

**Ohio Senate Local Government and Elections Committee**  
**SB 258**

Testimony Location: Ohio Statehouse, South Hearing Room

Testimony Date: November 16, 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 Chair Theresa Gavarone and all those in the Local Government and Elections Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit this written testimony

In the past, both political parties have marginalized the other party through mapmaking and Ohio has some of the most gerrymandered districts in the country. Ohio voters adopted reforms to curb gerrymandering in 2018 for Ohio's congressional districts by over 70% of the vote. Ohioans continue to 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. The map proposed in Senate Bill 258, and the process by which it was created, does not reflect the will of the voters that was demonstrated when Ohioans passed the Congressional Redistricting Procedures amendment.

We continue to receive little and/or late notice that the committee would take testimony, and we see a lack of transparency and access to information about the party-led process. As someone who voted for reform, I want my, and my community's voice, to be heard. We cannot continue to pack and crack districts in a manner that serves the interest of the party in power and not the will of the voters. I do not think it is good for our democracy when politicians of **any party** manipulate voting maps to keep themselves and their party in power. Senate Bill 258 proposes a map with only two Democratic districts and six for the GOP, with the rest competitive. This falls short of representational fairness.

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.

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. The people of Ohio are not fairly or accurately represented in congress due to gerrymandered districts. We cannot repeatedly disenfranchise Ohio voters by denying them fair representation. Senate Bill 258 will dilute my voice by unnecessarily splitting Hamilton County into 3 districts, splitting my community, and placing me in a district that overwhelming votes in a manner inconsistent with my needs and values.

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

I ask you to consider my testimony carefully. Do not settle for anything less than a fair, representative map. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Tony D'Ambrosio