

November 3, 2021

Chairman, Vice Chair, Ranking Member, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Linda Striefsky. I am an Ohio voter from Cleveland Heights, Cuyahoga County. I am here to testify for fair maps and equal districts.

Today I'm going to address specifically about HB 479.

Ohio voters passed, in all 88 counties, 2 **reform** measures intended to change the way that Ohio maps for congressional districts are drawn. That is how the **reform** measures were written and explained to voters. The new maps were intended to represent the results of 10 years of voting, which we all know should reflect roughly a 55 percent Republican/45 percent Democratic voting history. What have you given us? A map that has 13 seats for Republicans and 2 seats for Democrats. Seriously?

We should have a map that would be **FAIR**, with 7 Democratic seats and 8 Republican seats. This reflects Ohio's average statewide vote share for the past decade.

And to add insult to injury, you provide a map with no backup statistics to illuminate your decisions. I can only conclude from this that you think Ohio voters are not paying attention and don't know what reforms they passed.

The cornerstone of American Democracy is that voters choose their lawmakers. That we have government of the people, by the people, for the people. This ensures that our government is fair, that it represents all people that it oversees, and protects from tyranny.

The proposed congressional district map is the opposite of these principles. This is an example of lawmakers choosing their voters. This is an example of government of the people, by the few, for the few. It will ensure that the voices representing Ohio in the halls of Congress will represent a fraction of Ohio's voices.

I now pose the serious question to all of you voting for this map: what is the point of an elective Democracy if you, as the party that holds the majority in our legislature, due to gerrymandering, have already decided who is allowed to win? Why bother spending the time, money and energy voting if you have already decided the outcome? What is the difference between what you are doing now, and simply canceling the election, or stuffing the ballot boxes? There isn't one. You have decided what voices will create laws on our behalf in Washington. You have decided which party will represent us in Congress. You have decided who will win, all without having to actually present your policy positions and convince voters to pick your candidates in any election.

For those of you that are supporting this map, I strongly encourage you to read from the Declaration of Independence. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." This map does not treat the people of Ohio equally. This map treats some people as vastly more important and deserving of representation than others. You know it. I know it. We all know it. I believe in Democracy. I believe in the letting the people decide who represents them. It saddens me to see that so many of you don't.

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.

Linda Striefsky