



Fair Districts = Fair Elections Coalition

35 E. Gay Street, Suite 404, Columbus, OH 43215

Fair Congressional Districts for Ohio campaign

c/o League of Women Voters of Ohio

17 S. High Street, Suite 650, Columbus, OH 43215

www.fairdistrictsohio.org

Speaker Rosenberger
77 S. High St., 14th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215 1

President Obhof
Senate Building
Capitol Square, 2nd Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Leader Strahorn
77 S. High St., 14th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Leader Yuko
Statehouse
1 Capitol Square, 3rd Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Representative Schuring
77 S. High St., 14th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Senator Huffman
Senate Building
1 Capitol Square, 1st Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Representative Cera
77 S. High St., 10th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Senator Sykes
Senate Building
1 Capitol Square, Ground Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

October 16, 2017

Dear Speaker Rosenberger, Minority Leader Strahorn, President Obhof, Minority Leader Yuko, and Members of the Congressional Redistricting Reform Committee,

As members of the Fair Districts = Fair Elections Coalition, we were very pleased to learn that leadership is in discussions about congressional redistricting reform. That has been our goal all along, to reach a bipartisan solution that can be put before voters.

We are writing to express our willingness and hope that we can work with you in finding a solution that serves the interest of all Ohioans.

Based on our decades of work in this area, and talking with thousands of voters across the state, we have identified the following as essential criteria for meaningful congressional reform.

1. True bipartisan support must be required for a map to be enacted, with no alternative option for approval by a single party. We prefer that redistricting should be the responsibility of the bipartisan Ohio Redistricting Commission, as established through Issue 1, which was supported by over 71% of the voters, and by votes of 81-7 in the Ohio House and 28-1 in the Senate. But if it is decided that redistricting should remain under the control of the legislature, it is essential that a Congressional redistricting plan may only be adopted if it is approved by a majority of each party in both chambers.
2. No plan shall favor or disfavor a political party or candidate, and district maps should permit fair representation of voters from all parties. Districts shall not be drawn to artificially favor or disfavor a party or candidate but should instead reflect community voter preferences over recent elections.

3. Districts should keep communities whole by not splitting up counties, cities, or townships, in that order, from largest to smallest. Splitting counties accounts for a substantial amount of Ohio's gerrymandering problem, and voters from Summit County to Mercer County are fed up with it.
4. The process should be transparent and allow public input on proposed maps before a vote.

We have always supported a legislative solution and continue to do so. However, we will carefully scrutinize any proposal to ensure it puts forward real reform, not just pay lip service to the problem.

We owe it to the 152,000-plus verified voters who have signed our Fair Congressional Districts for Ohio initiative and to the nearly 3,000 volunteers on the ground across Ohio working for Fair Districts, to make sure that voters have the opportunity to vote for real reform. While we are eager to work with you to reach a mutually agreeable bipartisan solution, we will continue moving forward with a citizen initiative in order to make sure reform is enacted before the next time Congressional districts are redrawn.

Respectfully,

Carrie Davis, League of Women Voters of Ohio

Catherine Turcer, Common Cause Ohio

Heather Taylor-Miesle, Ohio Environmental Council

Jeff Cabot, Treasurer, Fair Congressional Districts for Ohio