

To: Senate Local Government and Elections Committee
From: Collin Marozzi, Deputy Policy Director, ACLU of Ohio
Date: November 9, 2021
Re: Substitute Senate Bill 258 – Opponent Testimony

Thank you Chairwoman Gavarone, Vice Chair O'Brien, and Ranking Member Maharath for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on Substitute Senate Bill 258 (SB 258). My name is Collin Marozzi, and I am the Deputy Policy Director for the ACLU of Ohio.

The ACLU of Ohio stands in opposition to the congressional districts proposed in SB 258 as they will not accurately reflect the people of Ohio in Congress. Instead of crafting a congressional district map that accurately reflects the diverse political attitudes of Ohioans, SB 258 artificially inflates partisan control of Ohio's congressional delegation to one political party at the expense of another. This is achieved by needlessly exploiting allowable splits that crack urban areas into districts that dilute their voting power. Districts 1,2,3,4, 5, 7, 9, 10, and 15 are examples of this tactic.

Article XIX Section 1(C)(1) requires the General Assembly pass a new congressional district map in the form of a bill. This was an encouraging aspect of the 2018 reform law because it was one more way to bring this historically secretive process out of the shadows.

Traditionally, bills are presented as a solution to a problem, where sponsors of the legislation present their bill in detail and describe their decision making process, and then elaborate on the choices made in crafting the legislation. Supporters of the legislation then come and testify as to how a particular bill will make their life better. SB 258 has not followed this template. Instead, zero justification has been given for the choices made when drawing this map, and there has yet been a single supporter of this legislation.

Article XIX allows broad discretion, with only limited rules on the number of allowable county splits and keeping major cities whole, or as close to whole as possible. With discretion comes choice, and the people of Ohio have been left completely in the dark when trying to understand the choices made in creating SB 258. Choices about which the people of Ohio deserve to know more. Map drawers need to show their work, and justify the decisions they made when drawing these lines.

They need to justify why in District 7 metropolitan Summit County was paired with rural parts of the region like Deerfield, Apple Creek, and Killbuck rather than more similar areas like Canton, Massillon, or Kent?



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What was so compelling to the map drawers that they decided to pair Toledo and Lake Erie border counties with central Ohio rural farmlands in Morrow and Ashland Counties in District 9?

In Columbus, I live in district 3, work in district 15, and socialize in district 4 – a 17 mile round trip that takes no more than 30 minutes of drive time. What characteristics do Lawrence County and east Columbus share, or Linden and Wapakoneta that warrants their inclusion in the same congressional districts?

We've heard for a decade how the people of Hamilton County can't get a phone call back from either of their two current congressional representatives, why did the map drawers think adding a third congressman for Hamilton County would improve this?

The fact of the matter is that every line in SB 258 points in the same direction, which is this map unduly favors candidates of the Republican Party. The ACLU of Ohio urges the General Assembly to consider all congressional district maps submitted through the redistricting website, as well as the four officially introduced maps by each chamber's caucuses and then hold a deliberate and transparent amendment process during the constitutionally mandated joint committee proceedings. The people of Ohio deserve nothing less.

The deadline for a new congressional district map is still three weeks away. There is still time to reach a bipartisan 10-year map, as long as there is the will to get there.

Thank you to the committee and I'm happy to try to answer any questions.

