my goal, and I believe that I want to speak for other members of the commission, but I would think that's a goal that all members have. Chair recognizes Senator Huffman.

Speaker 4 [00:21:40] Thank you, Co-Chair Cupp. And I guess, my understanding, there's sort of a, a presentation which anyone can present. And the Senate, senate Democratic caucus showed that they were the quickest to execute on this. Unfortunately, however, I just learned about this effort a few minutes ago, and there's already been some analysis. Apparently there are some constitutional violations in this map. And my staff will get with Senator Sykes and talk about that. And Section 5 of the Constitution has to do with incumbent senators and who have a three, in this case, three and a half years remaining on their term and the protection that those senators have. And those would be, frankly, Senator Sykes and myself and all senators who are in an even-numbered year. And those apparently were not taken into account. And I'm not prepared to discuss that today

because I'd rather have our version of, of the Senate Democrats expert here today, to talk about that. I guess I'm a little, I'm not sure if the House Democrats are not going to present a map. If senator.. If Leader Sykes is not involved in that, or maybe that's a separate effort. But it was it was my expectation that ultimately there would be not only a Senate Democrat map and a Senate... Or excuse me, House Democrat map, or perhaps combined. But, you know, we could have four separate caucus legislative maps and then multiple maps presented by the public through whoever that would be. And that... And I think the purpose of the introduction language is, if the commission is... If the commission is going to adopt a map, there needs to be a hearing on that map rather than, in a separate time when it's introduced, unlike past procedure, because in the past, the former apportionment board would have a hearing and pass at all in the same hearing. And what we've done with the rules today, if folks don't realize, is the Constitution requires an introduction and one hearing. What we've done today is a... In addition to the introduction, three -- two additional hearings in different parts of the state, not required by the Constitution, but collectively, all seven members of this commission agreed to have two additional hearings. And the point here is that we're getting away from the way this was done in the past. It won't simply be meeting, vote, and it's over with. There will obviously be considerable hearings on this. And those hearings may change what the commission wants to do in one way or another. So I appreciate the effort by the Senate Democrats. And I'm... You know, I think this is the kind of discussion that Senator Sykes and I anticipated when we introduced this in 2014. And then with Senator Faber, I should add, as the president of the Senate at the time. And then that Senator Sykes, then-Representative Sykes and I, campaigned on in 2015. So I would expect, in addition to this map, there will be other maps, whether there's a House Democratic map separately or perhaps not. But, you know, we look forward to those other presentations and then ultimately for the one introduction that the Constitution calls for.

House Speaker Robert Cupp [00:25:24] Chair recognizes Auditor Faber.

Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:25:25] Thank you, I just I want to make sure I'm clear and I thought I was until the discussion just a second ago. Senator Sykes and the House... The Senate Democrats did not intend for us to vote on this map today because we haven't had the public hearings and we don't have the time to have the three public hearings prior to the the first date. It was just a starting point. The way I understood it was just a starting point for us to all take a look at and start seeing some concepts as we start working down this process. Was that the intent or were was this expected to be something that we could get done by by September 1st?

Sen. Vernon Sykes [00:26:04] Mr. Auditor? That is the intent.

Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:26:07] Thank you. Not to have it done by September 1st, just to start the discussion at a benchmark to start from.

Sen. Vernon Sykes [00:26:13] We are not trying to put any impediments in trying to meet the deadline of September 1st. The constitutional provision that the voters voted for. We still have that obligation. So we're not trying to skirt that. We're just trying to start the process of reviewing maps.

House Speaker Robert Cupp [00:26:35] Chair recognizes Representative Leader Sykes.

House Minority Leader Emilia Sykes [00:26:38] Thank you so much, Mr. Chair, and I agree this is a great discussion. I'm glad that we are having it. Again, I... the responsibility

of this commission is to put forth a map and it is laid out in very plain language in Article 11, Section 3. It is in the second paragraph, "the commission shall release to the public a proposed General Assembly plan for the boundaries for each of the 99 House of Representative districts and the 33 Senate districts. The commission shall draft the proposed plan in the manner prescribed in this article." I think it is very clear that it is the responsibility of the commission. It does not say that is the responsibility of the Senate Dems or the House Dems or the Senate Republicans or the House Republicans or the Secretary of State or the Governor or the Auditor of State. It is the commission. And so, again, I would like to ask the question, when will the commission release to the public a proposed General Assembly plan for the boundaries for each of the 99 House of Representative districts and the 33 Senate districts?

Senate President Huffman [00:27:49] Mr. Chair, and I know that question is addressed to the two chairs. But I mean, it's very possible that... I think Leader Sykes is... That's accurate reading directly from the Constitution. I think what the Constitution says is, the commission needs to introduce a map collectively and the public needs to have at least one hearing on the map. We've added two today in the rules, for additional activity. And what that means is, the commission, at least by a four-to-three vote, must agree that they're going to introduce a map. And we may never get to that point. Or we may never get to that point by September 15th. And there's a lot of reasons for that. But it may simply be that only two... One or two or three people agree with a particular map for introduction. Now, I think probably, eventually we'll get to something, especially if we have the kind of dialog that the Senate Democrats talked about today in their presentation that Chairman Sykes talked about. So, I'm optimistic that we can have a map that the commission will introduce in time to do what we asked today in the rules, which is three, and that that the constitutional requirements will allow us to have a ten-year map. But so far, I don't think anyone has presented a constitutional map. You know, we are... We, the Senate Republicans, are working hard to try to do that. And it's extraordinarily difficult. As we, as I said, half of the senators in the General Assembly are protected over the next three and a half years, and that needs to be taken into account. That's not part of what changed in 2014 by the 15 that's been in the Constitution since 1967 and has been a bugaboo for mapmakers ever since. So I'm, I'm convinced that there will be something that at least a majority of the commission will allow to be considered. I encourage all four caucuses to do that work and make a presentation for consideration. And any of the statewide office holders, also, if they have, if not a full map, the suggestions on how those things should be.

House Speaker Robert Cupp [00:30:25] Chair recognizes Representative Leader Sykes.

House Minority Leader Emilia Sykes [00:30:28] Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think that President Huffman and I are explaining very clearly how lawyers manage to keep themselves employed by arguing two sides of an argument. (laughter) And I would say for the record, that I don't believe that it says we should only have one hearing, that we should maintain the three hearings, that no matter the point in which the commission maps, the maps that shall be produced by the commission, are being put forth. But again, I would like to ask the question, at what point will the commission offer these maps? And let me re-up a previous question. The maps that the co-chair previously, previously discussed as being worked on, looking at data. At what point will the remaining members of the commission have an opportunity to weigh in on those on those details as they're being considered?

House Speaker Robert Cupp [00:31:22] Obviously, when a map is presented, members of the commission have an opportunity to weigh in. Chair recognizes Secretary of State LaRose

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:31:32] Mr. Co-Chair, I appreciate the opportunity to speak, and I think that I want to make sure that we're not talking past each other in some ways. Because I think here as friends and colleagues, we want the same things. We're working through a process for the first time. What comes to mind to me is three words: situation, mission and execution. Now, this comes from... I went on a run a couple of days ago. That's when I do my best thinking. These are three words that come from my military background. Situation, mission and execution. So I was trying to think through this process in that sort of way that I was taught to think through mission planning. I want to talk through that just briefly. Situation. We did something remarkable as a state in 2015 and 2018, we created a new and hopefully balanced process for creating district lines for both congressional and state legislative districts. Many of us voted on that. Many of us worked very hard on that. I could tell you, I did personally. And many of you remember that I came into the legislature in 2011 coming from Summit County, really dead set on, we needed to change this process. Part of that situation is that it requires bipartisan compromise to reach that 10-year map. Compromise leading to consensus to reach that 10-year map. We know that 70 and then 75 percent of Ohioans voted to approve that process, essentially charging us with this important mission. Now, we were thrown a curveball. We were given an inexplicable delay by the U.S. Census Bureau that has put us in a very untenable situation. We know how complex this is. And that's why I, I really my hats off to the to the Senate Democrats for getting this process done so quickly, because it is hard. I think that sometimes it's oversimplified in the public eye of why don't you guys just sit down with your state roadmap and your pencils and get this done? Well, the work of drawing shape files in a GIS system that complies with all of these requirements is enormously complex. And if we had gotten the Census Bureau in the spring when we should have, yeah, we would have been well into this process of compromise and finding the consensus between the two sides to get that done. We saw a map today. And again, I thank the Senate Democrats for doing that. That's a starting point, as they said in their in their testimony, that's a starting point for negotiation. Candidly, it sounds like there are work being done by Republican legislative caucuses to present a map, they're just not done yet. And as soon as they are done, then that'll be presented for our consideration. And that's that's where the mission part comes in. I want to be clear. I want a ten-year map. I hope, I sincerely hope that's the desire of all my colleagues. And I, I've heard some speculation about, you know, well, one side or the other is just resigned to a four-year map. I certainly hope that's not the case. Because the mission that the people of Ohio gave for us was to was to create a ten-year map. We know that part of this situation is that three Republicans could vote no on the map, and it's still passed. But if any one Democrat votes no on the map, it's not a it's not a ten-year map. And so that means, you know, Leader Sykes and Senator Sykes, that that creates a unique scenario there where we need to work together if we're going to reach a ten-year map. So here's the execution part. The mission accomplishment part. We've seen one map today, hopefully soon. And I hope we don't, be unduly hasty about this, but soon we can see some other maps. And at that point, when both sides or parties or people, groups, whoever have put out their proposals, then we can start the compromise. And compromise is not a failure. It's how statesmen and women solve problems, and it's what leads to consensus. So that's when the compromising and the consensus building can begin. And we will get to that hopefully very soon so that then we can adopt a commission map and then have our three public hearings and then finalize that and create a ten-year map that complies with both the spirit and the letter of the Ohio Constitution. That's my sincere hope. And I got to tell you, all of

you, that I am willing and eager to work with any one of you to make that mission successful.

House Speaker Robert Cupp [00:35:28] Chair recognizes Representative Leader Sykes.

House Minority Leader Emilia Sykes [00:35:31] Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate all of the commentary and the lectures and the responsibility, I think we all understand our task at hand. But the reality is there is no map put forth by the commission, which is required by the Constitution, that the minority party members can vote yes or no on. And my question still remains, at what point and what is the process for us to do that? I think that deserves an answer and a clear answer. And if we can't get an answer today, then I propose we set forth another meeting of this commission to, to move forward and figure this out.

House Speaker Robert Cupp [00:36:12] Well, I would disagree a bit that you haven't received an answer, I think you've got an answer three or four times already and there will be another meeting of the commission, you know, fairly shortly to... to commence all that... process. And I would be working with the co-chair to set those set those future meeting dates. (pause).

House Speaker Robert Cupp [00:37:26] All right, is there... is there further business come before the commission today? Hearing none, is there...?

Sen. Vernon Sykes [00:37:35] I will be working with the co-chair to come up with the schedule as soon as possible.

House Speaker Robert Cupp [00:37:42] We will be working very diligently to have that schedule set and working with members of the commission to make sure they are available. All right, with that, is there any further business to come before the commission today? Hearingn one, without objection. The meeting will be adjourned. Hearing no objection, the meeting is adjourned.

Ohio Redistricting Commission - 9-9-2021 - part 1

<https://www.ohiochannel.org/video/ohio-redistricting-commission-9-9-2021-1000am>

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:00:00] Ohio Redistricting Commission. Will the staff please call the roll.

Staff [00:00:06] Co-chair Speaker Cupp.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:00:08] Present.

Staff [00:00:10] Co-chair Senator Sykes.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:00:12] Present.

Staff [00:00:16] Governor DeWine.

Governor Mike DeWine [00:00:16] Here.

Staff [00:00:16] Auditor Faber.

Auditor Keith Faber [00:00:16] Present.

Staff [00:00:17] President Huffman.

Senate President Matt Huffman [00:00:18] Here.

Staff [00:00:19] Secretary LaRose.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:00:20] Here.

Staff [00:00:22] Leader Sykes.

State Representative Emilia Sykes [00:00:22] Here.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:00:25] With the quorum present, we will meet as a full commission. At this time, the commission will hear public testimony from sponsors of submitted plans and from members of the public on those plans, in accordance with the commission rules in the - in Article 11 of the Ohio Constitution. Under the rules, the sponsor of a complete statewide General Assembly plan may present their plan to the redistricting commission for up to 10 minutes. We will not be taking testimony on incomplete plans or congressional maps. A member of the public may testify on a redistricting plan before the commission four up to five minutes. Should the commission itself vote to introduce a plan at the hearing or a subsequent hearing commission, the commission will hold three additional public hearings around the state on separate days on the introduced plan. We will now begin with our first witness here today. Please state and spell your name for the record.

Senate President Matt Huffman [00:01:32] I'm sorry, go ahead.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:01:32] And also, please indicate that if you're testifying as a sponsor of a plan or a member of the public on which you're talking about a particular plan.

Senate President Matt Huffman [00:01:42] Mr. Co-chair.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:01:43] Yes.

Senate President Matt Huffman [00:01:44] I would, pursuant to rule 10 of the commission, I would like to present to the commission a proposed General Assembly district plan for all 99 seats of the Ohio House of Representatives and all 33 seats of the Ohio Senate. And for the commission's benefit, I've asked Messrs. Ray DiRossi and Blake Springhetti to present the substance of the proposed plan. And they're here today to do that. And for the record, Mr. DiRossi serves as a caucus staff to the Senate Majority Caucus. Mr. Springhetti serves as the caucus staff for the House Majority Caucus.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:02:22] Thank you. At this time, we are ready for the presentation.

Ray DiRossi [00:03:23] Good morning.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:03:24] Good morning,

Ray DiRossi [00:03:26] I am Ray DiRossi. And as was mentioned, I'm the caucus staff for the Senate Majority Caucus and my colleague Blake Springhetti, caucus staff for the Ohio House Majority Caucus. Co-chairs and distinguished members of the redistricting commission, it's great to be with you today. Spelling of names: Ray R-A-Y, DiRossi D-I capital R-O-S-S-I, Blake Springhetti B-L-A-K-E, Springhetti S-P-R-I-N-G-H-E-T-T-I.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:03:56] Thank you.

Ray DiRossi [00:04:01] Is that, on the volume, is that-

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:04:03] Yes, that's good, we can hear you now.

Ray DiRossi [00:04:04] Better.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:04:04] Thanks a lot.

Ray DiRossi [00:04:05] Thank you. We are pleased to present for your consideration a proposed General Assembly districting plan for 2022 through 2032. This is the culmination of a drastically expedited process, significantly delayed by the lack of timely census data. The receipt of the census data, 134 days after the federally required April 1st delivery date made this process more challenging than usual. Having previously been through this process, I want to personally thank all of the citizens of the state who took time to testify at the regional hearings and all those who took time to submit thoughtful plans. Blake and I know the time and commitment it takes to produce a complete plan, and I know my counterpart in the Senate Democratic caucus, Randall Routt, would also acknowledge this. Ohio's population from the 2010 census was 11,536,504. Ohio's population under the 2020 census is 11,799,448. This represents an increase of 262,000/263,000, or about 2.28%. And while that percentage growth over 10 years might appear small, the growth or loss of population in our state's 88 counties is varied and certainly not evenly distributed across the state. Of the state's 33 current Senate districts, 13 are outside the allowable five percent population deviation. In the House, 46 districts are currently either overpopulated or underpopulated. This simple fact, of either being underpopulated or

overpopulated, will require modification simply because we do no longer comply with the population requirements of the Ohio Constitution. Population shifts are also demonstrated by the change in county populations, for example, under the 2010 census, the population of Cuyahoga County dropped by roughly 114,000 persons. Under the 2020 census, Cuyahoga's population only dropped by about 15,000 persons. Franklin County has continued its growth trend, as has Delaware and Warren counties. Also noteworthy is that Hamilton County grew by over 28,000 people this decade. Generally, the Appalachian region experienced population loss over the decade. An interesting fact for your consideration, if you start in the northeast corner of the state in Ashtabula County and listed each county along the eastern and southern border of the state that lost population, you would end up counting 15 counties in a row that lost population. And not until you reach Clermont County, one county shy of Hamilton County in Cincinnati, would you find a county with a positive growth rate, over the last 10 years. Blake and I want to share some observations with you about the geography of the state, while most of Ohio's 88 counties are relatively square or rectangular, the physical boundaries of Ohio cities, villages and townships are far from pristine. While some townships, mainly in the rural counties of the state, are still square-like, the boundaries of our cities and incorporated areas can take on very odd shapes. And we do have some examples to show and they are included in the packet that was provided to you. And so we'll have those on the screen and also in the packet. So the point I want to make here, and we'll go through these pretty quickly, is that the the geography and the irregular geography of political subdivisions or jurisdictions in the state can lead to districts that take on irregular shapes, especially if one of these jurisdictions with an odd shape is on the outer boundary of a district that is proposed. So the first example on this on the screen is in Stark County - we have three political subdivisions, three cities, Canton, Massillon and Canal Fulton. And you can see that they are far from regular shaped or square shaped like some of our townships and other cities that take on more general shapes. They also have, you could call them tails, but they're sewer, sewer systems and canal systems that are part of the political subdivisions themselves. And so when we're drawing districts, those boundaries have to be maintained or else you are splitting the jurisdiction, something that we are striving not to do. The next example is in Licking County. So what we have on the screen here is the collection of three cities put together. This is Granville, Heath and Newark. And we've just shown you the map of just the geography of the state. But now we're going to add the county subdivisions lines, the township lines and also the city lines. And you can see that that shape is actually the perfect outline of those three cities. So we do have one more example, but again, the point we're making here is that the geography of the state is challenging and the geography of the state takes on irregular shapes itself. Here in Franklin County, where the geography is the most challenging for anybody who has looked at a map. What we are showing in green are the political subdivisions that are not Columbus, Ohio. And there are a number of them, and you can see that they completely circumscribe or encircle, Columbus does, those jurisdictions. And then we have the city of Columbus, which is shown in pink, and you can see it protrudes north into Delaware County. It also protrudes east. And I don't believe it has penetrated the southern border yet, but due to annexation policies, that may not be far off. But you can see this geography presents us with significant challenges in drawing districts and trying to maintain the boundaries of political subdivisions and having them take on irregular shapes. This is a map of the townships of Franklin County, so now we've removed all of the cities and municipal corporations in Franklin County and now you're looking at the remnants of townships. And as you can see, a number of township, Franklin Township, Mifflin Township, Prairie Township, other townships are, somewhat appear shattered into a number of pieces. I think by last count, Franklin Township was in over twenty five pieces, noncontiguous distinct pieces. So this also presents significant challenges when drawing a

district down to the level of detail that the Constitution requires. Thank you, Blake, very helpful. County splits. So redistricting this year is occurring for the first time under the historic amendments to our state constitution approved by the voters in 2015. These amendments provide very prescriptive, detailed but neutral rules for drawing state House and Senate districts. The plan that we are presenting today fully complies with the requirements imposed by the state constitution. We want to highlight a few of those requirements for you. The Constitution requires us to start with the largest counties in the state and proceed to the smallest counties of the state, with population greater than 1.05% of one House district ratio of representation. The constitutional limits determine how counties can be divided depending on their population. I want to take a few minutes and discuss northeast Ohio and I will apologize in advance for the brief recap of history, but I feel this history is important for your consideration of plans before you. Northeast Ohio, this this area of the state has been very challenging to the apportionment boards of decades past. And the specific issue in northeast Ohio is the significantly high concentration of counties that contain enough population to be more than one house district. In fact, 10 counties that stretch from Lorain all the way to the Mahoning Valley create two rings of counties that have additional House district and Senate district requirements. These 10 counties surround Geauga and Ashtabula counties and pin them between Pennsylvania and Lake Erie. This collection of counties is also home to almost 33 percent of Ohio's residents. So we are not dealing with small populations in that quadrant of the state. This mathematical challenge has confronted apportionment boards of previous decades. The 1991 Apportionment Board had no geographic or mathematical solution that was possible to create House districts and Senate districts. There was no mathematical or geographic way to fully comply with the requirements of the Constitution. In 2001, this problem recurred, but a solution was found and implemented by splitting at least one township in northeast Ohio, I believe it was in Trumbull County. In the 2011 map, the current maps that we are operating under, this problem arose again. And like 1991, no constitutional solution was ever found or presented to the Apportionment Board. Which brings us to 2021, which brings us to today. With some additional constitutional requirements under the new constitutional provisions that were imposed on us for creation of House and Senate district, this makes northeast Ohio very difficult, but not impossible. There is a solution this decade. The solution that we are proposing following all of the rules of the Constitution is the pairing of Cuyahoga and Summit counties. Now, those words were pretty easy for me to say, but implementing those proved to be very difficult because combining the populations of Cuyahoga and Summit county, we ended up having to create 15 House districts. And all of those 15 House districts had to be roughly four percent heavy on their population targets. And anybody who is played around or worked on a map knows that coming up with a few districts that naturally, without splitting subdivisions, are that heavy, is difficult. Having 15 of them all together inside two counties is extremely difficult. In addition, the Constitution contains specific language addressing the splitting of counties. The current map, the 2011 House map, splits 39 counties, while the Senate map splits 19. So of those 39 and 19 splits, many are actually required because of various Ohio constitutional provisions, because various Ohio counties contain too much population to avoid being split. The same is true for counties being whole Senate districts. In fact, of the thirty nine current House splits, twenty one are required by the Constitution. On the Senate side, of the 19 split counties that I mentioned, eight are required by the Constitution. It's an important point for the commission to understand that half of the county divisions in the current maps are required by the Constitution. A similar dynamic occurs in the current decade with similar amounts of required splits. We are happy to report that the plan being proposed today significantly reduces the number of split counties. In the proposed House map, we have reduced the number of divided counties from 35- 39 to 35. Well, spoiler alert, I let the number out too early. It is very important to note that 22 of these 35 splits are

required by Article 11, Section 3(C)(1). The county splits not required by that section only number 13 compared to 18 such divisions in the previous House map. Thus, our proposed House map should contain a total of 5 less divided counties than the number divided in the current map. However, because Wood County grew and is now too large to be a single district as it was in the last decade, the net reduction is only 4. Similar reductions can be found in the proposed Senate map that we are displaying. The 2011 Senate map split 19 counties. The Senate map proposed today only splits 13, or 6 less than the 2011 Senate map, a significant reduction. Together the proposal before you reduces this county splits into two plans, the House and the Senate map, respectively, by 10. Splitting cities, villages and townships. The reforms adopted in the Constitution also address what constitutes a split of a city, a village or a township. The Constitution now clarifies that cities, villages or townships are considered split only when a contiguous portion is divided into separate districts. Additionally, a city is not considered split where portions of the city are located in different counties and are placed in different districts. I live in Dublin, Ohio, and Dublin, Ohio is in three different counties. And so that's very applicable there. And I think there are numerous examples of that all over the state of Ohio. Based upon these constitutional clarifications and looking at the 2011 house map, backwards or retrospectively, there are 14 cities or townships in this state that were split. Now, six of them should be obvious to all of us, Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Toledo, Dayton and Akron. These six cities were, and continue to be, too large to be contained in a single district and therefore must be split according to the Constitution. In addition to those six cities, a total of eight other cities or townships were divided in the 2011 house map. Those included Cuyahoga Falls in Summit County, Massillon and Plain Township in Stark County, North Ridgeville in Lorain, Austintown Township in the Mahoning Valley in Mahoning County, Middletown in Butler, and Mentor in Lake County, and also Brunswick in Medina. We are happy to report that none of these eight governmental units are split in the map that we are proposing. They are all whole and all of the splits have been washed away. In fact, aside from the largest six counties that I mentioned previously, our plan only splits one city and one township. And let me tell you why that is. As I previously mentioned, to implement our Northeast Ohio solution, the remainder of Cuyahoga County, the remainder of Summit County must be paired with the remainder of Geauga County. And if anybody here is familiar with that geography that I just described, all three of those counties meet at one noncontiguous or point contiguous point. The city of Solon was selected to be split in House District 23 to accomplish this constitutional footprint to make the districts contiguous. The only other split jurisdiction in the entire proposal, again noting the big six cities that I previously mentioned, is Jackson Township in Stark County. And that is done to ensure that the three House districts are contiguous and meet the population requirements of the Constitution. And again, if you recall, we showed a graphic of some of the challenging geography in Stark County. We had endeavored not to split any jurisdiction, but we felt that it was necessary to conform to the Constitution and follow those guidelines. I want to thank the co-chairs for your time. I know I probably went a little long, but Blake and I are happy to answer any questions that you might have. And thank you for your consideration.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:19:42] Thank you, Mr. DiRossi. I'd like to just notify the commission that we did allow him to go over the commission plan and so we did not interrupt the presentation. One question that I have is you mentioned the historic amendments of the Constitution that put in different new requirements. I'd like to know, and you didn't mention this in your presentation, how you satisfy the new requirement in Section 6(B) of the Constitution that deals with the statewide proportion of districts whose voters based on statewide and federal partisan general election results during the last 10 years favor each political party shall correspond closely to the statewide preferences of the voters of Ohio. That is really significant, of course a new provision that you might know

about, as well. It relates to the issue of fairness because within the guidelines you can satisfy compactness, you can satisfy contiguous districts or not splitting districts, and still gerrymander a district to favor a political party. [Applause] So the issue here is whether or not you comply with all of the provisions of the Constitution. This one is special. It has in a special section, compactness is not identified or how it is not enumerated, how you calculate that. But this concept of representational fairness is. And so I'm just wondering how you address that issue.

Ray DiRossi [00:21:35] Co-Chairs and distinguished members. I mean, our our maps, our proposal that we have before you, fully complies with the constitutional requirements. We are conducting an analysis of the election data contemplated by the Constitution. That analysis is ongoing, is not complete as of today, and it is ongoing.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:21:57] Incomplete analysis. OK, fair, fair. Any other questions? Yes, Leader Sykes.

State Representative Emilia Sykes [00:22:05] Thank you. To the co-chairs and to Mr. Springhetti and Mr. DiRossi, thank you for the work that you put together, so you could present to us to today. Excuse me. My question is specific to how this current map complies with any provisions of the Voting Rights Act and what provisions of the Voting Rights Act did you consider in constructing this map that you presented or these maps that you presented today?

Ray DiRossi [00:22:33] Co-chairs, Leader Sykes, thank you for the question. We did not use demographic data or racial data in the production of our maps.

State Representative Emilia Sykes [00:22:44] Follow up?

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:22:44] Yes, please.

State Representative Emilia Sykes [00:22:45] Thank you for answering the question. So are there any provisions of the Voting Rights Act in which you considered while you drew the or why you drew these maps before us today?

Ray DiRossi [00:22:59] I guess I would, co-chairs, I guess I would stand on my previous statement, we did not use racial data or demographic data for the maps, but we feel that the map complies with all the provisions of the Ohio Constitution.

State Representative Emilia Sykes [00:23:14] Follow up?

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:23:14] Yeah.

State Representative Emilia Sykes [00:23:14] Thank you, I appreciate your answer and I certainly appreciate the brevity of it. Can you explain why you didn't consider any parts of the Voting Rights Act in your consideration of these maps before us today?

Ray DiRossi [00:23:28] Well, I said we didn't consider racial data or demographic data in our maps, but we were directed not to use that data by the legislative leaders and so we did not use it.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:23:42] Yeah, go ahead.

State Representative Emilia Sykes [00:23:44] So I would count myself as a legislative leader, and I don't think that I shared that information with you and I - this is not an ambush. This is simply a question. The Voting Rights Act is certainly a part of our election and electoral fabric. And so really just trying to get a better idea of how we are, or not, in compliance with that with these maps. So hopefully we can have some deeper conversations about that. But again, thank you for your responses.

Ray DiRossi [00:24:13] Thank you.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:24:14] And just another note, follow up to the Leader Sykes, we just can't leave it to chance. It's prescribed in the Constitution that we comply with it. So you have to have some evidence, has to be intentional or deliberate, some evidence that you comply with the requirements of the Constitution. And by not having that, we just consider your presentation somewhat incomplete. But you said, you indicated is ongoing. Any other questions? Thank you for your presentation.

Ray DiRossi [00:24:50] Thank you.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:24:59] The next witness we have is Anastasia Birosh. The next witness will be Gerald Barna. Gerald Barna. The next person to testify would be Susan Jolli. Susan Jolli. Melissa Sull.

Sull [00:26:29] Good morning, Commission. My name is Melissa Sull from Gahanna, Ohio. I vote in Ohio.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:26:35] Can you spell your name, please?

Sull [00:26:37] Yep. M-E-L-I-S-S-A Sull S-U-L-L.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:26:42] Thank you.

Sull [00:26:45] So I vote in House District 19, Ohio Senate District 3 and Congressional District 12. I testified to this commission on August 27th in Mansfield about our Gahanna Jefferson School District, which is broken into three Ohio House districts. The public has just now only seen a map from this commission this morning. I suffer less than equal representation because of gerrymandering. Today's opportunity for public comment on the proposed map is limited, late and scheduled on short notice in the middle of a weekday. It's troubling that our elected officials are making it increasingly difficult for citizens to participate in the political process. It appears that this commission's majority members have decided to rush through a four year solution rather than work in good faith with the minority party. I suppose the cheating out in the open is a slight improvement over the secretive cheating used in 2011 to create our current district maps. Ohioans have voted repeatedly and in great majorities to have both a voice and fairness in the redistricting process. It appears we will get very little of either. Citizen action through petition is clearly the only way to gain the attention of Ohio's majority party. They have proven deaf to any call for fair, ethical and constitutional behavior on this topic from Ohio voters and the courts. I will be both surprised and appreciative if this commission grants me the equal of representation to which I'm entitled by law. Thank you for your time. [Applause]

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:28:34] Are there any questions of Ms. Sull? We'd like to ask the audience to please not clap or we in a different form, it's being- This is being live

streamed and for courtesy of everyone, if you would refrain from that, please. Thank you. The next person to testify will be Tommie Radd.

Radd [00:29:23] Good morning, members of the commission. My name is Dr. Tommie Radd. I vote in Ohio Senate District 3, House District 19 and Congressional District 3. I testified on August the 27th in Mansfield and submitted that testimony. The reason I'm here is to voice my appreciation to the minority party for submitting a map before September 1. My disappointment is that the majority party commission members did not submit a map for review, at a minimum. The commission was responsible to work jointly to meet the September 1 timeline. That didn't happen despite hours of testimony and Ohio hearings requesting your diligence to create fair maps, followed the constitutionally required timeline and work fairly as a team. The commission had access to the basic data and could have done the basic groundwork and then plug in the census data to modify the maps per the constitutional requirements. The governor chose to do nothing until the last minute and now the majority members on the commission are just as unresponsive. When I contacted your offices to voice my concern that no hearings were set or a joint map submitted, I was informed to contact someone else on the commission. That is not acceptable. Each commission member is constitutionally responsible for the Ohio redistricting process, maps and end results. Everyone on this commission is accountable for the way they conduct themselves and work transparently with the process. That hasn't happened. The detrimental impact that partisan gerrymandering of our Ohio House, Senate and congressional districts has on our community and state was well documented in the statewide hearings from August the 23rd through August the 27th, 2021. Ohioans voted in record numbers to have Ohio Constitutional Amendments added in 2015 and 2018 to address these inequities. Ohioans expect representative fairness in the new districts and the calculation of those districts to be done fairly and transparently. Gerrymandering is cheating. Drawing maps without transparency is deception. A group of people who need to resort to those tactics must not believe they can win the vote by their ideas and policies to benefit the majority of Ohioans. To gerrymander to create and maintain a supermajority in the House, Senate and congressional representation is wrong. That is the reason the citizens of Ohio stepped up to fix this problem and hold you accountable. The Ohioans voted for you to fix this unfairness and stand for all people now. This redistricting commission has a responsibility to draw fair maps per the letter and the spirit of our Ohio constitutional amendments as demanded by the voters. We expect you to follow the constitutional requirements, hold public hearings to review the maps prior to approval, and to integrate public input into the maps prior to implementation. As a lifelong educator, I taught my students that cheating was not allowed and they needed to follow the rules to the letter and the spirit of the assignment, to be team players when working with the group. So far, you haven't passed that basic requirement we expect of elementary through doctoral students. It's overdue that you do your jobs and know you will be graded on the process and maps you create. The voters stand ready to give you a grade. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I appreciate your time and your attention. Have a wonderful day. Thank you for your help.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:33:40] Dr. Radd, if I may ask a question.

Radd [00:33:43] Yes.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:33:44] Please speak of a fairness. How do- you know this is something that we're trying to get to, this is something we've been charged to do?

Radd [00:33:50] Yes.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:33:51] And we'd like to fulfill that commitment. How do you see fairness, what do you mean when you say fair?

Radd [00:33:57] When I see fair, I know that the vote in the last decade has a proportional fairness of what portion of the population voted for Republicans and for Democrats. And that those factors need to be sent into the maps that we project and that we approve. And I'm disappointed that we saw a map this morning, they were obviously ready with AV equipment and printouts, that were not submitted online for us to even give feedback, as did the minority maps. But we're expecting that the voting rights, that minority rights, that the percentages of Democrats and Republicans voting across the state be represented fairly. And that means we have a 45 to 55 percent voting record as it stands right now, in spite of the gerrymandering, which I believe it could be different if it hadn't been gerrymandered. And that's what the voters are expecting and that's what we're watching for and waiting for. I hope that addresses your question.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:35:11] Yes it does, thank you. Any other questions?
Secretary LaRose.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:35:16] Doctor, thank you for your testimony.

Radd [00:35:18] You bet.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:35:19] I'm sure that you're aware that the census data was 134 days late.

Radd [00:35:23] Yes, I was. And that wasn't anybody's fault.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:35:27] Well, I would argue that it was the Census Bureau's fault.

Radd [00:35:29] Well.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:35:30] Let me finish my question. The Census Bureau put us at a great disadvantage by being nearly five months late. And we're not the only state that's operating at that disadvantage. Our friends in that state up north just announced yesterday that their redistricting commission is going to be months delayed before they are able to draw their maps or get their maps drawn and passed by the public. The process can't really begin until those census data are received by the various map drawers. My question for you is this, though. I heard a lot of testimony over the week of public testimony that we got that people want us to take our time to collaborate, to work on this. I've heard a lot of outrage over the last few days about missing a September 1st deadline. My argument would be that if we take the time to collaborate and work together, the deadlines are less important than getting the work done right. Would you agree with that?

Radd [00:36:26] It depends, Secretary. My concern is that the basic criteria established in our constitutional amendments has been well established. We had a minority map submitted that we could all discuss and debate on August the 31st. The maps that we saw this morning, if people had been diligent, could have also been made available then. So then the census data could be then established and plugged in to that. But to say we're

going to postpone and not have some kind of conversation within the timeline, we don't see is really acceptable.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:37:13] OK, thank you, ma'am.

Radd [00:37:15] You're welcome. Thank you for the question.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:37:17] Are there any additional questions? Dr. Radd, thank you very much.

Radd [00:37:23] Thank you so much for your time and your questions and again for your hard work. We're having big expectations for something that will be acceptable to our Constitution. Thank you.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:37:38] The next witness is Debra Sanders, Debra Saunders.

Saunders [00:37:48] Good morning, I'm Debra Saunders. Debra D-E-B-R-A, Saunders S-A-U-N-D-E-R-S, and I am here speaking as a member of the public. I live here in the Columbus area in Dublin, and my Ohio legislative districts are 16 and 21. I provided personal testimony at the Dayton hearing on August 24th. And I also attended the commission meeting here in the state House last Tuesday on August 31st, I will have to say I came away from that meeting pretty disappointed, and it instilled in me a sense of uncertainty if you, the members of the commission, are listening to us. The 70 percent plus Ohioans who have stated clearly to you, our elected officials, that we want and expect fair redistricting by ending gerrymandering while being informed as to how this will be achieved by this commission. First, I commend the Ohio Senate Democratic Caucus in presenting mapping at last week's meeting to demonstrate that it could be accomplished, to be used at least as a working draft for discussion and debate. And it showed a real effort and willingness to present a substantive plan for discussion and debate, for further mapping submissions. And I think it provided a catalyst for next steps and it appears it did compel further mapping submissions, as we saw here today. I feel the September 2nd updated map additions by the Senate Democrats demonstrates a much greater representation of my district within the rogue carve out that position on the street that I live on. It's only a roadway, a Route 33 Riverside Drive. It has no, any, it has no residents on it. It is in a different district than I am in. And it obviously was a conduit to grab residences that are north of where I live. I see the maps. I was sitting in front of the the display this morning and I see the maps that were submitted today by the GOP retains that same carve out. And one might say, with a convenient argument, that it keeps the subdivisions together as required by the Constitution. But, you know, we, the voters of Ohio now expect to see the officially presented maps coming from this commission, not just the Democrat or Republican created maps. Redistricting maps that we, the public can review and then provide comment. Additionally, we want this entire process to be transparent. The short notice for hearings and commission meetings do not provide a confidence that transparency is happening. We expect the commission to provide us how you will get to fair redistricting in a constructive nonpartizan manner with a complete schedule for the introduction of official maps and dates for public hearings, for comment on those maps. Very soon, as the September 15th deadline is looming. Thank you.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:41:15] Thank you. Any questions of the witness? Thank you very much. The next witness is Paul Helby. Paul Helby. Anastasia Birosh.

Birosh [00:41:57] Sorry, I want to thank you, first of all, for hearing my testimony. I drove down from well, yeah, down, this is down, from Brunswick and I was just kind of like flying down the highway.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:42:18] Can you pronounce your name and spell it, please, for the record?

Birosh [00:42:20] Oh, yeah, I'm so sorry.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:42:21] Oh no.

Birosh [00:42:23] I'm Anastasia Birosh. And the last name is pronounced like the alcoholic drink beer and OshKosh B'gosh jeans. So it's not spelled that way, but it's pronounced that way. So to the Ohio Redistricting Commission members and co-chairs Senator Vernon Sykes and Ohio House Speaker Robert Cupp, I'm pleased to see members in attendance today. I'm thrilled beyond belief. Thank you for allowing me to submit written and verbal testimony to the Ohio Redistricting Commission. My name is Anastasia Birosh and I currently vote in Ohio House District 70, Ohio Senate District 22 and Ohio Congressional District 16. Brunswick is currently divided between two Ohio House districts, 69 and 70, and two congressional districts, 7 and 16. It's time that Brunswick being one Ohio House district and one congressional district. I testified before this commission on August twenty seventh in Akron and I'm back because I care greatly about having competitive, competitive, I can spell it out if it would assist you all, competitive Ohio Senate and Ohio House districts. I acknowledge that my white privilege affords me the opportunity to travel to and attend these hearings occurring in the late morning and announce at the last possible minute. I'm grateful that on its website, the Ohio Redistricting Commission has a public input tab that when clicked displays a list of all maps submitted to the commission. I'd like to draw the commission's attention to Ohio Senate and Ohio House maps proposed by Jeff Wise and I will hand these out to you. I printed up seven of them last night. Some appreciative of the. OK, so I like to draw your attention to those maps proposed by Jeff Wise. He's a Ph.D. engineer by day and a concerned citizen by night. He's come up with proposed maps that even I, an ordinary citizen with no technical expertise in analytical computations or anything else of that nature, can understand, very helpful to me. He was even responsive, though hurried, when I called him late last night with a few questions, just after this meeting was announced. It was easier to speak with him than it was to speak with my own representative. What he did with his proposal was no small feat, considering the gerrymandered districts drawn up behind closed doors in 2011. In his comments and explanation of the quantitative analysis methodology, he clearly explains how Senate incumbency complicates fixing these gerrymandered districts. He calls them creatively drawn. I'll call them what they are: gerrymandered. And due to this and other factors, tradeoffs and compromise will be necessary in drawing these final competitive maps. In the end, though, his concern, as mine, is more, is drawing more equitable and competitive maps than we were presented with in 2011. I appreciate your time. I thank you for hearing my testimony. If you have any questions, I believe he said he's going to be here at two o'clock. So if either of the technical nature, ask him. If there are of the ordinary citizen nature, go ahead. Do you have any questions?

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:47:22] Do you have any citizen questions?

Birosh [00:47:26] Nada?

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:47:27] Thank you very much.

Birosh [00:47:28] OK.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:47:32] Susan Cavanaugh. Bailey Kulp. Sierra Dobbs Brown.

Saunders [00:48:07] Hello, my name is Sierra Dobbs-Brown, that's spelled S-I-E-R-R-A my last name is D, as in dog, O-B, as in boy, B, as in boy, S hyphen Brown, like the color. Chair Cupp, Chair Sykes and members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission, as I mentioned, my name is Sarah Brown and I've lived in Columbus, Ohio, for nearly 26 years, my entire life. I am testifying today in support of the maps that were proposed by the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission. Currently, I live in Clintonville. I live near a Whit's Frozen Custard. I live near a Luckey's Market. I live near more antique shops than anyone needs. And I also live near the Wetstone Park of Roses. This is somewhere I go often, this is somewhere I can walk to, this is somewhere I see as a pillar of my community. Yet this is somewhere that is not in my district. I'm represented by Senator Andrew Brenner in a district that picks up a small chunk of my more progressive community and sprawls all the way up to Mansfield, Ohio, where there are folks with very different priorities and needs than in Clintonville. Aside from being someone who can't seem to leave this wonderful state, I'm also the Central Ohio Regional Field Manager at Planned Parenthood Advocates of Ohio. We have been in these halls countless times, year after year to speak to members of this legislative body, about the 30 attacks we have seen on reproductive freedom since 2011, only to see this body vote in opposition to the wants and needs of Ohioans time and time again. And I'm here again today on behalf of Planned Parenthood Advocates of Ohio and the hundreds of thousands of supporters that we represent. Ohioans overwhelmingly support access to abortion. But when our district lines were drawn to keep one party securely in power, Ohioans lost. We lost the fair and equitable representation from our elected officials that we are promised as the foundation of a successful democracy. And since 2011, Ohio has lost half of the abortion providers in our state. This loss is directly related to the onslaught of attacks abortion providers have been under at the whim of this legislature. All people, regardless of our race, gender, socioeconomic status or zip code, deserve to be able to make the best decisions for our health care. Yet when district maps were drawn that dilute our vote, anti-abortion extremism that is out of touch with what Ohioans want and need only went further. Young people, black folks, other communities of color and queer people are all disproportionately impacted by laws that chip away at our access to abortion. And when we look at the racial and partisan gerrymandering that happened in 2011, these are also the communities that were intentionally cracked apart or patched together to take away their power. I stand before this commission today to state clearly that Ohioans want and need access to abortion. But because Ohio politicians have been picking their voters for the last decade, these needs have not been reflected by this elected body. I hope that as you move forward in the process of redistricting, Ohioans will receive the fair representation we deserve, which is at least 44 Democratic seats in the House and 14 Democratic seats in the Senate. And in turn, we will have a legislature that is proudly fighting to ensure each person can access the health care they need, including and especially access to abortion and all reproductive health care. I thank you for your time and I welcome any questions you may have.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:52:13] Any questions? Thank you very much. Mark Erhardt.

Erhardt [00:52:31] Good morning, thank you for allowing me to speak today. My name is Mark Erhardt, that is spelled M-A-R-K, lastname Erhart E-R-H-A-R-D-T. I live in the

Columbia Tuscola neighborhood in Cincinnati. I drove up this morning. I am in the Ohio House 27th, the Ohio Senate 7th and the U.S. Congressional 2nd. I did provide written testimony to the Cincinnati hearing in August. I would want to thank first the Ohio Senate Democratic plan that was available for the public to review. It was very helpful for me to be able to see that and see many, I think, positive changes to the way the current districts are drawn. I would have to admit I was a little bit disappointed this morning in the presentation that I heard. It seemed to focus a lot on certain technical aspects of the changes, but other aspects of the changes, such as the proportional party representation we're not addressing and not yet been studied, and also seemed to miss a bit on the spirit of what the voters of this state have asked for. And so in that respect, I will have to obviously take a detailed look at those. From what I could see, it appears that some of the current issues in my own representation maybe have not been addressed. But again, I'll have to look at that in more detail. I do want to say one thing, and I do agree here with Secretary LaRose on this, I personally believe that, you know, missing a deadline by a day or two in order to allow for public review and input of the process, and particularly bipartisan work on this commission, would be greatly appreciated and wanted by the voters of this state. And if the deadline is missed by a day or two here and there, I think many of us would understand that because what we're really looking for here are the right outcomes and fair outcomes. And as I said, a better process maybe than we've had in the past. Thank you for your time. Any questions?

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:54:55] Any questions? Seeing none, thank you very much.

Erhardt [00:55:00] Alright, thank you.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:55:01] Next witness is Jen Miller.

Miller [00:55:13] Good morning, co-chairs, morning, commission members. It's my honor to be here. I'm the Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of Ohio. I'm sorry to have not gotten you testimony in advance. 24 hours is hard on the general public. It's also hard on folks like us who have full schedules. I'm not here really to talk in great technical details, but I do have a lot of questions. The first thing I just want to mention is that the League of Women Voters of Ohio members love our state. They come from all corners of the state. In fact, we have members in all 16 congressional districts. They love our Democratic Republic. That's why they spend hours and hours and hours registering voters, doing candidate forums, doing everything they can to ensure that our system works. That's why we got out our clipboards in 2015 and 2018, and that is why we worked so hard on those negotiations. And to get those passed at the ballot, I hope that you are seeing the support for ending partisan gerrymandering. I do ask for forgiveness about the applause. I know we don't do that usually in Statehouse hearings. But for those of you that weren't at all of them, I just want to say a few things. The Toledo hearing room had to be moved to a larger space and it was still packed. Cleveland's main and overflow rooms were packed. The Akron hearing went- they had to double or triple the number of seats that came in. And it went over a lot of time, causing the Mansfield hearing to start late. If you were in the Mansfield hearing, you might not have realized that not only was it standing room only, but there were people sitting on the floor. Indeed, nine of the 10 rooms were packed, maybe even more than any of us expected, and overwhelmingly asking for transparency and fairness and a plan moving forward. I hope, I want to bring that up because they're here and they're going to continue to be here. And so I think the more time you can give them, you know for attending hearings, the more information you can give them on the process, I think the less frustrated they'll be. I think that you'll see not only higher quantity, which

maybe some don't want, but a higher quantity of participation, but also quality of participation where they can actually be better prepared. Again, I'm not here to talk about my own technical definitions right now, but I do have questions. And the first is, will we be hearing from political scientists, mapping experts, legal experts? Can we allow virtual testimony just for those experts? You know, there's a lot of questions that need to be defined. And I think part of the frustration, Secretary, is that some of these should have been defined. This commission should have been convened before the data came out so that we could talk about some of these technical questions. But representational fairness, how are we defining that and counting that as Ohio, not just the commission, but all of us? The Voting Rights Act absolutely needs to be considered in this case, in these maps. And in the congressional, I understand we're not talking about congressional, but I will just say that we argued in federal court and won in front of a bipartisan panel that the VRA was wrongfully interpreted last time in the congressional map and caused more vote dilution in minority communities in northeast Ohio than needed for Democratic Party voters. So are we going to be talking about the Voting Rights Act and how that should be applied? Section 5 was brought up by a commissioner last time. That's not a rule that is about how to draw a map, it's about what happens when maps are drawn. Inevitably, there's going to be some incumbents that have pieces of their district in more than one district, their former district, into more than one future district. It's not about a constitutional requirement for drawing maps. It's about how you assign those incumbents once the maps are drawn and agreed upon. Equal population. I'm hearing once again, just like ten years ago, there some argument about how that should really be defined. When are we going to grapple with these issues as a state in a thoughtful, deliberative manner? Will we be bringing in experts to discuss the different pieces so that you as a commission could maybe have the same common understanding of these legal questions? That's one of my questions. The next is and maybe it's on and maybe it's already happened so far, but when will we get the shape files of the proposed Republican maps? When will we get the rest of the analysis? Absolutely, we should have the analysis on what they think in terms of the Voting Rights Act. Absolutely. We should have the analysis on, you know, basically the predictive analysis of how we think the seats will go and if that will be representation the way fair. Those are mostly my questions. And I would say I would prefer not to have a 2:00 p.m. hearing today so that we have time to review the Republican map with some more details. But if that's how you're going to move forward, I understand it. So with that, I'm happy to take questions. And I thank you for your time.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:00:51] Any questions? Secretary LaRose.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [01:00:56] Thank you Co-Chair. Thank you so much for your testimony, would you agree that the outcome is more important than the schedule? That taking the time to get it done right and continuing to strive toward a ten year map is more important than the deadlines? And I recognize the deadlines are important. But this is a judgment call between two different competing and both important things.

Miller [01:01:21] Thank you, Co-Chairs. Thank you, Secretary LaRose. I do. Here's the problem, though, is last week we were a day before a deadline and there wasn't even agreement among this commission. How many maps we're going to you know, how the commission would decide which map to present to the public. We didn't have any idea when these public hearings would be. Again, we hadn't decided what kinds of other issues the commission needed to discuss. So it is hard to just say, OK, we've missed deadlines and that's inevitable when, quite frankly, this commission should have been convened earlier. We should have been doing this work already. And if you were going to make the deadline as the commission, that at least the public understood what the process would be

and how we were really moving forward, those rules were thin. And I think there's still a lack of clarity, potentially even among all of you, but it's definitely among us in the public. And so it doesn't really pass the smell test a little bit. It would be one thing to say, yep, it's going to be late. But but if we started this in July or August, you know, early, well, I should say June or July at least. And we were trying to grapple with these things and we were trying to figure out how to move it forward. Or the day before, yep, we're going to miss it. But this is the process moving forward. It's hard, I think, from the outside to feel trust in this process because of the lack of clarity, because of the lack of preparation. And so I can't just, so I'm with you to an extent.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:03:09] Thank you. And also, you know, thank you for your questions, I'm sorry we're not in the position to answer. Let me assure you that the issues of virtual testimony of experts have been discussed between the co-chairs, and representational fairness, how you calculate that, that's been discussed. There has to be, this is a bipartisan process to a certain extent, and there has to be agreement. There has been no agreement on it thus far. Thank you for raising the issue. We'll continue to grapple with those.

Miller [01:03:41] Thank you, Co-Chair. Both Co-Chairs. I'll just say, but we should be grappling with these together. That's what should be happening here, we should be having hearings where we are grappling with these definitions together and we are, you know, no one has actually- Secretary, I'm sorry, Senator Sykes, you have asked for some input on representational fairness, but we should be having experts come in together to talk to all of us.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:04:13] Right. Yes?

Auditor Keith Faber [01:04:14] Senator Sykes, Co-Chair, to the witness, you've used the term representational fairness a number of times. I recall very distinctly when this constitutional provision was drafted that that term was never included in the Constitution. So what section of the Constitution are you defining with regard to legislative redistricting that uses the term representational fairness? Are you implying the representational fairness means the number of congressional or looking back over the elections of the last 10 years? Is that what you're substituting the term representational fairness for? Or can you give me a better definition?

Miller [01:04:48] Thank you, Co-Chairs. Thank you, Auditor Faber. Actually, what I'm saying is we need to be having a conversation about how we're defining it. And it is in the Constitution. I'm sorry, I don't have it in front of me, but representational fairness is in the Constitution. I think we need to decide how we measure that. So I could excuse myself and get the or maybe Colin could get it for me. But it is in the Constitution. Yes. Article six.

Auditor Keith Faber [01:05:15] I believe the term representational fairness is not in there with regard to legislative redistricting.

Miller [01:05:22] OK, well, again, Article six, that's what it's capturing, this idea of as we use predictive analysis, past vote in electoral information, that partisan indexing, how the seats we think will go versus how versus the general voting results. And so, again, this is my point exactly is-

Auditor Keith Faber [01:05:53] Which is, Mr. Chairman, which is why I ask the question.

Miller [01:05:54] Yeah.

Auditor Keith Faber [01:05:55] Because we keep hearing these terms bandered about. I think people put different meanings to different things. And that's why I ask the question, because you use a term that I think specifically to legislative redistricting is not in there. Maybe I'm wrong. I'm pretty sure it's not, but-

Miller [01:06:09] Thank you.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:06:12] Additional clarification, I was involved also in the negotiation for the inclusion of this concept, and it was clear that we did not want to leave it undefined, the concept or deal with the terms. As I have indicated before, compactness is not defined or how you calculate it. So instead of just using the term phrase representational fairness, we actually spelled it out how it is calculated. So it would be clear for everyone from now on, for what we're talking about.

Miller [01:06:48] Thank you, Co-Chair, and actually thank you, Auditor Faber. I think you're actually making my point. The point actually is that Section 6 A and B are defined, but there's still a lot to be decided in terms of how we really implement that language. Right? There's decisions along the way. So, for example, federal, you know, statewide and federal parties in general election results during the last 10 years. I'm not actually sure, I would argue that what you provided is not exactly that. We should have been having conversations about that piece alone, how the data is used, how the data is cleaned, what data we use to look at these past results over the ten years. That matters. What the term shall correspond closely to the statewide preferences, what do we mean by correspond closely?

Auditor Keith Faber [01:07:45] I agree.

Miller [01:07:46] So this is, that was my first point, was that I wish that we had been talking about this in months ago. And this is my point now is when are we going to have experts, not Jen Miller, but political scientists and legal experts coming and helping us decide together how this is upheld?

Auditor Keith Faber [01:08:07] So, Mr. Chairman, which was exactly my point. And so you, I think we're making the same point. The term has not been defined. It is somewhat nebulous because you can read this differently ways. But it very clearly says you can't draw a district primarily to favor or disfavor a political party, and that in many cases is at odds with trying to draw a certain number of Democrat or a certain number of Republican districts. And so that's where the next provision and this is why when we debate what these things mean, the next provision, provision C, says the district shall be compact. That's not a discretionary term. Compact is, I agree, not specifically defined, but at least those are things that are, in concept, if done, will be drawing districts based on geography and communities of interest and not splitting political subdivisions, which the rules require, which aren't discretionary. When you get to this aspirational section here, I think that's where we need to have a lot more discussion as of how it applies across the maps. And so specifically, now that we're at the point of discussing various maps, because we do have maps and I appreciate it would be nice if this had been done six months ago, four months ago, three months ago, where some of us started having conversations. But at the end, my question is this. To get to the landing field that we're talking about on the 15th and I'd like to see us hit the 15th, we got a lot of things to do between now and then. I'd really like to see bipartisan discussions going on because I want a 10 year map. And so as we go down

that route and we plan to have more hearings, it's helpful if we have specific discussions about maps and where we're going to land, if we're going to land this plane by the 15th. And land it in a way that leads us to a better bipartisan map. So that's my point on some of these things as to what we're talking about. We heard a lot of discussions during our tour around Ohio, and I'm curious to see how those all fit in. And I've done an analysis of all the maps. And so when we go through those, those are going to be things that we want to see and have input as people provide input. But I would just ask future testimony from everybody, and I know your organization has helped deliver and present a lot of testimony. I mean, you certainly have been very active about getting people to share their thoughts and views. I would just encourage us to have specific thoughts and views about whether it's map A, map B, map C, as to how those maps can better meet the concept of making sure that people are represented by somebody - to some extent because you really can't do it 100 percent, you're always going to have somebody that's represented by somebody who doesn't share their extent unless you have 100 percent of people ever agreeing in a district. But that's, I think, our overall goal that all of us have said that's where we want to land the plane. So thank you.

Miller [01:11:05] Thank you, Auditor Faber and Co-Chairs. I'll just say even that Section C. like how we measure compactness, there's different measurements for that, too. So I think it's worth the conversation. 24 hours in advance is not enough time to get experts in to help think about this. Which is why I'm saying could we even have a hearing specifically where we are inviting some technical folks? Can I work with you to help think about some technical folks who might even disagree on how some of these things should be applied or defined, but 24 hours in advance isn't enough time to do that. So that is part of my request.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:11:45] Thank you very much, any additional questions or comments? Thank you so much.

Miller [01:11:49] Thank you.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:11:52] Ryan Goodman. Mindy Hedges.

Hedges [01:12:27] My name is Mindy Hedges, and it's sort of Mindy M-I-N-D-Y and Hedges like a bush or shrub, H-E-D-G-E-S. Co-chairs, Senator Sykes and House Speaker Cupp, and members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission, my name is Mindy Hedges from Radnor, Ohio. I'm in House District 67, Senate District 19 and Congressional District 12. Thank you for hearing my previous testimony last week when I told you about how our founding fathers and past presidents spoke vehemently against gerrymandering. And also about my rural area, and I'm sort of a fish out of water. But I also spoke about reminding you about my area. It's in a very wealthy county, but our rural area is still without much internet access, water or sewage, renewable energy resources, garbage, health care facilities or transportation, because our House, Senate and - our Ohio House and Senate Representatives know they don't have to care about any of their rural voters. They have their campaign signed, sealed and delivered by a gerrymandered vote. But about this process you've been going through to ensure a fair mapping procedure. I normally don't like to begin any discussion with the negative, but I'm disappointed with how this process has progressed to this point. I'm concerned, therefore, with the process in general, almost less than 24 hours to call this meeting with testimony? On what? There was no map. And then only four hours to ask us for testimony again? With no map? It has made me and many others wonder whether this will be a fair mapping assessment and completion or whether it will be reduced to backroom antics and more gerrymandered, unfair, embarrassing and undemocratic districts. But you see, the voters do have the upper hand.

Don't ever forget that over 70 percent of Ohioans voted to redistrict and we were close to bringing this to a ballot vote. We can and will do this again. Ohioans were sick of being laughed at by the entire country because their district quacked or slithered. They were sick of being ignored by their representative. They were sick of their needs not being met by someone who had no clue even where their Ohio town was on a map. In fact, when I had an initial look at what the map was shown to us today, when you took Westerville out of Delaware County and put it in Monroe County, that makes absolutely no sense. Westerville is a city, a vibrant city, and you took it and put it in a rural county. Makes absolutely no sense whatsoever. And of course, you took what was a vibrant Democratic part of Delaware County and put it totally in a Republican county. Of course, that was done, partisan. So it makes no sense. But I'm more than this negativity, I'm normally an optimistic, not a pest- an optimist, not a pessimist. I believe you will do the right thing for your state, your communities, your friends and your families. Your actions to date have not been driven by a democracy in action. This is not the kind of government you want to hand down to your children or grandchildren. This is not what we were handed down by our grandparents. Let's be real. This appears to be more fascist than it is democratic. Make the right choice and start by really discussing this with your neighbors on both sides of the aisle. And listen to the hundreds who testified over the past 10 sessions. We did this because we want our Ohio back. We want it to prosper, not shrink in wealth. We wanted it to grow, not diminish. We wanted it to prosper, not shrink in wealth. We wanted it to increase in resources for our children and grandchildren so they can prosper. Our younger generation is leaving Ohio because of the politics. Let's help it grow again. Thank you for your time and consideration of my request. Do you have any questions?

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:17:23] Are there any questions? Thank you very much.

Hedges [01:17:28] Thank you.

Auditor Keith Faber [01:17:33] Chair? I do have a question. To the Chairs.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:17:33] Auditor Faber?

Auditor Keith Faber [01:17:35] My understanding is, is we've heard a lot of this is to the chairs.

Hedges [01:17:39] Okay, thank you.

Auditor Keith Faber [01:17:41] My understanding, based on the conversations that my staff have had, is that we do anticipate having other hearings between now on the 15th. Specifically, I think we're trying to do at least three public hearings after a maps introduced or adopted by this commission. So I know a lot of people apparently were confused that there was this was going to count as one of those three public hearings. My understanding from the leadership is that that is not the intent of the Chairs. And I think that might help alleviate some of the concerns, including the concerns I just heard from this nice lady who just testified, that other testimony is going to be available in other hearings to talk about the maps. If I'm mistaken, please correct me. But I think just to clarify that.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:18:22] Auditor, you are correct that we do have, and its schedule will be finalized this afternoon and distributed this afternoon.

Auditor Keith Faber [01:18:33] So we are anticipated, just to make sure I'm clear, the witnesses are clear, we are anticipating hearings at some point between tomorrow and

Tuesday or Wednesday that will include at least three other public hearings around Ohio and whatever maps we go forward on.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:18:51] Yes, And we understand that the time is still constrained because we have the September 15th deadline, but we do intend to comply with the rules with three additional hearings around the state to review a proposed map by the commission.

Auditor Keith Faber [01:19:11] Thank you.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:19:16] Diane Meeves. Carrie Coisman.

Coisman [01:19:43] I'm too tall for this podium. Okay. Hello, commissioners, my name is Carrie C-A-R-R-I-E, Coisman C-O-I-S-M-A-N, and I'm the Ohio Digital Organizer for All On The Line, a grassroots advocacy organization that's working to end gerrymandering. I'm here today testifying on behalf of myself, but also on behalf of all of our volunteers and activists who could not attend today due to the timing of today's hearings and the short notice of when today's hearing would be happening. I'm going to speak on three things today. Firstly, the process and how it has impacted Ohioans, the fact that representational fairness is, in fact listed as a requirement in the Constitution and how I define that representational fairness, and number three, why we deserve both a fair process that is upheld by the Constitution and a fair map that also follows the Constitution. Firstly, on the process, I'm grateful to be able to do this work full time. I'm not a parent, a family caregiver. I am fully vaccinated and I'm not immunocompromised, making it safe for me to be here in this body today. And I live only ten minutes away from Cap Square in Clintonville. All of these factors make my presence and testimony here today possible. But the way that these hearings have been conducted excludes the voices of thousands of Ohioans. Over the last six months I, my organization and numerous partner groups have trained thousands of Ohioans, myself alone, 4,000, about this new redistricting process and how they can engage with this body. I spent hours, and I truly mean hours, every week talking with Ohioans who feel like their government and elected officials do not serve them as constituents, but rather serve special interest groups and elected officials own self-interest. Every day I get calls, texts, emails and social media messages from people from around the state asking the following questions. Why is this process not fair and transparent, when Ohioans overwhelmingly supported the reform measures that promised that our process would be different? Those reform measures were voted on in 2015 and 2018. We voted for this process to be different, but where are the maps? Why is this commission keeping Ohioans in the dark? Why are all the meetings being scheduled at the 11th hour? Why does all of this feel similarly to a broken process like in 2011? Are members of this commission going to gerrymander my community again? Will my neighborhood be cracked apart? Will my urban neighborhood like mine be pulled into a sprawling, rural district? And lastly, and most devastatingly, will my vote count for the next decade? And All On The Line volunteer and proud union member, Erika White, said this at your hearing in Toledo, "Gerrymandering further distance representatives from accountability at the ballot box. But there is hope: gerrymandering is fixable. Citizens across Ohio are fired up about fair maps for redistricting. This could be the political moment to solve these problems and get Ohio back on track for fair representation. Let's fix this today and stop this train on democracy and together try to strengthen the pillars of our democracy." Erika could not be here today because of work obligations and because the commission, again, has failed to live up to the promise of a fair and transparent process by not allowing virtual testimony options in the midst of this pandemic. However, her, excuse me, her words ring true, and I thought it was important to bring them to you

today. Excuse me. Gerrymandering is political cheating, but it is solvable, and that is your duty as members of this commission. Hiding behind excuses of the census delay is no longer valid when this commission has received dozens of maps from Ohioans and organizations who are able to produce maps in a timely manner using the same data set which you all have access to, with staff, I may add. My second piece that I want to talk on is representational fairness, and to answer Auditor Faber's earlier question about representational fairness and how it is cited in the Constitution, Article 6. The Constitution says "No General Assembly district plan shall be drawn primarily to favor or disfavor a political party. The statewide proportion of districts where voters based on state and federal parties in general election results during the last 10 years favor each political party shall correspond closely to the preferences of the voters of Ohio." I grant the auditor that it does not say representational fairness, but as someone who did not go to law school, I even can understand that that is what this article is saying. Ohioans have voted across the decade in a split of 45 percent Democratic and 55 percent Republican. That is an average across the last decade. At first glance, it appears that the map that was just presented today by the majority party actually further reduces adequate representation of Ohioans. If we have any hope of maintaining the promise of our democracy, Ohioans deserve a map that reflects the true partisan makeup of this state, which means our future maps must include at least forty four Democratic House seats and at least 14 Democratic Senate seats. We deserve maps that keep our communities together as much as possible, and especially our major metropolitan communities and Ohio's communities of color, which I was devastated, was not taken into account when the GOP drew their map today or presented their map today. This will ensure that all Ohioans have a pathway to political representation. And I am again disappointed that this commission has failed to provide a map for Ohioans to review until days until our final deadline. And finally, why we deserve both a fair process and a fair map. Missing a deadline is, in fact, a big deal. It is important. These deadlines are constitutional requirements, not just soft suggestions. But keeping their map in the can as long as they did, the Ohio GOP has denied Ohioans a real opportunity to review the maps and to give public input. We are seeing this map just six days before our final deadline. That is not what Ohioans voted for in the reform measures. We are not picking between a fair process and a fair map. We voted for both, not one or the other. It is, frankly, a declaration of duty and an insult to the Constitution that we are being asked by the commission if we would prefer a fair process or a fair map. That answer was made clear in 2015 and in 2018. We are done with backroom deals, lack of preparation and excuses because the majority party is so secure in their power, due to the partisan gerrymandering of the last decade. We are seeing a troubling repeat of strategies that were deployed in 2011 to dilute the political power of Ohioans. This is a sham and an insult to democracy. This process did not have to be rushed. We are running up against the final deadline. This is made obvious again by the fact that maps have been submitted by Ohioans and good government groups in the Ohio Senate Democrats. I hope that when all the hearings are done and you're prepared to adopt a final plan, this commission will have done its due diligence in ensuring that Ohioans voices are heard and fairly not represented, not just the ones that this body picks for yourselves, your friends and your colleagues in the Ohio General Assembly. Thank you. Any questions?

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:27:25] Are there any questions? Thank you very much. Ann Shroyer.

Shroyer [01:27:41] Excuse me. My name is Ann Shroyer, thank you, commission members, for the opportunity to speak today. My first name is Ann A-N-N, last name Shroyer S-H-R-O-Y-E-R, excellent pronunciation again. Just shout out to Governor DeWine's UT Rocket mask today, I appreciate that as a graduate from there. So as I said,

I live in, my name is Ann Shroyer, I live in Westerville, Ohio, in the 68th state legislative district and the 19th State Senate district. As I pointed out in Lima, my city of forty one thousand is cut into two state representative districts and two state Senate districts, even though we are only 12.7 miles. And the new maps are dividing us again or moving us completely out of the counties that we live in.

Audience [01:28:27] Mask off.

Shroyer [01:28:27] No, I'm leaving mine on, thank you, though. So these unfairly drawn lines leave voters with no real representation, and we demand a fair and transparent end to this, as many have said. The importance of fairly drawn districts cannot be overstated. When district lines are drawn to give extreme advantage to one party or the other, then the true constituents of that legislator are the large donors and lobbyists who can donate and bribe with enough money to bend the ear and get the attention of elected officials. For one example of how this lack of representation affects us, my county, Delaware 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 the entire pandemic. And by the new map that was presented today, Delaware County will be included in the state Senate district with Holmes County, or part of Holmes County because they have such a huge population they have to be split, apparently. And Holmes County has the lowest vaccination rate in this state of Ohio. So just that's just one characteristic that would seemingly not put us in the same district. The state government is beset by a massive bribery scandal, and yet almost the entire state legislature was reelected because gerrymandered districts guarantee their seats are safe, thanks to the district lines that we currently have. And I'll finish with most of the remarks that I said in Lima two weeks ago when I had the opportunity to speak. The lack of true representation, thanks to unfairly drawn districts, can be seen thus. 90 percent of Ohioans, including 87 percent 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 donors in the gun lobby. Columbus has over one hundred and forty two homicides so far this year, again on their way to setting a record, most of them by firearm, and many guns are 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. Even after Dayton. The legislature did pass the Stand Your Ground, kill at will bill last Christmas at the height of covid death in states. The priority was to protect shooters. The only proponent testimony given at that hearing was from a gun lobbying group, not from an actual voter. The gun lobby 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. Mothers are shot and killed with their infant children by domestic abusers. That happened less than three miles from my house. And Aisha's Law never made it out of committee in the Senate last year. A mother mourns her daughter, who died by fun suicide less than an hour after purchasing the gun, despite attempts by families 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 two days ago, less than two miles from my son's grandparents house. An entire family gone by gunfire and maybe Aisha's law or a ERPO could have saved that mother, those children and even the shooter and gotten him help. But yet, because those bills, because ERPO and Aisha's Law do not have a well financed lobbying group to get lawmakers attention, they do not, excuse me, those bills die in committee. Maybe if more mothers had a huge budget for donating to campaigns, we would save, 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 Statehouse. Mothers will continue to show up and we demand that we have

fair districts to elect lawmakers motivated by their voters. We demand there is a transparent and fair process with well publicized hearings, so I don't have to repeat myself because I didn't have time to realign my testimony. Gerrymandering is killing Ohioans literally, and the new GOP map will continue this tradition. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:32:22] Thank you, are there any questions?

Shroyer [01:32:26] Thank you.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:32:29] Zahra Smith. Charles Spencer. Ralph Turek. Andrea Yagoda.

Yagoda [01:33:16] Co-Chairs, member of the commission, thank you for affording me the opportunity to speak today. I did address the members that were present in Mansfield about how gerrymandering directly affected me as an individual. I'm sure I'm not alone when I say this is not the map making process I envisioned when I worked so hard to pass the constitutional amendment and I voted for it. I envisioned a commission working together to review maps that were submitted, discuss them in earnest, and then work together to draft a proposed commission map. So far, what I'm seeing is reminiscent of 2011. No bipartisan discussion, but a back room map drawing process. So it appears to me that all the town halls and these hearings today are merely window dressing to give the impression that the map making process has changed. And Secretary LaRose, I'm not giving you legal advice here, but I understand that other states that ran against deadlines went to their Supreme Court, which ours I think has exclusive jurisdiction, and they asked for an extension. Although I can honestly say after seeing the map today where the Republicans pick and choose which parts of the Constitution they were going to follow in drafting their maps makes me believe that no matter how many more months you had or how many more weeks you had, there wouldn't be a bipartisan commission working together to draft maps. I envisioned a website with a portal whereby Ohioans could not only submit maps, but where other Ohioans could review them and have input. What I found was a hastily constructed website where maps submitted are not labeled. So you have to download, you can't just open the map, you have to download each and every map. And then I have to go look on my hard drive to see, I have to remember the name of the map, then I have to search for it and then I have to open it. Then there is no place for me to comment on that map. It would have been a lot easier if you just posted the maps on Facebook and everyone could have commented on them and this commission could have seen all the public input for all of those maps. Right now what you have to do is keep a list and then maybe put it in your testimony somewhere to comment on each map. That is not a transparent process with input from Ohioans everywhere that don't have to show up at a meeting to testify. They don't have to draft testimony. They could just comment on the map. Even the witness slip is not fillable, so you have to download the witness slip, you have to print to help the witness slip, and then you either have to scan the witness slip, take a photograph of the witness slip. If you're like me and you have a flip phone, you don't take a photograph of that. So if you don't have a scanner, you can't even get your witness slip to this commission. And rule 10 specifically says that in order for me to testify about a map, I must submit and notify you that I plan to testify, in order for me to be able to do so. Why a easy fillable witness list was not included on your website can only show me that you really don't want to hear from us. Why would you make it so difficult? Honestly, as one average person with average knowledge of computer, I really got tired of trying to open the maps and downloading them and I just gave up on the effort and I'm sure that I am not alone. Mr. Faber, you, someone from your office indicated that you had reviewed all of the

maps submitted and I commend you if in fact you did that. But my question is, is even if you did do it, what input did you have that went into either the Democratic submitted map or the Republican map that we saw today? I'm willing to bet that you didn't have any input in that map after reviewing the citizens maps that were submitted by Ohioans. I'm sorry, but I didn't have a chance to write my testimony, but this whole process has been really disheartening for someone who spent days at the Fair District's office reviewing petitions to make sure that they were accurate, scanning petitions, putting data in so we could keep track, for someone who went on street corners on the weekends, went to fairs, stood on street corners, went to farm markets. I got over 3000 signatures on petitions. And it's disheartening to see nothing's changed. I don't see anything that has changed. The failure to submit timely maps, the failure to request an extension from the Supreme Court. You could have moved the primaries and requested that. And I think some of the Democrats had even requested that you, that the Republicans request that, and they took no action. Governor, you failed us by failing to convene this committee back in March or April. [Applause] So a lot of this process could have been done. That was a complete failure. I'm sorry, everyone on this commission knew who was going to be appointed to sit here. You could have, you could have sped this process up. We could have spent this time, instead of doing town halls, talking to the League of Women Voters to define what you needed to do in these maps. I'm sorry. There are no excuses. We are tired. You are not going to silence me for the next 10 years. I have had enough. Ohioans have had enough. We did not vote for this. We all, we all worked hoping that you would act in good faith and do what the voters want you to do. This is not what we voted for. This is not the process. This is not acting in good faith. This is not a meaningful process. This is just a charade to make it look like something's changed. I hope, I hope and pray to God, that you prove me wrong in the next few days. But really, I don't go to bed tonight thinking that that's going to be the case. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. I'd be glad to answer any questions. I will try to get something in writing to you, but I have a life too. And when you give me 24 hours notice, I have to decide whether I want to spend my time writing something or spend my time coming to a hearing. Does anyone have any questions?

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:40:16] Any questions?

Yagoda [01:40:17] Thank you.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:40:18] Thank you. Oh, excuse me, there is a question. Leader Sykes?

State Representative Emilia Sykes [01:40:24] Thank you, to the Co-Chairs, and thank you for your testimony and I appreciate your passion and sharing exactly how you felt with us. It is deserved, for sure. Moving forward, what could this commission do to help satisfy your concerns about what has not happened and what should be happening, to make you feel like your work was not done in vain? And the voters in both 2015 and 2018 who requested a new way and new process would feel like they are being respected in their wishes are being granted?

Yagoda [01:41:05] Well, first, I don't think we get to pick and choose which constitutional amendments. I had hoped, I think it would have been great if we could have been on the Ohio Channel, even if we couldn't appear and we could see you folks discussing maps. Pull up, I don't know, a lady just brought a map in that was submitted. If I could see this committee say, oh, you know what? We've got a map from John Doe. Let's discuss what's in that map. Let's discuss the pros and cons. There should have never been a Democrat map and a Republican map. Because you know what I see when I see that? And I don't

mean to insult anybody on the commission, but what I see is, I see this majority saying, you know what, we don't really give a damn what the minority says. This is the map. We have the majority and this is what we're doing. I think what would have been, people would have had more faith if we didn't be talking Republican maps and Democrat maps. But really, this commission, I think you had indicated at one of the hearings, it's probably the last one, when are we going to work together on a map. And when a map is produced and it doesn't and the person comes in here today and says, we didn't even consider, you know, representational fairness or how Ohioans voted in the last ten years. That does not give me any faith whatsoever in this system. So I think what we need to see is we need to see this body that we, we, created through a constitutional amendment, we need to see you publicly speaking together on what your objections are to the maps, how you're going to change the maps, not just bring us something and say this is our map. We need to see the bipartisanship, we need to see the discussions of this commission. We need the transparency which we're not seeing now. We're just seeing, we're not seeing anything. We're just seeing this charade that you bring us here really so we can vent. That's what I see. You just bring in here so we can vent. No offense, I can make you listen, but I can yell out in this mic and get your attention and make you listen, but I can't make you hear anything that we're saying. And I think that we don't believe you are hearing anything. We called your office, Governor DeWine, and we begged you to convene this committee. If you had done so, we'd be a lot further along in this process. And now it just, it seems like you're just spinning wheels. So I think we need to see you. You want to say we're going to be bipartisan? Secretary LaRose, you say you want that? Why aren't we seeing it? Why aren't we seeing this commission work together in a bipartisan manner? I don't know if that answers your question, but thank you.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:43:59] Thank you. Any additional questions? Thank you. Sha'tisha Young.

Young [01:44:14] Hello. One second here. I apologize for my voice being shaky, public speaking makes me really nervous, but I'm here anyways because I think it's important that you all hear from me. So my name is Sha'tisha Young. That's spelled S-H-A apostrophe T-I-S-H-A, Young Y-O-U-N-G. I am from Xenia, Ohio, and I am here today because I was around 15 the last time the maps were drawn. And since then I have watched time and time again as my fellow Ohioans have suffered under a series of maps that were drawn behind closed doors and with a sense of secrecy that we should not be seeing in modern day politics. More often than not, it seems, my colleagues, friends, family and I find ourselves at the Statehouse protesting for our basic rights while a group of people who could never truly represent me, even if they wanted to, and they clearly don't, continue to legislate based on their own personal beliefs and the wants of those who line their pockets. In 2019 in Dayton, Ohio, I stood in a crowd of mourners and listened as Governor Mike DeWine and other elected officials promised to do something about the gun violence we had just seen tear apart a community and by extension, our entire state. Earlier this year, I watched in horror again as DeWine and his fellow Republicans signed a Stand Your Ground bill into law, despite the wishes of experts and advocates within our community, effectively endangering the black and brown people of this state. Our elected officials are meant to represent the people and are meant to advocate for the betterment of all Ohioans. Clearly, this is not what has been happening at the state in recent years. Since our maps were last drawn, the GOP have won around 55 percent of the statewide vote, as others have said today, but have managed to walk away with supermajorities in both state legislative chambers. They hold an alarming 75 percent of Ohio Senate seats. That's not fair or reasonable. At the start of this process, I had incredibly high hopes that you would honor your commitment to bringing fair maps to Ohioans. But after seeing you

all skip meeting after meeting and miss deadline after deadline only to present yet another set of hearings held during the work day, when the people you need to be hearing from the most are working to provide for their families. And it's become abundantly clear to me that this is not the case. Ohioans are not going to suffer through another 10 years of gerrymandered maps that value the votes of some over others. We are watching and we are awaiting. Thank you for your time today and I can answer any questions.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:46:51] Thank you. Are there any questions?

Young [01:46:52] Thank you for your time.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:46:55] Thank you very much. Is there anyone else that would like to testify this morning? Please come forward. We don't have a witness slip for you, but when you finish if you could complete one, that would be great.

Ahern [01:47:19] Sure, yeah, I appreciate that. I didn't want to walk in front of everyone to fill out the slip. My name is Mike Ahern. I live in Blacklick, Ohio. I'm in House District 20, in the Senate District 3. And I do have written testimony that I'll submit online.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:47:38] Thank you.

Ahern [01:47:40] I did submit testimony down in Rio Grande. There was representation of voters down there and I came prepared today to talk a little bit about the map that had been submitted by the Democrats at the previous hearing. I saw the presentation this morning, and I'm going to submit this hard copy and let you consider it. It is comments on the map and proportionality, compactness, all that. But I guess I'll just make two highlight points to try to shorten things up here a little bit today. The first is, and this is related to my prior testimony, I just want to highlight to the commission members that were not down in Rio Grande. And I really appreciate Co-Chair Sykes traveling from northwest Ohio to southeast Ohio. You are part of a larger process, as you all know. Ohio elections are run in a nonpartisan fashion, they're run by Democrats and they're run by Republicans. And during the time that people are doing that work, they set aside their party, they do their best to do their job in a nonpartisan fashion so that we have free and fair elections, in Ohio, okay? This past November, there were people that suited up because they knew that they were going to be exposed to people with COVID-19. People that felt so strongly about their ability to vote, that they came to the polling locations sick so that they could vote. And there were people like these folks in this picture, I'm going to give these to you so each of you can look at them, keep them in mind, that processed their vote at a risk to their health. So I'd like you to keep that in mind as you're considering these maps. Nonpartisanship should be a driver in this process because it's a driver in the entire rest of the process. Set aside your political parties. And create districts that are fair, that are competitive, that represent the will of the voters because the voters are the source of power, you're the representatives and I appreciate the service that you all provide. But please listen to all these people from all corners of the state. That are demanding representational fairness through districts that are drawn fairly. Win your elections based on the strength of your arguments, not based on cheating through gerrymandered districts. Second item that I'd like to highlight, I just want to make sure I heard this correctly, when the staff for the Republican Party presented the map this morning, there was a question about consideration of the Voting Rights Act, whether that was included as part of the analysis of drawing up their maps. Did I hear correctly that they were told or requested by some leadership, either in the Statehouse or even on this commission, to not consider that information? Wouldn't that be a bedrock item? To include as consideration in drawing

maps rather than focusing on geography and township lines. I hope I didn't hear that correctly. Thank you.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:51:46] Thank you. Any questions? Thank you very much.

Ahern [01:51:51] Thank you.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:51:52] Is there anyone else who wants to testify? Come forward, please.

Dyke [01:52:12] Hi, some of you, well probably only two or three of you, will recognize me from the Cleveland hearings because that's all that bothered to show up that was on this commission. My name is Susanne S-U-S-A-N-N-E, Dyke D-Y-K-E. I am from Cleveland Heights. I drove here from Cleveland and as I mentioned in my testimony in Cleveland, I gathered signatures for fair districts. I am an activist and advocate and I am going to hold all of your feet to the fire, especially the majority party to get these maps the way we thought that they would be created. I did not prepare testimony until I came here because of the lasy minute nature of this meeting. I am here, though, to represent teachers who need to be at their jobs today. People, doctors, nurses, because we are in the middle of a pandemic. Some of you seem to have forgotten that. People who are at work, people who can't drive, people who are in a high risk category and can't take the chance to be in this room because you who are not wearing masks, don't care enough about your constituents to protect them from disease. People who have appointments they can't cancel without penalty or charge, people who are waiting for the appliance repair person to show up because they've been waiting for two months for their dishwasher to be repaired during the pandemic. People who can't find last minute day care. And I'm here for all of those thousands of volunteers and Ohioans who wanted to see a change, which we are not seeing here today. And by the way, I wanted to just acknowledge Andrea Yagoda. Her testimony was so powerful. I don't think I could follow that up, but thank you. But anyway, like I said, I can't comment on the maps because I was driving from Cleveland when they were presented. But I will comment on the process and I have a number of questions. And in probably ninety nine percent of the case, I am addressing the majority party. And I would like you to listen. This commission, the majority party on this commission, is unprepared to do these maps. You are not doing what your voters who voted for you want you to do. You are not serving the public. You're not acting in good faith. I'm still still still livid that Speaker Cupp could only bother to be at two meetings, that's 20 percent. That's usually a failing grade, anything under five, which is almost all of you on this commission. That's a failing grade. Either you don't care about this process or you're definitely, I can't imagine why that you'd even be taking this process, that you are even taking this process seriously. Very frustrated by that. As Andrea mentioned, your website, your own offices can't find things that your people within your office have posted. I called yesterday to ask a question about Attorney Blessing. No one could find it on the website, but she had posted information on the website that led us to be confused about the purpose of this meeting today. Sloppy, rude and disrespectful to the public who you work for, I have to remind you that, and pay your salary. You all work for me ,whether I am in your district or not. We got different answers yesterday from every single legislative office about what these meetings were about - your own offices didn't know. And Senator Huffman, your office seemed to have the best knowledge, but is that, why is that? Is that because you are running the show here, not the co-chairs? Well, it sure feels that way. You are being disrespectful to those who have fought for decades, years, months to stop you all from cheating. You act indignant about not being able to meet deadlines, but unpaid regular citizens are doing a

better job than you are, and there is no indication that the delays are resulting in a better map and it surely has not resulted in a better process. You have had the time, you have squandered. Every single majority member on this commission, you have squandered your opportunity. You are doing the bare minimum and not in the spirit of what voters voted for, and this meeting is a prime example. You're still cheating, it's just not in a hotel room, maybe it's in the Statehouse. How can you expect, people like, oh, why you are so angry, how can you expect us to trust this process? You or this process? Anyway, so here's my questions. Why did you wait so long to get started? There have been funds available since 2019 to start this process. That, the census wasn't even a problem back then, okay? You could have started, but you didn't. Why? My guess is because you intended to not actually follow, to follow the bare minimum of the rules. Why would the Dem Co-Chair or anyone else in this room be in the dark about the maps you showed this morning? Was it, why was it a secret, who is drawing your maps? You knew who it was, why couldn't you release that to the public? I don't understand. This is very confusing. Why wouldn't you, I am assuming that many of the, at least the minority party on the commission, had no idea who was drawing your maps. Why is that? Are you guys not working together? I'm confused. This is a commission. You guys are supposed to be working together. Why not? When will you take responsibility and work together instead of making excuses? I've been calling your offices since March along with some friends of mine, and every single time there was an excuse. Oh, the census data. Oh, the budget. You didn't have to say this, but yeah, you were also conspiring to create anti voter legislation. All right. You focus on everything but what was the most important thing that you could do in the next 10 years. You blew it off. And I'm disgusted as a citizen of the state. The recent hearings showed that the public demands fair maps. Are you all working across the aisle to make sure that that happens? Are you? Based on what we're seeing, you're not, and again, a failure on this commission. Why is anyone in charge who failed to attend the hearings, the 10 hearings that you had across Ohio? And sent their B team on a regular basis, their J.V. You have once again disrespected - why are you even on this commission? You're not fulfilling your duty to show up to a meeting with Ohioans unless it's in your own hometown. And then I'd like to know is why does it appear that Senator Hoffman is running the show when there are bipartisan Co-Chairs? And why do the bipartisan Co-Chairs not seem to be talking to each other? And I rest that on you, Speaker Cupp, to reach out and do more than sit next to your counterpart and your colleague. I say that if you didn't bother to show up to any meetings like you, Senator, Governor DeWine or anyone else on this committee who showed up to less, commission who showed up to less than five, you don't deserve to be, to keep your office, number one. And number two, I think you really need to step aside and let someone else do a better job than you can. Finally, my last statement is all of this just leads me to believe that the majority party is still cheating and just not in a hotel room, that's all. Any questions?

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:01:43] Any questions of the members? Thank you very much. Is there anyone else that would like to testify? Is there anyone else who would like to testify? Come forward. State your name and spell it, please.

Reese [02:02:14] Good afternoon. My name is Deidra Reese, that spelled D-E-I-D-R-A, last name R-E-E-S-E, and I'm here representing the Ohio Unity Coalition regarding the Ohio redistricting process. It is our belief that democracy is a fundamental cornerstone of America, that we are still a nation seeking to be a more perfect union. We were built on solid ideals of freedom, liberty and the concept of true representation. Ohio voters spoke loudly when they passed not one but two constitutional amendments, changing the way district lines are drawn for legislative and congressional district maps. While no process is perfect, the new process offers a great improvement over past processes for drawing

district lines by two major elements: keeping communities together and requiring bipartisan support of maps. The Ohio Coalition on Black Civic Participation, or the Ohio Unity Coalition, engages in black civic participation in elections with the goal of electing candidates who will best represent their interests. However, if politicians are able to select their voters through gerrymandered districts based on partisan criteria, it undercuts the true purpose of our voting process. We are aware that we will lose one congressional seat due to the 2020 census, and we're particularly sensitive to the lack of representation of people of color in our legislative bodies. Currently, there is only one majority minority district in Ohio, and I guess we're using this term minority opportunity districts. And there are only two districts represented by people of color, though one of them is vacant right now, in the United States Congress. In the Ohio General Assembly there are 20 districts represented by minority members. That representation is twelve and a half percent and fifteen percent, respectively. According to the 2020 census, the Ohio minority population in total, including African-American, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander and Native Americans, is 24 percent. While that current minority representation of the populist population is underrepresented in the General Assembly by six percent, and nine percent in the Congress, this is an opportunity to consider districts that reflect the true population of the people who live in the districts, as well as the issues and concerns that bind them together by their experiences. I was sitting at home watching this presentation on the phone and I was greatly disappointed. And that's a very weak word really, for what I was feeling when I heard the presentation by the Senate Republican caucus, that they did not even consider racial data when drawing the lines. I feel invisible, I feel as if I don't matter. I feel as if other people of color don't matter at all as they were presenting their map. And I just I raced down here, you probably saw me rushing in the room. That's why I'm out of breath, because I need to come here and stand before you and tell you that I feel invisible, that numbers say I'm underrepresented. But I feel very, very disgusted by the fact that someone was told not to use that data in drawing those lines. And I'm certain I'm expressing that for other people of color. When you're in this process right now, it's disgusting. It's absolutely disgusting and demeaning that someone would say, don't even consider me when you're drawing lines to represent me and other people who look like me. Race, ethnicity, economic status and educational attainment are often factors that are similar enough to require a voice that will represent a unique and needed view in the halls of government. The Voting Rights Act, and indeed several SCOTUS decisions, say that you can allow consideration of race as a criterion, along with other issues of common interests. In a season of significant racial and economic disconnect and division, it is imperative that there be voices to raise concern and voice concerns of a significant portion of the citizens of this state. It is my sincere hope that as this commission conducts its work, that there is consideration for at least one majority minority congressional district in our state and consideration of that representation for our legislative districts as well. There have been very spirited discussions of issues that have centered on sensitive historical and current racial dynamics that require a voice in policy debate and discussion, but more importantly, decision making. As this body deliberates the redistricting in our state, please do not adopt a colorblind approach that ignores the complex experiences that are at times are unique to the racial diversity in our state and should be represented in our halls of government. The new system affords you the structure to meet this request, and I hope that you will provide that fair opportunity. Because until we are colorblind in outcomes, some of some of which are still tied to class, race and geography, our diversity should be embraced so that we can all benefit from our differences and learn what we share in common. As we talk about representational fairness, partisan fairness cannot be the only person considered. Communities of color also deserve representational fairness that has been grossly lacking in our political discourse. While I'm keenly aware that the concept of minority opportunity districts and maps that I have seen thus far, opportunity does not

often translate from potential to reality. I ask that this body be deliberate in its action to assure the ability for communities of color to truly impact and influence the outcome of elections and more importantly, those who will ultimately represent them in the Congress and state legislature. Those current levels of underrepresentation of six percent in the General Assembly and nine percent in Congress are out of step with our diversifying population. I implore you to take this opportunity using the Supreme Court approved policy to use racial data as one of your criteria to consider as you draw the new maps. I hope this information is not new to you as this testimony was submitted to this body in written form for the Zanesville hearing. In closing, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to share this testimony and wish you much success in this tight time frame to create a fair and equitable districts that gain bipartisan support. Thank you very much for the opportunity to stand before you today, and I hope I can answer any questions.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:09:41] Are there any questions to the presenter? Seeing none, thank you very much.

Reese [02:09:46] Thank you.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:09:48] Is there, are there any others that- yes, come forward. Are there any others after this person speaks? Okay.

Halaiko [02:09:59] Co-Chairs and members of the commission, thank you for this opportunity to testify, I'm sorry I did not turn in written testimony. I will have some and I will fill out a slip. I just have a couple of questions.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:10:16] Can you state your name, please?

Halaiko [02:10:18] Yes, my name is Mike M-I-K-E. Last name is Halaiko, H-A-L-A-I-K-O. Officially, my first name is John. I did get to testify at Zanesville and I was quite honored to do that. I saw one member of this commission at every public hearing. And I want to thank you, Co-Chair Sykes for being there. I just have, I want to go back to the beginning of the meeting. And with all due respect, one of the statements that we hear is that the census data was late. And I would like to ask, Secretary LaRose, why was that census data late? Anybody? Co-Chairs, anyone?

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:11:22] Secretary.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [02:11:22] Co-chair, I get I accept that the Census Bureau's explanation for why it was late had something to do with the pandemic, but the fact remains that it was egregiously late, by orders of magnitude.

Halaiko [02:11:37] OK, thank you. You know, there was great excitement in the meetings, the public hearings. I came here on August 31st. And I have to tell you, quite frankly, it's a little depressing to see. That, you know, the people of Ohio have spoken. What is it going to take? This is a bipartisan commission. And I listen to Senators Emilia Sykes ask this question, what is the timeline? What, you know, asked a simple question, how are we moving forward? And I don't know if we have an answer to that yet. That was how many days ago, how many days we have left to the second constitutional date? I just want to ask one more question, okay? It's a bipartisan commission. Outside of August 6th, August 31st, and this date, how many bipartisan meetings have you had? Anyone? Well, thank you for this opportunity. No questions?

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:13:10] Are there any questions? Seeing none, thank you very much.

Halaiko [02:13:16] Are there any answers to my questions?

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:13:20] We'll continue to work on it.

Halaiko [02:13:21] Thank you.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [02:13:25] Are there any comments to be made by any of the members of the commission? Seeing no other witness to be present here today, no further business to be brought before the commission. The commission is adjourned.

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Ohio Redistricting Commission - 9-9-2021 - part 2

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House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:00:00] The meeting of the Ohio Redistricting Commission will now come to order. First item of business is the roll call. So I ask the staff to please call the roll.

Staff [00:00:14] Co-Chair Speaker Cupp.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:00:14] Present.

Staff [00:00:14] Co-Chair Senator Sykes.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:00:18] Present.

Staff [00:00:18] Governor DeWine.

Governor Mike DeWine [00:00:18] Here.

Staff [00:00:21] Auditor Faber.

Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:00:22] Here.

Staff [00:00:23] President Huffman.

Senate President Matt Huffman [00:00:24] Here.

Staff [00:00:25] Secretary LaRose.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:00:26] Here.

Staff [00:00:26] Leader Sykes.

State Representative Emilia Sykes [00:00:26] Here.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:00:30] Quorum is present and we will meet as a full commission. The order of business for this afternoon's meeting will be as follows. We didn't adopt the minutes from the August 31st meeting this morning, so we'll do that first. Then we would entertain a motion, set a schedule for the upcoming hearings and meetings of the redistricting commission and then consideration of selecting a map for the commission to introduce to start the hearing process. And then public testimony, as was in the notice, will be limited to statewide General Assembly proposed maps, either the sponsor or member of the public wishing to testify to a map. At this time, in the interest of providing advance notice, and I will say that Senator Sykes and I have been discussing this for at least a week or more. So we have been working on this about setting in advance schedule so everyone knows when the upcoming hearings will be. I would move that the commission adopt a schedule for public hearings for the commission's introduced map as follows: Sunday, September 12th, at 4:00 p.m. in Dayton, Monday, September 13th at 4:00 p.m. in Cleveland, Tuesday, September 14th at 10:00 a.m. here in Columbus.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:02:01] I second the motion.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:02:03] It's been moved and seconded. Are there any objections to this hearing schedule? Seeing and hearing none the scheduled is adopted without objection. At this time I'd recognize Senator Huffman for motion.

Senate President Matt Huffman [00:02:21] Thank you, Co-Chair Cupp. Mr. Co-Chair, pursuant to Section 8 (A)(1) of Article 11 of the Ohio Constitution, I move that the commission introduced the proposed General Assembly district plan that I presented earlier and through the testimony of Messrs. DiRossi and Springhetti.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:02:39] There is a motion. Is there any objections to the motion?

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:02:44] Object.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:02:44] Chair hears an objection. Any discussion? Without - I can go ahead and call the roll? Leader Sykes?

State Representative Emilia Sykes [00:02:53] Thank you, to the Co-Chairs and to members of the commission. Thank you for allowing me to express some concern and speak to the objection that is before us on adopting the maps that Senate President Huffman has just offered up to us. You know, we've gone through this before as a legislature, where we see a proposal put forth. It is very detrimental. It is very extreme. And it is usually used to shock the sensibilities of the members of the legislature, for example. Through the process, it tends to get marginally better with the attempt that perhaps there would be some support from the minority party, suggesting that it could have been as worse as the first option. And that is what I view as the maps that we saw today. However, this is a much different process. This is a constitutional mandate that voters have told us not once but twice that they want us to do something different. And the status quo, which we see in the legislative process of offering something really shocking and then pulling it back marginally is just not going to work here, in this scenario. We were able to raise the concerns of lack of consideration. Or I think more appropriately, no consideration of the Voting Rights Act. We heard that the constitutional mandate and requirement that uses shall language of the proportional representation or representational fairness, which is the colloquialism that folks have been using over the past week, was also not considered and would likely not be considered. And those two issues alone, I think, are reasons that we may need, well, at least that I will not be willing to fully support this contention, although I do know it is very important for us to move forward. We've heard often that the Census Bureau is delayed us and it is the reason why we are where we are. And I take exception to that for multiple reasons, particularly because we knew in January of this year that the census data would be late, yet there was little to nothing done in order to rectify that issue. We could have done a lot more. Our Attorney General filed a lawsuit to help and the commission additionally, could have been much more resourceful and reasonable in its attempt to make its deadlines. So I imagine that this map will still be adopted so that we have a place to continue to move forward so we can start this process. But I do hope that the members of this commission are taking a good faith effort to make adjustments to eliminate the cracking and packing that we have seen in the preliminary observation and analysis of this current map, that people do not want to continue to see the status quo. And I think that we have not lived up to that in this so far. So I am encouraged by the spirit of bipartisanship that I've heard from every member on this commission, that we can get to a 10 year plan by Wednesday. It is a tall task, but if I can have faith in these members of this commission, and I hope you all don't let me down, we can find our way to get there. And I am confident that we are all committed to that process.

And I assure you that I will be equally as committed to it as well. So as we move forward with this map and of course, they can't predict the future, there is a lot of room for improvement, but I am happy to be a part of it. And I look forward to working with all the members of this commission to make sure that we fulfill our constitutional duties and we provide a 10 year map for the people of the state.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:06:43] Thank you, Leader Sykes. Senator Sykes.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:06:46] Thank you, Chair, Co-Chair. We had an opportunity to look and to analyze the proposed map during our break. And in reviewing it, it seems that the partisan proportions are worse than what they are existing today. And for that purpose, I think that purpose alone, is enough for me not to be supportive of this and would hope that we could work together hand in hand, hopefully, over the next few days to come up with a much better proposal.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:07:24] Further discussion? Auditor Faber.

Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:07:28] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to see us hit a 10 year map and I'd like to see us work in a bipartisan fashion to do it. So, without regard, my vote today will be contingent on this. I would really encourage that between now and certainly the first hearing on Sunday. Our staffs and us, if we're available, certainly work in the background to compare the maps, to look at areas of compromise, to find a bipartisan solution. And I am willing to offer up my staff. I'm willing to offer up our team's conference calling system to make that bipartisan discussion in the background available. And certainly I want to echo the conversation I had with Senator Sykes, Co-Chair Sykes, when he was kind enough to let me go through their map with great detail, district by district. And we found a lot of areas I thought we could reach compromise on just between the two of us. And I know you've had similar conversations with other members, when I asked to sit down and go through your maps in great detail. And so I want to encourage that. Initially, it does not look like we're all that far apart, although there are concerns, candidly, that that I have with regard to certain areas in the map that have nothing to do with partisan issues, that have more to do with communities of interest and keeping communities together and shared ideology. So one of the things my staff did quickly pulling off the Dave's Redistricting site, which now has them up there to compare, is pointing out that between the Senate Democrat map and the GOP House and Senate map, you're within a couple of districts on the competitive side in the House. And actually the Senate version, sorry, the GOP version, when you look at the Senate actually has more competitive districts in the Republican produce map than the Democrat map. But, you know, you do have a difference in what are the solid leaning Republican and solidly Democrat districts in both maps. But it doesn't look like they're that far off. You're talking about a couple of districts here and there. So it seems to me that there is ample area of compromise and I will commit my team and myself to that, certainly tomorrow and Saturday and Sunday and on past that as we go forward. But I do think it's important that our staffs start sitting down collectively and going district by district and looking at where we can find compromise. And with that, I will agree to move this forward for a discussion point. But I really, really would like to see a 10 year map. I really would like to see us have bipartisan buy-in on it. And from from that perspective, I think it's a place for us to start.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:10:09] Any discussions? Secretary LaRose.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:10:13] Thank you, Co-Chair Cupp and- there you go. For the-. [audio feedback]

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:10:34] Try that.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:10:40] All right. Thank you, Leader. So for the, for the folks that have been so good to come and offer testimony not only here, but at all of the different remote sites that we've been to, I really share- I can talk louder. For those that have had the opportunity to come and offer testimony. I sincerely appreciate your engagement in the process. And I share a lot of the passion and a lot of the concern that you have. Remember that I worked very closely with many of you as we got this process enacted many years ago. I remember the all nighter that we pulled to get this initial proposal on the Senate floor. And I think it happened at about 4:00 a.m. by the time the compromising was done. And so while I share the concern, I guess I don't share the pessimism. And here's why. I think that now is when that real collaborative process can get started. Now, we are weeks and weeks behind thanks to the delay in the Census Bureau data. But we have the opportunity now, the seven of us, to do the thing that lies at the heart of this process, and that is collaborate and compromise and find the middle ground. And the auditor and I did the same analysis over the little break that we just had just now. And I got the information off of davesredistricting.org. As well. What I see is that the two maps aren't as far apart as some might think they are. Just again, this back of the envelope analysis here shows that there are, you know, in the Republican map, there are 20 competitive districts in the in the in the House, in the Senate Democrat map, there are 22. So that's a difference of two competitive districts. In the Senate there's eight competitive districts on the GOP plan and there's four competitive districts on the on the Democratic plan. A difference of four. There's a difference of zero between the Republicans and the Democrats on how many Republican leaning districts there are, a difference of four on how many Democratic leaning districts in the Senate. Again, we're talking single digits here. This is that time that we now need to roll up our sleeves as a group, though, the seven of us, and find those compromises over the weekend. I am prepared to allow this map to go forward as the work in progress, as the first draft. But I think it needs substantial work. One of the other things that I was looking at is the majority minority districts or minority opportunity districts. I think that that's something that's important. The Republican map that was introduced this morning, again, according to Dave's show 11 majority minority districts in the House and two majority minority districts in the Senate. So room for progress on there. My objective has been from the beginning, a 10 year map. I think that that can only happen if we work diligently tomorrow, Saturday, Sunday and throughout the next few days. And again, I echo what the auditor said that I, for one, am willing to put in the hours this weekend and tomorrow to get that done. I know my staff shares that, and I think that we have a real opportunity here to reach a 10 year map with this map that was proposed this morning as the starting point for that conversation. But just the starting point, by no means a finished product. Thank you.

Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:14:14] Further discussion? Senator Huffman.

Senate President Matt Huffman [00:14:17] Thank you very much, Senator Cupp. And a little bit of history, when this was, the proposal was negotiated in 2014 with Senator Sykes and I from the House and President Faber and I think Minority Leader Schiavoni, if it memory serves right. Of course, Senator, now Secretary, LaRose was there. The concept was that when we got the data on April 1st and it took some time to put this in the political finish, and that usually was a two month to 10 day or 10 week process. And somewhere at the end of June, we would have it and we would have a full two months plus to do the

negotiation that we're now going to try to do in six days and try to come up with a 10 year map. And negotiating these things is difficult. It's not just a matter of, you know, pressing one button and it all falls into place. But we didn't get that 60 day to 75 day period. And actually longer than that. We didn't get our six or about five month period that we had, because as we know, there was a pandemic. The Census Bureau did whatever they could do and here we are. So now we have seven days. Frankly, and I have to say, this is one of the reasons why I asked that we get a 30 to 60 day extension in April and asked to take that to the voters. And many folks, probably some people in this room, opposed us doing that. And so here we are with the September 15th deadline. I'm optimistic because I know everyone on this panel and I know they're all intelligent people, people of goodwill, that we can substantially, have substantial negotiations, substantial conversation, to get to a 10 year map and a six, in the six day period that we have left. I wish it were 60 days, but it is what it is. A couple, and as I mentioned, I think a couple folks have mentioned, but I mentioned in my comments to the media, you know, we met yesterday with Senator Sykes and Leader Sykes and we reviewed the map that you saw today. And then two days ago, I met with Senator Sykes and his staff and reviewed the Senate Democrat map in detail. So there have been ongoing conversations from both sides. And I think what we walked out, and what I think the Secretary and the Auditor are suggesting is an excellent plan. Because of the detail involved in this, it's let's take these two days for our staff to get together and begin making suggestions on how to make this a comprehensive collective commission product. And so, again, a couple of things I did want to say. There's, and I think for the public, you know, these terms aren't particularly important and maybe not relevant, but in fact, constitutionally they are. We have maps that are presented formally and we have that this morning with one map, a week or so ago with another. But the Constitution calls for the commission to introduce a map. Now, in the olden days, what happened was a map was introduced to what was then called the reapportionment commission. They'd walk in, set the map down, there'd be a couple of hours of conversation and they would pass it. The reason we came up with this process, where long negotiation period but deadlines. And we had a deadline, by the way, of September 15th for the General Assembly so that nobody could get redistricted out of their district after a year because that's the constitutional requirement, you know, so September 15th, and then we work on the congressional lines after that. But we changed that process and said we have to have hearings on the map separate from the when the time the map is being introduced so the public can digest it, people can make objections, supporting comments, whatever it may be. This commission, although the Constitution only required one hearing in the September 1st to 15th deadline, added two additional hearings and some would argue, some would argue added another hearing. But the point is that in the contracted timeframe, the commission is not only adding hearings, but doing all of the things that the Constitution requires, including introducing a map. The Secretary is correct, this is a working document that can be changed and we're going to have hearings. That's the point of having the hearings so that the public not just through this microphone, but through the website that's established, through all the other ways that people communicate, can do that and there can be due consideration. I do want to say a couple of things. I want to thank Ray DiRossi and I'll let Speaker talk about his staff. Ray has worked since the data was received about 16 to 18 hours a day, maybe more than that, for about the past three weeks straight, to try to produce the map today, which is a map which meets all the constitutional standards. So he's working very hard and he's going to work very hard for the next eight days straight, also, in negotiations and making all the changes. And finally, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the Co-Chairs with working with this extraordinarily truncated time period, trying to get the hearings done, and especially Senator Sykes and you have been a great working team and managing this difficult schedule. So thank you.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:20:35] Thank you. I am encouraged by the optimism that I hear in this, on this commission today. So I would just echo that the introduction of a map is not the end of the process, it's the action necessary to commence the next set of hearings, which we have already set. And that does create the opportunity for bipartisan discussions. And certainly the the House majority staff is available the next three days and throughout the hearings. And Blake Springhetti is the staff person that has been working on this, which we've previously acknowledged and stated, and again, many, many times of sleepless nights. And I would also add that the software and the equipment was all set up way in advance, not way in advance, but in advance of knowing, of getting the census data so it would be ready when it came. So there was really no delay, but rather, on the contrary, an opportunity to move this along as fast as possible, understanding the truncated process. So I would also say that having these hearings provides a greater opportunity for the public to understand. I mean, some are, you know, very interested in the map. Others are very interested in the concept. And we hope that many members of the public will actually tune in, log on and look at the maps and see the contrast and understand what the discussion is that is going on. So public education is also a part of this process. I would also add that in these hearings to come, experts are welcome to come and testify. We've heard, you know, the need for some of that. This is an opportunity for experts to come and to provide their expertise, whichever side of the equation they're on. Maybe they'll all be on the on the same path, which would, that would really help things a lot. And so this is a great opportunity. So no further discussion? I have the staff call the roll.

Staff [00:22:59] Co-Chair Cupp.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:23:00] Yes

Staff [00:23:01] Co-Chair Senator Sykes.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [00:23:02] No.

Staff [00:23:04] Governor DeWine.

Governor Mike DeWine [00:23:05] Yes.

Staff [00:23:06] Auditor Faber.

Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:23:07] Yes.

Staff [00:23:08] President Huffman.

Senate President Matt Huffman [00:23:09] Yes.

Staff [00:23:10] Secretary LaRose.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:23:11] Yes.

Staff [00:23:13] Leader Sykes.

State Representative Emilia Sykes [00:23:13] No.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:23:18] The vote is five to two, the motion passes, the commission has now introduced its map, which is publicly available. In addition to the hearings, I also, we have agreed that the next meeting of the Ohio Redistricting Commission will be at 10 a.m. Wednesday, September 15th, 2021, and it will be, go back to the House, it will be in room 313, the known as the House Finance Room. All right, at this time, then, we're moving into the witness testimony. Again, this testimony, as provided in the notice, is limited to comment on statewide General Assembly proposed maps. And if there is a map that someone which is yet to propose, you would have 10 minutes, more or less, to do that. If you just wish to comment on one of the proposed full statewide maps, the rules provide for five minutes to do that. If you testify, we'd ask you to state your name, and if you are testifying to a complete statewide map and whether you are a plan sponsor or a general witness. So do we have any witnesses slips? All right, first witness is a Gerald, let me find your name up here, Gerald Barna? Right. He has provided witness or written testimony. Our next witness are Ariunaa Bayanjargac. I'm not saying that right, so we're going to have you come and spell your name and and pronounce it for us. And I would ask, are are you testifying to a complete statewide?

Bayanjargac [00:25:50] I'm sorry?

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:25:51] Are you testifying to a complete statewide map?

Bayanjargac [00:25:53] Yes. Hello, Commissioners. My name is Ariunaa Bayanjargac. I'm an MD PhD candidate at the Ohio State University, studying biology of pediatric cancer. I moved to America when I was 18 years old with three hundred dollars in my pocket. Even then, I was able to recognize the potential and the promise of the United States of America, where an immigrant can aspire to participate in democracy. I watched American democracy from the sidelines for more than 10 years, until I became a U.S. citizen. The importance of exercising our votes as citizen had been strongly emphasized while I was preparing for the civics test and when I became the US citizen. I knew I was joining an imperfect country, but I also knew I was joining a country that aspires for a more perfect union. When I cast my first vote at the ballot, I saw many of these imperfections at the ballot box, of our American political system. The issues I care personally and professionally, is not, has not, been the topic of any discussion or policy. Instead, Ohio politicians pander to the coal industry corporations and powerful few. Despite the disappointment I felt with my options at the ballot box and beyond, I still firmly believe the way to participate in American democracy is through voting, through fair and transparent elections. As our elected officials, you have a duty to ensure we Ohioans are fairly represented at the state and at the federal level because we spoke up. We want fair maps and fair representations that reflect who we are and what our values are. The current process, which we hold hearing today, is not neither fair nor transparent process that Ohioans wanted. Here are some examples: waiting until the last minute to assemble the commission and blaming the timeline is not a fair or transparent process. Giving the public less than twenty four hours to prepare testimony is limiting who can voice their voice. Proposing a map late in the process and blaming the census data when more than 20 organizations were able to draw maps from easily accessible data to lawmakers. GOP prepared map doesn't meet the VRA requirement. They looting down the BIPOC community's political power and also does not ensure fair representation of partisanship in Ohio. This blatant effort to limit and dilute people's political power is anti-American. The beauty and promise of America, that depends on the fact that my vote counts just as your vote. As our elected official, now is your time to stand up and fulfill the promise of America by ensuring Ohioans have fair maps and representation through a transparent process. And thank you for your time.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:29:06] And thank you and I would just remind future witnesses today that the testimony is limited to a plan, a statewide plan, not general comments. So we can move through this and we have, there's the next six days to testify on these maps. Is there an additional witness? Next to Shela Blanchard from Columbus, Ohio. Miss Blanchard, are you testifying on a statewide map?

Blanchard [00:29:56] At this point, yes, yes.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:29:58] And you a sponsor or witness, a general witness? Are you testifying as a sponsor or a general witness?

Blanchard [00:30:04] A general witness.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:30:05] Right. If you state your name for the record, you may proceed.

Blanchard [00:30:08] Yes. Sheila Blanchard, S-H-E-L-A, B-L-A-N-C-H-A-R-D. And thank you for allowing me to speak today. I am looking at reviewing the proposed maps and that is what I am here to speak to on today. I initially wanted to speak about the effects of it and how it, a lot of people don't understand the effects of an injustice map, an unfair map. But as I'm looking at this map that was presented this morning, I am wondering and my question is, down here in District 8, 9, 7, at the bottom - is that clear? I see overlap. Just not understanding that overlap and it just, I don't know, just looks, I don't want to say the word junk, but just unfair as to how are the people that can be fairly represented. And this section of our state, 8, 9, 7, then you have 14, which I've never really understood, because in the Cincinnati area down there on the border of Ohio, you have this large, and I don't have the statistics with me of how many people are here and in District 14. Why is that split between the 14 all there right there on the river? Is there, I'm real confused about that, so maybe that's something that could possibly be addressed. Also here, it just does not stand in 17. That - do you follow me? So anyway, today I wanted to speak to the map, but I also wanted to speak to you individually and say that as a african-American, that these maps do not represent the effects that the unfair just drawn maps affect everything from prison reform, criminal justice, our education system, our budget system, common sense gun legislation. And it affects me when I go to the gas station. It affects me for any and everything, not just me, but all people of Ohio. And from Lake Erie to Cincinnati, these maps are not fair. And so I just ask from my perspective and from the people of Ohio to revisit, and that's what you're planning to do over the next few days. I don't know how you're going to do it within seven days, but I'm praying that you are able to come back with something that is more fair and just for all people of Ohio, not just for the one percent, but for 100 percent of the state. We went to the ballot box, we requested fair maps. And so we just, following the Ohio constitution, that's what we deserve. And so as I look at this, I'm just looking at one. And it just does not, I'm just asking for more. Thank you for your time.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:34:10] Thank you for your testimony. Any questions for the witness? Yes, okay. Leader Sykes?

State Representative Emilia Sykes [00:34:20] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize. I don't have a question for you, but thank you for testifying with us. Just as your testimony did illuminate something I think might be helpful for all of us as we're just taking in the feedback. I mean, the maps that we have, we have a PDF form and in various colors, in lines and numbers, the house maps are incredibly difficult to see, especially in the urban

areas where they're very tight. So is there any way that we could have either staff support, help us explain or understand some of these issues? For example, as I just heard, the testimony about the Senate districts, 8, 9, and 7. I don't know what communities are even a part of these districts. I know the map pretty well, and the counties pretty well. So is there some way that we can have either staff support so we could identify exactly what people are testifying about? I know we all just got this information this morning and we're struggling to do our best to adhere to the the question about what, of testifying solely on these state legislative maps. But it's a little hard to get quality feedback when the maps aren't labeled by county, by city. And it's just some of that detailed information we just don't have yet. So I don't know if I have an answer to the question, but perhaps someone on the commission does.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:35:49] We will work to have a larger, and the problem is these are large maps that are condensed, real small, and you can't see them. And I was having the same issue. So we'll try to figure out a way of getting additional information, maybe larger, larger maps in some way so it can be better elucidated. So. All right, next witness is Steven Castro. He says no testimony on. Welcome welcome back, Stephen.

Castro [00:36:21] Thank you.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:36:22] Are you testifying as a, on a statewide map, complete statewide map?

Castro [00:36:27] I am.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:36:28] Alright

Castro [00:36:28] I am commenting on maps, multiples.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:36:30] All right. Very good. Are you a sponsor or a general witness?

Castro [00:36:33] General witness.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:36:35] Well you may proceed and state your name for the record, please.

Castro [00:36:37] OK. Thank you, Co-Chairs and commission members. My name is Steve Castro. I'm coming from Reynoldsburg. I testified in Zanesville. Previously, I testified on measuring compactness. It's something I consider really important personally and is in the Constitution. So first of all, I just want to say thank you so much for providing the digital files. That was one of the things I requested. So both the Democrats and the Republicans have released the digital files on the redistricting website. And I'm very thankful for that because I was able to analyze both the Democrats and the Republicans maps. I scrambled to do that this morning in time to be here today. So I want to talk about three maps and two principles. First, I want to say the Democrats and the Republicans proposals are actually very similar in terms of compactness. They are better in terms of compactness than the current maps, which is a good thing. Their averages are pretty much similar, almost identical. We're talking about, now, I'm talking, I'm using the measure convexity coefficient. So we're looking at seventy five percent average convexity for the House maps for both the Democrats and Republicans, so very, very similar. Now, the Republicans, the minimum is a little bit lower. So the median is a little bit lower. And there

are, there are more lower compact districts on the Republican side. But at the same time, there's there's a lot fewer, when you start going up to like 60 percent, it's actually a little better for the Republicans map. So basically, in terms of compactness, they're both very, very similar. However, the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission, who has submitted a proposal, their maps are far more compact than either one of these maps. So we're talking about eighty one percent on the House side and 83 percent on the Senate side. So far, more far more compact. And so I'll just say that, you know, when I testified before, I said that less than 50 percent convexity, I consider kind of a red line. You know, a glass less than half full is objectively not full by any by any standard. So. With the current map, let's start with the house, with a current map that we have right now, we have fourteen districts under 50 percent. The Democrats have proposed eleven a little better, could be better, but it is better than what we have now. Republicans and even better, nine, the OCRD has two, two districts less than 50 percent compact. That is highly compact. And on the Senate side, we're looking at four for the Democrats and two for the Republicans, both better than what we have right now. And the OCRC has zero districts, zero Senate districts below 50 percent. The OCRC has produced a highly compact map. And so showing that it is possible and that we should consider looking at the OCRC's map. Now, the second principle I want to talk about is Section 6B. Now I'm going to use the term proportional party favoring districts. I think the term representational fairness, it was left out of the Constitution intentionally. I think proportional party favoring is much closer to, you know, what the Constitution actually says. Now, and when we, first we'll start with the Democrats and Republicans maps. The Democrats for the House, they've achieved 55 to 44. That was from their presentation. That is, I haven't heard anyone argue that that's not correct. I mean, that's very roughly what it should be. Now, the OCRC has also achieved 55 44 in the House. So the OCRC and the Democrats have achieved very similar proportional party favoring, as the Constitution expects. However, the Republicans maps that they've submitted this morning are not near that at all. So instead of, so if 55 is somewhere ideal, they've given 56 safe districts to the Republicans and only 23 for the Democrats. So they've given themselves more safe districts than what to the Republicans than what the target is and half as many for the Democrats. And that's just safe seats. Now, as far as the competitive districts. Competitive districts, I believe, are fully constitutional, I don't think every single district has to be party favoring, but if you look at the way they still lean, now you're talking about 66 districts for the Republicans and 33 for Democrats. This is nowhere near the constitutional expectation of proportional party favoring and some people have characterized this section as aspirational, and I want to push back on that. Because I think, yes, it says, you know, you shall attempt, that is a constitutional requirement to try. And when you have a failure, and as Senator Sykes has pointed out, this is worse than what we have now in terms of Republican favoring districts on the House side. And I just want to point out, the aspirational should not be confused for optional. This is something that the Constitution expects this commission to strive for. And so, and I also say that proportional party favoring, I disagree with the assessment that it's in somehow in conflict with Section 6A. I believe, you know, we can't be making maps to favor one party. And I think Section B saying that the that need to be proportionately party favoring is specifying this is the way that you avoid favoring one party over the other. It is not in conflict. It is how you do it. And so, and I'll also say that if when the Democrats produce a map that still keeps the Republicans in the majority, you can't rightly say that that is somehow favoring the Democrats. They could have made a map that, you know, gave the Democrats a majority, but they didn't. They did it according to the Constitution. So I just want to say that in terms of compromising between the Democrats and Republicans maps that have been proposed, I believe the Democrats maps are much closer to where the compromise should be and that the Republicans maps, I'd really like them to go back to the drawing board. I think it's very far from what the Constitution is expecting in terms of this proportional party

favoring Section 6B. And I think that at some point, if it's not proportional party favoring districts, which such as the one that's been proposed, that I would say that they have demonstrated a failure to attempt to adhere to this. And so I consider that unconstitutional. So finally, I would just say I highly advocate this commission to accept the OCRC's proposed map that has been submitted, it's available on the redistricting site. If there is a compromise that doesn't consider the OCRC, I think the Democrat's is much closer to it. And as far as Republicans, I think it's far too far away from the constitutional expectations to be considered something you should accept.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:43:54] Mr. your time has expired.

Castro [00:43:57] OK, I'll say one last thing. The Republicans map on the Senate side has the lowest.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:44:01] I'll give you one minute to conclude.

Castro [00:44:02] I'm sorry, has the lowest district convexity the last several decades of any of the maps at twenty five percent. Are there any questions?

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:44:12] Questions for the witness? Thank you very much. Interesting testimony. Next witness is Tala Dahbour. Welcome, are you testifying on a map today?

Dahbour [00:44:38] Yes.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:44:40] Alright. And are you a planned sponsored or general witness?

Dahbour [00:44:42] General witness.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:44:45] Spell your name for the record, if you would, and then you may proceed. You have five minutes.

Dahbour [00:44:49] Sure. T-A-L-A. Last name D-A-H-B-O-U-R. Good afternoon. Co-Chair Cupp, Co-Chair Sykes and members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission. My name is Tala Dahbour and I'm here today testifying on behalf of the Ohio chapter of the Council on American Islamic Relations, known as CAIR Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to present testimony in support of the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission proposed Unity Maps. As a civil rights and advocacy organization for Ohio Muslims and a proud member of the Equal Districts Coalition, CAIR Ohio has been working for several months to fight for fair maps. Muslims. Who are often the subject of political discourse, rarely have the opportunity to advocate for themselves. As it stands, Islamophobia, racism, xenophobia pervades our political system, leading to the creation of discriminatory policy. This emphasizes the need for diverse representation among our elected officials. At the very least, Muslims should have adequate representation in government that will be accessible and responsive, much less advocate for our needs. The redistricting process is crucial to establishing proportional representation and ensuring that all Ohioans have a voice at the ballot box. This is why Ohioans overwhelmingly voted for these reforms. Also, part of these reforms was for this process to be fair, transparent and provide ample opportunity for public input. Thus far, we have seen this commission seriously challenge the spirit of the redistricting reforms Ohioans were promised. Today's hearing was announced with one day's notice and during work hours for most Ohioans. Fair maps

come from a fair process, and we are deeply concerned that that is not what we are getting here today. The Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission has accomplished what this commission has failed to do. The OCRC has been regularly soliciting public input from across the state during the biweekly meeting since May of this year with ample opportunity for public testimony. The OCRC has made a concerted effort to get perspectives from minority groups such as our Muslim community. For example, one of our Muslim community members [indecipherable name] testified about her residential community around the Noor Islamic Cultural Center, one of the biggest mosques in central Ohio. She testified about how her neighbors are split between two congressional and two state House districts, therefore diluting their collective voting power as a community. The OCRC was able to take Hadia's testimony into account when drawing the proposed unity maps. These maps meet all of the relevant constitutional requirements and mostly, and most importantly, reflect representational fairness. To reach representational fairness, we strongly believe this warrants 15 state Senate Democratic seats and 40 for state representative Democratic seats. Over the last decade, Ohio Republicans have only captured about fifty five percent of the statewide vote. Our maps need to reflect that reality. Such an important task that implicates all Ohioans and has the power to dictate policy reforms demands a substantial amount of time care and attention. With looming deadlines and hearings announced with such short notice, the commission clearly does not appreciate the great responsibility that has been assigned to them. We need to ensure that Ohio voters are fairly represented in Ohio government seats for the next 10 years. These maps will shape our lives, laws and policies for the, for at least the next decade. We need fair maps to make sure all of us, especially immigrant communities like mine and other communities of color, are fairly and equitably represented, no exceptions. Thank you for your time today. This concludes my testimony.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:48:55] All right. Thank you. Any questions for the witness? Representative, Leader.

State Representative Emilia Sykes [00:49:01] Thank you to the Co-Chair and thank you for your testimony today. I do recall, Hadia's testimony in Cleveland and she discussed how the mosque that she was a member of has members who live nearby but separated in plenty, and numerous committees- or excuse me, state legislative districts, as well as congressional ones. Based on what you know about the map that was just adopted, I know you talked about the the unity maps, but based on the maps that were just adopted today, does, would the mosque in the community that it serves be treated fairly, as far as you can tell, under what it was just adopted this afternoon?

Dahbour [00:49:41] Thank you, Leader Sykes, for your question. Unfortunately, I have not been able to make that determination just based on the amount of time I was given in order to come here prepared. So I hope that that's something that we'll be able to discover. Thank you.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:50:02] Thank you, I appreciate that. I was just informed we have twenty - No, I'm fine, thank you very much. Twenty seven witnesses to go. So what I would again ask you to limit it to five minutes each and if you could try not to be repetitive. So if you have a new point to add in talking to the map, that would probably be most helpful to the commission. The next witness is. Tony D'Ambrosio from Cincinnati. Is Tony here? The next witness then is Sue Dyke. Is Sue here -.

Dyke [00:51:02] [Indecipherable].

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:51:08] Then you may proceed. Please limit your comments to the map.

Dyke [00:51:17] I will. I had my chance to speak. I just had a couple of questions. You know, it's really hard to comment on the maps when the counties and the communities aren't labeled. Really hard.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:51:30] Well, that'll be coming. These are little tiny maps, but that'll all be labeled.

Dyke [00:51:36] But that speaks to the rushed process and the fact that, you know. So I think that, like I said, it's difficult to comment on, when the proper preparations have not happened. Any map has the cities and the counties identified and the communities. Otherwise, it's just it's just a drawing on a piece of paper. And also the maps, I notice, were taken away. So we can't even really look at them. And we asked for them to be put back and they said that they didn't know if they had them anymore. Where are they? Where they'd go? Don't know? I mean, I would really like to take a closer look, but I can't. And so if you're out, if you're being very, very a stickler about commenting on the maps, you're not providing the resources that are needed for people to make good testimony about the maps. And the one thing I would like to mention, because President Huffman over here mentioned earlier that he was not running the process, then my question is, is why is his name the only one that's on the map that was submitted by the GOP? Those are my comments. Thank you.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:52:47] Thank you.

Dyke [00:52:50] Questions?

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:52:50] Next witness. Next witness is Richard Gunther from Worthington. Is Richard here? All right, next witness. Is Stanley Hertel from Dayton, Stanley here? Next witness. Christopher Hicks from Cincinnati. Welcome, Mr. Hicks.

Hicks [00:53:40] Well, thank you. I'm a general witness, and I think on the full map.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:53:44] Very good may proceed.

Hicks [00:53:45] So thank you for the opportunity to speak. I'm going to try to be brief and take less than five minutes. My comments eventually are going to be specifically on the distribution of seats in the maps and of what I know and what I've read in the press so far. I just want to precursor to them by saying I think I'm more conservative than any person sitting up there. I'm a conservative right wing Republican and I wish most of my Republican friends up there would be more conservative. OK, so, but I just wanted to comment before giving you the distribution that we're here because the Constitution requires you to be here. The Constitution requires you to be here. You know, it also requires that this meeting is electronically streamed. It also requires that there be citizen input. And I just like to ask the question, why isn't that the standard for all public meetings in Ohio? Why isn't that the standard for all public meetings in Ohio? Now, specifically starting to move into the district maps. There's two things I want to hit on. What do districts matter if the legislature does not meet and get the business of the citizens done? If the legislator is not meeting, acting and being on the record, taking up and down vote on things that the citizens are clamoring in the streets about, whatever they be, Republican things, Democrat things, but that the citizens see their legislature acting, districts mean

nothing. What's the point of electing people that don't meet and act on the business of the citizens? One of those things, for me as a conservative, I know some people here might not agree with me, would be House Bill 248. At least there should be an up and down vote on whether there should be vaccine mandates allowed in Ohio. Why doesn't our citizen, why doesn't our legislature meet to even allow those votes to take place and what do districts matter? Second point I want to make before talking about the specific distribution is, what the districts matter if dark money controls our elections in Ohio? I just received a piece in the mail from Mike DeWine's people, I guess, from Ohioans for Free and Fair Elections. Do we really need another dark money PAC trying to buy elections in Ohio? I notice that that PAC is not registered with the Federal Election Commission. It is also not registered with the Secretary of State. Even Larry Householder registered Growth and Opportunity PAC with both of those things. Even Larry Householder had the decency to do that. But one thing that is common to them is Ohioans for Free and Fair Elections is incorporated in Delaware, just like Larry Householder incorporates his dark money operations.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:56:15] Do you have comments going to the map?

Hicks [00:56:18] Now I'm going to speak specifically about the distribution on the map. So I already told you I'm a right wing conservative. I would love right wing conservatives in our government offices and in our legislature to feel some heat. So that they would get the business done. I don't like the idea, if I believe the press reports I read, of a map that increases Republican control and I'm a conservative Republican. I want there to be debate. I want there to be legislative sessions. So I'm very concerned with a map that increases control, even though I'm a right wing Republican, I want you guys to keep control. But I want our government to work for the people. I want to remind people here, and Mr. Cupp, this might be something you'll remember, that in 2012, the map process went to the Supreme Court. At the time, that was a six to one Republican majority on the Supreme Court, six - one Republican majority on the Supreme Court. At the time, Justice O'Connor voted with the Democrats on the map. Now it's a four three majority. Now Justice O'Connor's Chief Justice O'Connor, you might remember this because you were on the Supreme Court when this took place, which is another thing about fair districts, competitive districts is we have a revolving door system in Ohio. You're on the Supreme Court, you're in this, you're in this, you're in this, you're in this. And I think Republican and Democrat people are sick of this. We want districts that allow for vibrant competition, that get the people, that get our legislators and our elected officials focused on at least meeting to get the business of the citizens done. Heck of House bill 248 doesn't pass in an up and down vote, at least that had a vote. At least it got taken care of. So I would encourage that you really think about the map that's been proposed, because I see it landing at the Supreme Court again. And that's, the makeup of the Supreme Court's different than it was back in 2012. Mr. Cupp, you would know that. So the map that's been proposed and the notion of gerrymandering to increase control, I don't think as a conservative Republican is the right answer. Frankly, I want my Republicans to feel some heat, to feel some heat so that they would get the business done that I think a lot of grassroots Republicans want to see get done. Instead of hiding behind big majorities to not get anything done. I thank you very much for the time to address you today.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:58:41] Thank you, Mr. Hicks. Are there questions for the witness?

Hicks [00:58:52] Hearing none?

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:58:53] Hearing none. My five minute marker went off, I was trying to shut it off, so. The next witness is Susan Jolly. Susan is from Springfield. OK. Next witness. Benita Kahn from Bexley.

Kahn [00:59:32] Good afternoon, general testimony on the, I guess, the map that was presented this morning. It wasn't really designated as the Redistricting Commission map, so but that is what I would like to talk about.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [00:59:47] Very good. You may proceed. You have five minutes.

Kahn [00:59:49] Yep. I'm from Bexley, Ohio, which is currently House District 18, Senate District 15, Congressional District 3. I'm testifying today because of the history of unfair practices, lack of transparency and failure to allow, much less accept, public input when drawing maps after the 2010 census. These unfair practices resulted in Ohio voters passing, by seventy one percent and seventy five percent, amendments to the Constitution for redistricting commission to draw new legislative and congressional maps. And in spite of this history and the adoption of Articles 11 and 19 to the Ohio Constitution, this process is still broken. Ohio voters wanted to ensure transparency and real public participation in the redistricting process, and of particular importance is the map proposed by the Redistricting Commission. From what I indicated, I thought was this morning's. We voted for the creation of districts that are compact, contiguous, do not favor or disfavor either political party, have limited splitting of counties, municipalities and townships. And I will add here, the map that I was able to pull up from the website, there's no way I can tell whether counties, municipalities or townships are split on that map. So we definitely need something better to be able to look at to determine that. They're also supposed to correspond closely to the preference of Ohio voters over the last 10 years. This is what the Redistricting Commission's map should reflect, but since that map was submitted at 9:30 this morning, certainly there's not adequate time, especially for us to review that issue, whether it corresponds to the preference of Ohio voters. But against the clear will of the voters, the transparency and true ability of public participation have not been met, as has indicated, that's indicated by the significant delay in appointing members to the Redistricting Commission, Redistricting Commission, getting it started, the failure to timely introduce maps to the public by September 1st, so at least there would be some time to review the proposed ninety nine House districts and thirty three Senate districts prior to hearings. And the requirements under our Constitution have complexity, which requires time for the public to review and provide real input. That's not what's happening here. So in spite of this clear September one requirement to provide the maps, the commission submitted its map this morning at 9:30. The impact of the 2010 unfair districts has been clear. And I think, while we are on opposite sides of our political views, the last witness and I are in agreement on one thing, the gerrymandered districts have skewed heavily in one political direction, and that's resulted in Ohio voters, including myself, having their voice and their vote limited or lost at the Ohio legislature. Their House Senate is currently seventy five percent Republica, twenty five percent Democrat, the House is sixty five, thirty five split in favor of Republicans. And in particular, the public must have time to review the repos, the proposed maps, to ensure that they shall correspond closely to the statewide preference of Ohio voters based on, quote, "statewide, state and federal partisan general election results during the last ten years". I would ask, what process did this commission go through to determine if that map complies with this statewide preference? I would also ask, at some point you will have to submit a statement as to how you came to that conclusion. And I want to know who's going to write that statement and what you think that statement is going to be. Ohio's gerrymandered districts have resulted in politicians

making extreme positions to win primaries, knowing they don't really have to do anything in a skewed district in a general election. That's eliminated the incentive to compromise at the legislature on issues that are Ohio, are important to really almost all Ohioans. They're just not taken care of. Rather than voters having the freedom to elect officials who represent them, this once again looks like the officials have created districts to select voters that represent the officials position. So in closing, I want to emphasize the importance of having a transparent process with time for real public input that is recognized and taken, that there is time to do that, and that the districts must be compact, contiguous, not favor or disfavor either political party and correspond closely to the preference of Ohio voters over the last 10 years. We cannot have fair representation if voters voices are silenced. Any questions?

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:05:12] Thank you. Are there questions for the witness?

Kahn [01:05:15] Thank you.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:05:16] Seeing none, thank you. Deborah Krantz from Columbus, Deborah? Next witness. Linda Mackoff. From Worthington. Lucianne McCloskey from Dayton. Welcome.

McCloskey [01:05:58] Hi, Speaker Cupp, Senator Sykes and members of the commission, thank you for this opportunity to speak. My name is Lucianne McCloskey and I'm a resident of Washington Township, Montgomery County. I'm speaking today, I would like to speak in support of the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission map. As previous witnesses have stated it leads the other proposals in compactness and representational, proportional representation. Both of these criteria are essential and of utmost importance to the voters. I cannot comment on the Republican plan because unfortunately, it wasn't available until after I had to leave home this morning. From what I understand, it lags the other plans in the important considerations of compactness, competitiveness and representational fairness. The fact that it doesn't show political subdivisions makes it impossible to evaluate on the criteria, criterion, of not dividing political jurisdictions and suggests that it was not submitted in good faith for public input. When the people of Ohio went to the polls in 2015 and again in 2018 to pass constitutional amendments to reform the redistricting process, the people spoke loud and clear. We want an end to gerrymandering. We want to choose our representatives and we want them to work for us. We've seen the results of gerrymandering over the last 10 years. Uncompetitive districts are represented by unresponsive legislators. The legislature has time to pass laws on hot button issues that are actually supported by only a minority of citizens. But they fail to act on significant issues and pass legislation that has the support of a majority of Ohioans. Special interests wield unprecedented power, and unprecedented corruption has followed. Now, it is up to this commission to implement the new requirements, how you do this will tell the people of Ohio much about you as leaders of our government. Will you produce a map with fair districts? That give voters real choice and their representatives are will you use all the wiggle room you can find to produce maps that deserve partisan advantage and ensure that incumbents will be reelected? If you choose the first course, you'll show the world that you are statesmen who serve the people and who work to strengthen democracy. If you choose the latter course, you'll reveal that you serve the interests of your party and yourselves and that you value control more than democracy. We understand that you're laboring under constraints brought on by the delay in receiving the census data, but we also know that you delayed in organizing the commission and lost valuable time that could have been used to lay the groundwork for a fair mapmaking process. We appreciate that you're holding public hearings, but hearings convened with

only one day's notice don't give most Ohioans the opportunity for meaningful participation. The maps you draw will bind all Ohioans for years to come. They will affect our health and safety, our children's education and our elders well-being. The people of Ohio want a legislature that represents us and passes laws that support our priorities. The people are watching. We know what was done 10 years ago, and we have made it clear at the ballot box that it should not happen again. It's in your hands now. Show us that you are statesman in service to the people of Ohio and give us fair and competitive districts. Thank you for your time and for consideration of my words.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:10:45] Thank you. I assume that you know, as we announced in the hearing date that Sunday there's a hearing in Dayton, so you won't have to drive so far next time.

McCloskey [01:10:57] Thank you.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:10:59] The commission will take a five minute recess and then we'll reconvene.

Recess [01:11:06] [Recess].

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:11:06] Back to order, the next witness that we have is Diane Meeves from Columbus, Ohio. Diane? Diane Meeves? Meryl Neiman from Bexley. Meryl and I see you marked here you want to talk about the Senate Republican plan, so

Neiman [01:11:33] I'm sorry I missed what you just said.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:11:35] And I see you've marked here you want to talk about the Senate Republican plan.

Neiman [01:11:40] Yes.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:11:40] You have five minutes.

Neiman [01:11:43] Sorry, I'm just throwing this up here, so my apologies and thank you.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:11:48] That's all right. We understand technology and it's harder for us to probably do it than you.

Neiman [01:11:54] I had major printer problems this morning, so I'm working off my phone here, but thank you for affording me this opportunity. My name, as you mentioned, is Meryl Neiman. I'm in Bexley, which is part of the Columbus area. I'm disappointed that we've already lost several members of the commission. It was nice to actually see all of you for once here at one place as part of this process. I previously testified at the hearing in Mansfield. I'm testifying once more because I am dismayed by how the majority members of the commission have been advocating their constitutional responsibility. And I think that that's been manifested in the map that was so quickly introduced and then voted on to move forward as your working proposal. But before I get into the substance of that testimony, I wanted to again point out what a privilege it is for me and others to be here today. And I don't mean like what a joy it is. I mean like an actual privilege. Most Ohioans, as you know, don't live in the Columbus area like myself or have the ability to travel somewhere else like I did to go to Mansfield. Most don't have the luxury of being able to attend a hearing during the day. I noticed that once again, it's a challenge for even some

of you all to be attending a meeting during the work day. Most people don't have the ability to stay so on top of this process that they even know that a hearing has been scheduled with less than 24 hours notice. Many people don't have Internet access or a printer or they have a bum one like I did this morning to be able to download and complete the witness slip. And others may be understandably uncomfortable about being indoors in a large group during our fourth covid wave that's overtaking Ohio. And again, especially with, you know, members of the commission and others, not even sort of demonstrating the courtesy of wearing a mask to protect those who might be vulnerable. So I had asked in Mansfield for hearings to be offered virtually and to be offered in the evening so that all Ohioans who want to participate would be able to access the process. But but they can't under these conditions. I find that disappointing. And at least in the spirit of the Constitution, I find that, you know, really upsetting, right, that you would not want to deny, that you would not want to print it everyone took to participate and that's been manifested again by the schedule going forward for the next few hearings, have the same problems. But so now for the substance. So, you know, obviously, we're all here today, and as I said in Mansfield, because no matter our color or background, our zip code, most of us can agree that voters should pick their leaders and leaders shouldn't pick their voters. And that's why every decade we have this process. And that's why Ohioans went to the polls and voted in vast numbers for the constitutional amendments to reorient the process from where it had been in the past in terms of how we got here to a gerrymandered state. The electoral maps are supposed to ensure that each of our votes have equal weight, each of our voices are equally heard and each of our communities has equal access to government resources. And that's what was supposed to happen and it wasn't. And so that was what was supposed to be corrected through these amendments. But now we're seeing with this map that just appeared today, I'm really disappointed that Senator Huffman is not here because it seems to be his baby, this map. But it's you know, from the testimony that I saw this morning, they did not meet. It does not even on its face attempt to meet the constitutional requirements. Someone, I was wanting to ask him, but presumably Senator Huffman, advised the map drafters as they testified not to even look at the demographic data when drawing their maps so that we know on its face that there's no way it can be compliant with the Voting Rights Act because they were directed, improperly, not to look at that. They also testified that they have not assessed their map to see whether it complies with Section 6 for representational fairness. And now from the brief time that people have had to review the maps, it's clear that it does not. So how you could be voting to move forward a map that on its face, although someone said again, I think it was Senator Huffman, that it's constitutionally compliant. It is not. And so it's one thing to say we're going to all huddle together and work to come to agreement among the parties. But you put forward a map that we didn't have time to talk about, that we had all these hearings about nothing but the process, which is the same thing we all voted for already. And now we have this no opportunity-

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:17:53] Your time has expired.

Neiman [01:17:55] OK, well, just to finish up, we've had no opportunity to speak. You then, at the beginning of the second hearing - so it was strategic, right? - the first hearing you throw out the map and then at the beginning of the second hearing you vote. So in no way were you even pretending to take feedback on whether the map that you are really working on was something that the people are comfortable with. And I think it's really appalling that you knew on its face that it wasn't constitutionally compliant. And I'm just going to remind you all, as I did in Mansfield, that we are still watching that even if you attempt to do the same thing that was done, you know, even worse, perhaps with regard to the rigging and the cheating and the gerrymandering, this is in the Constitution and we will

continue to watch. We will be on social media. We will be here. We will be at the courthouse, the Supreme Court.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:18:51] Your time is expired.

Neiman [01:18:51] And we'll make sure that our our rights as voters, all of us, Republican and Democrats, are respected. Thank you. Do you have any-

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:19:01] Are there any questions?

Neiman [01:19:02] Questions for me? I really did want to ask questions of some of you, but they disappeared.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:19:08] Thank you. I would note that Senator Antani is sitting as a designee for Senator Huffman, the rest of the afternoon. Next witnesses is Meryl, Meryl Neeman. That was. Oh, did I? OK.

Neiman [01:19:36] You know, Senator Huffman, the person who directs the drafters of the map to ignore the Voting Rights Act and not consider demographic information, since you're his designee, what do you know that?

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:19:53] All right, let's let's move on to the next witness.

Neiman [01:19:55] [Indecipherable]

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:19:58] Well, let's move, let's - Harriet Silv- Silva. Frederick Smith Jr. from Euclid. Frederick Smith. Zara Smith from Bellbrook. Probably not being very loud, I mean, Zara Smith from Bellbrook. Charles Spencer from Cincinnati. Are you here to testify-

Spencer [01:20:43] I'm Charles Spencer from Cincinnati and I bring my warm greetings and respect and gratitude to the Ohio Redistricting Commission. This is difficult work you're doing and it's critical to the well-being of all Ohio citizens. I was fortunate to be born of the son of an Eisenhower Republican dad and Stevenson Democrat mom. They were both committed to civic engagement and they knew they needed strong relationships with the diverse groups of neighbors they each worked together with to improve our communities. Their voices and the sight of them gathered with neighbors at the kitchen table in our home are with me today. In my adult years, I became a strong advocate for social and economic justice and racial equality, but I always considered both the conservative instinct and the progressive instinct to be the lifeblood of our country. It always seemed plain as day to me. That if either party commits itself completely to crushing the other party, it will be a disaster for both parties and for our country. So it is natural for me to be an advocate of the Ohio Constitution's Articles 11 and 12 and its standards for redistricting. I'm speaking today in support of the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission's plan and maps as much as I could read in the time allowed. My district, my House of Representative district and where I am in Cincinnati, is a lot better than what we have now in that plan and I will do more reading as it becomes available and now that I know where to find everything. We have a good set of guidelines in the Constitution, to the extent that they push us towards fairness, logical ground rules and a transparent process designed to give citizens a chance to review and comment on the commission's progress. It's not surprising that this commission has had a hard time meeting deadlines. That is common. I've studied several redistricting efforts and it's a lot to do, it's complicated, if you

made, move peg A, peg B falls out, so on and so forth. But neither sacrificing public engagement and transparency nor shoddy work should be justified by having to meet deadlines. And I know you all know that, you've been working hard for it on it, as I've heard today, and I know you will continue to do. The commission needs to get it done and according to the Constitution. I urge that the Ohio redistricting commission especially to strive for compact, compact and contiguous legislative districts, to base district boundaries to the extent possible on county, municipal and township boundaries, to seek maps that do not favor one party over the other. And to provide representational fairness that matches the overall percentages of votes the parties have received over the past 10 years and to avoid partisan gerrymandering in all districts, all maps. Now is the time to burn the midnight oil and spare no effort at fairness and an on redistricting plan that will make all Ohioans proud. Thank you. Any questions?

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:24:45] Any questions for Mr. Spencer? Thank you for coming. I would also note that Senator Faber's designee for the rest of the afternoon as Alex Bilchak. Next, witness, Melissa Saul. I think she testified this morning, I believe, yeah. All right, Ralph Turek from Strongsville. Ralph here? Reverend Joan Van Beckler, from Columbus. Renee Westermeyer from Springboro. Jeff Wise from Wyoming, Ohio. Sure, sure. So we have some technical people here that can set that up.

Wise [01:26:24] Also have physical maps I can handle out that would be helpful; should I distribute those?

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:26:30] Sure. Anything that you have you want to submit to the commission, you should do so.

Wise [01:26:34] Let me get those. So hopefully this is going to turn on. And I apologize if it doesn't come through clearly.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:27:12] We do have some folks from IT coming to look at getting this working.

Wise [01:27:17] So, yeah, I had warned ahead of time. So, I mean, I can start talking or you want me to.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:27:23] Go ahead and start talking and then we can-.

Wise [01:27:26] All right.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:27:26] Get all this covered.

Wise [01:27:27] So my name is Jeff Wise, I live in Cincinnati. I attended the 8/24 hearing. Some of you were there. I did a little bit of a kinda dramatic thing here. I'm not doing anything dramatic here. I want to be I want to be serious. And I recognize that the task in front of the committee is pretty, pretty daunting. And what I was prepared to talk about before this morning was how we can do better than the plan that Co-Chair Sykes introduced as well as the OCRC, because at that time I thought there would not be a Republican plan to compare to. And so that's all changed this morning. I looked on the website at nine o'clock and it still wasn't there, but it is now. So that's that kind of changed the dynamic here. But I heard very clearly that the two sides want to come together and form a compromise that's going to work for Ohio. And I think that's great. And if you can listen to me for the next 10 or maybe 15 minutes, you guys can get your weekends back.

You're going to meet a compromise with the plan I have to save everyone the time. I'm serious. And this is going to require compromise from both sides. So you need to listen and hear me out and give me a little gift from this tiny little gift from that side. We're going to get to a plan. And and that's the that's the hope that I have here today. So what I initially planned to share was a comparison of my plan to those the two plans from from the Democrats and the OCRC, which other people have already talked about today. We all already know that we missed the 9/1 deadline and we've got six days to the 9/15 deadline. And the map has to be compliant with Article 11 or else we gets pushed to the courts and might get rejected. And then we're back to where we started, square one. So what I was hoping to share was the comparison of the Sykes and OCRC plans on things like how compact they are, how much people of color get voting, power, competitiveness, fairness, and if there's time, I want to talk about the issue of Senate incumbency, which if Senator Huffman were here, he I know he has a lot of passion for that. So I do address that in my plan. I haven't, I didn't see that in the two planes that were posted before this morning. At this point, I don't think I really need to wait for someone to be able to turn on the monitors.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:29:46] Yeah, we'll the stand at ease-

Wise [01:29:47] I'm sorry.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:29:49] While we get hooked up. No, it's not a problem.

Wise [01:29:55] Are they're on? OK?

At Ease [01:30:00] [At Ease].

Wise [01:30:01] Apologies for the delay. Again I'm from Cincinnati. This is adapted from my 9/15 commission and I'm trying to do a comparison because I think we need to meet in the middle between the plans from one side versus the other. OK? And I just want to be transparent on the process that I use for generating these maps. The team consisted of me, myself and I, and I got a late start. Questions?

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:30:24] Mr. Wise, if you would just direct your comments to the commission.

Wise [01:30:27] Yes, sure. So I started, I started. I got a late start. I saw a sign in someone's yard on the 10th. So I spent about two, three days and equivalent of that on background material and getting ready. And then I was ready to use the census data and it took me about maybe five total days to put together a map, as well as this analysis and presentations, about nine working days total for me from start to finish. So just to get, I don't know how it compares to what's going on here, but that's where it came in. I'm pretty exhausted after doing that. So I'm not going to go through the details of what the maps look like. But I have those comparisons. I did use Dave's Redistricting, which other people are using, which is great. I don't have to explain the methodology, but for those here, it uses the 2020 census data as well as like the past three or four elections. And that leads to about a fifty six - forty four split for the Republicans versus the Democrats. So the analysis I always going to go through - a little bit on, you know, are we compact or not? Are we sufficiently empowering minorities? Is a competitive? And the real thing is, you know, how do we translate votes into seats? That's very important. And if we have time, I want to talk about incumbency. So the first thing I want to look at is are we unnecessarily splitting some cities. Now that certain cities that you cannot split, and those are the last four, the last five or so, in the table and all these are compliant for that. For the larger

cities, we're trying to minimize splits. And the OCRC plan slices and dices a couple of the larger cities more than you'd like. Honestly, Co-Chair Sykes' plan is the best for that. I had a little bit of a piece of Cincinnati I put in the eastern Hamilton County to make a more competitive district there. But those work out well. The other thing you want to do is not overly split urban county, I'm sorry, not urban counties. The rural counties. You know, there's some that you have to split from population, but minimizing that's important to avoid confusion for people there. It's unnecessary to split them too much. So, again, the OCRC plan's a little bit, non desired on that. And then you can look at compactness with very various measures. What I was using is that I know it when you see it measure. A little bit lower than the others on the Senate. And I think it's the way I stitched to it, stitched some things together. On the Senate side as far as, I had this long South Ohio piece. And I've got to, and then I brought Delaware into northern Columbus. We can change those things if people think those are problematic. But otherwise things look pretty good from compactness for all of them. The thing I really want to focus on here is minority power because, and competitiveness, because I think these are two primary measures that people look for. So in those, I'm pretty comparable to the OCRC plan, at least for the House, for the minority power. For the for the Senate, the OCRC does a little bit better, but that's because of what I've done with Dayton, which I can go into that detail later if we need to. The big deal is competitiveness. I've really raised the bar on competitors as far as the number of districts that are competitive, which I think is a really important part of this. So people get quality representation. So I probably glaze over some people here and I just want to cut to the chase here in terms of, you know, how many seats does each party get? I think people really focused on that. How many do we get? How many do we get? And the answer is you don't get seats. You get the opportunity to compete for seats. And I try to make this as competitive as possible. And I try to put as many seats in this box of competition between forty five percent for one party and fifty five percent of the other and vice versa. So by boosting the number of competitive seats, I think we get higher quality government because people are competing across party lines for votes and they're going to resonate more with other voters. So that was really the objective of what I was trying to do. And you can see I got much higher numbers of seats in that box for the Ohio House and also for the Senate. The other thing to notice here is that what that does is that means the swings are going to be bigger than they would be otherwise. If you look at the Ohio House plan for OCRC and Sykes, those numbers don't even get up to 50 percent until you know, you know, all those, all those top friendly seats in that light orange actually go up and then some. So they're never going to get to 50 percent of the of the control of one of those houses, until they get a substantially large portion of those, that didn't even make sense to me why they did it that way. But that's that's the basis of my work here. I'll skip this side here. I just want to talk a little about proportionality, because I think there's a lot of people here who think, OK, if you have fifty five percent seats, votes, that should be fifty five percent seats. And I want to look forward to the congressional districts and thinking this through because the math really easy here. So if you think about congressional districts, we've got 15 of them. If it's about 50 50, that means seven to eight or eight to seven and 50 percent should be that lying or that seat flips. And then the Ohio Republicans tend to do a little bit better than Democrats. So they have a chance to win another seat at about the fifty seven percent threshold. It's going to be very rare for the Republicans to get up to a sixty three percent threshold. It's going to be very rare for the Democrats to have a blue wave and they gain, you know, and they get fifty seven percent and the Republicans get forty three. So if you do something proportional, there's really only two seats in play and that means there are seven safe red seats and six safe blue seats. And when you get that sort of dynamic, you get these types of people on the extremes as you're representatives that you send to Congress, all right. And I don't think we need to send seven of those and six of those to Congress and the same thing for the

Statehouse. So I think there should be some communities where you've got homogeneity and it makes sense to send people on the extremes. But I don't think we should be only sending two people who have to compete for seats across party. So that's a consequence of proportionality. I think we really need to think through before we decide on the final map. And then if you only have two congressional seats that are up for grabs where do we put them? You know, does Cincinnati take a turn for 10 years and hand it off to Dayton? You know? We've got lots of spots in the space in the state where we have, um, we have opportunities for competition. Let's use them to cultivate our political talent and get better results. So we go into a little bit of, a little of the technical detail here, because to really understand how you translate votes into seats, you have to actually look at the seats to votes curve. And so the x axis here is the fraction of votes. In this case, the software says Democratic votes are positive. I know that's a problem for some people, just let that go, okay. But how many seats they get. And most important thing to do is say is that 50 percent votes, you should get 50 percent seats. All right. I think that's that's like a basic thing to you need to do. All right. And if you look at the plan from OCRC and from Sykes, in order to force that proportionality, they actually actually missed that a little bit. And the Democrats don't get quite as many seats when they're having a good year because they're forcing that proportionality. That doesn't make sense to me. Now, in my laptop versus the presentation I pulled in the Huffman plan. I was about to leave here from Cincinnati and I saw them posted. So I ran up into that. The the difference from that fifty - fifty line is much greater for the Huffman plan. It's a really strong partisan bias. In my opinion, it's a nonstarter. We cannot get that sort of a map through the courts. All right. It's just it's just too biased. It's not going to work. I think we need to recognize that we need to make a map that's fair enough that people are going to accept and it's going to get through the courts. So that's the House. And the Senate, it's the same sort of thing. You should be able hit that fifty - fifty line. I can see how I'm really hugging that line of - this is the natural slope of the seats versus vote curve. I know this is technical stuff, but you can just see how they've done this line and they've done that just by switching precincts until they get to a proportional thing, that's the thing you have to distort to get for proportional. So for all those years.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:38:48] Mr. Wise, Mr Wise?

Wise [01:38:49] Yeah?

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:38:49] Can you point out which line you're talking about?

Wise [01:38:52] Sure. I don't know if this thing have a- I'll go over to. Can you see the mouse OK? Yeah, sorry. So here, you see how this green line, you see how it's staying on the curve. With that saying is the response of seats to votes is smooth. But if you look over here, the slope of this line here exceeds the votes, it has to be bent, they have to bend it to make it, to make it proportional. So they're they're artificially contorting the districts so that they get to proportionality. And what, in order to do that, they have to drop districts out of the competitive zone to make that work. All right, so I know this is a technical point, but that's that's the basis of the problem here, is that you're making fewer competitive districts in order to meet this arbitrary standard of proportionality. The Constitution says it has to closely correlate. It doesn't say that has to be exactly proportional. I checked that with LSC Ohio. OK, all right. So I'll skip this, I want to talk a little about incumbency before we go, and that's we have to find a home for all the senators. And Senator Huffman really pointws this out well, last week. There's really, the big problem area is the fact that we've got this mini snake near the lake, I wouldn't say it's on the lake, as far as a House dis- Senate district for number 24, Cuyahoga County. And that creates some problems that I'll show

how we can fix that. So overall, on my map, there is one orphan seat near like the Bellefontaine / Wapakoneta area, because there isn't a natural center to put there. But besides that, everything kind of matches up well, as far as you look at the old districts versus the new districts and where they line up and this comes out better on my laptop than it looks like here. But I can actually match things up, even though you've got some really spidery shape districts now. So all that works, the only problems we have to do is between these two distinguished gentlemen here. We have to figure out who stays in twenty six and who moves to twenty two. I don't know if they're going to thumb wrestle or rock, paper, scissors or dance off. However they're going to figure that out, they can figure it out. And then we have to have Senator Dolan figure out which of these four districts from 2011 is his home. And the other three are odd numbers, so they're going to be open seats. So that, the Senate incumbency problem is solved. The OCRC, I really push those folks to declare what their Senate incumbency plan. I haven't heard from them what that is. I'm not sure if it's clear on Senator Sykes' plan. Obviously, I haven't looked at it for Huffman's, but I have solved that for here. So in summary, you know, you guys can go hash things out for three days and try to meet in the middle. I just try to make that work done for you with realistic compromise between the two parties and I think it's worth taking a look at. I'm happy to take any questions or even later on from the group offline. My contact information is listed on my slides.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:41:58] Any questions for the witness?

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:42:04] Thank you for your testimony. I would just be interested in your complete analysis with the Huffman plan too, so that we could see a total comparison. That would be great.

Wise [01:42:16] Yeah, tonight I'll go back and I'll post that as an update to my public input.

State Senator Vernon Sykes [01:42:21] OK, thank you.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:42:23] Mr. Wise, I know your time has expired.

Wise [01:42:26] Yes.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:42:26] But in a very brief nutshell, what generated your interest in this topic?

Wise [01:42:31] Oh, I've done some research into reforming the US Electoral College, and I could see that there was a gap in really applying the partisan bias ideas here. And I reached out to many people on this committee saying I have this expertise. I'd love to help with this. And I got nowhere, I'll be honest with you. I wanted to help on the inside and help and get this to be a process that would work well. And I just got stonewalled. And so I said, I have to do this by myself.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:43:03] Well, thank you for your interesting testimony and for your initiative and in coming here and doing that. Thank you.

Wise [01:43:09] You're welcome.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:43:16] Next- I've got some here. Next witness is Sarah Yuronka. From Akron.

Yuronka [01:43:38] Good afternoon and thank you. First off, I wanted to, before I talk about the maps, I wanted to thank Senator Sykes and Leader Sykes for wearing their mask. My daughter has been an ICU nurse since the beginning of COVID, and I have never seen her more stressed as she is now. And I strongly encourage everyone to wear a mask at all times. This has not been a fair process. We voted on it. We want a fair process. You all have not shown up to every public hearing except Senator Sykes. You blame the census, yet OCRC drew fair maps. You did not have hearings during times that people can attend. This map process has not been your priority, and it shows to all of us here in Ohio. I have been working in politics for many decades and in the history of Ohio politics, has there ever been a vote where all 88 counties vote in favor of one thing? We did, twice. Our votes should matter. We deserve better from you. We deserve to be represented by competitive districts. We deserve to be heard. We deserve districts to be competitive and representative of who we are. The proposed maps divides marginalized communities and people of color, especially in Cleveland and Akron, because that's where I'm from, Akron. The map should represent us and the elected officials should be accountable to the voters. Every voice in Ohio should be heard. Yet you want us to comment on these maps and answer questions about these maps, but yet you gave them to us a few hours ago and they're not even labeled. So you want us to do something and be here, but not give us the tools to be educated about it. Thank you for your time.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:45:40] All right. I see no questions. So the next witness is Mindy Hedges, I think you testified this morning. All right, Susan Cavanaugh from Columbus. Welcome.

Cavanaugh [01:46:12] Thank you very much. Thank you, Co-Chairs, members of the commission and those of you sitting in for members of the commission. My name is Susan Cavanaugh. That's Cavanaugh C-A-V-A-N-A-U-G-H. I'd like to first comment on the Republican map introduced this morning. I haven't had an opportunity to review it in detail, but I was struck by two things. First, according to the person who introduced it, it did not address Section 6 of the citizen's constitutional amendment. Section 6B states, "the statewide proportion of districts whose voters based on statewide, state and federal partisan general election results during the last 10 years favor each political party shall correspond closely to the statewide preferences of the voters of Ohio." Second, the Republican plan does not address the Voter Rights Act, and the presenters said that the Republican leadership told them not to. I was appalled by that. Now, the OCRC map shows that fair maps are possible. Instead of starting with that, the commission voted just a little while ago. And they voted on partisan lines to start with the highly partisan Republican plan. That's disappointing. I also came to the last meeting of the commission on redistricting, last week, hoping to hear something substantive regarding the work of the commission that would lead to fair redistricting. I left disappointed. When I read the constitutional amendment that created this commission, I read about what the commission shall and shall not do. I read shall as a directive, in the biblical sense, not as a suggestion that the commission might or might not choose to consider. I also came to that meeting with a background that tells me that if a bipartisan plan were to be developed, the first order of business would have been to form a bipartisan subcommittee to start work immediately. I've been around a while, and nothing gets done without that kind of thing. And that still, to my knowledge, hasn't been done, although there's talk about working together over this weekend. Much has been said about the short time span. I, with very limited computer skills, managed to create maps and upload them to the Fair District site eight days ago. I don't accept that people, being paid by the citizens of Ohio, to do this work, don't have the time to do it. At the last meeting, a Democratic plan for maps was submitted. The main objection I heard from a member of this commission, who's not here

at this moment, was that it didn't include the constitutional provision that his job as a senator be protected. I now have no confidence that the commission plans to follow the directive of the citizens of Ohio in drawing bipartisan maps. I really hope I'm wrong, but my only hope at this point is that there are citizens currently working on the next constitutional amendment that could be voted on in twenty, twenty four, and that would take the process away from the legislature and the governor. I'd also like that next amendment to strike Section five of the Ohio Constitution. I see no reason why senators who have their jobs because of gerrymandering, and who have no intention to follow the citizen's constitutional amendment, should have protection. I'm really tired. I didn't like standing on corners, getting signatures, but I am ready to collect signatures again in support of fair elections. Thank you.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:50:51] Thank you.

Cavanaugh [01:50:52] Any questions?

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:50:52] Questions for the witness? Hearing none, thank you. Sandy Bo- yeah, yes, that's it. From Columbus, welcome.

Bolzenius [01:51:09] Thank you.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:51:12] I'll have you pronounce and spell that for the record.

Bolzenius [01:51:14] Oh, Bolzenius, at least that's how I say it. Others in my family say differently. B as in boy, O-L-Z as in zebra, E-N as in Nancy, I-U-S as in Sam.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:51:33] All right, yes, you may proceed.

Bolzenius [01:51:35] Hello, everybody. I have to say, I was barely able to make it here today. I only found out about this hearing last night from a friend who heard about it on some other way. She also wanted to come, as did a few others, I found out last night, and I'm sure many, many others in town. But she was not able to change her plans around. It was difficult for me. So I just, I mainly have questions. Why, these have been brought up today, but not answered. Why was this hearing not announced earlier, giving people proper time to prepare, prepare themselves and attend? Why are there not evening hours for Ohio, so more Ohioans may attend? Why is this not available virtually especially for people susceptible to COVID? I'm really worried about it and I'm not even that susceptible. What's the deal with this newly proposed map that missed the September one deadline, went up and then down this morning, and is not even available to us in this hearing today? I would have thought it would be here in paper form. Why is the author, Senator Huffman, not here today? To me, that makes absolutely no sense, if we're treating this seriously. Which begs the question, how serious is this panel about this overwhelmingly popular opinion among Ohioans to have fair elections and fair districting? In fact, let's face it, we all know the answers to these questions. The one thing I cannot figure out is given how essential that fair maps that accurately represent Ohioans is to the democratic process, why are most of you OK with the avoidable delays, lack of needed materials available and absent members during public hearings? Among the other things I mentioned. How in the world does this build public faith in the commission? I'm scared to death about being a banana republic. And I really, really want to know from the people here how you feel about this. This is not just about one districting. This is about the future of Ohio, the future of the country, and might I say, the global world. I have to say that I find it curious, I find curious

to talk about desiring bipartisanship among representatives who have wildly, wildly, wildly exploited the skewed three fourths majority of the state that is more or less split 50/50 between parties, and gives no room to other parties. Right, left, whatever. It's really scary to me. I am a historian. I have taught overseas. Mostly overseas, but also in this country, in middle school and high school students about how important democracy is. Genuine democracy, not fake democracies. So I will conclude with this. All the people of, all people of Ohio, I would hope you, all of you, want a genuine democracy. If you're not so concerned about it today, like, oh, we can mess around a little bit here, just as long as we keep our seats, OK. Please think about your children, the future. Because you either use democracy or you lose it. And I'm a history teacher, I can give you lots of examples of that. This, so in order to have a genuine democracy, this requires representatives who are sincerely committed to genuine democracy, one that represents the people not guaranteed seats to one party or candidates over others. I'm going to leave it there. Please look beyond how this is going to affect your elections. This whole idea of having safe seats, or equal safe seats, I don't even understand that concept. Shouldn't we just be looking at maps that will make sure that people in a particular area have a representative that they can call on to represent their interest in connection with the rest of the state? And country? This idea, we have to somehow find safe seats and some competitive that mostly this or that. This is not democracy, folks. So before I go off any more, I'll be quiet.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:56:30] Are there any questions for the witness? Hearing none, thank you for coming to testify.

Bolzenius [01:56:35] And thank you for those of you who are sincerely thinking about democracy. Thank you.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:56:43] Tamie Wilson. From Delaware. You'll be testifying on a complete statewide plan for the General Assembly?

Wilson [01:56:54] Yes.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [01:56:55] I know you have an interest.

Wilson [01:56:57] No court [indecipherable]. I just wanted to, I did study the map, that's why I was a little late. So my concerns, I'm not going to say that they favor the Republicans, because you asked us not to repeat things. I heard that. But what I will say is repetition's key, right? Republicans have taught us that. But so, I am really concerned because you guys have such an enormous responsibility for what you're doing. And it is appalling to me as an Ohioan, as an Ohio voter, that not everyone's present. You guys are here to represent 11 million lives. It's a big deal and it is appalling that not everyone's present. The other thing that really disturbs me is that if you really wanted to really represent and give fairness, why don't you have fair representation in the committee? I mean, I this is Buckeye Nation. And if we had a committee that was all Michigan football players and there were two Ohio State, I mean, I'm sure we would all think that was pretty unfair. Right? So I just have major concerns and especially, I'm running for Congress. It is extreme concern for me, my district, the way that the Republicans have redrawn the lines. I don't feel that represents equal representation to the citizens of those counties. The way that they have redrawn the lines, they included Holmes County, I believe it is, and they are not representative- I'm of, I'm from Delaware and Delaware is really close. It is a suburb of Columbus. We have a lot of people that work in Columbus. It's a big city, and those other areas are more rural. So I really feel that you need to take into account that people should have people that can represent their district rather than having, you know, such a big

portion of a big city mixed in with, like rural areas. It just doesn't make sense to me. So I just thought that that was really unfair. And also the way that the lines are drawn, they do favor incumbent Republicans. And I just think that you guys should really take it more seriously. I just, you know, you have such a huge responsibility and you should really redo the committee and have fair representation on the committee. I mean, I think it's a joke, too. I mean, it's nice that you have these hearings, but it's like you're just going through the motions and like, yeah, sure, but there's people not even here. I mean, it's just ridiculous. So it's all I wanted to say. Thank you.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [02:00:02] Thank you. Any questions? I just point out one thing that the members on here are, many of them, are required by the Ohio Constitution. So it's not just kind of pick and choose.

Wilson [02:00:17] But then we saw the map this morning, though right? So, yeah, it's still not, it's still not drawn fairly. So that's something to think about. Thank you.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [02:00:26] Thank you. Next witness is Bailey Kulp, student at Ohio State University. The Ohio State University. Ryan Goodman. From Orient, Ohio. Paul Hebling. From, doesn't have a city. Paul Hebling? All right, is there anyone else that, those are the ones that we have witnessed slips, or anyone else to testify? I know you testified this morning, you have something additional to say, that's not a repeat of this morning's testimony?

Hedges [02:01:14] I have a witness slip for you.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [02:01:14] Yes. Do you have something additional to testify other than what you testified? Come on up.

Hedges [02:01:22] And I also have a witness slip.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [02:01:23] Yeah, I think you were out when I called.

Hedges [02:01:24] Thank you. Co-Chair Senator Sykes and House Speaker Cupp, and members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission, again, my name is Mindy Hedges. I'm from Radnor, Ohio, in Ohio House District 67, Senate District 19 and Congressional District 12. With regards to proportional party favoritism, today in the Columbus Dispatch, and I think you all need to read it and hear this, republicans could retain 67 of 99 seats in the Ohio House and 25 of 33 seats in the Ohio Senate. You just have to realize that currently they have 64 of the 99 seats. So they're going to gain from the current map three more seats in the House and, hold on a second. And they have 24 of the 33 seats in the Ohio Senate, currently. They would be gaining one more seat in the Ohio Senate, in the current map. Now, it was my understanding that this map was supposed to be more fair and equal to be currently, at least from what the Ohio voters voted for the last gubernatorial election, which is, I believe that was a 45 to 55 percent. That is not what this map represented. Very disappointed. And this was according to Dave's Redistricting application or app, a commonly used redistricting website that assigns partisan designations based on recent election results. Based on that website's analysis, 16.5 Percent of House districts and 19.8 Percent of Senate districts would be competitive, defined as a partisan lean between forty five percent and fifty five percent. Voter approved changes to the Ohio Constitution added guardrails to how mapmakers draw districts for the Ohio House and Senate. The commission must try to draw a map that does not favor a political party, is compact and corresponds to the statewide breakdown of Democrats and

Republican votes. And the reason I got up here right now is because I just didn't have time to do any analysis on that map that was represented or that was, excuse me, proposed to us this morning because I was on my way to drive here when that map was shared. So I apologize for having done two different testimonies today. So I appreciate the fact that you allowed me to speak again. And I thank you. So are there any questions?

House Speaker Bob Cupp [02:04:10] And I appreciate the fact you had two different testimonies. So they weren't the same one twice.

Hedges [02:04:16] No, I would not have done that to you. That would've been awful.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [02:04:18] Any questions for the witness? Hearing none, thank you.

Hedges [02:04:22] Thank you.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [02:04:23] Any one-.

Hedges [02:04:26] I'll submit that in writing to you.

House Speaker Bob Cupp [02:04:26] That'll be fine, thank you. Any further witnesses today? If not, that will conclude our hearing today. And we will then convene on Sunday. Let find my list again. Sunday, September 12, 4:00 p.m. in Dayton. That is a weekend, it is not a workday for most people and it is later in the afternoon, so. Commission adjourned.

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Ohio Redistricting Commission - 9-12-2021 - Dayton - part 1

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Co-Chair Speaker Bob Cupp [00:00:00] Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the regional hearing of the Ohio Redistricting Commission. Before we begin our official business, we'd really like to thank Washington Township and its staff for hosting us today. I would also like to note the presence of. Yes... A few other members of the General Assembly that I've noted here, Representative Tom Young, I believe we are in his House district right now. Representative. Representing Phil Plummer and Representative Rodney Creech are in the audience, and we thank them for coming today to hear testimony as well. At this time, we'll call... Call to order of the regional hearing. And if if you if you want to testify and you have not already filled out a witness slip, there is a table out there and we would ask you to do that and provide it to our staff so that we know that you're here and wish to testify. I will now take attendance and I'll ask the staff to call the roll.

Clerk [00:01:12] Co-Chair Senator Vernon Sykes (present), co-chair Speaker Robert Cupp (here). Governor Mike DeWine (present), Auditor Keith Faber will be here momentarily, designee for Senate President Matt Huffman, Senator Antani (present) Secretary of State Frank LaRose (here) and leader Emilia Sykes will be here momentarily. Speaker, a quorum is present.

Co-Chair Speaker Bob Cupp [00:01:35] Thank you. The quorum being present. We will meet as a full commission. Does any member of the commission have an opening statement before we begin the public testimony from from those who are here? Chair recognizes that... The chair recognizes Secretary of State Frank LaRose.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:01:55] Thank you so much Chairman. Is this mic on? All right, thank you so much, Chairman. And just wanted to maybe try to set the tone a little bit as we get started. I do, If you've heard me say before, some of my best thinking when I'm running. And so this morning, I was running and reflecting on the fact that today is September 12th, a day that 20 years ago for many of us really came to symbolize coming together, focusing on the things that unite us and not the things that divide us. And so my hope is, as we get started with this, that we can proceed in that spirit, that we can proceed in a spirit of civility and in our own small way, work together to get something very good here accomplished for Ohio. I want to thank the both Democratic and Republican staff members who have been working hard over the weekend as they've been working to try to find that consensus and middle ground between the different proposals that have been brought forward. And and I appreciate the work sincerely that they're doing. I said on Thursday, and I still believe that the map that was introduced on Thursday needs significant work. And so now is when that work can get done. And that's when that consensus building to get that work done can happen. I look forward to hearing from the members of the public, and my hope is that we can do something today that's become too rare and that is have a civil and thoughtful conversation. I thought... A thoughtful conversation based on the proposed maps and the changes that people would like to see made to the maps. I know that a lot of folks may not have liked the 2011 maps. I count myself among them. But the time for, you know, talking about and rehashing some of that stuff is probably behind us. And I think it's time that we get down to the business of passing 2021 maps. And so thank you, co-chairs, for the opportunity to say that. And I look forward to the conversation today.

Speaker 5 [00:03:44] All right. Thank you. Secretary LaRose, any anyone else have an opening comment? All right. At this time, then the commission will hear public testimony on

the commission plan that was introduced on September 9th, 2021, in accordance with commission rules and Article 11 of the Ohio Constitution. These proceedings will be recorded and broadcast by The Ohio Channel. So the board in its deliberations may consider things here today. And the public has an opportunity to witness and hear what is occurring here today. We ask that again, the audience refrain from clapping or other loud noise out of respect for the witnesses and the persons watching the proceedings remotely. As Secretary LaRose said, let's have a civil discussion instead. If you are here.... I mentioned this. A member of the public may testify on the commission's plan before the commission for up to five minutes, subject to limitation by the co-chairs. I think we have about 50 witnesses maybe signed up today. So in order to include everybody who wants to testify an opportunity by the time the hearing is over, if we'd like you to kind of try very diligently to adhere to that, we do have a time keeper to give the witness an indication when their time is up. And we would also like to ask you to keep your testimony again to the plan that's introduced or your thoughts about changes to that plan and any specifics is what would be most helpful to the commission. So, Representative... Excuse me, got representative, on my mind today, Senator Sykes and I will be switching off as we proceed through these witnesses. We will now begin with our first witness here today. And that is Gunther, Mr. Gunther, if you'd come forward.

Dick Gunther [00:06:18] Afternoon, I'm Richard Gunther, professor of political science at Ohio State University, and I was one of the five negotiators who crafted the language that is now Article 11, which governs redistricting. I'm here in my capacity both as a professional political scientist with experience in redistricting, but also as a participant in the part of the act of creating the laws that we are about to apply in drawing our district boundaries. I'd like to address several of the criteria set forth in the Constitution by the 2015 reforms and the extent to which the map proposed by Ray DiRossi on behalf of the Republican House and Senate caucuses meets those criteria. The criteria set forth in the Constitution are, one, that districts have roughly equal population size. Two, conformity with the Section three rules concerning the splitting of counties, municipalities and townships. Three, compliance with the rules set forth in Section 6A and 6B commonly referred to as the representational fairness criteria. Four, compliance with the Voting Rights Act and five, compactness. Now, all of these rules are important, but I'm going to focus my attention on compliance with the VRA and the rules set forth in Section 6A and 6B. Let me begin with what are commonly referred to as representational fairness criteria. That is what is set forth in Section six. Section six begins by stating, "the Ohio Redistricting Commission shall attempt to draw a General Assembly district plan that meets all of the following standards." I'm going to stop here for one second to deal with that sentence. Note that the Constitution does not state that the redistricting commission can, may or might, attempt to meet these criteria. It says shall. It shall attempt to draw district boundaries that meet these criteria. This is not an option, shall means shall. And in light of the discussion last Thursday of the status of Section six, it should be noted that the word aspirational appears nowhere in the Ohio Constitution. Now, I should also point out that there are other sectors of the Constitution, such as Section nine, dealing with the Supreme Court's role in overseeing this process. The deal very extensively with Section six, as well as Section eight, which calls upon the members of the redistricting board to explain how they met the preferences of the voters of Ohio. Now, what are these additional standards that Section six calls upon us to actually implement? Section 6A says, "no General Assembly district plan shall be drawn primarily to favor or disfavor a political party." Section 6B makes it quite clear what not favoring a party means. Quote, "The statewide proportion of districts whose voters based on statewide, state and federal partisan general election results during the past 10 years favor each political party shall correspond closely to the statewide preferences of the voters of Ohio." Now, how do we translate that into

numbers for this redistricting round? In the five general elections that have taken place over the past decade, Republican candidates for President, U.S. Senator, Governor, Secretary of State, Auditor, Attorney General and Treasurer have received 54.2% of the votes cast by Ohio voters, while the Democratic candidates for those offices have received 45.8% of the votes. To ensure that one political party is not unduly favored over another, the partisan makeup of Ohio's districts should mirror these partisan preferences of Ohio voters. That is, for the House, the statewide map should include approximately 54 districts whose voters lean towards the Republican Party. To be precise, that is 54.5% and 45 that lean towards the Democratic Party, which is 45.5% Percent. How does the DiRossi proposal stack up against a standard? It would have 67 districts Republican and 32 districts leaning towards the Democrats. This is even more unfair than our current map. And the Senate map is still worse. It would create 25 Republican districts and only eight Democratic leaners. In short, it unduly favors one political party and is flagrantly unconstitutional. The shortcomings of the DiRossi plan go beyond these highly biased partisan outcomes. In response to a question from a member of the commission, DiRossi stated last week that the drawing of this map did not include an assessment, an assessment of the extent to which the partisan tilt of the districts did or did not, quote, "correspond closely to the statewide preferences of the voters of Ohio." And since it did not even examine these data, it certainly violated the requirement of meeting these criteria. I'll skip over my comments about the VRA since my time has expired. But I would like to point out that in 2015, the amendments to the Ohio Constitution that bring about redistricting reform and that will affect what we do here today were endorsed by an overwhelming majority of both houses of the General Assembly and by over 70 percent of the Ohio voters. And they were co-sponsored by prominent members of this commission. I am hopeful that the Ohio Redistricting Commission will reach a bipartisan consensus and adopt district boundaries for the Ohio House and Senate in a manner that respects both the letter and the spirit of those reforms. Are there any questions?

Co-Chair Speaker Bob Cupp [00:12:31] Any questions for Professor Gunther, Senator Antani?

Sen. Antani [00:12:36] Well, professor. Now. Hello, test, test. Can you hear me? Well, thank you, Professor. First thing I would say is I very much enjoyed your Comparative Politics class circa 2011. Thank you. I think I passed it. So, good to see you. What data was used for you in order to come up with with the statistics you provide? I mean, you said Dave's Redistricting App? Is that those data?

Dick Gunther [00:13:06] Directly from the website of the Secretary of State of Ohio.

Sen. Antani [00:13:11] But insofar as estimating that it would create the 67 Republican districts.

Dick Gunther [00:13:16] Oh, I'm sorry. I apologize. That came from a commonly used app which is called Dave's Redistricting. And in the absence of other data, this is what we relied upon. Now, I recognize that that is not the full basis of five elections that are required according to the Constitution. But we don't have the data from the Republican map that we could use to address that question. So this is a close approximation.

Sen. Antani [00:13:47] Followup question?

Co-Chair Speaker Bob Cupp [00:13:47] Proceed.

Sen. Antani [00:13:49] And so do we know how Dave's Redistricting App calculates that data? Because as you know, you know, in each election, there are likely Democratic voters, likely Republican voters and then swing voters. And so, you know, in order to come up with a hard number and say exactly 67 and exactly... I lost your numbers here, 32 for the House. You know, I'm curious, do we know what the Dave's Redistricting uses in order to get to that number? Because an election for governor, my friend, the governor's here, is very different. I ran for the state Senate. I simply am not as well known as the governor. As much as I would like to be. I am not. And so, you know, those elections are are very different. So do we know what party, party data they use?

Dick Gunther [00:14:36] I perfectly agree with you that this is an imprecise data set and it could be 69, it could be 65. But what we do know is that this is roughly in accord with a number of maps that were using the same data base. And this is a widely respected nationwide data set. So it is not precise and I will certainly not assume that this is exact. And your question is well taken.

Co-Chair Speaker Bob Cupp [00:15:05] Thank you, Professor. Further questions, Secretary LaRose,

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:15:12] Thank you, thank you, co-chair and Professor Gunther, thank you for being here and appreciate your testimony. My question sort of follows on from my friend, Senator Antani, and goes to the question of when does a district become a Republican district and when does it become a Democratic district? And I think that, you know, for some there has been a sort of a very simple - if it goes over 50.0001, that it's a, you know, R or D, I think that I think we all recognize that that's a fiction. Right, because candidates matter, campaigns matter, fundraising matters, doorknocking matters, all those things that candidates do matters. And I for one, when I ran in 2010, I won in a district that people said was unwinnable. It was a 46 Republican index district, and I was able to outperform that and still win. It seems to me like a better, a better way to to approach this question of proportionality that's contained in the Constitution would be to pick a number where we consider competitive districts, 48 to 52. Could be that, I don't know what it is, 48 to 52, sort of in my mind is a definition swing or competitive district. And then take those competitive districts off the table for that calculation and say, OK, those are competitive by definition, go compete, win them, whatever. And then among the remaining districts, you have what you would call maybe a safe district. And some of those are safe Republican districts. Some of those are safe Democratic districts. It would seem to me that where that proportionality and I'll just, you know, for the purpose of argument, go with your numbers of 45 percent Democratic and 54 percent Republican, that that percentage should be adhered to among the safe districts, excluding the competitive districts. Would that rationale work in your mind?

Dick Gunther [00:16:54] Yes. I mean, these are approximate figures. They are a baseline that we can use for judging the fairness of a map. They're not precise. And in fact, on Tuesday morning, I will be presenting a map that does, in fact, give you very, very precise numbers on how to break this down. That will be the map set forth by the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission. And in this particular moment, what I can simply say is that it is not as precise as we would like. But at the same time, I want to point out one thing. This is not an election we're talking about. The voters haven't voted yet. What we're talking about is what the territorial units they represent will be. And there's certainly plenty of room for a good campaign to lead to the victory of one party that doesn't fit with these predictions, or a bad campaign leading to a disaster that doesn't show up in these numbers. We certainly would not want to prejudge how a campaign would actually reveal the qualities of

candidates. But I do think that competing on a level playing field is an important first step in guaranteeing the quality of democracy in Ohio. And that's what this is intended to do.

Co-Chair Speaker Bob Cupp [00:18:14] Any further questions. Thank you, that actually was a informative exchange, and we appreciate that. [applause] All right. Please, let's not do that, we can all listen, we can applaud in her mind, let's not get into that. This was a wonderful discussion. Let's just continue in that regard. I would note for the record that Minority Leader Emiia Sykes is here, as well as Auditor of State Keith Faber. Our next witness is Dr. Derrick Forward. Dr. Forward. Come forward.

Dr. Derrick Forward [00:18:59] Cochairs, representatives, senators, governor. My name is Dr. Derrick L. Forward, president of the NAACP here in Dayton, Ohio, and vice president of the NAACP for the state of Ohio, the great Buckeye State of Ohio. I didn't think that was going to be here today from testifying a few weeks ago. But it seems that as we take a look at the first proposed map, that I'm back. So as we take a look, you know, NAACP, I want to read this one more time. I think I read this at the, at the first hearing. But from a voting rights standpoint, we say that the voting rights and political representation protect enhanced voting rights and fair representation. Every American will have a free, open, equal and protected access to the vote and fair representation at all levels of the political process. By protecting democracy, enhancing equality and increasing democratic participation in civic engagement, African-Americans will be proportionately elected to political office and be represented thereafter. As I take a look at the composition of the board. I know that, Rep. Antani. I know you're life member of the NAACP. I know Secretary of State is a life member of the NAACP. And if we are life members of this prestigious, 112 year organization, then we need to make certain that we are adhering to what it is about fairness as relates to the democratic process. And I know that Rep. Sykes is also a life member. In 2015, in 2018, Ohio voters overwhelmingly voted to pass reform measures after the 2010 redistricting cycle, demanding a fair process and responsive elected officials. These maps and the process to date failed to meet the promise of the reform measures and ignore our state constitution, which are the absolute floor of fairness. The draft Ohio redistricting commission map that was adopted Thursday were adopted based on 5-2 vote along party lines. And as many of you know, as members of the NAACP, we're nonpartisan. We're a nonpartisan organization. This does not bode well with the process that was designed to be bipartisan. For the past decade, Ohio has lived under some of the most gerrymandered district in the country. But the bipartisan breakdown of the Ohio Redistricting Commission proposed maps is even worse. These GOP proposed maps do not reflect the state's partisan makeup and would likely give the GOP another decade of supermajorities in the chambers. Despite the fact that Republicans have won roughly 55 percent of the statewide share of voters across the last decade, the GOP proposed maps will give Republicans 60 percent, 66 percent of the House and Senate seats. The proposed state legislative maps fail to uphold even the most basic tenets of a fair map and representative fairness number one, the crack communities of interest. Number two, they dilute the political power of communities of color, which I'm from. And they are... Number three. They are not representative of the state as a whole. The GOP proposed maps crack and pack Ohio's communities of color, diluting the power of the vote and denying them from adequate representation. If we think about our our 3rd Senate District or our 3rd Congressional District. He has been in office for over close to 20 years, two decades. For example, the proposed Senate maps draws the black communities in and around Dayton, together with white rural Preble County, I mean Preble, Darke and Miami counties, rather than connecting to a similar communities in Jefferson Township and Montgomery County where I'm from. So there was representation when I grew up in Jefferson Township, we had representation. But there's... That representation is gone due to the way the last map

was created. Another example is black voters who live in Trotwood should not be cracked apart from other black communities in Dayton into a different district. A fair map would ensure that those communities are kept together to create a pathway to representation. So what are we talking about? When when you all created, when the commission created the maps 10 years ago, you all created a whole new district that came with district number that came from somewhere else. And what did it do? It went to Preble county where basically I worked, so I kind of know the community, I know community real well. And that seat was lost. So the individual who represented me at the time, his district was taken out of the communities of color. Ohio maps drawers must ensure that communities of color have adequate and real pathways to political representation. Yet it appears that Republicans on the commission are not planning on even trying to meet this obligation. And that's concerning, especially when you took out a life membership to the NAACP. We have reports from the Ohio Redistricting Commission hearing on Thursday in Columbus that the GOP leadership have directed their map drawers to ignore racial demographic, demographic information, in drawing their maps. Even worse, there are reports that they are were instructed not to even consider federal and state standards of minority representation that ensure that the maps are in compliance with the Voting Rights Act, as the gentleman just stated a little while ago. I find this hard to believe that something has fundamentally essential, never mind constitutionally required, is not being followed by this commission. Ohio's African-Americans and communities of color deserve to get the political representation they deserve, fair redistricting does not require us to be colorblind. Quite the opposite. Fair redistricting is in the identification acknowledgment of how diverse our communities are. That requires that the maps you draw, embrace, represent a fairness, which means exactly what it says. Maps should be fairly representative of the communities you serve. A majority, a major responsibility of this commission is to develop district maps that are both responsive to and reflective of communities across Ohio. In 2021, map drawers should be drawing new districts that are not only represented by Ohio, but are also responsive to the will of the voters. That means we shouldn't be adopting maps that look even worse than the current lopsided partisan nature of our current ones. In conclusion, fair maps like the ones that have been developed by the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission reflect the partisan makeup of our state that will require 54, a 54 to 44 percent split among House and Senate seats based on the electoral election results over the past 10 years that translate into at least 44 Democratic House seats out of 99 in the General Assembly, at least 15 Democratic seats, Senate seats out of 33 in the Senate. Adopting maps that reflect this representative fairness give communities of color a real pathway to representation. I understand that the staff on both sides of this commission are working hard behind the scenes to come up with, to come up with a revised map in the coming days before your September 15th deadline. I hope that you will take heed to our concerns that have been raised today and adopt a fair and representative 10 year map that are both Republicans and Democrats can fully embrace we don't want a four year map, we want a 10 year map that you all can work together on, and I know that you can make it happen. All it takes a little faith, honesty and integrity. Thank you.

Co-Chair Speaker Bob Cupp [00:27:39] Any questions? Thank you, Dr. Forward, are there any questions? Please, let's not do that. Any questions? All right, thanks very much for your helpful testimony, appreciate it. Thanks. Next witness is Elliot Harrington if I'm pronouncing that correctly. We'll ask you to come forward and identify yourself or the record. All right. All right. All right, well, we'll move on to the next one to go back to so we can use all our time. Katie Barnes. Welcome.

Katie Barnes [00:28:35] Good afternoon. On this recent anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, we're engaged in examining the proposed Ohio voting district maps that have been

submitted and approved by the Republican members of this commission as they're working drafts for this important work of redistricting, despite clear and unequivocal messages from Ohio voters from back in 2015 demanding that districts are proportionally fair, compact and include fair representation for Ohio's population of populations of color, the Republican members of this commission have voted to instead accept these unconstitutional maps as their starting place. How do you justify beginning this critically important process with seriously flawed maps that clearly do not meet the demands of Ohio voters for their districts? How do you justify beginning with these flawed maps, considering the extremely tight timeline that you're working under? Why aren't you beginning with carefully developed maps that do meet the demands of Ohio voters? You have several maps available today that you could use as a starting basis for this process. Maps that already comply with the mapping criteria in the Ohio constitution. You have fair maps available today that are clearly superior to the maps that have just been voted on by this commission, maps that have been developed by citizens of Ohio who are engaged in the map making process. You have maps available today that have been carefully scrutinized and analyzed by the advisory committee for the state legislative mapping competition that do, in fact, meet the mapping criteria in the Ohio Constitution. You have these constitutional maps available today that have been scrutinized by people in the state of Ohio. You have these maps available today, maps that are that have clearly written explanations of the decision making process that went into developing the maps in accordance with the constitutional criteria. Instead, by choosing to begin this redistricting process with the obviously flawed maps that you voted to approve as your starting place, you're deliberately poisoning this process. The citizens of Ohio deserve better from you. You have a responsibility to the citizens to meet their demands for fair districts and to do so by beginning this process with the best possible maps available, not the flawed maps that we've been working from up to. Now you have those maps and they are available today. If you choose to ignore these resources and instead... Instead persist in using these partisan gerrymandered maps as your starting point, you need to understand this this action for what it is. It's an attack on a representative democracy, one that seeks to manipulate and distort the will of the people. You're choosing to attack the very heart of our democracy, the lifeblood of our democracy, which is fair representation for our citizens. We endured an attack on our citizens 20 years ago that was initiated from outside our borders. But this now feels like another attack, this time coming from within our borders, indeed, from within our own statehouse. We deserve better. Please do not attack our democracy from within. By poisoning this process, by starting with these partisan maps, we deserve better. Thank you.

Co-Chair Speaker Bob Cupp [00:32:37] Thank you for your testimony. Is there any questions for the witness? Right. We will. Is Elliot Harrington here yet? No. All right, Michael Odioso. Thank you for the correction.

Michael Odioso [00:33:12] Good afternoon. My name is Michael Odioso, so I am a western Hamilton County Green Township resident and a Republican. I am also a licensed attorney in Ohio and I speak today here on my own behalf. And thank you to this incredible group for allowing me to get my voice heard. And thank you, Commission, for your good faith efforts so far to shepherd Ohio through this brand new redistricting process. It appears to me that the process so far is constitutional and complies with the 14th Amendment Due Process Rights and Voting Act requirements. Never before has Ohio redistricting been more transparent, received so much voter input like today, and being guided by specific procedures and clear, although at times contradictory goals. My first concern is that critics of this commission have already proclaimed that its workings are rigged and offense to democracy and cannot pass the smell test. As noted by the

bipartisan National Conference of State Legislatures, the Census Bureau report was delayed four months by the pandemic and the delays would mean deadlines, including Ohio's, would be impossible to meet. Furthermore, Republicans have publicly acknowledged that the current proposals are working documents subject to more data, more public comment, and in the end, our great tradition of negotiation and compromise. Declaring the process fundamentally flawed as the Ohio League of Women Voters has so prematurely proclaimed, does a disservice to this bipartisan commission and the Ohio voters who overwhelmingly voted for this open process. Have the more partisan members of the Democratic Party's voter rights complex already committed to court challenges before this first good faith attempt is completed? In other words, have they committed to sue until we turn Ohio blue strategy? My second concern is that Republicans, no matter how honorably they conduct themselves in this process, will never be acknowledged for their efforts in Ohio and the nation's liberal news media. It appears to me that the media breathlessly repeat the Republican bashing talking points in unison at the cost of allowing Ohio voters to reach their own conclusions at the end. In other words, rigging popular perceptions against Republicans on this panel. Hasn't Ohio speaker, Robert Cupp, already publicly committed to this new process, and I quote, "We have new requirements in the Constitution, it limits some of the things we could have done before. It limits splits. It requires more compactness." We have to be able to stay within those new restraints on drawing district lines. And let's face it, Republicans and Democrats on this panel are intentionally under a magnifying glass. They have an extremely tough task to keep their proposals within these new Ohio constitutional parameters, including the inherently conflicting legal concepts of drawing districts that both retain the voice of the community interest and paradoxically, at times promote the value of election competitiveness. Don't we see in the Democrats proposal how paradoxical goals conflict in their awkward attempt to deal with population loss in places like Trumbull County? And hasn't Senate President Matt Huffman already asserted? I think something that needs to be reminded here that creating this map is not going to be easy. Now, indeed, the Democratic proposal states that, as was the situation in the 2010 reapportionment plan, Northeast Ohio represents an impossibility for full compliance in each county with more than one ratio of representation. Aren't Republicans also allowed the benefit of the doubt as they go forward? My final concern is my greatest, this bipartisan commission represents the will of Ohio voters in what is obviously an extremely high stress environment with the potential to permanently damage bipartisanship and goodwill. Though we share in our own personal lives, common interests as Ohioans, regional residents, coworkers and neighbors, we already see evidence of this shared values in the Ohio plan. As president, Senate President Matt Huffman has already noted, aren't the first drafts of the significance... Of significant portions of both parties' proposed maps almost identical? And hasn't the proposed Republican map already adopted... Adopted compactness by reducing the number of counties and cities split between districts? My... I will conclude, let's give this new redistricting process a chance to succeed. All we are saying is give peace a chance. Thank you.

Co-Chair Speaker Bob Cupp [00:38:44] Are there are questions for the witness? All right, let's, people, no applause, please. All right. Thank you very much.

Michael Odioso [00:38:55] Thank you all.

Co-Chair Speaker Bob Cupp [00:38:59] Next is Matthew Barron Chapman. Is Matthew here? All right, Christine Corba with the League of Women Voters of the Greater Dayton area.

Christine Corba [00:39:43] Good afternoon, commission. My name is Christine Corba and I am the executive director of the League of Women Voters of the Greater Dayton area. Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify. The league has introduced and supported initiatives to place redistricting reform on the ballot for 40 years. When Ohioans overwhelmingly approved constitutional amendments in 2015 and 2018 that would deliver a transparent process that promotes fairness and bipartisanship, we are hopeful that our goal of fair maps would be realized. For the past six months, Dayton area league members have provided educational opportunities and community mapmaking sessions in Greene and Montgomery Counties. These events helped to empower citizens to insist that the reforms they voted for were implemented during the mapmaking process. This tireless group of volunteers helped citizens create and then submit eight community maps of Beavercreek, Centerville, Farmersville, New Lebanon, Jefferson Township, Kettering, Oakwood and Trotwood. Each of these maps are respectful of county and municipal boundaries and consider factors including communities of interest, school districts and unique community features. Most important, the maps demonstrate how the residents of these communities believe they would be best represented. The officially proposed maps do not take these factors into account. While we understand that the commission was under constraints due to the delay of census data, there was ample time to hold public hearings over the summer. A lack of preparation and research resulted in a rushed process which did not allow time for citizen participation. We are also concerned that the maps do not meet the standards mandated in the constitutional amendment. While both parties have created gerrymandered maps over the years, the intent of the new process was to create a fair proportional maps. Based on statewide voting over the past decade, Ohio's vote share is 46.38% Democrat and 53.62% Republican. Proportionally, the House's 99 seats should be made up of 46 Democrats and 53 Republicans. As the maps are drawn, the likely outcome would be approximately 32.32% Percent Democratic seats and 67.67% Republican seats proportionate. Proportionally, the Senate's 33 seats should be made up of 15 Democrat leaning districts and 18 Republican leaning districts. As the maps are drawn, the likely outcome is the Senate will also be unbalanced, with approximately 30.30% Democratic seats and 69.69% Percent Republican seats. Disproportionate district maps reduce voter choices and lead to fewer competitive elections. Also troubling was that the maps were drawn without the use of racial and demographic data. As such, they did not adhere the Voting Rights... Voting Rights Act, which requires that districts reflect the diversity of their citizens. Additionally, the officially proposed maps appear to have cracked minority... Or some districts, diluting the voting power of communities of color. Finally, the amendment specifies that the map making process be transparent. The officially proposed maps were adopted before citizens had the opportunity to provide feedback. We realize the commission is under a tight deadline and by its own admission, there is still a lot of work to be done. But resources are available. Fair Districts Ohio recently announced the co-owners of its mapmaking competition. Their Ohio house maps scored higher in terms of proportionality, minority representation and compactness than the officially proposed map. And their Senate map scored higher in proportionality and compactness and scored similarly in terms of minor... Minority representation. The maps were thoughtfully drawn, keeping in mind the uniqueness of each community. We urge the commission to do the same and to respect the will of voters by producing maps that provide fair representation for all Ohioans. Thank you again for the opportunity to speak.

Co-Chair Speaker Bob Cupp [00:43:58] Thank you for coming today to speak. Are there questions? Representative LaRose, and then before you leave, I'm going to ask you to spell your name for the record.

Christine Corba [00:44:09] Certainly.

[00:44:10] I had forgotten to do that, so apologize.

Christine Corba [00:44:12] It's corba c o r, b, a.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:44:15] OK, thank you, Speaker. And thank you again for your testimony. Really appreciate that. Your proportionality numbers differed from Professor-- Professor Gunther's. Would you be willing to share your math with us or where those came from and not even verbally but maybe upload it to our commission website or show how you arrived?

Christine Corba [00:44:33] I didn't approximate them. I took them straight from the from the Dave's Redistricting.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:44:40] OK, so your numbers come off of Dave's redistricting.

Christine Corba [00:44:43] That that was the information that was received from the Ohio League of Women Voters. Yes.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [00:44:47] OK, thank you, ma'am. Thank you.

Co-Chair Speaker Bob Cupp [00:44:50] Chair recognizes Senator Antani.

Sen. Antani [00:44:52] Speaker, thank you for coming and testifying. So Professor Gunther was not able to cite how Dave's Redistricting came up with those numbers. Do you know how Dave's Redistricting calculated those numbers?

Christine Corba [00:45:06] Again, as Professor Gunther said, those are estimates and those are things. Those are those are numbers that were used to estimate the the division of the districts.

Co-Chair Speaker Bob Cupp [00:45:20] Thank you very much.

Christine Corba [00:45:21] Thank you so much.

Co-Chair Speaker Bob Cupp [00:45:23] Our next witness is Judy Douglas. And Judy, before I forget, I'll ask you to spell your name for the record, too, please.

Judy Douglas [00:45:38] Sure. It's Judy. Judy Douglas.

Co-Chair Speaker Bob Cupp [00:45:42] Thank you.

Judy Douglas [00:45:43] Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Judy Douglas. I live in Beaver Creek and I'm 73 years old. And that matters. And you'll hear why that comes up. The structure of voting districts affects lives. We're hearing about proportion and things, but it's individuals as people. Our districts give everyone the opportunity to vote, to be heard, to choose the persons to represent them. Gerrymandered voting districts take away the ability of voters to determine how their lives can be lived by cheating. Let me start by telling you two very personal stories, a little bit of science and how these items relate to redistricting. When I was 12, my next door neighbor's daughter was brutally murdered. Her

nickname was Peachy. She had an illegal abortion that was so unsafe and botched that afterwards she required hospitalization. She agreed to testify as part of the prosecution against the abortionist. When it became known that she would testify, persons came to her home and took her. There's evidence she fought for her life. She was bound with barbed wire, bound to cement blocks and thrown in the river. A month later, her body was found and no one was ever arrested for her murder. Every year, for many years, on the anniversary of Peachy's murder, the local newspaper carried the story. In this manner, every woman was reminded that her life meant nothing. No one would pay a price for murdering her if she spoke out against an illegal abortionist. Many, many years later, I went for a six week checkup after the birth of my daughter. The physician looked me in the eye and said, You will not survive another pregnancy and I'm not doing anything about it. I won't tell you his religion. I don't care who you're, who you worship, how you worship, what your religion is. That's your choice. This was still when abortion was illegal before Roe v Wade, abortions were made legal, abortions were ugly, unsafe and resulted in death. Wealthy women will always get abortions. They can afford it. They can go other places. They can take the tour of Europe. People used to do that. Religion should have no place in the discussion of abortion. Many politicians have forgotten that we have the concept of separation of church and state. Today our gerrymandered state of Ohio was able to pass a law forbidding an abortion six weeks into a pregnancy. Most women will not know they are pregnant at that time. Many women will continue to have periods throughout their pregnancy. We have established criteria for determining a human being brain dead and no longer in need of life support. If we applied the same criteria for establishing a legal limit for accessing an abortion, then an abortion should be legal up to the fifth month of pregnancy. The so-called heartbeat at six weeks is not the result of a formed heart. The only reason a so-called heartbeat can be heard at six weeks is due to increased technological equipment. A formed human heart does not exist at six weeks and not for many more weeks. However, gerrymandering has resulted... Gerrymandering has resulted in a few radical and religious groups pushing an abortion agenda onto the public. Overwhelmingly, voters want safe and legal abortions. Unfortunately, that is being lost due to partisan gerrymandering and that gerrymandering affects lives. Gerrymandering is a form of voter suppression. Packing like voters into a district and then cracking apart other districts creates a situation that favors only one party. And in the current environment, that's resulting in the will of the majority of peoples being denied. Politicians choosing voters rather than voters choosing the politicians. Is democracy upside down? Please do as the voters who have asked you to do twice at the ballot box and create fair voting districts where all our voices be heard. And I see my time's up. Do you have any questions?

Co-Chair Speaker Bob Cupp [00:50:17] Thank you. Are there any questions? Thank you for coming today.

Judy Douglas [00:50:22] I apologize for the apparent rudeness. I do need to leave.

Co-Chair Speaker Bob Cupp [00:50:26] That's perfectly understandable. Thank you. [applause] Mark Erhardt.

witness [00:50:39] Can you turn the mics up a little?

Co-Chair Speaker Bob Cupp [00:50:39] We're, we're trying.

Mike Erhardt [00:50:52] Co-chairs Cupp and Sykes and members of the commission, thank you for allowing me to speak today. My name is Mark Erhart and that is spelled Mark

Erhardt. I live in the Columbia-Tusculum neighborhood in the city of Cincinnati. I am here to speak in opposition to the maps officially. [inaudible] to speak in favor of maps submitted by Geoff Wise and the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission. When I retired from my job last year as a senior vice president of a large bank headquartered in Ohio, I had time to pay more attention to state and local issues. One area that seemed ripe for improvement was how legislative districts are drawn in the state of Ohio. So I began to pay attention to the redistricting process this year. As someone new to the world of Ohio politics, I would have to say I have been disappointed and underwhelmed by how the process has gone so far, particularly after citizens of Ohio voted overwhelmingly to create a more bipartisan process this time around. Frankly, there has been a failure to meet the expectations of your constituents, the citizens you represent. The process got off to a late start, blamed solely on the delays in delivery... In the delivery of the U.S. Census data, when in fact the governor could have called the commission together earlier to define a transparent process, to come to a common understanding and redraw the maps, how citizens could better access the proposed maps and avoid the mad dash to the finish line between now and September 15th. And, for example, the commission could have established the data criteria for the partisan voting patterns instead of citizens having to rely on public sources such as Dave's Redistricting App. I attended both of the commission hearings last Thursday, September 9th, and testified briefly in the morning session after the Republican staff presented their maps. I was not impressed with how the commission conducted its business. Before there was adequate time to review the maps in detail, in the afternoon, the commission voted along partisan lines to advance the Republican staff [inaudible] for final negotiation and approval. This was a major disappointment as far as [inaudible] Every section of Article 11 of the Ohio Constitution refers to the commission, not one party's political, one political party staff as having the authority and responsibility to draw district lines. The Democratic Senate staff submitted their own maps. Why didn't the commission work in a bipartisan fashion to negotiate differences between the submissions prior to voting to advance an official version for final citizen review and commission approval? Did the commission review any of the nonpartisan alternative maps submitted prior to hastily approving partisan submitted maps? Based on my attendance at the Thursday September 9th hearings, I believe the commission failed to live up to the bipartisan expectations that the citizens of this state expected of them. It looks like this was yet another partisan process, an outcome. My specific opposition to the maps proposed by the commission is that I believe they clearly failed to meet the standards in Article 11, Section six of the Ohio Constitution. As approved by the voters, the Constitution says the commission shall attempt to draw a General Assembly district, a General Assembly district plan that meets all three of these standards. No district plan drawn primarily to favor or disfavor a political party [inaudible] statewide, be statewide. [inaudible] Correspond closely to the statewide preferences of voters and see compactness, the maps supplied by [inaudible] parties and approved by the commission along party lines appears to violate all three, all of these standards, and that no attempt was made to meet them. I urge the commission to reject partisan maps submissions and instead focus on proposals submitted by Geoff Wise and the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission. Both alternatives appear to more closely meet the standards detailed in Section six of Article 11 of the Ohio Constitution. I would also note the fact that an individual citizen of the state, Mr. Wise, and a group of volunteers at the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission were able to create Article 11 compliant maps, shows how the constitutionally mandated commission, made up of the most powerful leaders in the state, failed to do the job asked of them, that they follow the Constitution as amended by its citizens to take partisanship out of the redistricting process.

Co-Chair Speaker Bob Cupp [00:56:19] Thank you. Are there questions for the witness. Chair recognizes as Auditor Faber, thank you.

Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:56:26] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And to the witness, because I think our goal here is to take a look specifically at the concerns and not continue to hear the general concerns that you've expressed now a couple of times. You live in Columbia-Tusculum?

Mike Erhardt [00:56:39] Yes, in Cincinnati.

Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:56:40] I'm looking at the maps that were submitted by the Democrat Senate and the ones that were submitted by the Republicans in the House and Senate. Is there a difference as to how either one of those maps treats Colombia-Tusculum?

Mike Erhardt [00:56:52] Not a lot about the difference. I've actually looked at both the commission approved ones. I looked at the ones that the Democrats had submitted, I looked at the Mr. Wise's maps and the other, several of the other maps that were there. My actual neighborhood actually is treated fairly, but my more general concern is both for the state as a whole and actually for the entire process. As I said, I'm, I'm... New to watching politics here. And I just I guess I had had higher expectations that this process wouldn't be as partisan as it appears to be.

Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:57:36] I appreciate that, Mr. Chairman. Or to the two chairmen and to our witness. We've had a lot of testimony at various hearings about Columbia-Tusculum and I'll be candid. I did not know the nuances of the district that we've heard from a lot of proponents. So it is your... And that's what I was hoping to get to, I did not know that whether it has been treated the same or not on the various maps, you're saying effectively it's treated the same and you're satisfied with how that --

Mike Erhardt [00:57:59] Yes, actually, I am satisfied. I am satisfied for my own personal situation. But again, I'm speaking more generally for, you know, the broader public.

Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:58:09] That's what I want to know is how the maps are treating people. And I didn't know I didn't know that answer for that community.

Mike Erhardt [00:58:14] No. Thank you for that question.

Co-Chair Speaker Bob Cupp [00:58:17] Thank you, Mr Erhardt, to ask you. And did you spell your name for the record, please?

Mike Erhardt [00:58:21] Yes, it was Erhardt and first name is Mark.

Co-Chair Speaker Bob Cupp [00:58:27] Thank you. Thank you very much. Next witness is Darrell Fairchild.

Auditor of State Keith Faber [00:58:38] I mean, I'm trying to figure out where we can get compromise.

Darryl Fairchild [00:58:49] Darryl Fairchild, Darryl Fairchild.

Co-Chair Speaker Bob Cupp [00:58:55] Thank you. I appreciate that.

Darryl Fairchild [00:58:56] Yeah, my name is Daryl Fairchild. I'm a Dayton city commissioner, as well as a member of the League of Women Voters of Dayton and a lifelong member of the NAACP and a plaintiff in a settlement with previous Secretary of State Husted on early voting. I speak on behalf of my colleagues, Mayor Nan Whaley, Commissioners, Matt Joseph, Jeffrey Mims, and Chris Shaw. We're asking for these unconstitutional gerrymandered maps to be rejected. Voters overwhelmingly approved a new process in 2017 that was meant to limit impact of partisan gerrymandering and create maps that ensure fair representation for Ohioans. These maps fall far short of what Ohioans demanded, and our Constitution requires. Extreme gerrymandering, harms Dayton residents by diluting their voices in the statehouse. Neither proposed maps staying intact and the maps cut off Dayton, cut us off from our suburban neighbors that faced challenges similar to our own. Montgomery County, which typically votes relatively evenly between Democrats and Republicans, will almost surely be without any Democratic representation in the Senate and will have only one of five members as Democrats in the House. Without representation. That reflects the makeup of our community. The most pressing issues facing Dayton, poverty, housing instability and a legacy of racist education. House... Housing policies get shortchanged in Columbus in favor of partisan cultural wars. In Dayton we are doing our best to address these issues, but we need a partner in the state to address them effectively. Instead, we find that the state legislature is often actively seeking to harm Dayton and Ohio's other cities by attacking our home rule authority or undermining our funding resources. To be specific, I ask that we redraw the maps to emphasize the representation fairness criteria as well to eliminate the practice of packing. Secretary LaRose, you mentioned taking the competitive races off of the table. I would like to see your evaluation of the districts, the evaluation I saw identifies two House districts that are competitive and one Senate district that is competitive. If there were more, we would gladly join with you to support these maps. This is not what our state constitution requires. This is not what the voters wanted, they and we demand a fair process and fair representation. We ask you to uphold your oath to the Constitution and to reject these maps. Thank you. [applause]

Co-Chair Speaker Bob Cupp [01:01:47] Thank you, Chair recognizes Secretary LaRose

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [01:01:53] Thank you, sir. Appreciate your testimony. And I wanted to ask something that you had mentioned about neither map keeps Dayton intact. My understanding is that the population of the city of Dayton exceeds the ratio for one representative district. So it's not possible to draw a map that keeps Dayton intact, correct?

Darryl Fairchild [01:02:12] Correct. But what we see is the packing practice of packing. And so our Democratic voters get packed into one district while we shave off the Republican voters in other districts.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose [01:02:26] And fair assessment on that. I just as far as keeping Dayton intact, it's too large to be one district, obviously. The comment that you made, I appreciate and as I've said all along since Thursday, these maps that were proposed Thursday are very much a work in progress and my idea of sort of taking those competitive districts and considering those off to the side and then looking at those safe districts for the proportionality question, that is for the ongoing negotiations in the future, amendments to come to these maps. Certainly not for the one that was introduced on Thursday.

Darryl Fairchild [01:02:55] Well, I appreciate that. And I'm sure that people in this room would join you to create more competitive districts, because I don't know what your analysis is. But I know that the one I've seen, it's three and that's certainly not fair to our citizens or does justice to democratic causes. Thank you.

Co-Chair Speaker Bob Cupp [01:03:14] Thank you very much. Oh, I'm sorry. Leader Sykes.

Minority Leader Rep. Emilia Sykes [01:03:21] Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Commissioner. Mr. Commissioner, for joining us today. So you mentioned at the beginning of your testimony that the city, the way that the commission adopted maps are now, it's separates the city from your suburban neighbors. Could you tell us which suburban neighbors you were looking to have Dayton connected with? Since we do have to split the city because it is larger than a district, which direction should we go and what communities would you combine or do you suggest we combine with?

Darryl Fairchild [01:03:51] I think in Dayton, what we recognize is that many of our first ring suburbs are [inaudible] very similar issues that we have with Dayton voters. And so, you know, there's parts of Kettering, Jefferson Township, Harrison Township, Huber Heights, Trotwood.

Sen. Antani [01:04:16] Chair recognizes Senator Antani.

Minority Leader Rep. Emilia Sykes [01:04:18] I'm going to speak to to just sort of extrapolate what the Secretary of State was asking about. So as we have acknowledged, the city of Dayton's population, the 2020 census, was 137,000, which is more than 105 percent ratio of a house district. And and the map, actually, if you look at it, you know, from a political standpoint, I think, you know, it moves Belmont actually into into the 39th, not what is now the 39th House District, which has most of the the city of Dayton. And then it moves Jackson Township out of the 39th and then, you know, more of the city of Dayton than is left intact, keeping community holds. But then the northeast part of Dayton, I think, is then split off. And so, you know, I guess... When you've got, you know, only 12,000 voters to work with, I mean, I guess where would you like those voters to go, those citizens to go?

Darryl Fairchild [01:05:16] Yeah, well, I appreciate the question. And I would think that hearing other testimony today, the Harrison Township, the Jefferson, Trotwood, and I think the biggest thing is to eliminate the packing of West Dayton. You know, I think that's the piece when I've seen the alternative maps that people have proposed. It doesn't pack the votes in West Dayton.

Co-Chair Speaker Bob Cupp [01:05:45] You may proceed.

Sen. Antani [01:05:47] One of the principles that we use is keeping communities as whole as possible, right. So, you know, the Constitution lays out that, again, if a municipality is the size of a house district, it has to be wholly contained within that house district. Dayton is not. And so... But but it's right on the edge. Right. So 120,000 for House District. 126,000 is 105% population data is 137,000. So I guess I'm a little confused. Do you want Dayton to stay as one community? Or is that considered packing for you?

Darryl Fairchild [01:06:20] Well, I think I appreciate that, but you focus on the House districts and then when we get to the Senate, we know that the Senate, we don't have any

representation that equals what we see in Montgomery County in terms of party... Or the public... Or the party voting practices. And so I think that there has to be a line to those House districts that then compose the Senate. And so by focusing on the state or the on the on the House, we aren't doing justice to the Senate lines as well. And so I think that's where it gets very complicated. And so to try to pinpoint here and go on one specific evades is the question of how to get the state districts drawn fairly.

Sen. Antani [01:07:06] Last follow up, Mr. Chairman? And I guess just to say that, you know, in that Senate district, you know, part of it is with suburbs and then the other part is with Trotwood and, you know, the Townships on, you know, the western part of the county, the northern part of the county. So, I mean, I guess I'm just a little confused as to what exactly you would prefer. Well, I'd be glad to work with you to come up with where specifically you like where we could move and negotiate that. I appreciate that. [applause]

Co-Chair Speaker Bob Cupp [01:07:40] Thank you. Chair recognizes Auditor Faber.

Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:07:44] Thank you, Mr. Chair. And to the witness, I want to emphasize a couple of things. As I look at the maps and and again, the testimony that's most helpful to me, particularly at this point, is looking at the map. So I'm flipping between the various proposals in the maps and it looks like the voting percentage, according again, I'm using that wonderful source everybody cites all the time as Dave's Redistricting because I haven't seen any competitive numbers from... From either side, really. So. Well, I don't know that I trust these. Those are the only ones I have to look at. Dave's Redistricting says that Montgomery County's essentially 49.3 percent Republican and 48.2 percent Democrat. If I were going to draw Senate districts with regard to that population switch, unless I pack and crack, I'm going to end up with the Senate district that's relatively either in the, in the competitive range or I'm going to end up with a Republican district, particularly when two thirds of of of Montgomery County makes up a Senate district. And so if I'm drawing without regard to district partisan indexes, how do you draw a, in your words, a Democrat state senator?

Darryl Fairchild [01:09:03] Well, forgive me if I'm wrong, but I believe the Constitution requires you to draw by state index.

Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:09:12] I assume that's what I'm looking at here in the Dave's Redistricting. State index tells me if I'm drawing without regard to index, it's going to be... I'm going to have to do something. If I'm not going to draw a competitive district for a Democrat senator in Dayton, I'm going to have to, I'm going to have to do gerrymandering to get you a Democrat senator in Dayton.

Darryl Fairchild [01:09:31] I think we're asking for a competitive district. And I think the Constitution requires you to regard partisan index. I think that's the representation fairness criteria.

Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:09:46] Well, again, I pointed this out, the Constitution doesn't say representational fairness. It it says three factors to be considered and were to determine what those factors mean. But looking at these districts specifically in your question about Dayton, I assume because Dayton's populations, one House district plus your preference would be to keep all of Dayton in at least one House district, or do you want to split Dayton multiple times? Would you like? Again, my reading of the Constitution

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Darryl Fairchild [01:10:18] I think, obviously required to be split twice --

Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:10:21] And one of those one of those splits has to include a district that includes a district solely within Dayton. Is that your understanding or do we split Dayton twice with outside areas and put that 130,000 people in two different districts in equal numbers?

Darryl Fairchild [01:10:37] Well, I think that becomes a question of how you balance all the different criteria.

Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:10:43] As a Dayton commissioner, would you rather have one House district that is solely contained within the city of Dayton and one that goes outside of Dayton? Or would you rather have... What is your preference?

Darryl Fairchild [01:10:54] My preference is to have competitive races. I would put that criteria higher than others. And I think as my testimony, connecting them with our suburban inner circle suburbs that share like issues would be preferable.

Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:11:13] OK, thank you.

Co-Chair Speaker Bob Cupp [01:11:14] All right, thank you very much.

Darryl Fairchild [01:11:16] You're welcome.

Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:11:17] This time, Co-chair Sykes will take over moderating.

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [01:11:23] The next witness is Miss Jennifer Fisher. Jennifer Fisher. OK, then we would have Shannon Freshour. Which state and spell your name, please.

Shannon Freshour [01:11:45] Of course, the I'm Shannon Freshour. And I am here to oppose these maps that have been presented. The key thing is, I've been listening to the commentary and Secretary of State LaRose asked for civility and for us to focus on these maps and focus... And the problem with that is that there's a lot of people that a lot of outrage at what we've been subjected to for the last decade. In the last round of this, [inaudible] in this round. We can talk about the fact that the final census data was late. [inaudible] That time, but it was before the deadline. We also know that census data is delivered well in advance, like you get census data all the time. The US Census Department doesn't sit around and only work on 10 years. They deliver updates all the time. You could've had [inaudible] where you did final... The final Senate approval at the time, but you chose not to. You chose to continue a plan that's in effect, going to give a four year clearly partisan attempt that we will end up in four years coming back and having to have this fight again. And that's unconscionable for people who work for us. It also gives us another four years of extraordinary extremism, which is killing Ohioans. It's maiming them. It's killing them. I ran the numbers from the covid database this morning. 68,000, I think one hundred and twenty four people I think it is or something to that effect have been hospitalized for COVID in Ohio. That's literally every person in my home town of Marion, myself included, every person in Lima, including Co-chair Cupp and President Huffman. And the entire town of, I think, Independence, actually. And if we go by who's died in the last 18 months, we've eliminated the entirety of Tiffin and Ross County and still have dozens more who have died. That's what extreme gerrymandering is giving us and it's

giving us, instead of fighting this, we're fighting to to have a fair maps, but [inaudible] vaccines from like mandates for smallpox. People are angry because when when Secretary LaRose asked for civility, all I kept thinking is... That's like asking, that's like the kidnapers saying, I've been holding you for ten years, why don't you accept Stockholm Syndrome yet? Why can't you just accept [applause] that we are in charge and we're going to do what we want? You can shake your head, but it's true. That's exactly what I said there about. And that's why I say that every time I heard the questions. President Huffman couldn't be bothered to show up to defend maps that he prepared at a constitutionally required event. He couldn't be bothered to shut up unless he's sitting in a hospital in an emergency room. There's absolutely no excuse for someone who is not him to be sitting in that chair. No offense to you, you know, but you didn't propose the maps. And if we want to talk about the maps, I have no idea, being in Union County, how far into Franklin County do these maps go? I know they go into Dublin, but do they go into Upper Arlington? Do they go into Worthington? What are the map deadlines? I can see it on a map like on a county map, but I don't know what the definitive lines are. We are in a... This is a crisis for the state. And I get that this is a crisis for... That you're hoping you can kick the can and you can maintain control for the next four years. You know, Governor DeWine's just hope we can get past the primary. He doesn't care about it. He's at the beginning of this. He was fighting for all of us. Now she's fighting to survive. And it's our lives that we're fighting to survive with. We've got communities that are being ripped apart. Because it's easier to keep rural white communities together than urban populated communities of color. That's not what we should be doing. We should be... You know, the governor wanted 50 million dollars for an ad campaign. That's... That said, we're a progressive state, come move to Ohio. Where the hell is that progressive state? Well Leader Sykes said, save the money and just pass some crazy extremist legislation. That's what we should be doing and this process is wrong. You had the opportunity to do it right, and you chose to take the easy way out, the four year way out to maintain power. And I'm sorry if you don't want me to be angry, but I'm going to be angry and I've got a right to be. Thank you.

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [01:17:00] Thank you for your testimony regarding any questions. The next witness is Kathleen Gmeiner. Would you state your name and spell it please?

Kathleen Gmeiner [01:17:57] Is it possible to have the map displayed otherwise, I have a PowerPoint with the map on it, it's it's just the commission map that I want, that's the only one I need up here. yeah.

Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:18:13] Let's see if she's got something.

Kathleen Gmeiner [01:18:24] Thank you. OK, OK, fine, thank you. Good afternoon, Co-chairs Cupp and Sykes and Commission members. (OK, I'm sorry about. Either way, with the commission that's available, but I also have a.) Thank you for the opportunity to address the maps that are at the heart of Ohio's decennial redistricting process. My name is Katherine Gmeiner. I live with my husband, William Todd, and House District 17 on the southwest side of Columbus. I'm retired now, but my professional career took me into the statehouse many times between the year 2000 and 2019. I will be talking about the... well, OK.... (Maybe I better use my own because mine has a lot more detail. I'm sorry. Thank you) and I'll be talking about the commission's map and then also making some comparisons with the maps that were proposed by the Democratic commission and Geoff Wise, one of the volunteer maps and then Pranav Padmanabhan, these were jointly selected for the Fair Districts Legislative Mapping Competition first, I guess, first prize. But first, however, let me say that my observations about our state and our electoral process is

that it is becoming increasingly polarized and less reflective of the desires of the voters at large, which is why getting this redistricting process right is so important. In many of Ohio's districts, the primary election is the real election because the distribution of voters is not competitive. And when elections get settled at the primary, many voters start to lose interest in the electoral process. The elected officials become primarily responsive to their political base, not to all their constituents and the people who vote in the primary for a much smaller number. And they may not be reflecting the mainstream of the voters. And as a result, we're seeing more and more that the legislation that is being introduced and garnering the lion's share of attention of the Ohio General Assembly is not legislation that's arising from people's concerns, but is legislation that is driven by national political agenda as the recent spate of so-called voter reform legislation shows. But let me now move on to the maps. The districts that are drawn should be compact, competitive and reflect communities of interest. It should respect governmental boundaries, counties, cities and townships. Voting pattern of Ohio has been roughly 55 percent Republican, 45 percent Democrat in the Ohio General Assembly should reflect that voting behavior. But unfortunately, the map put forward by the commission does not meet these standards and it shows in the expected outcome of the House and Senate seats. Let me start with some observations about Franklin County, because that's where I live. And I'm most familiar with note that the commission used me. Map combines the northwest corner of Franklin County with a large part of Union County to the north and the west. So if you look over here. See, have this northwest corner and then it goes all the way up to you see that number here, up here? Well, now that for a long time, the first three election cycles in this decade, that was a Republican seat. But then after a lot of work, the Democrats captured that in 2018 and 2020. So now in an effort to gerrymander that seat, the commission map takes a large [inaudible] Republican voting county and puts it together with that northwest part of Franklin County. As I mentioned above, I live in District 17, lots of which is incorporated into the new District six in the commission map. Now, interestingly enough, the commission map grabs a densely populated 100 square block area shaped like a finger out of the logical boundaries of what should be a compact district six and joins it's a district one to the east and that's over here. We have District six, this is where I live over here, and then this 100 square block area is suddenly put over here into District one. If you live in Columbus and know anything about Columbus, the west side and the east side, very different. Those very different communities of interest. Why was this done? For some reason, it was decided to pack these hundred square blocks of votes into the East side district one. Clear gerrymandering. These then become wasted Democratic votes in District one, which is clearly a Democratic voting district, whereas District six could be a little more competitive. So the Democratic caucus. Also, so across the Franklin County line, which I don't think should be [inaudible] but it has no obvious intrusions into Franklin County districts, as the commission does. Yeah, there's that there's the 12 up there and goes up there, so that's a little. That's of a concern to me, too. Now on the maps by Geoff Wise, that keeps all the districts within the boundaries of Franklin County so it can be done, clearly can be done. Now, using the scoring mechanisms of Dave's Redistricting App, which is the software tool used by the commission, the Democratic Caucus and the winners of the four districts contest, the commission map lags behind the other three significantly in the scoring. Here's the bottom line. In the commission's map there are 56 Republican House seats (I'll go really fast) and 11 seats that lean Republican. While there are 23 Democratic seats with 8 that lean Democratic. Only one House seat is really competitive. In the Senate, 18 Republican seats and five between Republican and seven Democratic seats and one that leans Democratic. Only two Senate seats are truly competitive. OK, but Geoff Wise was using the same software to come up with a 54-39 breakout and a 54-34 breakout in the house. And Pranav Padmanabhan proposed a map with a 58-34 breakout in the Senate and the 63-32 breakout in the House, only to say it

can be done. So I say that I went over slightly and I'm happy to answer any questions if you have them.

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [01:26:50] Thank you for your testimony, are there any questions? Thank you very much. OK. Next, witnesses will them calm. OK. Matthew Krug.

Matthew Krug [01:27:41] Good afternoon. My name is Matthew Krug and I'd like to ask, I'd like to thank the redistricting commission and my fellow citizens for allowing me to speak to you all today on this important issue. I am a father, a husband, a scientist and a concerned citizen of the state of Ohio. My home is in Oakwood, an inner-ring Dayton suburb. I'm here today to give my opinion on the maps that were recently officially proposed by the Ohio Redistricting Commission. I've had the privilege to be part of a group of volunteers with the League of Women Voters, which has been traveling to communities all over Montgomery County for the last six months to understand directly from residents how they define and describe their communities, what they feel they need from their government and their political representatives, and to document that in the form of community maps. Over that time, I've come to understand and care about what they feel is not working and that they need from their representatives. These people all deserve representatives that know them and they care about each of their communities. But I don't believe that the proposed maps will provide that for them. I'd like to start by considering the proposed Ohio House map. While I actually think that there are a few good features of that map that should be preserved. These are far outweighed by some of the negative ones. A notable example, Trotwood residents stated clearly that they do not want to be severed from Dayton and its surroundings and to be grouped in with Preble County. But that is exactly what this map does to them again, as in 2010. Taking a broader view, it is a requirement of this commission to create a map with partisan proportionality to actual voting patterns. Considering all districts which are in whole or in part in Montgomery County, the proposed map is highly skewed. In aggregate, the districts districts likely partisan lean is 51 to 47, Republican to Democrat. But race outcomes are very likely 80 to 20 by districts, four to one. In other words, the four percent difference in partisan lean is inflated by this map into a likely 60 percent advantage for Montgomery County. To understand this better, I calculated the efficiency gap for Montgomery County's proposed districts. This is a simple metric for disproportionality that compares what's called wasted votes. Wasted votes or votes that are cast for a losing candidate or votes for a winning candidate that are in excess of those needed to win. As such, it neatly accounts for both the primary mechanisms of gerrymandering, both packing and cracking. The efficiency gap compares the wasted votes for the two parties. And if there is a large gap, that is an indication that the map is gerrymandered in a way that removes political power from one group of voters and delivers it to another in a way that is strongly out of proportion to the preferences of the electorate. From Montgomery County districts in the proposed House map, the gap is large. Specifically, four out of 10 votes cast by Democratic leaning voters and Montgomery County will be wasted four out of 10. Conversely, only two out of 10 votes cast by Republican leaning voters will be wasted in Montgomery County. The efficiency gap for the House map is 24 percent. This is far too large. Now moving to the proposed Senate map, ten out of ten votes cast by Democratic leaning voters in Montgomery County will almost certainly be wasted. It will be nearly impossible for the city of Dayton to have a Democratic senator representing them in Columbus, despite Dayton's importance in the region as one of Ohio's largest metropolitan areas whose residents vote in overwhelming numbers for Democratic Party candidates. This map robs the citizens of Dayton metro area of their political voice. A disproportionately large number of those citizens whose political power is being exported to the rural surroundings are minorities, and the pockets are being picked most aggressively in Trotwood in Jefferson Township. I

have met with these folks. I spent hours talking with them about this issue. They care about it. They're citizens of Ohio who deserve to have a voice in choosing who represents them in these maps, deny them that choice. Creating a proportionately fair map that preserves communities is actually a difficult geographic problem. I appreciate that, but it is not impossible in a number of the maps that do achieve this outcome have been discussed already by other testimony. No map is perfect, but many maps already proposed by citizen groups are far better starting points than the two maps proposed by this commission. Finally, in response to criticisms of this map and its partisan skew. I've heard the following rejoinder on social media and even from Ohio politicians. Elections have consequences. And on this, we agree in part, elections should have consequences. And that's exactly the point with this map. Elections won't have consequences. They'll be predetermined. The truth is that the last Ohio election that has truly mattered was the 2010 midterm election that set up the previous gerrymander. And adopting the proposed map or anything like it will continue to force Ohio's government to remain in 2010 while the rest of the world moves on without us. Thank you.

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [01:33:00] Thank you very much. Oh, Leader Sykes?

Minority Leader Rep. Emilia Sykes [01:33:07] Thank you, sir, for your testimony today.

Kathleen Gmeiner [01:33:09] So you mentioned specifically that you believe the communities of Trotwood in Dayton are more similarly situated. Do you know how we could construct a map that includes Dayton plus Trotwood, maybe Jefferson Township in a way that protects the voters in those communities and does not necessarily -- crack or pack black voters?

Minority Leader Rep. Emilia Sykes [01:33:36] I think that it would probably, given the population of the city, that it would be necessary to divide Dayton into more than one district. That district on the west side would include Jefferson Township and Trotwood, and on the east side would include... Include some of the other outlying communities in inner ring suburbs of Dayton.

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [01:33:59] All right, any other questions? Auditor Faber?

Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:34:05] As a follow up, as somebody who knows the area. Is it your preference, again, because Dayton is bigger than than one state legislative district, would you be your preference that Dayton have one wholly contained state representative district inside its city boundaries and then one that went outside of its city boundaries for state rep districts? Or is there another proposal that would take? And again, one of the problems you have in districting is is with geographic areas. Are you going to draw spidered districts or spiderwebs outside to pick up various voters to get to that 50/50 magical number? That's the problem you get into, because Ohioans tend to live around people who think like them.

Matthew Krug [01:34:45] I understand. And that's a problem. That's a situation that's replicated all over the country in terms of what my preferences are, I would defer to the citizens of those communities, including Dayton. And I think you all should be meeting with them to make sure that you're satisfying what they want out of their representation. [applause] But I think that it's almost certainly going to be necessary to divide the city of Dayton into more than one district. And it shouldn't be done in a way that disproportionately packs Democratic leaning voters into one district. They ought to be split

up in a way that enhances the goal or approaches the goal of achieving proportionality of representation for Montgomery County as a continuous region.

Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:35:28] So, Mr. Chairman, follow up, the converse to that's also true. Currently, Preble County comes in and partners with Trotwood. Preble County is a pretty high Republican indexed area. Should Preble County also then be be district primarily in an area that packs those, those people together? Or should we goal to try and separate that into two 50/50 districts where by very nature, then you're going to be putting people with somebody who isn't like them?

Matthew Krug [01:36:01] Yeah, I mean that, so to be getting into the granular details of exactly how this map should be done, I don't think it's something that you and I can sort out here during this testimony. It would involve sitting down in front of a map and again, I think involving the citizens affected by the map.

Auditor of State Keith Faber [01:36:16] I appreciate that. And I appreciate you coming forward and sharing your thoughts. That's why I wanted to... I'm trying to get specifics as to where we could make lines move to get compromise.

Matthew Krug [01:36:24] I'm sure that we could connect you with folks who would be able to express their views on those particular regions, if that's something that the commission requests. If I may just also an additional follow up that I didn't include, but I heard it being discussed by this commission. There were questions about the the way in which the Dave's Redistricting App data are are formed and the reliability, perhaps, of those data. And also about relying on the hard numbers and a 50 50 cutoff for when a district will go to one political party or the other. It is entirely possible to create a very simple model where you could say the probability that a particular candidate, if a given party is going to win a district, slides according to the partisan lean of the community. And that's what I did in calculating my efficiency gap numbers. The Dave's Redistricting App numbers, Senator Antani, they come from, it's a mean of three means. So it's a mean of all of the party wide election results at the presidential level, at the governors and attorney general level and at the United States Senate level. Those are all individually averaged together. Then those three averages are themselves averaged together to create a composite number that is taken as an indicator of partisan lean for each precinct. [applause]

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [01:37:51] Any additional questions? Senator Antani

Sen. Antani [01:37:55] Great to know the Dave's Redistricting, but I mean, again, I think an election for governor is very different than an election for the General Assembly. And, you know, using, you know, the party voter index might be more accurate. But again, could you know. So you did say in your testimony that you wanted Trotwood and Jefferson and maybe Jackson, I missed if it were Jefferson or Jackson Township, which Jefferson Township, Jefferson.

Matthew Krug [01:38:22] Just to clarify, it's not what I want. It's what they told me they want.

Sen. Antani [01:38:25] Sure. So these are very rough numbers. Trotwood at about 25,000, Jefferson at 21,000. And so in order to create a House district, you know, you need about 60, 65, 68 from the city of Dayton. City is 137. So that would then mean the city of Dayton is now split in half. Is that what you are asking for?

Matthew Krug [01:38:48] I think, my opinion, considering the numbers that you just cited, is it will have to be cut into two districts if there is a goal of creating a proportional map. And exactly where that cut is drawn should take into consideration the desires of the residents of those communities.

Sen. Antani [01:39:06] Followup Mr. Chairman?

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [01:39:07] Yes.

Sen. Antani [01:39:07] And I guess my only question is if, you know, again, a principle is to try to keep communities whole. The city of Dayton is a community. But you're now saying you'd rather see it split in half?

Matthew Krug [01:39:19] I think that you just told me that its population exceeds the size of a district.

Sen. Antani [01:39:26] Follow up Mr. Chairmain?

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [01:39:27] Yes.

Sen. Antani [01:39:27] It does. But you can try to keep as many Daytonians together as you can. But in your proposal, you would have to split it in half.

Matthew Krug [01:39:39] So perhaps I spoke imprecisely, I didn't mean as close to 50 percent of the residents should be in each district. I think that some logical and fair line could be found about which to divide the city of Dayton.

Sen. Antani [01:39:53] It's not possible.

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [01:39:54] Any additional questions or comments? Thank you very much.

Matthew Krug [01:39:59] Thank you.

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [01:40:04] F. Mark Laskovics. Please state and spell your name, please.

Mark Laskovics [01:40:25] Mark Laskovics.

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [01:40:35] Thank you.

Mark Laskovics [01:40:36] I want to thank Speaker Cupp and Senator Sykes, co-chairman of the commission and the commission, for allowing me to speak today. I am Mark Laskovics. I live in Montgomery, Ohio, which is a northeast suburb of Cincinnati. I'm in the twenty eighth Ohio House District, the 8th Ohio Senate District and the first U.S. Congressional District, all created by gerrymandering. This commission has proposed a voting district maps which to me look more gerrymandered than our current districts. And you've heard the numbers. I'm not going to repeat them. But basically the proposed maps fall short in three critical areas: proportionality, minority representation and compactness. Whether on the proportionality side, you have the percentage could be argued. You know, it's 46 percent Democratic voters in his state, 53 percent, 54 percent. And the current membership of the House is basically 66, 67 percent Republicans and 32 percent

Democrats. So it's out of proportion. Minority representation is official maps of people appear to be inappropriately packing minorities in Ohio house districts. For, for example, House districts 24 and 25 in Cincinnati have a surplus of population as well as significant percentages of minority populations. While the surpluses are within legally allowable limits, concentrating on minority populations in the fewer districts can affect diversity and election results. And the members promoting the officially proposed maps, as far as I understand it, stated that for the record, they failed to examine the racial composition in their maps. This admission is just not correct. Federal Voting Act, minority communities, and all Ohio voters need to be taken into consideration. And from a compactness perspective, Ohio District House District 18 is an example of a district that performs poorly in compactness. It's actually up near Cleveland. Both in mathematical measurements and in falling, failing to pass. It just doesn't look... It doesn't pass the eyeball test. As has been mentioned, there have been fair districts proposed by Mr. Wise of Cincinnati and Mr. Padmanabhan of Columbus, and they independently submitted these. They gave a good explanation on how they were generated. And I would recommend that this commission use those maps as a basis for future restructuring. I know in Montgomery we are divided in half. Montgomery, Ohio, has... I'm in the House District 28 and half of the city is in another district. Why is Montgomery divided in half? It makes no sense. The school system where all of the same school system with Blue Ash and yet it's divided. I'd like to see that fixed in the future. Thank you very much. And I appreciate your time.

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [01:45:11] Thank you. Other questions. Thank you very much. Valerie Lee. Please state your name.

Valerie Lee [01:45:34] Yes, Valerie Lee. Good, OK? Good afternoon. My name is Valerie Lee. I'm from Ohio. I appreciate this opportunity to speak to this august body. Governor DeWine, members of the redistricting committee and the audience of supporters for their districts. It took a certain measure ofchutzpah to appear before you a shirt representative of that university to the north that's recognized as arted foe.

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [01:46:11] I didn't notice.

[01:46:14] OK, my choice of dress was purposeful, opening the door to presenting my thoughts on the topic under discussion as a sports metaphor. I was in downtown Ann Arbor last night and it was game night. That big letter M was in the sky on the ground that appeared in my dreams. I'm sure the same might be witnessed on the OSU campus on game night. The energy and enthusiasm were palpable and reflective of a community coming together in victory or defeat. They chose to attend University of Michigan, the faculty chose to teach at the University of Michigan and the community chose to be part of that communal spirit. That same might be said of my community. The City of Trotwood. With the community mapping session. We identified common interest, common concerns and common needs. Those needs cannot be addressed because our voices have been silenced. Our legislative district, District 43, was created in such a way to diminish our input, leaving our community unrepresented. Can you imagine taking a slice of the University of Michigan and throwing it into Buckeye Nation? That portrays what has happened with our gerrymander and noncompetitive district, district 43. First since we had been kind of just thrown into Preble County. You, the members of the redistricting committee have a role to play in putting this runaway train back on track. It's up to you to be a truly representative body and create fair districts so our legislators can be the megaphone for we the people. Thank you.

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [01:48:12] Thank you. Are there any questions?

Mia Lewis [01:48:20] Mia Lewis.

Mia Lewis [01:48:40] Hello, my name is Mia Lewis. Co-chairs Speaker Cupp and Senator Sykes, members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Mia Lewis and I'm here on behalf of Common Cause Ohio, a nonpartisan good government group with three 30,000 members that has been a central part of the fight for fair maps and fair elections for decades. The maps adopted for formal consideration by the majority on the commission are an affront to the people of Ohio. They violate the rules that you yourselves made and committed to. How do I know? Because Common Cause was there. We were part of the negotiations when the new rules for drawing Ohio's House and Senate districts were created. Our executive director, Catherine Tercer, along with Senator Huffman, Senator Sykes, academics, experts and legislators went round after round to create the proposal that state legislators overwhelmingly approved in December of 2014. That proposed amendment was placed on the ballot in 2015, endorsed by both parties and then one in every single Ohio county with over 72 percent approval statewide. And what were those new rules? And how does your, do your proposed maps measure up on those rules? Let's see. There was bipartisan map making process, that hasn't happened. Transparency throughout the process, that hasn't happened. Meaningful opportunities for public participation. We do appreciate these regional hearings, but the proposed maps do not reflect the public input that you have received. Minimizing splits to keep communities together, and the officially proposed maps do manage to do that. Adherence to all state and federal law, including the Voting Rights Act. And in failing to keep the needs of minority populations into consideration, the maps under official consideration are in clear violation of state and federal law. And of course, the requirement for representational fairness so that the maps mirror the partisan breakdown in how, how Ohioans have voted over the previous decade. I want to be clear that I'm speaking to the members of the commission who voted to approve these working drafts. As you can see, your maps score very poorly. In fact, they succeed in only one out of six requirements. So and, some commission members even admitted that for some of these requirements, they didn't even try. A lot of people here today have spoken about representational fairness. And let's take that as an example. It's a really, really central part [inaudible] 2015 reform because there is no clearer or more direct way to prevent gerrymandering than to say that the predicted outcome of the new districts must reflect the way Ohioans have voted over the past 10 years. It's basically a way to say gerrymandering is not allowed. If they if the lines create districts that don't reflect the partisan breakdown of Ohioans' vote, then they aren't allowed. End of story. [applause] And as many other people testifying today have spoken, the ratios of the maps that you've proposed are just completely off. They're not even close. And as you know, the requirement for representational fairness is not optional. It's there in black and white in the Ohio Constitution, Article 11, Section 6B. And I quote, "The statewide proportion of districts whose voters based on statewide and federal partisan general election results during the last 10 years favor each political party shall correspond closely to the statewide preferences of the voters of Ohio." I would offer to explain all that to you, but as all of you either wrote it, it passed it on to the ballot, endorsed it or voted on it. I'm sure that that is not necessary. Your maps fail the test of representational fairness. In a word, they are gerrymandered. And how did that happen? You just simply chose to ignore one of the most basic rules and actually several of the rules that are part of the redistricting reform of 2015. And in opting not to follow the rules clearly laid out in the Ohio Constitution and in federal law, you were thumbing your nose at the enormous majority of Ohio voters who passed these reforms in a landslide. You are disregarding and disrespecting Ohio's African-American and other minority populations. You're thumbing their nose at the literally

hundreds of Ohioans who have testified in previous hearings. You are basically saying we really don't care about fairness, we don't care about the law, we don't care about representative democracy. And it doesn't have to be this way. As the fair districts mapping competition shows, it is quite possible with good faith and a bit of effort to draw maps that are fair, that avoid political spinning, splitting political subdivisions and keep communities together and that are more competitive. And they bring all voices into the democratic process rather than shutting them out. With the deadline for adopting the Ohio House and Senate maps coming up in just three days, we would like to suggest the obvious. The Ohio Redistricting Commission should set your maps aside and instead adopt one of the two winning maps from the Fair Districts mapping competition for formal consideration. The maps submitted for the competition are altogether superior than more... They more closely comply with the constitutional criteria. They're constitutional, they're fair, they're legal, they're inclusive, which none of yours are. Bipartisan mapmaking is challenging. But Ohioans are tired of business as usual and would like to see a true deliberative process. The commission should use these upcoming public hearings to individually review each of the districts of any proposed map and consider possible improvements. I urge you to engage in the public debate and deliberation about each district and create maps that reflect the Ohio Constitution and demonstrate bipartisan mapmaking. Thank you.
[applause]

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [01:55:07] Any questions? Thank you very much. Jo Lovelace.

Jo Lovelace Hill [01:55:34] So you didn't ask me to spell my name, was that easy?

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [01:55:39] [laughter] Would you state and spell your name please.

Jo Lovelace Hill [01:55:41] Okay, my name is Joe. My last name is Lovelace Hill. I had written out something today, but when I was listening to everyone, everyone was saying the same thing and you all asking the same question. All we're asking is for you to be fair. I live in Harrison Township. I live in district 43. And I am a grouped also with Preble County, which my community has nothing in common. All we're asking is that you take one step back. Rethink, relook at your own map. And do what Matthew said, talk to the people who are involved. Give us an opportunity to talk to you. That's all that I'm asking. Thank you.
[applause]

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [01:56:38] Thank you. Thank you. Collin Marazzi. Before you start, we're told that the clapping makes it difficult for the streaming, the hearing of the testimony, so we're asking you again, would you please curtail that?

Collin Marozzi [01:57:22] Well, good evening, Commissioners. My name's Collin Marozzi. And I am a policy strategist with the American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio. And thank you for the opportunity to testify on the introduced General Assembly District Map plan. The General Assembly map plan that is being considered by this commission is fatally flawed. My testimony will focus on the failure of this proposed map to take into account the Voting Rights Act and the failure of the proposed map to comply with Section 6 requirements. Section 3(B)(2) requires any adopted General Assembly map to comply with the U.S. Constitution, the Ohio Constitution and federal law. The Voting Rights Act is federal law. The Voting Rights Act protects minorities from having the right to vote, including minority vote dilution through gerrymandering denied by state and local governments. In order to comply with the Ohio Constitution and federal law. The commission must conduct analysis

on the maps effect on minority representation. This is even more necessary given the Democrats... The demographic shifts in Ohio's population, according to the 2020 census. This commission must do its due diligence and analyze this proposed map to ensure compliance with the Voting Rights Act and present those findings to the public. Second, the disproportionate partisan advantage of these proposed General Assembly districts clearly violates Article 11, Section 6(B), which says, quote, "the statewide proportion of districts whose voters based on statewide, state and federal partisan election results during the last 10 years favor each political party shall correspond closely to the statewide preferences of Ohio voters." This proposed map perpetuates and extends the gerrymander created supermajorities that currently exist in both the House and the Senate. The people of Ohio demanded better in 2015. You've heard from hundreds of Ohioans during these hearings calling on this commission to create fairer maps. And instead of listening to the pleas of your constituents, this commission has doubled down. Is this what the members of this commission promised when you voted for and sponsored HJR 12? Is this what millions of Ohioans voted for? Is this what was promised in 2015? No, it isn't. I'll say it again, the splitting rules of Sections 3 and 4 are only a means to an end. Compliance with Section 6 is the true goal and the guiding principle of Article 11 and creating a map that under Section 6 is the only way that this commission will have legitimacy in the eyes of Ohio voters. The proposed General Assembly district plan again violates Section 6(A), which also provides that quote, "No General Assembly district plan shall be drawn primarily to favor or disfavor a political party." The protection of incumbents in the Senate plan, in the strategic pairing of incumbent representatives in newly created House districts reveals that this proposed plan was drawn to disfavor a political party. You can't say this map was drawn to keep communities together. When you slice Trotwood off from Dayton and bury it and Preble and Butler Counties. Not one the city of Cincinnati... Of Youngstown, I'm sorry, is in a Senate district with rural Carroll County, but not other valley metros like Niles and Warren. And not when you pull Dublin out of Franklin County and stick it with Union County. Those are not communities of interest. The map wasn't drawn to be more competitive. According to Dave's Redistricting App, both the proposed House map and Senate map are less competitive than either current map. Nor was the map drawn to be more compact. As Dave's Redistricting scores both the proposed House and Senate maps as equally or slightly less compact using the Rehak and Polsby Popper metrics. The sad fact is, other than the allocation of General Assembly seats to the majority party, it's hard to find a quantifiable measure where the proposed House and Senate maps outperform our current maps. This is not what the people of Ohio earned when they went to the ballot in 2015. Thank you and I'm happy to answer any questions.

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [02:02:11] Thank you. Any questions, Senator... Auditor Faber.

Auditor of State Keith Faber [02:02:19] Any titles is fine. Looking... I'm going to talk about the first thing you talked about was minority representation. And I agree, in the past, we have taken great pains to try and where we can draw minority influence or minority... Majority districts. But my understanding and the ACLU certainly would be better expert on this than I am because I've never had to litigate these type of issues. But my understanding is, is the first predicate before you can consider race as a factor in drawing districts, meaning you're going to consider that by its very nature, discriminate one way in favor or against the minority population, is you have to show some evidence that the minority community has not been able to select or have an impact in selecting representation. And would you agree with me that the current districts, the ones that everybody agrees are so bad, does a decent job giving minority representation in the General Assembly?

Collin Marozzi [02:03:20] Well, through the co-chairs to Auditor Faber. I would say that my comments on the proposed General Assembly map plan and my comments, you know, I would say, asking for an analysis to be done of the Voting Rights Act with the map that is under consideration today stands as the fact that it was incomplete when it was originally introduced.

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [02:03:46] But going back to it, Mr. Chairman, going back to the ACLU's position and making sure I understand it right now, currently there are 21 out of 132 members of the General Assembly are minority. That's roughly fifteen point nine percent of the General Assembly. Far higher than the percent of minorities in Ohio. Again, I don't think there ought to be any component that leads to any frankly... Minorities could be 50 percent if that's what the voters decide. We ought not have any discrimination in Ohio, period. My question is, though, before we intentionally go in and draw a minority/majority or minority influenced districts, is there a requirement that we show that there have been some racial disparity in the ability of those communities to elect a minority member? And my question is, do you have any evidence of that? And isn't that the standard that federal courts have said pretty clearly in places that aren't under Voting Rights Act restrictions like Ohio, that you show before you use race as a factor when you draw districts? Again, I don't know this area well enough. I'm asking you guys, as the experts in this in this component.

Collin Marozzi [02:04:54] And again and through the co-chairs to Auditor Faber, I guess I would just say again that it is not the ACLU's duty to create the justification for this commission. It is the commission's responsibility to share that and to comply on your own accord with the Voting Rights Act. I'm not saying it has or it hasn't. I'm saying that the original testimony on this proposed map was incomplete because it said that the Voting Rights Act was not taken into account.

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [02:05:26] Thank you. Sen. Antani.

Sen. Antani [02:05:29] Mr. Co-Chair, so used to calling him senator. Thank you for your your testimony. And so you again, also referenced, you know, the issue of Trotwood. I don't think you mention Jefferson Township, but Trotwood being split from Dayton. And so, you know, hypothetically speaking, if your only concern is Trotwood. And we're not talking about [inaudible] so, Trotwood still in and around 25,000 in this decennial census, that would then cause a further split of Dayton. And so I guess my question is, is that the ACLU's position is that, to just have more of a split in Dayton, to have Trotwood in in the same district as residents of the city of Dayton.

Collin Marozzi [02:06:23] Well, thank the co-chairs and to Senator Antani, I think that's a false choice. There are four wholly contained, I believe. Let me get my map out here. Yes, there are four wholly contained House districts in Montgomery County. That means that there's three other House districts that can be split other than Dayton. And I don't think that. In order for Trotwood and for Jefferson Township to have meaningful representation, I think you don't have to split Dayton in order to achieve that.

Sen. Antani [02:07:00] Follow up, Mr. Chairman?

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [02:07:03] Yes.

Sen. Antani [02:07:03] And I'm sorry, maybe I do not have a written copy of your testimony so I was falling along. I thought you had said you, the ALCU's position was to have Trotwood and Jefferson Township with the city of Dayton. Is that am I not correct on that? Through the co-chairs and to Sen. Antani, those comments were based on the premise that they were not in a district in Montgomery County, but rather in Preble and Butler counties. So it would kind of be like if you look to Summit County and have both those urban districts in the city of Akron, I would say be equivalent to have only one district in the city of Akron and then another district into a joining county. You can have both.

[02:07:53] Follow up, Mr. Chairman?

[02:07:53] Yes.

[02:07:53] I'm still having trouble understanding, so there's a few... There's many things you can do right, is your point not having Trotwood and Jefferson Township with Preble County? Or is your point in not having and actually, by the way, in the map, I think Jefferson Township is no longer with Preble County. But is your point in not having Trotwood with Preble County? So is your point in not in having Trotwood with the city of Dayton. Does that make sense? So those are two choices.

Collin Marozzi [02:08:21] Through the co-chairs. And to Senator Antani, my point at the end of the day is that the people of Trotwood are not a community of interest with the people of Preble and Butler counties.

Sen. Antani [02:08:33] Ok, so Trotwood and Preble.

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [02:08:39] Any questions? One question I have is how do you calculate still statewide preferences of voters in Ohio as specified here in this Section 6(B). How do you how do you come up with that proportion?

Collin Marozzi [02:08:56] Thank you, co-chairman Sykes. So I gave testimony to this commission in Mansfield on August 27th. And in that testimony I talked about how we had simply run a very basic analysis of election results from every statewide election, statewide partisan election from 2012 to 2020. You look at those findings and then you simply average them together. And what you get there and what has been a you know, I would say consensus among those that have commented on how to calculate. What is described in Section 6(B). Is you get a 55 45 split and partisan preferences. Now that tells me that those percentages should closely correspond to the percentages of the number of seats each party has in the General Assembly as reading Section 6(B), which says the proportion of districts whose voters favor a political party.

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [02:10:06] OK, any additional questions? Thank you, sir. Oh, yes, yes. Oh, OK.

Auditor of State Keith Faber [02:10:16] Just just to follow up on that. And I think that that's a plausible reading of that section. But I go back and ask the question that I know others have brought up. How do you deal with competitive seats? Because there's no way for me to determine a district and I would say competitive seats anywhere between 45 and 55, because candidates matter, elections matter, races matter, communities of interest matter. All those things can sway numbers. So if I go through and just pull out all the, all the places we can draw, because I always thought that was the goal, if you're going to try and draw districts that you draw competitive seats. For all the testimony we've heard over

the last month and a half or however long we've been taking testimony, people don't want to be, they want the primaries not to decide the general election. They want people to have to be responsible to constituencies. And so if the goal is to draw competitive districts and the way Ohioans tend to live around people that think like them, which means it's certainly when you're keeping counties intact and cities intact and townships intact, it becomes very difficult to get to those kind of ratios without knowing how those competitive seats are going to line up. I just did an analysis and we've done the same analysis. Frankly, I wish I had the proponents of the Republican maps of the House and Senate Republican maps to give us their competitive index data. But I did my own back of the envelope calculation. And if you take out the competitive seats, then you've got, if you use your analysis, maybe some place to go. But I don't know how you do an analysis with competitive seats, because I'm going to have to pre-predict who's going to win all those races that we all know campaigns matter. And so that's what I'm trying to get some guidance from you guys as to how you dealt with those competitive seats. And frankly, I think you guys have argued before, you want more competitive seats, not less.

Collin Marozzi [02:12:19] Through the co-chairs and again to Auditor Faber, admittedly, this is, you know, in my personal opinion, a shortcoming of Article 11 because it does not mention competitiveness. The language does not mention competitiveness. It mentions proportionality, it mentions compactness. It does not mention competitive. You know, I believe competitive elections are certainly an aspirational goal, that this commission should, you know, try to achieve. But as my reading of Article 11, competitive districts is not a requirement.

Auditor of State Keith Faber [02:13:03] So. Mr. Chairman?

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [02:13:05] Yes.

Auditor of State Keith Faber [02:13:05] All the testimony we've heard talking about the downstroke problems of having too many Republicans or too many Democrats are having easy primaries, your view, and the ACLU's view, is that's not a concern for the Constitution. That may be a concern that if we can, in a perfect world, land, land with. But that's not a concern. We need to draft districts from.

Collin Marozzi [02:13:29] Well through the co-chairs. Again, to Senator Faber. I wouldn't say it's my view. I'd say it's my reading of Article 11.

Auditor of State Keith Faber [02:13:35] Thank you.

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [02:13:37] An additional questions? Thank you,.

Sen. Antani [02:13:41] Mr. Cochair?

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [02:13:42] Sen. Antani.

Sen. Antani [02:13:44] Thank you, Mr. Cochair. One more question based on the auditors question. I think, you know, based on his question, the real question is. How do you determine which way a competitive seat leans and under the data that you used, what was determined as a competitive seat? Right? So, you know, when you if we use the three means of the three different sort of races of, you know, the presidential, gubernatorial, attorney general, etc., you know, that's that's one way to do it. But if you are in that and, you know, I think Secretary LaRose said 48 to 52, the Auditor is at 45 to 55. We can, you

know, split the pickle. You know, those are toss up seats. Right. And I think if you look at, you know, any sort of PVI rating, you know, a toss up is a toss up. And the question is, is where did you put those in the lean Dem or lean Republican? I would remind you, the 43rd district this past cycle was won by 138 votes, I think. And has been competitive in the past. And so, you know. That was that's a Republican seat, but I mean, my gosh, a 138 votes, I don't know how you put that in anybody's column.

[02:15:07] Through the co-chairs into Senator Antani, I'd have to ask and unfortunately, could you restate the question?

Sen. Antani [02:15:14] How did you determine, or where did you put the competitive seats? What was your cutoff for a competitor? So is it a, you know, a PVI or whatever the Dave's Redistricting one is called, the three means? Is it exactly 50/50? And if there's one percent or one vote in one precinct more, that is a Republican seat or a Democrat seat, I guess. How did you put, you know, those seats that are in that 40 to 52 to spectrum?

Collin Marozzi [02:15:43] Well, through the co-chairs, I guess I would say that I didn't put them there, I looked at Dave's Redistricting App and they put it there.

Sen. Antani [02:15:50] So we don't know.

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [02:15:59] Thank you very much.

Collin Marozzi [02:16:00] Thank you.

[02:16:02] One comment I would like to make is that it's also incumbent upon this commission to provide some specificity as relates to certain parameters of competitiveness. As you know, we should roll up our sleeves as well and make some determinations, provide some guidance. We appreciate the input they were receiving, it's helping us with our, uh, with our deliberations. But we also have a responsibility to make some determinations. And hopefully we can do that. And as we should as we move forward, the next witness is Ann Mercer.

Sen. Antani [02:16:49] I don't know if it's...

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [02:16:56] Ariel Miller.

Ariel Miller [02:17:04] Chairs and commissioners, hi, how are you? You've been very hard working today and I'm sure that you're tired. If I were you, I would want to stand up and turn around a little bit. [applause]. I want to thank you for giving us this time on a Sunday afternoon. My name is Ariel Miller. I'm a retired lady from Cincinnati, Ohio. I spent my career working with the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio, which goes from Troy to Martins Ferry. So that meant I fell in love with people in urban, rural and suburban parts of the state who had very, very different views. But our common ground was that we were trying to love each other and to love God. And so I really appreciated the way you began this hearing, Secretary LaRose, by talking about where could be the common ground and the civility. I think you seven people are the most important leaders in the state this week. What you are trying to do is terribly important. It's September 12th. We are trying to resurrect American democracy and you can help us do it. I have faith in you. I don't think that you've made a good start. And I wrote some very cranky testimony, but I think you can still salvage it. Let me be specific. Governor, when we started the pandemic, I felt you wanted every single one of us to survive, including people who would never vote for you.

Secretary LaRose, I felt that the election in 2020 was a magnificent achievement. I felt that election officials locally and at the state level really did everything they could to make voters understand their votes counted and would be counted. It's a huge achievement. So now you need to be able to do that again. I think that the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission have given you a get out of jail pass. I think that the map that they have developed followed a process that would do what I think you would like to be remembered for doing, which is to restore faith in our political process. They started in May. They had hearings. They taught people how the new rules work. They got people busy thinking about communities of interest. They collected all of that documentation. They had Ohio State professors who crunched the numbers as soon as the census data were available. And they got a map done with a report by the first of September, which was the constitutional deadline. They explained how they met the criteria in the Constitution. And they they did this all in a way that was respectful and built trust so you could defy expectations and transcend partisanship and start with their map and say to the voters of Ohio, we are here for all of you. We want all of you to be heard and to to count. And we are not going to fall into the expectations and stereotypes that you have of us that we're going to be partisan. Wouldn't that be exciting? Wouldn't you like to be remembered as the seven people who rebuilt our democracy and made us believe in our state government again? Please do that. Thank you. [applause]

Co-chair Sen. Vernon Sykes [02:20:55] Any questions? Thank you very much. At this time, if there's no objections, we're going to take a five minute break. If this is not the usual legislative mess, this is going to be little more than five minutes.

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Danielle L. Stewart, hereby certify that on October 19, 2021, I caused a true and correct copy of the following documents to be served by email upon the counsel listed below:

1. **Stipulation of Evidence**
2. **Stipulation of Evidence, Appendix of Exhibits, Volume 1 of 2 (pages 1-259)**
3. **Stipulation of Evidence, Appendix of Exhibits, Volume 2 of 2 (pages 260-433)**

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