

Testimony of Anne Hanna (Philadelphia Regional Hearing)

My name is Anne Hanna. I'm an anti-gerrymandering activist, a scientist, a data analyst, and a mapper, and I've spoken with some of you before in those capacities. But I come before you today as a simply a Pennsylvanian, demanding the right to have my voice and the voices of my neighbors fairly represented in Congress.

I live in the Olde Richmond neighborhood in lower northeastern Philadelphia. Until 2018, my house was in the highly-gerrymandered 1st Congressional district, which was precision-engineered in 2011 to pack Democratic voters and Black voters in and around Philadelphia into as few districts as possible, and to give an unshakeably safe seat to powerful incumbent Congressman Bob Brady, in order to secure his acquiescence to a redistricting plan that was designed, overall, to disenfranchise his party and his constituents. In short, the old 1st district was a partisan, racial, and incumbent-protection gerrymander, and a particularly egregious one, at that.

Mr. Brady, my then-"representative", lived on the other side of the city from me, and his district included such a disconnected scattering of disparate and fragmented communities that he felt little need to represent constituents' actual concerns --- no challenger could assemble a unified coalition to go up against him in either the primary or the general election, and, as a member of a neutered and tamed minority party, he knew he'd never be expected to actually deliver on his constituents' policy preferences. He could sit secure as a regional powerbroker, accomplishing little for his patchwork district, and never fear losing an election, right up until the moment he got caught out in a corruption scandal.

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court's 2018 anti-gerrymandering decision changed all that. While no district map can ever be perfect, the new 2nd district, which now includes my neighborhood, encompasses a compact and comprehensible section of the city, and my current Congressman, while also not perfect, is considerably more responsive and legislatively active than his predecessor. Moreover, the improved fairness of our state's Congressional delegation as a whole means that, for the first time since I've lived in Pennsylvania, the policy preferences of the residents of my district stand an actual chance of being enacted in law, which means that I can go to my Congressman and demand that he take action on issues I care about, and expect him to actually deliver at least some of what I and my neighbors need.

This is what REPRESENTATION means to me, as a Pennsylvania voter --- not just that my own single Congressional representative be from a community with which I'm somewhat affiliated, or be from my preferred political party, not just that the rest of the district that helps elect that person be a somewhat reasonable assemblage of somewhat affiliated communities, but, most importantly, that my community, and communities like mine, actually have, collectively, the real-world electoral power to see our equal share of policy priorities enacted into law. That's what I want to see come out of the redistricting in our region and across the state.

This is an achievable goal! The Pennsylvania Supreme Court proved this to all of us in 2018 --- they collated mapping suggestions from a variety of different stakeholders (parties and amici in the lawsuit), prioritized the state constitutional requirements for free and equal elections and for adherence to traditional neutral redistricting criteria of compactness, minimal political subdivision splits, population equality, and contiguity, and, in the end, developed a redistricting plan that did not unfairly disadvantage any incumbent representatives and did produce a Congressional delegation that

reasonably matched the overall preferences of the statewide electorate. We the people have a right to see our legislature do the same in 2021, and the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's 2018 map should be a model, not just in its design principles, but in the specifics of its district shapes.

And now we have yet another model for a participatory and open process in our state. Over the past three and a half years, Draw the Lines has run numerous citizen mapping contests and collected a massive database of 1500 fully completed Congressional mapping proposals for Pennsylvania, the work of more than 7200 Pennsylvania mappers from almost every part of the state, including myself and several of my fellows in the Concerned Citizens for Democracy anti-gerrymandering group. Draw the Lines staff and champion mappers in DTL's Citizen Map Corps (again, including me) then collaborated to produce a consensus map guided by that database. The Pennsylvania Citizens' Map respects Pennsylvania's constitutional requirements for redistricting, the integrity of local communities (as identified by mappers from every region), partisan fairness, and fairness to incumbents, and it attempts to navigate necessary compromises amongst these values equitably and in good faith. This map is quite possibly the most democratically-produced Congressional mapping proposal in the state's history, and it deserves to be considered as a strong starting point for the official legislative process. You can see the map here: <https://davesredistricting.org/maps#viewmap::9cf69410-f021-4f35-a4bc-23af4d179d86> and further explanatory information here: <https://drawthelinespa.org/pa-citizens-map>.

But I'm starting to become concerned that the legislature does not feel the same sense of urgency as we citizen mappers do about ensuring that our state engages in and has time to complete a fully open and transparent mapping process before the 2022 Congressional primaries begin. I remember all too well what happened in 2011 --- a highly gerrymandered map specification appearing suddenly out of nowhere from the majority party's secret mapping room and being made law practically overnight, on near party-line votes, with no time for public comment, in an embarrassing sham of democracy. It would be a disgrace to have the process end the same way this year. The fact that these hearings are happening at all is indeed a significant improvement over 2011, but we need much more, on several fronts.

First of all, in regard to the hearings themselves, I have a real fear that this committee has, I would like to believe inadvertently, hamstrung its own ability to hear from large groups of important stakeholders in this process. This hearing, like the hearing in Pittsburgh, is set way out in the suburbs, far from the heart of the city, far from most of the Black and Latino communities who make up more than half our population, in the middle of a work day, inconvenient to public transit, with no remote testimony option to accommodate those with travel difficulties or health concerns about covid.

To put it bluntly, most Philadelphians couldn't be here today to have their voices heard even if they wanted to, and of course most don't even know this is happening, and don't know how their exclusion might affect them. It doesn't have to be this way. In 2019, the Pennsylvania Redistricting Reform Commission held its Philadelphia hearing in a multiracial church right on Broad Street, in the heart of South Philly, in the evening, after normal work hours, and attracted a huge and diverse crowd. This year, the LRC offers online testimony options and, as a result, they have successfully elicited the participation of a broad range of Pennsylvanians. This committee can and should learn from their examples.

Second, judging by the hearing calendar, this committee seems to have an expert hearing planned on October 28 that includes only right-wing voices and voices for rural voters, not to mention only white male experts. One speaker is from the Cato Institute, one speaker is from the Center for Rural

Pennsylvania, and one speaker has pro-gerrymandering views so extreme that even Donald Trump was forced to back off on an attempt to nominate him to lead the Census. Where are the nonpartisan political scientists and anti-gerrymandering experts? Where are the experts speak to the needs of urban Pennsylvania? Where are the female and minoritized experts? The expert hearing part of this process desperately needs rebalancing if it is to have any hope of providing a full picture of what's needed to create fair and representative districts for all Pennsylvanians.

Third, we the people need a commitment from you, our representatives, to not just put on a show of listening to us and then indifferently impose a map you already settled on amongst yourselves long before we ever had a chance to speak. We actually need you to seek our feedback, in good faith, on your mapping proposals before you finalize them. That means we need hearings just like this one (except more inclusive!) after your proposed maps are published, and we need timely access before those hearings to appropriate digital forms of the proposed maps and all analytical data that went into their design, so that nonpartisan experts can analyze their fairness before the maps are voted on, and suggest improvements.

The necessary data includes block assignment files listing which census blocks are assigned to which districts, and all geographic shapefiles, demographic data, voting data, incumbent legislator addresses (or at least their precinct IDs, if there are privacy concerns). This data release is especially important if the data used by the legislature is customized or modified in any way from what the Census Bureau puts out. The need for this data release is also urgent --- the data you will use to design your own map needs to be made publicly available as soon as possible to allow citizen mappers and outside experts to refine their own proposals for submission to you, and to prepare their analytical tools for evaluation of your proposal.

You're running out of time to make this all happen, and the month-long delay of these hearings only exacerbates the time crunch. But we the people know that plenty of other states are working through open redistricting processes in a timely fashion, and we're not going to accept another egregious gerrymander hustled through at midnight.

In short, I urge this committee and the legislature as a whole to:

- Respect the dramatic improvements the Pennsylvania Supreme Court made both in the specific structure of districts in the Philadelphia region and in the overall partisan fairness of the map. Remember that voters are represented when they can impact public policy, not just when their party's guy wins their one district.
- Use both the Pennsylvania Citizens' Map itself and the open, collaborative, good-faith process by which it was designed as a model for your own process and map design.
- Make hearings more accessible to Pennsylvanians from all walks of life, and affirmatively reach out to both Pennsylvanians in underrepresented communities and experts who can speak to their issues.
- Provide your draft map and all mapping data to the public and experts early enough and comprehensively enough to give us the ability and the time to refine our own proposals and comment meaningfully on your proposals before the final map is voted on.
- Actively seek out public comment on mapping proposals before any final votes.

All of these tasks are essential if the legislature wants to maintain any plausible public legitimacy for whatever map it eventually produces, so I sincerely hope that you will all work in good faith to accomplish them.

Thank you for your time.