

**Testimony of Peter Rockwell Petto**  
**House Government Oversight Committee**  
**November 10, 2021**

My name is Peter Rockwell Petto, from Bay Village. I vote in current House district 16, Senate district 24, and Congressional district 9. I am a retired high-school statistics and mathematics teacher. I have helped many students explore topics such as voting power, fair division, and apportionment — things you are wrestling with today. I recently helped the League of Women Voters construct a districting map that was submitted to the Cuyahoga County Redistricting Commission; and several chapters of the League with community maps that were submitted to Fair Districts Gallery and to the Ohio Citizen's Redistricting Commission.

Recent redistricting reform in Ohio was focused on ensuring that voters receive proportional representation in the legislatures when district lines are drawn. Ohio voters objected to being disenfranchised by gerrymandered districts, as has been the case over the past ten years. In Ohio statewide and national elections, the split between Republican and Democratic voters over this period has been approximately 55 to 45 percent. In the Republican map before you it is approximately 87 to 13 percent with no districts even close to competitive. Given legislative rules and procedures, this has the effect of shutting Democrats out of the legislative process. A map should be drawn that tends toward electing 8 Republican and 7 Democratic members in Ohio's Congressional delegation. This will encourage dialog and consensus as laws are constructed — which is desirable, prescribed by the Ohio Constitution, and responsive to an overwhelming majority of Ohioans when they reformed this process.

In particular, looking at the proposed Republican map you can see the fracturing of urban & suburban areas: Columbus, Toledo, the suburbs of Cleveland, the suburbs of Akron and the suburbs Cincinnati, in particular. The following districts fail the “eyeball test” for compactness: 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15. Thirteen does not appear to be contiguous, specifically its inclusion of Fairlawn and Bath Township. This disenfranchises many voters; especially suburban ones like me. I live in Bay Village, about 17 miles west of downtown Cleveland. It would make sense for me to be in a district of suburbs adjacent to the city. This is my community-of-interest with shared values, that center on the city. My neighbors in Bay work mostly in this ring, or in the city itself. I have worked in Cleveland, Avon Lake, and Lakewood. My neighbors work in Berea, Lorain, Cleveland, North Royalton, Beachwood, Mayfield Heights. Everything I said about employment also applies to recreation, entertainment, culture, health care — all the things that are the shared value of a community.

My district, seven on the proposed map, includes a giant southward swath of sparsely populated farming communities extending all the way past Loudonville to Baltic Village, four counties & nearly two hours away. There are so many communities like Bay Village so much closer...this map was drawn to join competitive suburban communities to rural ones to achieve permanent Republican majority, in the same way that districts were improperly drawn ten years ago.

Republican leaders Cupp and Huffman have suggested in other hearings that the concentration of Democratic voters in urban areas makes proportional representation difficult, if not impossible. This is mathematically untrue. The exact opposite is true. When voters are very evenly dispersed geographically it can become impossible to create districts that ensure proportional representation. A state like Massachusetts is an example of this extreme. It is possible to construct representative districts in Ohio that satisfy other Constitutional requirements.

I don't believe that the redistricting reforms added to the Ohio Constitution were intended to result in maps constructed in private only by the two parties, and then negotiated (or negotiated to impasse) behind closed doors. Just the opposite.

I urge this committee to take its responsibilities seriously. I don't believe you are able to hire mapmakers, as the Cuyahoga County Redistricting Commission did, and supervise their construction of maps in an open and transparent fashion. The Ohio Redistricting Commission could have done that but chose otherwise. What you can do is solicit maps from parties other than the Republicans and Democrats. You could then score those maps for representation, compactness, cracking, packing, compliance with the Voting Rights Act, and so on. And then you could select the best one. Doing this would fulfill the constitutional mandate instructing mapmakers to demonstrate that you tried, that you attempted to construct a representative map. I believe that if you did this, you would actually succeed in constructing a such a map. Please reject the Republican map and seek further. Look beyond partisan proposals.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Peter Rockwell Petto, 312 Breezewood Drive, Bay Village, Ohio 44140 (Cuyahoga County)  
<ppetto@ppetto.com> cell: 440.724.4629

Republican Map – [https://davesredistricting.org/maps#viewmap::8ea2a8b1-b5bc-431a-8a33-0a782d8ea9d4?link\\_id=0&can\\_id=e1dc7bbf3a5448b3b4ff3b78a0680e15](https://davesredistricting.org/maps#viewmap::8ea2a8b1-b5bc-431a-8a33-0a782d8ea9d4?link_id=0&can_id=e1dc7bbf3a5448b3b4ff3b78a0680e15)