



GREENE COUNTY DAILIES

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Austria discusses why he won't run

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GREENE COUNTY — A new redistricting map approved by the Ohio legislature has prompted Congressman Steve Austria not to seek re-election.

Austria stated that he has no intentions of retiring from public service or making a permanent exit from politics. The congressman still has another year in office, and he intends on remaining active in the Republican Party on a local and state level. Changes to the districts that have led to the fragmenting of the 7th congressional district, however, have led Austria to determine that a congressional run for the next term is not an option.

"I was forced out this time because of redistricting," Austria told this paper. "The 7th district was cut up three different ways and it no longer exists."

According to Austria, the developments that led to his decision began back in August of last year, when the Speaker of the House worked with leaders in Columbus to produce a new map. The new map, which was presented in September, splintered Austria's congressional district into three parts that were absorbed by the 8th, 10th and 15th districts.

"It had me redistricted into a primary with Mike Turner," said Austria.

On Dec. 7, 2011, Austria filed a petition to run for office in the 10th district, which included four of the eight counties originally in the 8th district. Seven days later, however, Austria decided against running when a new map was released with only Greene County and a portion of Fayette County contained in the 10th district. The new 10th district, says Austria, now only contains 25.7 percent of the 7th district. Montgomery County will make up the balance of the 10th district. Austria fears the Dec. 14 modifications would adversely affect Greene County's representation.

"I share the anger of people who are mad about the redistricting of the maps," said Austria. "Greene County is the largest county in the 7th district. The needs in Dayton are different from the needs in Greene County. Whoever represents Greene County must make sure those needs are met. Greene County should not be overshadowed by Dayton and Montgomery County."

Austria's departure will mark the end of the 7th congressional district, an area that has been represented by such notables as Dave Hobson, Mike DeWine, Bud Brown and Clarence Brown. The congressman plans to continue working on several projects, including the effort to secure airspace for the testing of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs). While his time in office will come to an end after this year, Austria does not rule out a bid for Congress in the future.

"It's been an honor to serve voters of the 7th district," said Austria. "I tried to represent them the best way I can. I've tried to serve with integrity and honesty. I regret that I will not be able to do continuing doing that because of redrawn maps."

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