

To: House Government Oversight Committee
From: Collin Marozzi, Deputy Policy Director, ACLU of Ohio
Date: November 10, 2021
Re: Substitute House Bill 479 – Opponent Testimony

Thank you Chairman Wilkin, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Government Oversight committee for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on Substitute House Bill 479 (HB 479). 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 HB 479 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, HB 479 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.

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. HB 479 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 HB 479. 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 12, the cities of Akron and Canton are paired with rural counties in the Appalachian and southern regions of the state?

What was so compelling to the map drawers that they decided to crack half of Toledo with western border counties, and the other half with central Ohio rural farmlands in Knox and Marion Counties in Districts 5 and 9?



4506 Chester Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44103
P: (614) 586-1959
F: (216) 472-2210

1108 City Park Avenue
Suite 203
Columbus, OH 43206
P: (614) 586-1959
F: (614) 586-1974

acluohio.org
contact@acluohio.org

Dr. Ebony Speakes-Hall, LISW-S
President

J. Bennett Guess
Executive Director



4506 Chester Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44103
P: (614) 586-1959
F: (216) 472-2210

1108 City Park Avenue
Suite 203
Columbus, OH 43206
P: (614) 586-1959
F: (614) 586-1974

acluohio.org
contact@acluohio.org

Dr. Ebony Speakes-Hall, LISW-S
President

J. Bennett Guess
Executive Director

In Franklin County, HB 479 cracks apart African American neighborhoods on the county's east side between the 3rd and 15th districts. Additionally, District 4 slices into the northeast corner of county and pulls those residents into a congressional district that spans as far south west as Springfield and northwest to Lima. The 2020 census showed that Columbus and Franklin County are the main population drivers in our state and they will remain so for the foreseeable future. Why dilute our voice in Congress by splitting the county twice when you don't have to? I hope the answer is more convincing than "we could."

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 would improve this?

The fact of the matter is that every line in HB 479 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.

