

Ohio Senate Congressional District Testimony

SB 258

Testimony Location: Ohio Statehouse, Senate South Hearing Room

Testimony Date: November 4, 2021

My name is Tony D'Ambrosio, and I live in current Ohio House district 28, Ohio Senate District 8, and Congressional district 2.

To all those in the Ohio Senate, thank you for allowing me to submit this written testimony

I volunteer with non-partisan organizations demanding free, fair, accessible, safe, and secure elections and one non-partisan organization whose mission is to reduce gun violence and increase firearm safety. As a member of these organizations, I find I am fighting an uphill battle on all fronts. Ohio is seeing too much legislation that is disenfranchising voters and making Ohioans less safe from gun violence. The people of Ohio are not fairly represented in state or federal legislatures. I believe this is the result of unfairly drawn legislative and congressional districts.

In the past, both political parties have marginalized the other party through mapmaking and Ohio has some of the most gerrymandered congressional districts in the country. Ohio voters adopted reforms to curb gerrymandering in 2018 for Ohio's congressional districts by over 70% of the vote. We demand an open, transparent process that results in fair maps that serve voters - not partisan, political interests. Please keep redistricting fair, transparent, non-discriminatory, and politically impartial. Maps should serve the voters - not the political interests of parties or candidates.

Over the past decade, Ohio has voted an average of 55% Republican. A fair map will have no more than 55% Republican seats. Fair district maps should reflect how Ohioans actually vote. This allows us to elect leaders who represent our values. Every Ohioan from every political party would benefit from fair, representative districts. We all deserve the power to vote politicians out of office when necessary. We deserve the power to elect new, diverse, leadership that truly represents us. Congressional district maps should keep our communities together and provide real pathways to political representation for communities of color and accurately reflect our partisan makeup.

Gerrymandering is a form of voter discrimination in which mapmakers manipulate legislative districts to intentionally favor one political party or candidate over the other. This allows the party with more control over the redistricting process to artificially inflate the number of seats it gets. Gerrymandering allows congressional districts to be won heavily by one party and the primary election becomes more important than the general election. This leads to a general election of extreme candidates who are less likely to compromise or work across the

aisle. Software improvements and the availability of sophisticated data about voters on a massive scale allows for the drawing of unfair legislative maps with surgical precision.

Ohio voters demand an open, transparent process that results in fair, responsive maps that serve voters - not partisan, political interests. We need to avoid packing or jamming as many voters of the smaller political party into as few districts as possible. We need to avoid cracking or spreading the remaining members of the smaller political party across many districts. We must have compact, contiguous districts while keeping communities together. Please keep redistricting fair, transparent, non-discriminatory, and politically impartial. Maps should serve the voters - not the political interests of parties or candidates.

Thank you for considering my testimony,

Tony D'Ambrosio