

SB 258 Testimony

Tuesday, Nov. 16

Chair Gavarone, Vice Chair O'Brien, and Ranking Member Maharath, thank you for providing the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the Congressional map as proposed in Senate Bill 258 (SB 258). I offer testimony to urge you to consider the impact the proposed maps will have on Ohioans over the next decade and urge you to meet the spirit and the letter of the constitutional requirements for fair maps and equal districts supported and adopted by an overwhelming majority of Ohioans.

My name is Zach McCune, and I am the Associate Director of Public Policy for Equitas Health. We are a nonprofit, community-based health care organization that serves patients throughout Ohio with a diverse set of services, including primary and specialized medical care, pharmacy, behavioral health care, dental care, HIV/STI prevention, advocacy, and case management. Our mission is to be a gateway to good health for those at risk of or affected by HIV/AIDS, for the LGBTQ+ community, and for those seeking a welcoming health care home. We work in communities across the state of Ohio and operate medical centers in Columbus, Cincinnati, and Dayton – three communities deliberately cracked under the map proposed in SB 258.

Fair maps must keep communities together. Cincinnati, for example, must remain whole and within a single congressional district. SB 258, continues to crack Cincinnati into two different congressional districts. "Cracking" or the splitting of communities into unnecessarily separate districts weakens the power of voters within those communities. The districts proposed in SB 258 were drawn to intentionally suppress the power of Cincinnati voters, our patients and your constituents, for another decade. The policy outcomes that will result from this partisan gerrymander will have a lasting impact on the physical and civic health of the communities we serve.

The decisions made by the legislature, including the boundaries you draw for our communities, will determine whether our interests receive fair representation in the halls of power. For over a decade, Ohioans have lived, and voted, under maps drawn to favor the party in power. Over the last ten years, we Ohioans' voices and votes be suppressed, their concerns and lived experiences ignored, and they have effectively been excluded from the policy making process. Ohioans deserve better.

We urge you to rise up to this challenge and stand for fairness, accurate representation, and maps that authentically represent the diverse and vibrant communities across the state of Ohio.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

Sincerely,



Zach McCune, He/Him/His
Associate Director of Public Policy
Equitas Health