

# Print

## Washtenaw County - Apportionment Commission Public Input - Submission #11527

Date Submitted: 11/3/2021

### Washtenaw County Apportionment Commission

Per MCL 46.401, the Washtenaw County Apportionment Commission must meet "within 60 days after the publication of the latest United States official decennial census figures, the county apportionment commission in each county of this state shall apportion the county into not less than 5 nor more than 21 county commissioner districts as nearly of equal population as is practicable..."

Washtenaw County currently has 9 county commissioner districts.

Submissions on this form go directly to the Washtenaw County Apportionment Commission.

### Contact Information

Please provide your contact information. Any personally identifying information will be redacted in public records.

Name\*

Email Address\*

Leigh Greden

Address\*

City\*

State\*

Zip Code\*

Ann Arbor

MI

48104

Phone Number

### Apportionment Input

I oppose any proposal to create 15 County Commission districts and prefer that we keep nine (9) districts. The proposals to increase the # of districts is a solution in search of a problem that does not exist. The current size of the board (9) strikes the perfect balance of ensuring representation while allowing for efficient decision-making. Boards that are too small lack representation, but boards that are too big become dysfunctional. The County Board has, for the last ten years, achieved perfect balance, had strong and proportionate representation from the east side and west side, and achieved diversity of race, gender, and sexual orientation that exceeds proportional representation based on the County's demographics. The increase in the County's population since 2010 does not support increasing the number of districts. Nine Commissioners would each represent approximately 41,500-45,000 people (based on 2020 Census data, and assuming future growth), which is significantly less than the population-per-district in Oakland, Wayne, and Macomb counties. If the # of districts is increased, I urge you to create no more than 11 districts in order to minimize deviation from the balance that exists now between ensuring representation and becoming too large to effectively function. The discussion to-date indicates a desire to create a number of districts that is both an odd number and divisible by three (either 9 or 15) to ensure that the City of Ann Arbor districts do not overlap into townships but, frankly, that is absurd. The City has much in common with several neighboring townships, and districts that cover both the City and township would be beneficial to all parties. Thank you for your service.

Please provide any input you would like to give to the Apportionment Commission.

### Commissioner District Apportionment



No Opinion



Decrease Commissioner Districts (5-8)



Maintain Commissioner Districts (9)



Increase Commissioner Districts (10-15)



Increase Commissioner Districts (16-21)

Please indicate if you would like to decrease district seats, maintain district seats, increase district seats, or have no opinion.

### File Upload

No file selected

Please provide any files you would like to share with the Apportionment Commission.

Note: If uploading GIS files, please submit a shapefile or a file geodatabase.

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## Washtenaw County - Apportionment Commission Public Input - Submission #11509

Date Submitted: 11/1/2021

### Washtenaw County Apportionment Commission

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Washtenaw County currently has 9 county commissioner districts.

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### Contact Information

Please provide your contact information. Any personally identifying information will be redacted in public records.

Name\*

Email Address\*

Margaret Schankler

Address\*

City\*

State\*

Zip Code\*

Ann Arbor

MI

48104

Phone Number

## Apportionment Input

Good Afternoon, I have previously submitted written and spoken comments on why I believe we need more representation on the county commission. I like the 15 district map the best. Today, I would like to share my concerns about what I heard at the October 11, 2021 apportionment public hearing when committee members provided their views on expanding the commission. At that meeting, I heard that having more than 11 commissioners would not be "good governance" because it would cost more and there might be acrimonious debate which would slow down progress. The leadership of Ypsilanti Township and members of this committee told us that they believe the 9 member commission is working fine the way it is. It may be working well for those invested in the status quo. But is it working for the people? If the commission is functioning just fine, why has the divide in prosperity and health outcomes only grown in the last 10 yrs in this county? Why do almost all of the public comments you've received call for more commissioners? Our elected officials decry the inequity in our county nearly every time they speak. But when it comes to those putting words into action, boldness fades to rationales about why this won't work, or that is too hard. To make progress, you have to move forward in every small and big way you can. How many times in history are movements stalled by a fearful defense of the status quo? You can always find a good reason not to change. It takes courage to try something new and risk the possibility of a disappointing outcome. I challenge what I heard at the October 11th meeting. Expanded participation in governance IS good governance. I particularly challenge the Democratic party chair's notions about a well-functioning commission. Again, for who? For the Democratic Party to seat the type of democrat they want? For a predetermined agenda to get pushed through easier? All the while, the party struggles to get the most marginalized residents to trust that they will make change this time? It is not working well for the Democratic party's future if the voters you need most do not feel represented. Is the current commission the best for equity, inclusion and forward thinking that we have had in a long time? Possibly. And yet this is the same board that leapt to spend \$24 million in ARPA funds with a pretense that public input mattered. The results from their survey were not even tabulated and the comments from Sycamore Meadows that came in on paper were not even reviewed yet. But they pushed forward to spend our money. Right now, just 4 commissioners on the leadership team meet outside of public view to set the agenda for each meeting. When a measure finally gets before the public, only 1 more vote is needed to pass it. If debate and decisions happen behind the scenes, the public comment portion of the meetings is merely a farce. And when debate among elected officials is feared as an unnecessary, acrimonious disruption and not considered good governance, I have to ask what do you think democracy is? A nuisance? Change isn't clean and tidy. Creating and defending a club of like-minded folks isn't democracy. A board that smirks at comments the public has only 3 minutes to share, and pats us on the head with "you don't understand how this all works, dear" is not providing good governance. The assumption that 15 people cannot work together to divide the work and be civil is curious if not disturbing. What makes anyone so sure that 9 commissioners will continue working in this way? Two current commissioners have already put in their bids for higher office. We've heard that the cost of adding commissioners is a concern. Rather than shoot down more representation due to cost, perhaps we should examine why the county has such high administrative overhead for each employee. Maybe the taxpayers would rather spend our money on more voices rather than more bureaucracy? The only way to break the persistent, growing inequity in this county is to tackle it from every angle. If we are to center equity in all decisions going forward, we need more commissioners. We need to rework every institution to bring it closer to the people. Margaret Schankler

Please provide any input you would like to give to the Apportionment Commission.

### Commissioner District Apportionment

- No Opinion
- Decrease Commissioner Districts (5-8)
- Maintain Commissioner Districts (9)
- Increase Commissioner Districts (10-15)
- Increase Commissioner Districts (16-21)

Please indicate if you would like to decrease district seats, maintain district seats, increase district seats, or have no opinion.

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