



Testimony on the Pennsylvania Citizens' Map

Senate State Government Committee

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Good morning Chairs Argall and Street and members of the PA House State Government Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today about Pennsylvania's congressional redistricting process.

I am here as the President and CEO of the Committee of Seventy, Pennsylvania's oldest nonpartisan good-government nonprofit. Since 2016 we have run the Draw the Lines project.

We launched Draw the Lines with the memory of Pennsylvania's 2011 redistricting process fresh in our minds. Many of you may not have been serving in your current elected offices at that time, but you may remember that the Legislature and Governor secretly considered, passed, and signed new districts into law in a span of one week. Pennsylvanians had no meaningful opportunity to comment on the shape of their own districts and how the boundaries may impact their communities, especially when they were split. Not surprisingly, Pennsylvania drew national criticism on both the process and end product, eventually leading to the Supreme Court striking down those maps in 2018.

From its launch, Draw the Lines has used mapping competitions to give to the public the same type of advanced tools and data that your committee will use to draw the commonwealth's voting districts. Our intention has been to equip Pennsylvanians with the skills and insights to participate in this year's redistricting process in a constructive fashion.

I'm proud that we can credibly call Draw the Lines the largest public mapping competition of its kind in the history of the republic. We've engaged 7,211 Pennsylvanians in drawing their own voting maps. They've come from 40 of PA's 67 counties, representing 90% of PA's population. They collectively produced 1,500 completed submissions, each unique in its boundaries and metrics.

Over the last three years, our team has reviewed each and every one of these maps. It became clear to us that a "wisdom of crowds" had emerged and that we could attempt to reflect that in a single, community-inspired map.



We have been encouraged this year by the numerous commitments from leaders in the Pennsylvania House and Senate to hold the most transparent redistricting process in the Commonwealth's history. We commend you holding this hearing today and we are excited to answer questions about the Citizens' Map.

But to follow through on those commitments to emphasize transparency and citizen input, we call on the General Assembly to take two important steps.

First, the Citizens' Map demonstrates the value of producing a map for public consideration before it can be finalized and voted upon. **We call on the General Assembly to produce a preliminary congressional map for the public to review.** The appropriate committee should then hold additional public meetings in different regions around the Commonwealth to solicit public feedback on the preliminary maps. These hearings should be accessible to as many people as possible, with options for virtual and evening participation. The Constitution requires a 30-day public consideration period for state legislative maps -- we think you should follow that 30-day guideline for the congressional map as well.

Second, to accompany the Citizens' Map, Draw the Lines produced "The Story of the Map." This narrative explains the different choices we made in finalizing the map's boundaries, including questions like how we went from 18 districts to 17 and how the map complies with the standards set out by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. "The Story of the Map" also provides a description of each of the 17 districts. **We strongly encourage the General Assembly to create a narrative for the preliminary and final maps you produce.** You can also use it to discuss how you incorporated public feedback from all of the testimony you've gathered at these hearings and the map submissions you've received online.

Using the example set by the Citizens' Map, there is an important opportunity for the Legislature to demonstrate that it is committed to the most transparent and participatory redistricting process in Pennsylvania history. Our team is excited to talk with you further about the Citizens' Map and how it can be helpful to the important task you have in front of you.

Regarding the Pennsylvania Citizens' Map

The Pennsylvania Citizens' Map is a composite set of 17 congressional districts that attempts to represent what 7,200 Pennsylvanians created with their own Draw the Lines maps.

Individual citizen maps were drawn and scored on common metrics using free online software, like DistrictBuilder and Dave's Redistricting App. The statistical averages became benchmarks by



which to draw the Citizens' Map, as did the values that mappers declared important to them. It also reflects the regional trends we saw our mappers present in their hometowns and communities. The Citizens' Map, in effect, seeks to represent the collective work and wisdom of these thousands of mappers.

Once drafted, Draw the Lines staff enlisted our Citizen Map Corps, an experienced group of Pennsylvania mappers who have demonstrated their aptitude for mapping the Commonwealth by winning previous DTL competitions. Working together over a series of meetings, we refined the map over nearly 10 iterations to consider and accommodate feedback. Once satisfied, we published the map to our website and began sharing it publicly. We have since fielded nearly 100 public comments on the map, asking for peoples' perspective on its strengths and weaknesses. Generally, about 70% of commenters claim they would vote for it if given the chance. We would be happy to share these comments with any member of this committee.

Not only was the Citizens' Map drawn and vetted by Pennsylvanians, it is objectively better by most standard redistricting metrics. Like the 2018 map, it only splits 14 counties, half of what the last legislature-drawn map in 2011 split (28). It scores better in compactness and creates more competitive elections than either the 2018 or 2011 map. It honors the Voting Rights Act, creating two majority-minority districts in Philadelphia. And because partisan fairness was a matter of concern to our mappers, including Democrats, Republicans, and independents, it clears several fairness benchmarks.

The Citizens' Map goes down to a near -0- population deviation, though we strongly disagree with this amount of false precision. Ensuring each district has exactly the same number of people, down to the person, creates negative consequences in requiring the division of roughly 25 voting precincts to reach its -0- deviation. This means that voters in the same precinct will show up on Election Day voting in different congressional districts. It will frustrate and confuse poll workers and create unnecessary headaches for county election officials. This is in the name of false precision, as there is obviously no way to tell exactly how many people are in a district as of Census Day, since people are born, die, and move into and out of a district on a daily basis.

We have created a separate version of the Citizens' Map, with a very minor (0.2%) population deviation which does not split any precincts. We would encourage the General Assembly to consider the importance of following this standard as well.



Committee of Seventy

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The Committee of Seventy and Draw the Lines believe that the Citizens' Map is a sufficient starting point for your work. We are happy to share all information, details, and process about how the map was compiled.