

## **Governor DeWine Signs New Congressional Districts into Law Following an Expedited Legislative Process**

Today, Governor Mike DeWine signed Senate Bill 258 into law, creating Ohio's new congressional districts following the 2020 census. Governor DeWine's signature came after a flurry of legislative action over the last several weeks as the Ohio Legislature worked to meet its November 30<sup>th</sup> constitutional deadline.

The final congressional districts contained in Senate Bill 258, publicly unveiled on Monday, are the first to be approved under the new redistricting rules passed by Ohio voters in 2018. The new rules are intended to reduce partisan gerrymandering by placing limitations on how counties and communities are kept together or divided, as well as by incentivizing bipartisan cooperation in the map drawing process. Under the new redistricting rules, a map with bipartisan support remains effective for ten years, as it was prior to the 2018 referendum, and a map that fails to achieve bipartisan support is only effective for four years.

Senate Bill 258 passed through the Ohio House of Representatives and Ohio Senate without bipartisan support, by votes of 55-37 and 24-7 respectively, and thus will be effective for four years and will need to be redrawn again before the next census in 2030.

House and Senate Republicans underscored the constitutionality of the new districts, noting that the map does not unduly favor either party as seven of the now fifteen congressional districts are considered "competitive." Moreover, the new map keeps all of Ohio's major cities, other than Columbus, within the same congressional district and reduces the number of counties represented by two separate districts.

House and Senate Democrats disagree with their Republican colleagues and believe the map will allow Republicans to easily win all but two or three of Ohio's fifteen congressional seats. The map also received significant opposition during public testimony as stakeholders alleged that the map implements "cracking and packing" measures to disenfranchise voters. Cracking is a process by which alike voters are divided into multiple districts to dilute their voting power and packing is a process by which alike voters are condensed into one district to limit the impact of their vote to a single district.

The new congressional districts will likely be met by a constitutional challenge in court, like the challenges encountered by the state legislative district map, which is currently facing three lawsuits pending in front of the Ohio Supreme Court.

A comparison of the current congressional districts and the newly drawn districts contained in Senate Bill 258:

