

AG Dave Yost rejects language again for Ohio redistricting proposal to remove politicians

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Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost once again rejected language from a group that wants to remove politicians from drawing statehouse and congressional maps.

Citizens Not Politicians, a group that wants to replace politicians with a 15-member citizens commission, must revise its summary, collect another 1,000 valid signatures and try again. Campaign spokesman Chris Davey said they were "disappointed and frustrated" by Yost's rejection.

"The people of Ohio are fed up with our broken redistricting system. It's long past time to put citizens, not politicians, in charge of map drawing, require that maps be fair and require that maps be drawn in an open and transparent process that protects voters," he said.

Yost, in his letter rejecting the language, took issue with the summary's lack of detail on how political affiliation is determined for the commission compared to the panel tasked with picking the initial members of the commission.

"How political affiliation is determined, who makes those determinations and what rules apply are critical issues that must be included in a summary of the proposed amendment if it is to be fair and truthful," Yost wrote.

Redistricting is the process of dividing the state into congressional and statehouse districts for candidates to run in. This is typically done every 10 years after the U.S. Census to adjust for population shifts. Gerrymandering is when mapmakers manipulate lines to favor their political party, essentially allowing politicians to pick their voters.

Ohioans voted on reforms in 2015 and 2018 to curb gerrymandering, but they didn't prevent Republicans from drawing maps that disproportionately benefited GOP candidates. The seven-member Ohio Redistricting

Commission, made up of lawmakers and three statewide elected officials, crafted maps that were repeatedly ruled unconstitutional.

That commission met for the first time in over a year on Wednesday but could not move forward because of Republican infighting over who should serve as co-chairman of the group.

Clearing Yost's review is the first step toward making the November 2024 ballot. Once approved, the ballot campaign would need to clear a review by the Ohio Ballot Board then collect more than 413,000 valid signatures from across Ohio.