

**Testimony to the Ohio Senate Local Elections and Government Committee
from Charles H Spencer 415 Bond Pl #9A, Cincinnati, OH 94206
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I oppose the Republican dominated congressional map-drawing process in Ohio. In 2018, Ohioans overwhelmingly supported a reform that overhauled our redistricting process to ensure transparency in map drawing and ample public engagement. Ohioans also overwhelmingly voted for a fair map.

We already have unfair districts. Now they will be even more out of alignment with actual voting patterns and real community clusters.

A fair congressional map for Ohio would reflect our partisan balance with 7 Democratic seats and 8 Republican seats, would empower communities of color with real pathways to political representation, and would keep Ohio's communities together as much as possible.

The only officially-proposed map that meets each of these three basic tenets of a fair map is the one proposed by the Senate Democratic caucus. It presents a really strong starting point for community-led conversations about how best to represent Ohio in the next ten years.

Newly-proposed congressional maps from Ohio House and Senate Republicans fail on all three counts. The proposed maps are even more gerrymandered than our current one and would draw Ohio Republicans into 87% of the congressional seats despite them only winning 54% of the vote in the last decade. They also unnecessarily carve apart our communities and would dilute the voting power of communities of color.

I urge all members of the Senate Local Elections and Government Committee to vote NO on the proposed gerrymandered maps. If Republicans are serious about delivering for Ohio and living up to the promise of our reform, they need to come back to the table with a fairer and more representative map -- the currently proposed ones are absolute nonstarters.

We have had political hacks and scoundrels in the past who bought votes, suppressed votes and coerced people to elect them. But never have we had the concerted effort now under way across the nation, by state legislative majorities manufactured by gerrymandering, to pass voter suppression bills designed to keep the growing communities of low income and color from voting. Republican policies have shrunk the middle class; now they are making sure the new poor they have created do not vote, in blatant violation of existing federal voting rights legislation.

All Ohio state legislators need to stand up and say no to this desecration of the democratic norms of our American republic.

Only cowards would resort to trickery and deceit to assure they stay in office. Only cowards want to rig the rules so they do not have to compete fairly for the elected positions they covet.