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Larry Briskin  
880 Fernshire Dr.  
Centerville, Ohio 45459

937-434-7186  
brisklar@sbcglobal.net

To: House Government and Elections Sub-Committee on Redistricting  
Senate Select Committee on Redistricting

Representative Huffman, Senator Fabor, members of the committee:

I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify. Redistricting the State of Ohio is a critical exercise in democracy. Only if it is fairly done will American values be served. Only if it is fairly done can the people of Ohio be honestly represented. In a matter of Americanism and fairness, it is important that the redistricting process not be arbitrary. The state should be redistricted using recognized fair rules of reapportionment.

The idea of gerrymandering goes back to the early days of our republic. In 1812, Elbridge Gerry, governor of Massachusetts signed a bill which critics claimed made one district look like a salamander. Someone remarked, "that's not a salamander, that a gerrymander." Even then it was recognized that in reapportioning districts, drawing quirky district lines could give one political party an advantage over the other.

The founders of our nation gave us our Constitution. It has served us well for over 225 years. Yet in writing the Constitution, the framers could not anticipate every possible future need. The constitution contains no provisions with regard to how redistricting is to be done. It is ours, as Americans living in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, to correct this deficiency.

When the Ohio constitution was written, the issue of how to draw the lines was recognized. The need for compactness was written into the state constitution with regard to the Ohio House, but not the Ohio Senate. The State Constitution states:

11.07 (A) Every house of representatives district shall be compact and composed of contiguous territory, and the boundary of each district shall be a single nonintersecting continuous line.

(B) Where the requirements of section 3 of this Article cannot feasibly be attained by forming a district from a whole county or counties, such district shall be formed by combining the areas of governmental units giving preference in the order named to counties, townships, municipalities, and city wards.

We Buckeyes in the year 2011 have the opportunity to correct the deficiency with respect to the United States House of Representatives. The principle of compactness should be extended to Ohio's redistricting for the United States House of Representatives.

It has already been suggested that four criteria should be considered:

1. Preserving County Boundaries, 2. Compactness, 3. Competitiveness, 4. Representational Fairness.

Computers have made the creation of districts a relatively simple and open process. Generally speaking, compactness is measured by the total length of the district boundaries. It is perhaps the most important criteria. The other criteria are of secondary importance.

The question is: how to achieve a fair reapportionment for the State of Ohio for the next 10 years. This can be done by opening up the issue to anyone who wishes to propose a redistricting plan. A competition is underway to select a new apportionment. The committees might want to consider the result of this competition as important contribution. Any Ohio citizen should be permitted to submit a plan to the competition. The five best plans meeting the above criteria would be presented to the committees. The committees would have the discretion to choose any one of those five plans as the redistricting method for the next ten years.

This will be an exercise both in direct democracy and in representative democracy. When citizens present their plans, they will make their voices directly heard. Ohio's elected state Senators and Representatives will then have the final say in the decision.

Senators and Representatives, I urge you to correct a critical deficiency in both the Federal and Ohio Constitutions. Make elections in Ohio one of fairness to all Buckeyes. Make Ohio a leader in the nation.

  
Larry Briskin