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**Ohio Redistricting Commission
Tuesday, September 14, 2021- Columbus
Testimony of OEA President Scott DiMauro**

Co-Chairs Cupp and Sykes and members of the Ohio Redistricting Commission:

My name is Scott DiMauro. I am a high school social studies teacher from Worthington. It is also my honor to serve as the President of the Ohio Education Association. On behalf of OEA and our 120,000 members, thank you for the opportunity to address you today. I'd like to address the maps adopted by the Commission for consideration and the process thus far.

When I testified in Dayton last month, I had a spirit of cautious optimism. I said that through this redistricting process Ohio has a chance to serve as example to the country. You could put partisanship aside and listen to the will of the people. By working together and compromise you could rise to the occasion and produce fair, representative districts.

I don't have that same sense of optimism today. Last Thursday, you adopted the maps under consideration on a party-line vote. They were unveiled earlier that day, produced by legislative staffers of the majority party. There was no bipartisan engagement. The maps heavily favor the party in power. It was as if 71% of Ohio voters hadn't supported a change in the Constitution. It was business as usual. This is wholly unacceptable.

The voters of Ohio have given you an assignment. The Constitutional amendment calls for the statewide proportion of districts favoring each political party correspond closely with the statewide preferences of the voters. It also requires that the plan comply with federal law, such as the Voting Rights Act. These provisions of the Constitution are not "aspirational." They are not optional. They are not for extra credit. They are fundamental to the change that we voted for. This feels like a bait and switch.

As others have noted, the citizen-produced maps that won the Fair Districts mapping competition outperformed the maps being considered on key metrics of limiting the number of splits of political subdivisions, compactness, competitiveness, and minority representation. They merit the consideration of this Commission. I particularly appreciate that Pranav Padmanabhan's proposal attempted to keep school districts intact as a way of prioritizing keeping communities of interest within legislative districts.

When voters approved Issue 1 in 2015, one of the committee co-chairs said, "Obviously there's a lot of skepticism about government, but if you work these issues through and get everybody involved, you can solve some of these issues." That bright-eyed optimist was none other than current Commission member Senator Matt Huffman. At Thursday's hearing several members of the Commission stated they wanted a 10-year bipartisan agreement. They were willing to put in the work to make it happen.



As I stated when I last testified, anything less than a bipartisan agreement and a ten-year map would be a failure of leadership. The voters of Ohio voted for change. We want an end to partisan gerrymandering and business as usual. We demand fair maps. As you know, time is running out.

Thank you for your time and attention.