

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: 11/8/2021

Name: Danielle Bekeleski

Are you representing: Yourself Organization

Organization (If Applicable):

Position/Title:

Address: 2277 Hoover Ave

City: Reynoldsburg

State: OH

Zip: 43068

Best Contact Telephone: (419)545-4219

Email: Bekeleskid@aol.com

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): S.B. No. 258

Specific Issue: Fair Maps and Redistricting

Are you testifying as a: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Are you testifying: In-Person Written-Only

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? 1-2 minutes

Please provide a brief statement on your position:

The map drawn by the Republican House and Senate is undeniably gerrymandered and unconstitutional, drowning out the voices of Ohio Democrats and people of color. This map is a blatant attack against the democratic process and must be revised.

Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.

OPPONENT TESTIMONY OF S.B. 258

Danielle Bekeleski

2277 Hoover Ave

IN SUPPORT OF:

Fair Maps and Redistricting

Senate Local Government Elections Committee

My name is Danielle Bekeleski and I live in Reynoldsburg, Ohio. I currently work as a waitress but have recently graduated from Clark State College and passed the board exam to work as a Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) in Ohio.

I was born and raised in Mansfield, a city in Richland County in Northeastern Ohio. In 2017, I left my hometown and headed for the Columbus area in a desperate attempt to escape a town that had very little to offer. Since then, I have lived in the city, as well as a couple of the eastern suburbs of Columbus. I have vowed to never return to Mansfield, as I have finally found a home in an area rich with opportunity, where diversity is celebrated and cherished.

There is a long list of things that I love about the Columbus area, but one of the things that I appreciate the most is being a part of a community of fellow Ohioans with political interests like my own. This map drawn by the Republican House and Senate robs me and so many of the like-minded members of my community of fair and accurate legislative representation, and that is absolutely unacceptable.

According to the 2021 census, Reynoldsburg and Whitehall, both located on the eastern and southeastern portion of the I-270 belt, are the top 2 most culturally diverse Columbus suburbs. This map groups these two central Ohio suburbs along with strictly white, Republican communities, reaching all the way down to the southeastern tip of Ohio in Lawrence County. This grouping essentially eliminates the votes of a large percentage of the black community in the Columbus area- a move that was undoubtedly intentional, and that makes me sick.

This map is offensive and is a blatant attack on democracy. As a tax-paying citizen, I refuse to allow my vote, and the votes of so many other like-minded citizens, get washed away in a sea of partisan corruption.

Do better.