

OPPONENT TESTIMONY OF: SB258

Rachel Bowman

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[Columbus, OH November 3rd 2021] — Set the stage with two or three short sentences.

My name is Rachel Bowman, and I live in Columbus. I'm invested in my city and state's future, and want to see myself and my neighbors represented well.

I have been following the redistricting process from the beginning, and am extremely disappointed by the callous political power grab I've watched. This legislature could have begun the fair, transparent map making process in September, but Speaker Huffman claimed the delay in census data prevented them. However, there are map making contests for average Ohioans - they have been able to use this same data to make representative maps sooner than our own legislature. Then in October, it was the commission's turn to give it a go. They punted, and held one hearing that was not open to the public. Ohioans have spoken clearly. We want fair districts and a transparent process. Those with the responsibility of making our maps have been repeatedly denying us what we demanded.

This legislature has a chance to turn this around. These hearings are a start - but it cannot end here. Hearings held in Columbus without remote testimony options announced just days before are not accessible to the majority of Ohioans. I would love to be writing to you about how the maps the majority caucus shared do or don't represent Ohioans - but they haven't been shared with the public, so I can't do that. Instead, I'll remind this body of their constitutional requirements. Hold hearings accessible to Ohioans so that we might offer feedback on the maps you've drawn. Districts should demonstrate representational fairness - in the case of our congressional map, that means 8 districts that lean GOP and 7 that lean to the Democratic party, communities of interest should be kept together, and districts must be as compact as possible.

Don't cheat us, we deserve fair districts. Thank you for your consideration.