

**INTERESTED PARTY TESTIMONY OF:**

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**[Akron, Ohio]** Jeniece Brock, Policy & Advocacy Director, Ohio Organizing Collaborative; Vice Chair, Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission

Chair Wilkin, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Brown and members of the Government Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to be here today. My name is Jeniece Brock, my pronouns are She/Her. I am the Policy & Advocacy Director at the Ohio Organizing Collaborative, a Health Scientist, and the Vice Chair of the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission.

This testimony is offered in support of the congressional maps submitted to you by the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission (OCRC). The OCRC maps reflect the true diversity of Ohio, with eight Republican leaning districts and seven Democratic leaning districts.

There are almost 2 million Black and Brown Ohioans who are too often left disaffected and apathetic about the political process because they don't see themselves represented. In Akron, over 30% of the population is Black,

and the Government Oversight Committee needs to include and uplift their voices when drawing our maps. With fair maps, we can make sure folks from Akron, Toledo, Columbus, and Dayton have the fully funded schools, vibrant neighborhoods, excellent public transit, and quality healthcare that they deserve.

Over and over again during hearings the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission heard from constituents from every corner of Ohio frustrated with the unreasonable district lines splitting apart their neighborhoods, campuses, and communities. You could hear the joy and passion for the people and places that make up their community. We know our lives are shaped by the regular everyday interactions at our schools, libraries, places of worship, recreational centers, corner stores and our post offices. Our congressional maps should reflect the communities that are bound together through these incredibly meaningful shared experiences.

No matter who we are or where we are from, we all deserve to stand on equal footing when it comes to having a say in who represents us in Congress. We finally have a chance to keep communities and allow all of

us an equal say in how our futures are drawn — but this only happens if we have fair maps.

The Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission modeled an open, transparent, and inclusive process and drew maps that met the constitutional requirements, kept communities together, and considered the extent to which minority voters can meaningfully influence elections. We are calling on the Government Oversight Committee to do the same.

Thank you for your consideration.