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Chair Roegner, Vice-chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Blackshear, and members of the Senate General Government committee; thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify in favor of SJR 1, a constitutional amendment to increase the size of the General Assembly. It's quite simple: in 2031 when legislative redistricting will next occur, maps will be drawn for fifty-one senators and one hundred and fifty-three representatives. Thirty-four senators will be up for election in 2032 with eight of them for a two-year term. However, this is only temporary and will not count against their term limits. After that, it's the usual process of the odd-numbered districts in gubernatorial years, and even-numbered districts in presidential, with four-year terms.

As I write this, I can't help but think of what the members of this committee will think. I worry that it'll be ridiculed, or that I'll be accused of attention-seeking. Whatever you think, I hope I can convince you that it's deeper than it appears at first blush. It seeks to address questions that have been contemplated in this country since its founding.

Did you know that 30,000 was the original size of each Congressional district? Did you know that James Madison wanted to amend the Constitution with a formula that would keep districts relatively small by increasing the size of Congress as our population grew? Did you know that the size of Congress was increased frequently until Congress fixed the size of the House at 435 in 1929? Just because this issue hasn't been addressed in Ohio in living memory, doesn't mean it's not a question of great importance.

So why fifty-one and one hundred and fifty-three? For context, Ohio has thirty-three state Senators and ninety-nine state Representatives. As of the last Census, the size of these districts in terms of population are roughly 358,000 and 119,000, respectively. For comparison with other states you can look here:

https://ballotpedia.org/Population_represented_by_state_legislators. You'll notice that Ohio has the fourth largest state Senate seats, and sixth largest state Representative seats, yet Ohio is the seventh most populous state. The average for all states is 161,000 and 61,000, respectively. SJR 1, if it were law today, would mean Senate and House district sizes of roughly 232,000 and 77,000, respectively. Ohio would still have legislative districts in the top ten in terms of population, a dubious honor, but it would be a step in the right direction. A 50% increase in the number of seats in each chamber would be a conservative change, as I was worried the cube-root formula – the cube root

of Ohio's population should be the number of House seats, which is about two hundred and twenty, or so – would be a bridge too far.

So what are the benefits? Does it help you to know that there are national organizations pushing to increase the size of Congress? Interested readers may be able to find more here: <https://www.amacad.org/ourcommonpurpose/initiative/enlarging-house-representatives>. Smaller districts more firmly anchor legislators to their districts. They would represent fewer communities and constituents, and could devote more time to them. The power of money in politics would be diminished with more, and smaller, districts. We can see this effect with statewide campaigns being the most expensive, while village and township elections, which can be run entirely out of pocket from those of modest means, are the least expensive. Look at other states with smaller districts and you'll see that their campaigns are significantly less expensive than ours.

Another benefit would be to help with the proportional representation problem that was the centerpiece of the last redistricting effort at the ballot. How? Mathematics. Fundamental to the study of Calculus is the idea of a limit: what happens to a function as an independent variable approaches some given number? In our case, proportional representation is a function of district size. Let's look at statewide districts. Ignoring minor political parties at the moment, the result is either 100% Republican or 100% Democrat. Thus if the statewide voting preferences of Ohio are roughly 54% Republican and 46% Democrat, the party that loses a statewide office has no elected representation in that office, thus proportional representation would be as far off as mathematically possible. Looking at the other extreme, what happens if each citizen is their own representative, thus a direct democracy? Proportional representation would be matched each election cycle by definition. That's good, but unfortunately pure direct democracy is very bad for a whole host of reasons. The answer to the proportional representation problem lies in finding the optimal legislative district sizes.

How would this work? For many years the state Senate has been over 70% Republican, while the state House has never been able to achieve 70%, at least not in living memory. The reason is that state House seats are one third the size of state Senate seats, and the mathematics make getting to 70% next to impossible irrespective of who is drawing the maps. Should SJR 1 be put on the ballot and passed, I strongly believe that the proportion of Republicans to Democrats would more closely approach proportional representation through no other means than mathematics. Had SJR 1 been in place years ago, it wouldn't surprise me to see today's Senate Republican split less than 70% Republican and the House less than 60%. I would be remiss if I didn't point out that this is a double-edged sword. Though Republicans have massive majorities today, it wasn't that long ago that the Democrats held similar majorities in the House; former Senator Vern Sykes spoke about this last General Assembly on the Senate floor. The point is that with this sort of reform, neither party will likely be able to achieve these majorities again.

This a lot to process, and I hope you walk away with an appreciation that the question of more, and smaller, districts is a complex one deserving of more scrutiny.

Though I'm sold on this being a net positive for Ohio, I hope even the detractors give this a second thought. Having spoken to conservatives and liberals back home, the response has been surprisingly positive, especially once I've explained the context. That said, I'm happy to answer any questions you might have.