OHIO CITIZENS REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

OFFICIAL REPORT TO THE OHIO GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SEPTEMBER 2021

ABOUT

THE OHIO CITIZENS REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

The Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission (OCRC) is sponsored by the Ohio Organizing Collaborative (OOC), Ohio State Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the A. Philip Randolph Institute (APRI) of Ohio. The OCRC worked in partnership with the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at The Ohio State University, More Equitable Democracy, Skylight and MGGG Redistricting Lab at Tufts University.

RESEARCH PARTNERS

more equitable democracy

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
KIRWAN INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF RACE AND ETHNICITY

MGGG
SKYLIGHT

COMMUNITY SPONSORS

OOC OHIO ORGANIZING COLLABORATIVE

Ohio Conference NAACP

APRI
A. Philip Randolph Institute

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ABOUT THE COMMISSION

OVERVIEW

The Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission (OCRC) is an independent, diverse, non-partisan commission made up of 16 volunteer members, including interested citizens, academics, community leaders, current and former elected officials, attorneys, and representatives from sponsor organizations. Members were deliberately chosen to reflect the diversity of Ohio, and include persons of color, persons of all ages and backgrounds, persons from the LGBTQ community, and persons from different regions of the state.

GOALS OF THE COMMISSION

The OCRC has three main goals:
- *Model a thorough and robust engagement process for developing legislative districts, including reaching out specifically to minority and underrepresented communities,*
- *Develop and demonstrate citizen-derived principles of redistricting, and*
- *Draw "unity maps", meaning maps based on constitutional requirements, citizen-derived principles of redistricting, and an aggregation of a wide variety of preferences that came out of public input.*

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

The OCRC developed this report summarizing how these goals were achieved to submit as public testimony to the Ohio General Assembly and the Ohio Redistricting Commission.

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Some members of the Commission helped to write the constitutional amendment that Ohio voters approved in 2018 and that spells out the criteria upon which the Commission's unity map is based. Commission members were invited to apply by representatives of the OCRC sponsor organizations the OOC, Ohio Conference of the NAACP, and APRI of Ohio.

COMMISSION PARTNERS

The OCRC partnered with the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at The Ohio State University and MGGG Redistricting Lab at Tufts University for data collection, analysis, and community mapping, with More Equitable Democracy for district mapping and analysis, and with Skylight for web-based community engagement. The following individuals participated in this work:

Mapping & Data Analysis Team Members

- **Dr. Ranthony Edmonds,** Department of Mathematics, Ohio State -- Data Analysis
- **Dr. Matthew Kahle,** Department of Mathematics, Ohio State -- Data Analysis
- **Dr. Vladimir Kogan,** Political Science, Ohio State -- Politics/Policy
- **Michael Outrich,** Kirwan Institute, Ohio State -- Ohio Community Mapping
- **Dr. Glennon Sweeney,** Kirwan Institute, Ohio State -- Ohio Community Mapping
- **Dr. Moon Duchin,** MGGG Redistricting Lab, Tufts University -- Project Manager
- **Elizabeth Kopecky,** MGGG Redistricting Lab, Tufts University -- Project Manager
- **Derrick Smith,** Applied Statistics, Ohio Organizing Collaborative -- Data Analysis
- **Colin Cole,** More Equitable Democracy -- District Mapping and Analysis
- **Bill Baugh,** More Equitable Democracy -- District Mapping and Analysis
- **Louis Libert,** Skylight -- Digital Designer & User Experience Lead

Alan Bannister
Vice President, Remington Road Group, Former Director, Manager, & Executive Assistant for 5 Toledo Mayors

Amina Barhumi
Outreach Director, Council of American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) Ohio

Jeremy Blake
Newark City Councilman, Equality Ohio Board Member

Jeniece Brock
OCRC Vice Chair
Health Scientist, Policy and Advocacy Director, Ohio Organizing Collaborative

Dr. Ellen Greene Bush
Clinical Psychologist, Citizen Leader of American Promise Ohio

Akii Butler
Student Organizer Ohio Student Association

Kathleen Clyde
OCRC Co-Chair
Former Ohio House Representative, former Candidate for Secretary of State

Samuel Gresham Jr.
Chair
Common Cause Ohio

Dr. Richard Gunther
Professor Emeritus
Ohio State University

Gregory Moore
OCRC Co-Chair
President & CEO Promise for
Democracy, Executive Director
of the Ohio Voter Fund

Dr. Lis Regula
Lecturer
University of Dayton

Tom Roberts
President , NAACP Ohio State
Conference, Former Ohio State
Senator

Katy Shanahan
Ohio State Director
All On The Line

Barbara A. Sykes
President & CEO
Ohio Legislative Black Caucus
Foundation

Chris Tavenor
Staff Attorney,
Ohio Environmental Council
Law Center

André Washington
President of APRI Ohio Chapter,
Field Rep & Special Projects Coord.
Ohio Association of Public School
Employees, Central OH Region

COMMISSION PROCESS AND TIMELINE

Commission Announced

On Wednesday, May 12, 2021, the formation and membership of the OCRC was announced to the general public via statewide media release and on social media. The public was encouraged to become involved in the work of the OCRC and to watch for further updates and developments.

Public Engagement and Hearings

Public hearings were held virtually throughout the state with a quorum of OCRC members present to give an overview of the amendments to the Ohio Constitution for 2021 regarding the redistricting process, to encourage attendees to participate in the community mapping project, and to receive feedback about what they would like to see happen in the 2021 redistricting process as it relates to their communities or region of the state. The OCRC was also interested to hear how communities , and particularly minority and underrepresented communities, have been impacted in the last decade under gerrymandered districts, and to hear feedback about what specifically witnesses would recommend moving forward to have better political and community representation.

Each public hearing featured a few guest speakers, like a prominent local elected official or community leader, and then the meeting was opened up for citizen witnesses to testify. **A total of 542 Ohio citizens registered to attend these public hearings.** Many of these citizens came representing large subgroups and/or membership lists of other citizens. Recordings of all public hearings can be viewed on our OCRC website at www.ohredistrict.org/past-hearings.

The OCRC held all public hearings after business hours to optimize accessibility, and virtually to ensure safe participation. Hearings were held on the following dates and times:
- May 13, 2021 at 6pm for an organizational meeting and redistricting briefing.
- May 27, 2021 at 6pm for Northwest Ohio (Toledo and Lima).
- June 10, 2021 at 6pm for Greater Cleveland (Cleveland, Lorain, Euclid, Parma).
- June 24, 2021 at 6pm for Northeast Ohio (Akron, Canton, Youngstown).
- July 8, 2021 at 6pm for Southeast Ohio (Athens, Portsmouth, East Liverpool, Chillicothe).
- July 22, 2021 at 6pm for Southwest Ohio (Cincinnati, Dayton).
- August 12, 2021 at 6pm for Central Ohio (Columbus, Marion, Mansfield, Newark, Lancaster).
- August 26, 2021 at 5:30pm for a presentation on our proposed state legislative unity maps and to receive feedback and questions.

- August 27, 2021 at 5:30pm for a presentation on our proposed state legislative unity maps and to receive feedback and questions.
- September 14, 2021 at the Ohio Statehouse ten OCRC representatives presented sponsor or supporting testimony on state legislative unity maps to the Ohio Redistricting Commission. Two additional commissioners submitted written testimony.
- September 24, 2021 at 4:00pm for a presentation on our proposed congressional unity map and to receive feedback and questions.
- September 27, 2021 at 6:00pm for a presentation on our proposed congressional unity map and to receive feedback and questions.

Commission Work Sessions and Work Groups

The first organizational meeting of the commission took place on May 13, 2021 at 6pm. Members received a briefing about the commission's objectives and about the guidelines laid out in the Ohio Constitution for drawing state legislative and congressional districts.

Commission work sessions took place virtually via Zoom on the following dates:
- May 27, 2021 following the completion of the public hearing.
- June 10, 2021 following the completion of the public hearing.
- June 24, 2021 following the completion of the public hearing.
- July 8, 2021 following the completion of the public hearing.
- July 22, 2021 following the completion of the public hearing.
- July 29, 2021 to discuss and adopt mapping criteria framework.
- August 12, 2021 following the completion of the public hearing.
- August 20, 2021 to discuss draft state legislatirve unity maps.
- August 22, 2021 to discuss draft state legislative unity maps. The OCRC voted unanimously to propose draft unity maps to the public.
- August 29, 2021 to discuss proposed state legislative unity maps, feedback on proposed maps, and the draft report to be submitted to the Ohio Redistricting Commission. The OCRC voted unanimously to adopt the final commission report and unity maps.
- September 23, 2021 to discuss the draft congressional unity map. The OCRC voted unanimously to propose the draft congressional unity map to the public.
- September 29, 2021 to discuss the proposed congressional unity map, feedback on the proposed map, and the draft report to be submitted to the official congressional redistricting process. The OCRC voted unanimously to adopt the final commission report and congressional unity map.

Commission officers met weekly on Mondays beginning on May 3rd.

Work Groups

The OCRC established four workgroups to facilitate the work of the commission and report back to the full commission. All workgroups met as needed and workgroup leads would report in at full commission work sessions. The working groups are:

Public Relations

Purpose: To represent the goals of the commission with the media, and to guide the commission's public communications.

Members: Alan Bannister (Lead), Amina Barhumi, Jeremy Blake and Chris Tavenor

Minority Representation

Purpose: To ensure that communities of color are treated fairly in the redistricting process and can meaningfully influence elections under the maps enacted.

Members: Barbara Sykes (Lead), Jeniece Brock, Greg Moore, Tom Roberts, and Katy Shanahan

Mapping Criteria

Purpose: To develop community driven principles and priorities for mapping and to ensure unity maps represent the input of community members and commissioners.

Members: Dr. Richard Gunther (Lead), Kathleen Clyde, Sam Gresham, Greg Moore and Katy Shanahan.

Community Engagement

Community Engagement & Outreach: To engage at the grassroots level in communities around the state and to ensure input from diverse communities.

Members: Dr. Ellen Greene Bush (Lead), Akii Butler, Dr. Lis Regula, and Andre Washington.

Community Mapping Project

The MGGG Redistricting Lab built a project team based at The Ohio State University and supported by a network of grassroots organizations to collect and synthesize Community of Interest (COI) input for the OCRC. One of the major guiding principles of this team was to ensure that narratives, needs, and concerns from a diverse range of Ohioans were included in the process. They emphasized concerted outreach to minority and underrepresented communities in their approach.

This team used Districtr, a free community web tool developed by MGGG to enable users to create both COI regions and "points of interest" paired with narratives about community issues and needs. **There were 2,350 submissions received through the Districtr portal.**

Prioritizing Communities of Interest is generally considered to be essential to drawing fair districts, but in practice, it is prohibitively difficult to implement without local community knowledge. This community mapping project collected spatialized testimony from the public, which featured not only narrative descriptions of the communities, but mapping describing their geography.

Districtr users could work remotely or join video conference-based workshops led by members of our outreach partner organizations. The Commission received public input in many modalities: collection at in-person meetings when possible, in virtual public meetings, submitted through Districtr.org, OCRC website and email or even via social media.
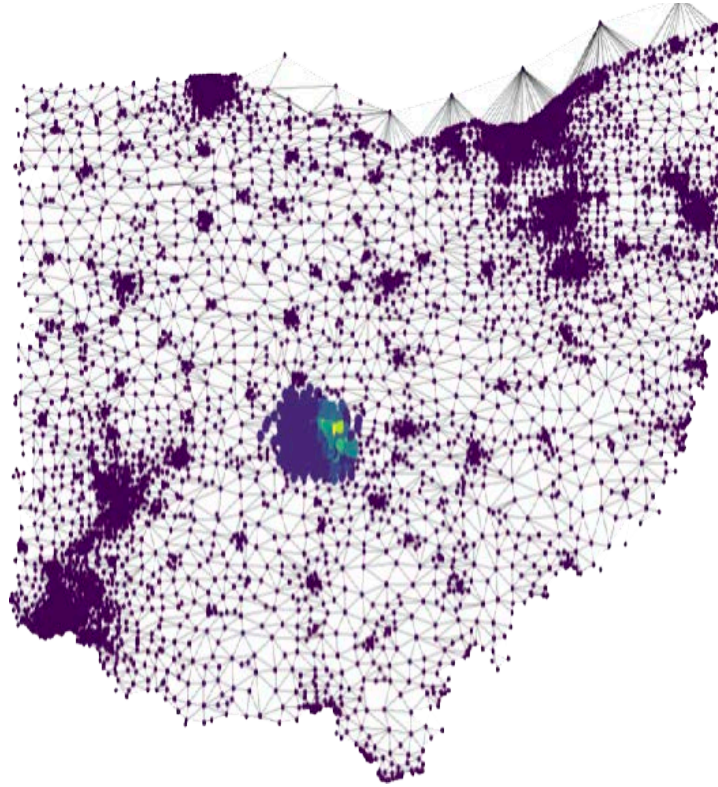
OCRC DistrictR Community of Interest heat map clusters from East Columbus, Reynoldsburg, Gahanna and Westerville prepared by MGGG.

Proposed Unity Map Introduced to the Public

On September 24, the OCRC released a proposed congressional unity map via statewide media and social media for public comment and input. The unity map was based on constitutional requirements, citizen-derived principles of redistricting, and an aggregation of a wide variety of preferences that came out of public input. The unity map incorporated the 2020 Census data released on August 12. Input was requested at two scheduled public hearings or via email to the commission.

Final Report and Unity Map Submitted to the Ohio General Assembly

The OCRC submitted their final report and unity map to the Ohio General Assembly on September 30, 2021.

CONGRESSIONAL UNITY MAP

The OCRC adopted this Congressional Unity Map based on constitutional requirements, citizen-derived principles of redistricting, and an aggregation of a wide variety of preferences that came out of public input. There are also additional considerations that the OCRC used to better understand how best to deliver real pathways to representation through new district lines for all of Ohio's communities.

EQUAL POPULATION

On April 26, 2021, the U.S. Census Bureau delivered Ohio's apportionment count of 15 congressional districts based on the 2020 Census state population counts, as required by Section 2 of Article I of the U.S. Constitution. Ohio's 2020 Census apportionment count represents a decrease of one congressional district from the 2010 Census.

Under Article XIX, Section 2(A)(2) of the Ohio Constitution, the whole population of Ohio shall be divided by the number of districts apportioned. The whole population is everyone residing in Ohio, not just citizens, adults or registered voters. The whole population of Ohio is 11,808,848 divided by 15 results in approximately 787,257 inhabitants per Congressional district.

The equal population requirement is not exact down to the individual person. The "one person, one vote" decision by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Reynolds v. Sims (1964)* concluded that the equal protection clause of the U.S. Constitution requires that the population residing in each congressional district should be "substantially equal." This has been subsequently interpreted as requiring that districts must be "exactly equal." In *Tennant v. Jefferson County Commission (2012)*, the U.S, Supreme Court clarified this criterion by finding that a West Virginia congressional map whose district magnitudes varied (between the largest and the smallest districts) by an average of 0.79 percent was constitutional if such divergences were necessary to meet other legitimate goals (such as avoiding excessive splitting of political boundaries).

See Exhibit A for a listing of the population of each district on the proposed map. The deviations range from -0.13 percent to 0.38 percent, well below the 0.79 percent variance permitted in the *Tennant* decision.

PARTISAN FAIRNESS

Article XIX Section 1(F)(3)(a) of the Ohio Constitution states that no district plan shall be adopted that "unduly favors or disfavors a political party or its incumbents." In other words, no congressional map should include partisan gerrymandering.

This prohibition against partisan gerrymandering is to go into effect if the General Assembly and the Ohio Redistricting Commission fail to pass a plan with bipartisan support. However, all district plans should take this important anti-gerrymandering criterion into account, particularly since it lies at the heart of all of the redistricting reform efforts in Ohio over the past decade.

In the five general elections that have taken place over the past decade, Republican candidates for President, U.S. Senator, Governor, Secretary of State, Auditor, Attorney General and Treasurer have received 54.3% of the votes cast by Ohio voters, while Democratic candidates for those offices have received 45.7% of the votes cast. To ensure that one political party is not unduly favored over another, the partisan make-up of Ohio's districts should mirror the partisan make-up of Ohio's voters.

Our proposed map has 8 districts that lean over 50% Republican and 7 districts that lean over 50% Democratic. This means that 53.3% of the districts lean Republican and 46.7% Democratic. This 53% Republican/47% Democratic ratio closely aligns with the 54%/46% partisan make-up of Ohio's voters over the last 10 years.

KEEPING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

Congressional districts were drawn to protect Ohio's communities by keeping them together as much as practically possible and in line with the constitutional requirements to minimize the splitting of counties, townships, and cities.

Under Article XIX, Section 2, of the Ohio Constitution, the following specific rules apply to keep communities together for any congressional district plan.
- The cities of Cleveland and Cincinnati must not be split apart.
    - Our map meets this requirement.
- Columbus is too big to include in just one congressional district, but it must be split responsibly to protect communities of interest.
    - Our map contains 69% of Columbus within one district, and the remaining 31% in a second full district. The district boundary line splitting the portion of Columbus honors recognized neighborhood boundaries. Care was taken to not break apart communities of interest within Columbus.

- Akron, Dayton and Toledo should not be split.
  - Our map does not split any of these cities and meets this requirement.
- Statewide, 65 counties must be kept whole, 18 counties may be split once, and 5 counties may be split twice. While the criterion allow for 23 county splits, it should be noted that doing so is neither required nor necessary.
  - Our map meets this requirement, keeping 75 counties whole, splitting 13 counties once, and splitting zero counties twice. No cities are split, except for Columbus because it is too large to fit in one district and must be split.
- Each congressional district should include at least one whole county. This does not apply for districts contained entirely within a county (e.g. the districts contained entirely in Cuyahoga, Franklin, and Hamilton) or where doing so would violate federal law.
  - Our map meets this requirement.

Under Article XIX, Section 1(F)(3)(b) of the Ohio Constitution, a congressional map "shall not unduly split governmental units, giving preference to keeping whole, in the order named, counties, then townships and municipal corporations." Like the partisan fairness criterion, this criterion is also located in Article XIX Section 1(F)(3), and therefore goes into effect if a map is passed in the absence of a constitutionally mandated level of bipartisan support. This means that no congressional map should be drawn that unnecessarily cracks apart Ohio's communities.

Relying on public input about how best to protect communities of interest across the state is key to understanding how best to protect against undue splitting. Hundreds of witnesses testified before the OCRC about the importance of keeping their neighborhoods and communities together. Using qualitative community of interest data collected by the OCRC and compiled by MGGG, the number of communities of interest kept together within district boundaries were maximized to the fullest extent.

COMPACT AND CONTIGUOUS

Under Article XIX, Section (B)(3) of the Ohio Constitution, the territory of each congressional district must be compact and must be contiguous, with the boundary of each district being a single non-intersecting continuous line.

Each district in our proposed map is 100% contiguous and our map scores a 70% on the Dave's Redistricting App compactness analysis, for a "Good" rating.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

INCUMBENCY PROTECTION
There are no incumbent protections in the Ohio Constitution as a criterion for congressional districts, and this was not a criterion considered for our proposed map. The absence of that

criterion was an important priority to reformers for any agreement on congressional redistricting, since preservation of the previous district boundaries was tantamount to making inevitable the preservation of the previous gerrymander.

MINORITY REPRESENTATION

Districts were reviewed to understand the extent to which minority voters can meaningfully influence elections. Following county and political subdivision split rules allowed communities of color to be drawn into compact districts and at the same time avoided packing and cracking. Minority vote dilution by packing or cracking was avoided. Packing is when minority voters are artificially concentrated into a small number of districts so that their overall electoral influence is weakened. Cracking splits minority communities and spreads minority voters thinly into many districts in which they have little or no electoral influence.

The Commission reviewed proposed the map to ensure that minority voters were fairly represented. The proposed map has three districts where minority voters have a substantial opportunity to be represented electorally. Exhibit B provides Black Voting Age Population (BVAP) numbers for those 3 districts, the People of Color Voting Age Population (POC VAP) and People of Color Total Population (POC Total Pop) and shows their location on relevant maps.

PROPOSED CONGRESSIONAL UNITY MAP

The following map meets all of the relevant constitutional requirements. Those requirements include provisions that dictate how or if a political subdivision (including counties, townships, and municipalities) is allowed to be split apart and that require partisan fairness.
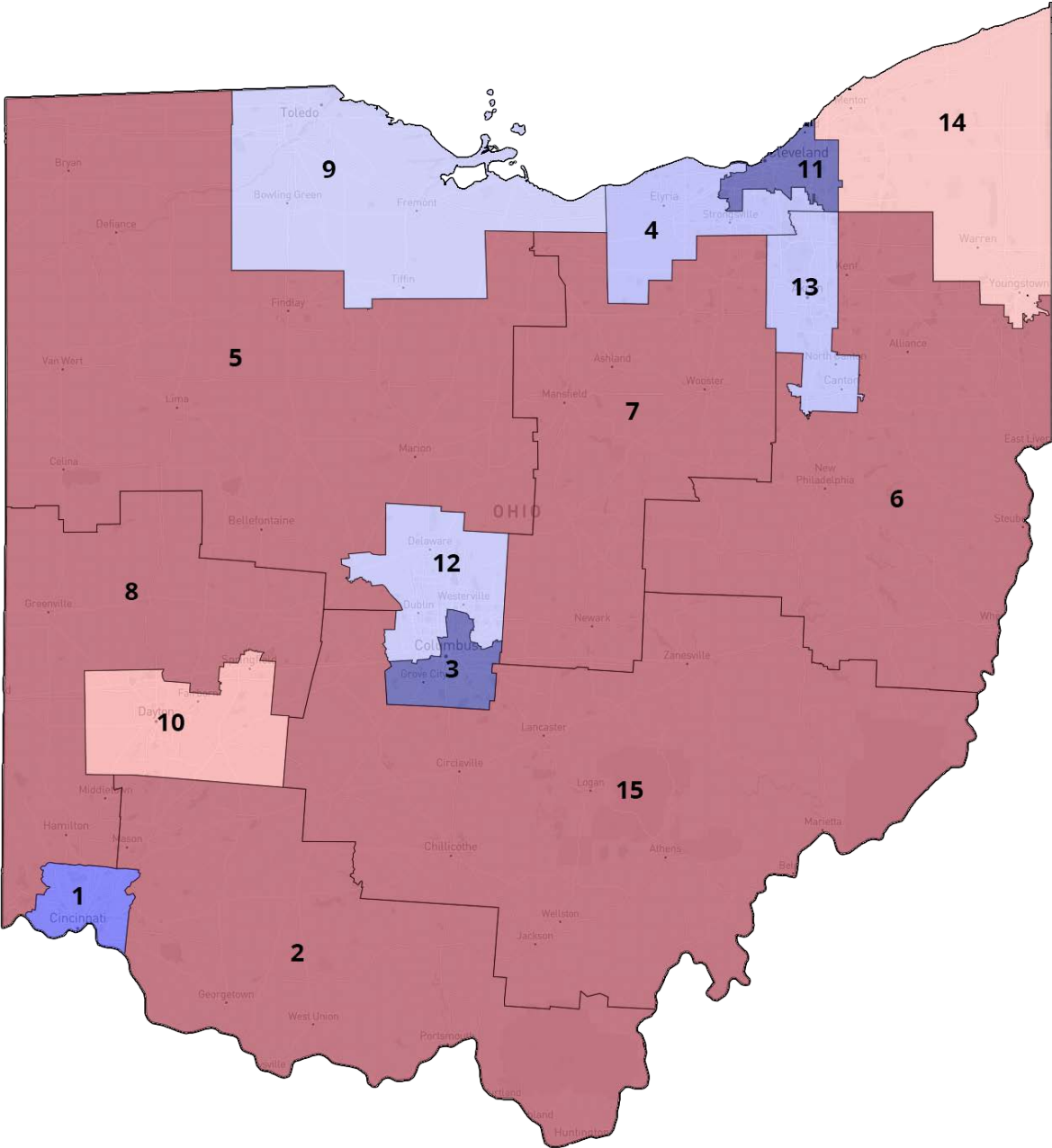
Key	
Dark Blue	Likely Democratic (60% +)
Light Blue	Lean Democratic (53-59%)
Pale Blue	Democratic Tossup (50-52%)
Pale Red	Republican Tossup (50-52%)
Light Red	Lean Republican (53-59%)
Dark Red	Likely Republican (60%+)

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EXHIBIT A: POPULATION COUNTS
CONGRESSIONAL UNITY MAP

Congressional District Population Counts			
District	**Region**	**Population**	**Deviation**
1	Cincinnati	786,400	-0.03%
2	Southwest OH	785,937	-0.09%
3	Columbus	788,453	0.23%
4	Lorain	788,170	0.20%
5	Northwest OH	785,743	-0.11%
6	East-CentralOH	786,039	-0.08%
7	Central-NE OH	785,663	-0.12%
8	Western-S OH	785,665	-0.12%
9	Toledo	785,767	-0.11%
10	Dayton	785,820	-0.10%
11	Cleveland	789,611	0.38%
12	Delaware-Franklin	788,516	0.24%
13	Akron Canton	786,079	-0.07%
14	YoungstownNorth	785,948	-0.09%
15	Central SE OH	785,637	-0.13%

EXHIBIT B: MINORITY REPRESENTATION
CONGRESSIONAL UNITY MAP

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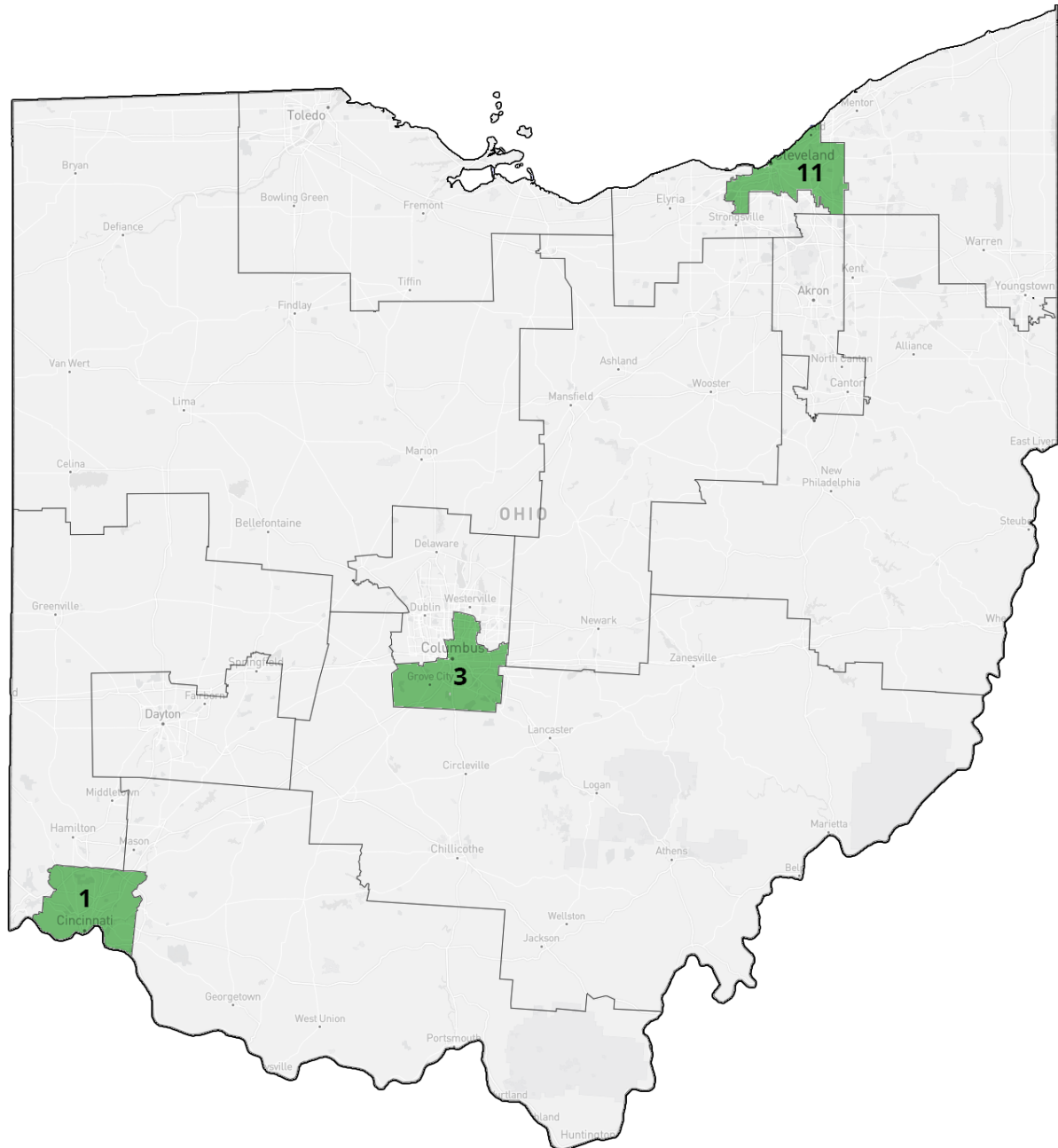
EXHIBIT B: MINORITY REPRESENTATION
CONGRESSIONAL UNITY MAP DISTRICTS

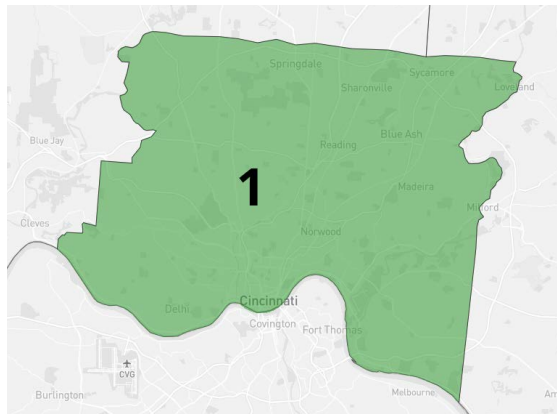| Congressional Minority Representation			
District	BVAP	POC VAP	POC Total Pop.
11	41.60%	53.49%	57.13%
3	32.38%	45.36%	50.54%
1	26.26%	35.48%	39.08%

DISTRICT 11
CLEVELAND
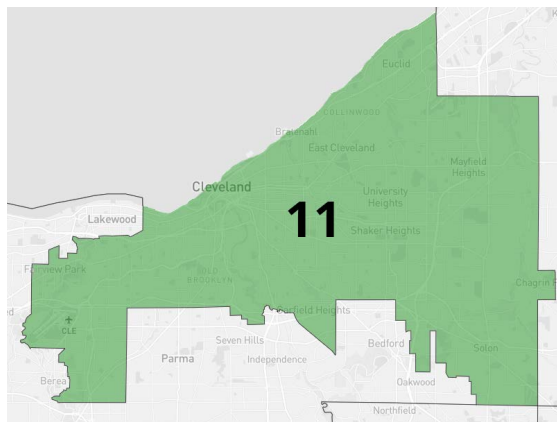
DISTRICT 3
COLUMBUS
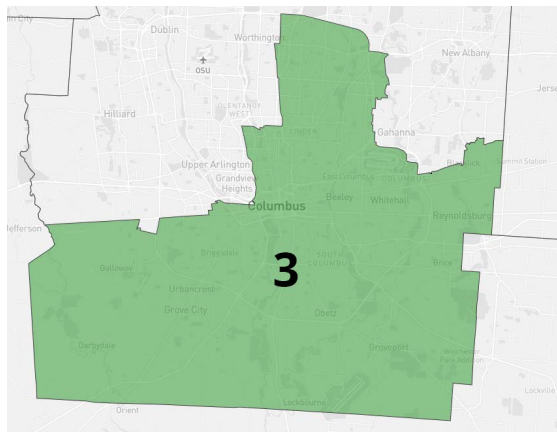
DISTRICT 1
CINCINNATI

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to all of our partners, contributors and every fellow Ohioan who lifted their voice in this process. Democracy is a practice that requires all of us.

SPECIAL THANKS:

Cathy Duval, Molly Shack, Prentiss Haney, Maki Somosot, Colleen Craig, Derrick Smith, Shaquiena Davis, Misha Barnes, Hannah Tyler, Carrie Coisman, Whitney Siddiqi and our partners at the Redistricting Data Hub: Louis Libert, John O'Neill, Andy Feldman, Jamie Atlas, Josh Cohen, Tim Lim, and George Cheung

"Nothing can stop the power of a committed and determined people to make a difference in our society."

Congressman John Lewis