

My name is Gary Gale and I live in Stark County, which was butchered in the last Congressional redistricting. Earlier this year I testified at the Redistricting Commission's Akron hearing on a three county map favored by my local Democratic Party leadership. On October 28<sup>th</sup> I testified concerning a 15 District map that I submitted through the Commission's portal on October 26<sup>th</sup>.

While my earlier testimony in Akron was on behalf of my County Democratic Party, for today's testimony I am only representing myself. I would respectfully request that you refer to my testimony from the Akron hearing regarding a Stark-Mahoning-Trumbull Congressional District where all 3 counties are currently partially in the 13<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, where the counties share common educational levels, economic status, ethnicities, forms of local governance, and both a common economic malaise and its concomitant population loss.

Before I go further I would like to add that while I am not a practicing attorney in Ohio, I continue to maintain my law license in Illinois; I am rated AV 5.0/50 by Martindale Hubbell, and that earlier this year in anticipation of litigation I took the NAACP's 5 Hour Gerrymandering CLE course, a gerrymandering course offered through the Southern Poverty Law Center, and I attended another CLE where one of the speakers was the General Counsel of the official Michigan Independent Redistricting Commission.

I came here today to testify only on SB 237 and SB 258. My expectation when I opened SB 237 was that like virtually all of the maps I have seen that they would disregard the wording of OSJR 5 and the January 29, 2018 Joint Release by Senate President Huffman and then Speaker Pro Tempore Kirk Schuring regarding the purposes of OSJR 5 wherein it explicitly stated that the purposes included :

Enhancing protections for regions, counties and cities by keeping counties from being split more than twice. In fact, the updated plan calls for at least 65 counties to be kept whole and allows only five counties to be split twice".... And "Eliminating strict equal population requirements for districts."

I was pleasantly surprised to find that **the Yuko/Sykes map in SB 237 met those goals better than any other map I have seen with the possible exception of my own.** The Yuko/Sykes map split only one of Ohio's 65 smallest counties and had a commendable 0.16% deviation from the ideal district population instead of going on a jihad against common sense.

Further, given that the map was drawn by and on behalf of the Ohio Senate Caucus drew a map with only three Democratic leaning Districts while drawing six Republican leaning Districts.

I specifically want to note that when we get to Stark County, my county, unlike other maps I have reviewed in the Yuko/Sykes map I can actually see that both Township and municipal boundaries were respected as is required by OSJR 5.

While the Yuko/Sykes map does not put all of Stark Counties into a district where their concerns are being listened to and they will be in a competitive Congressional District where any winner will have to listen to all of his constituents and not a just a handful of true believers; they did for 66% of our residents, some quarter million Ohio residents.

I am also relieved that unlike a number of the proposed maps the Yuko/Sykes map makes no attempt to favor an incumbent particularly in the 11<sup>th</sup> District where several other map makers had apparently made a conscious choice to tip the scales against Nina Turner in the 2022 Congressional primary.

While both the Unity Map and the Fair Districts Coalition's 1st Place finisher's map, for whatever reason had drawn maps that had taken away areas that Nina Turner last August had won and replaced them with areas currently in the 14<sup>th</sup> Congressional District that were similar to the areas--sometimes in the self-same suburbs, where new Congresswoman Shontel Brown had won by her largest margins in the 2022 primary.

Instead the Yuko/Sykes map took in areas father west in Cuyahoga County and assuring that the 2022 Democratic Primary in the 11<sup>th</sup> District will start out as being fair.

**If you are not going to be choosing my map, I think that adopting the Yuko/Sykes map would be the next best choice.**

Regarding the shell bill, I can only hope that they follow the path taken by the Yuko/Sykes bill and

- Protect Ohio's 65 smallest counties by keeping them intact;
- Follow the dictates of OSJR 5 and keep counties, then townships and only then municipalities intact in that order;
- Keep rural counties together, and not use urban counties such as mine as jigsaw pieces to provide population for rural districts.
- Finally, if you can please create a Congressional District of Stark, Mahoning, and the Southern 90% of the voters in Trumbull county based on common educational attainment; common economic status; common ancestry; common local governance; and most significantly a common economic decline with a concomitant loss of population

Thank you for your time and attention.

I will try and answer questions if you have any.