

Nate Bissinger, Hamilton County, Congressional District 1.

When I was in high school I got into a heated debate with my best friend when she made a claim that I found utterly insulting to me and to my country. Off the cuff, she said she believed the United States was definitely not the greatest country on earth.

I couldn't believe my ears. My parents raised me with absolute pride in my country, my government, and my American ideals.

I wish I could feel that optimism again.

Since that day, I have lost so much of my faith in our republic, our democracy. I held firm that, despite our country's shortcomings, the reason we were the greatest country on earth was because of the ideals of governance we all coalesced around. That democracy was tough sometimes, but was absolutely necessary. As Churchill claimed, "Democracy is the worst form of government except for all the others."

My generation, as well as those younger than me whom I now teach each day, laugh at the notion that we have any claim to being the world's greatest country. Well, that's not true. I guess we are more apathetic than anything else. Disillusioned.

The one guiding principle I thought Americans could rally around was our reverence for a government of, by, and for the people. That is, a conscious decision to make sure that our government at least respected, at best cherished, the will of the people.

I don't think we believe in that anymore. These proposed maps make that clear.

I have moved three times in the past three years. All of these places are within 15 minutes of each other in Cincinnati in Hamilton County. Before that I went to college at Miami University, approximately 45 minutes away in Butler County. I have had a different United States Congressman every year for the past four years as a result of the previous map and the two newly proposed maps.

I would like to remind the members of this council to be a government for the people, and not for themselves.