



County of Hamilton

DUSTY RHODES
AUDITOR

COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
138 EAST COURT STREET
CINCINNATI, OHIO 45202

ONE MAN, ONE VOTE FOR THE CMHA BOARD Dusty Rhodes, Hamilton County Auditor

In 1964 the United States Supreme Court established the idea of "one man, one vote". In Reynolds vs. Sims, the Court determined that state legislative districts had to be roughly equal in population. Before this ruling urban counties were often drastically underrepresented. The idea of equitable representation was favored by progressives at the time to counter balance the dominance of rural and suburban coalitions.

Today, two local state legislators are proposing to correct a similar long standing inequity in the make up of the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) Board. But now some progressive politicians and activists are opposing this overdue move to make the CMHA Board truly representative of the area it serves, all of Hamilton County with the exception of one small portion of Harrison Township.

Currently, CMHA's Board includes five appointees. The appointments are made by the Hamilton County Commissioners, Court of Common Pleas, Court of Appeals and by the City of Cincinnati City Manager. One of the appointments must be a CMHA program participant.

Three appointees are selected by public officials representing the entire County (which includes the City of Cincinnati), but two more are exclusively named by the Cincinnati City Manager. State Representative Louis Terhar's and State Senator Bill Seitz's bill would add two more representatives, one from the County's suburban municipalities and one from the County's townships.

Why should the City of Cincinnati have disproportionately excessive representation on a Board making decisions well beyond their boundaries? Why can't suburban communities and townships have equal representation on a Board making decisions which significantly impact them?

The current unfairness in CMHA Board membership is indefensible. Thanks to Representative Terhar and Senator Seitz for introducing this bill to assure equal representation for *all* County residents. The inequity the status quo perpetuates by practicing the politics of exclusion must be addressed.

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