Exhibit 12

Statements From the Public Hearing on Redistricting
is also found in the State Constitution. All State
House and Senate districts must be composed of
contiguous territory.

Senator, thank you very much.

SEN. RUCHO: Mr. Joyce, thank you for
your comments.

In an effort to be fair, I'd like to
contact Chairman Lewis in Rocky Mount and see if
Lois Watkins would be able to speak now.

REP. LEWIS: Mr. Chairman?

SEN. RUCHO: Yes, sir.

REP. LEWIS: Ms. -- Councilwoman Watkins
is joining us right now. She is just arriving in
the room, and ma'am, I would advise you to please
come and stand right here. The camera is to my
right, and we welcome you and welcome your
comments, and feel free to begin when you're ready.

LOIS WATKINS: Okay.

(Begins speaking -- spoken over by Sen.
Rucho at remote location.)

SEN. RUCHO: Ms. Watkins, would you
introduce yourself, please?

LOIS WATKINS: (continuing) -- these
public hearings across the state. And I'm going to
read some notes I have taken over.
I'm Lois Watkins, a resident of North Carolina and an elected council member for the City of Rocky Mount, and my entire ward is included in District 7. As a resident of Nash County for more than 20 years, I have been involved in advocacy to give representation in a number of districts in this eastern region, most particularly the state districts 7 and 25.

We the citizens of our ward know that based on the Census information, we have had population shifts, and they do have to add additional populations to districts 7 and 25. While we do understand that redistricting can sometimes help us catch up with the times, address population shifts, provide fair access to growth, we also recognize that redistricting --

REP. LEWIS: I'm sorry, Ms. Watkins. I was just looking at the back.

LOIS WATKINS: We also recognize that redistricting can degrade or erode the public's influence on the political process as a whole. It can erode the quality and resource allocation in underserved communities into large minority districts where we are less likely to receive the resources and attention to our issues because our
numbers are fewer.

I am here today to inform you that we want to protect our minority-majority districts and the opportunity for African-Americans to elect and keep representation of our choice. We also want to warn against packing of more blacks into our majority-minority districts than are necessary to meet Voting Rights requirements. Packing of African-American voters in a majority-minority district can undermine the influence of the black vote in the other districts in the count, and reduce our impact on receiving resource allocations to issues historically not addressed prior to the creation of the majority-minority districts because of pure numbers.

We also want to oppose the packing or splitting off of our communities of interest in order to provide others who meet the target numbers for other districts and then you add the entire county of Nash to these districts. I thank you very much for the work that you're doing in our General Assembly. Thank you for moving this process across the state. And I hope that you will consider the impact on voters across the state as you proceed with this redistricting effort.
you will be truly restoring confidence in
government. Thank you for your time.

SEN. RUCHO: Thank you, Mr. Circosta.

Again, to check with Representative Dockham in
Person County. Representative Dockham, do you have
anybody that might be listed on your speaking list?

REP. DOCKHAM: No, sir, not at this time.

We haven't had anyone sign up yet.

SEN. RUCHO: All right. If you should,
please just break in, and we'll make sure that they
get into the rotation.

Representative Lewis, your next speaker
in Person County? Or check that, in Nash County,
excuse me.

REP. LEWIS: Thank you, Senator. We have
Rocky Mount City Councilman Reuben Blackwell, who's
going to address us, and I would invite Councilman
Blackwell to the front, and welcome his remarks.

REUBEN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Mr.
Chairman. And my hometown is Roxboro; that's in
Person County. Since you can't find anybody, I'll
represent you from Rocky Mount.

I am a citizen of Rocky Mount. I live in
Edgecombe County, but half of my city council
district is in Nash County. Around the issue that
we have to deal with here are not just countywide
or relegated to the city, but statewide issues. We
are much more concerned about equity in resource
distribution than we are the shape of the district.
We are very concerned that we have inequitable --
inequity built into the systems that led to
problems in housing, education, in transportation
and economic development.

In Edgecombe and Nash Counties and
Halifax Counties, we share historical problems,
really being behind times. We've made great
strides in the last ten years, catching up in
education, catching up in economic development,
catching up in housing development. The lines that
have been drawn and the representatives that have
been elected have worked together across party
lines to make sure that we are bringing the ability
for all of our citizens to participate in strong
growth that can be sustained and that can be taken
into the next generation.

We are asking, in the Nash County area,
the Edgecombe County area, that we're able to keep
as close as possible the percentages that were
drawn ten years ago. We're asking that even though
we recognize that you have to add more people to
some of the areas and take away from others, that
you try to keep the spirit of communities that are
being represented intact. We're asking that you
keep the majority-minority districts in place
without packing them or diluting the efforts of
voters in non-majority-minority districts so that
we can have the ability for all citizens to
represent people who understand their interests,
needs and concerns.

This is about not just people's faith and
trust in government; this is about resource
distribution that will help North Carolina be
competitive with the rest of the world. We're just
beginning to move forward. We do not need to move
backwards in time. We are concerned that some of
the discussion that we've heard is not compatible
or conducive with strong economic development, job
creation, palatable for our school systems. We're
asking that you keep the districts as close as you
can to the way they are so that we'll be able to
continue the representation that we already have in
place, as well as to keep the ability of our
citizens to move forward and work together to
create opportunities for growth.

Racism has not ended. Discrimination
still exists. It is still very difficult in large
elections for people of color to receive
endorsements across the board. We still have
heated arguments and discussion that is centered
around race. We cannot excuse race as a
consideration. Even though it cannot be the
primary consideration, it is a strong contributing
factor, and we ask that you allow every citizen in
this state to be able to have a vote that counts.
Whether people go to vote is up to them, but we're
asking that you create districts and give every
citizen in the state the ability to elect
representatives of their choice.

REP. LEWIS: Thank you very much,
Councilman Blackwell. I appreciate those remarks,
and I appreciate your time.

Senator, with that, we'll yield back to
the -- to you in Raleigh, sir.

SEN. RUCHO: Thank you, Chairman Lewis.
The -- just for you to be aware, Senator Malcolm
Graham from Mecklenburg County just arrived, and I
ended up leaving the session, and he was covering
his job taking care of Senate business, and that's
why he came late, so we have Senator Malcolm
Graham, who we're very proud to have on this
Hispanic citizens and targeting African-American communities have occurred.

We believe that social science research will demonstrate that racially polarized voting still occurs at legally significant levels in many areas of the state, and in these circumstances, the federal government has rightly paid attention to the need to avoid diluting the legitimate voting strength of racial minority voters in the state.

The law requires that a redistricting plan must provide persons of color and all ethnic groups protected by the Voting Rights Act an equal opportunity to participate in the political process and elect representatives of their choice.

Redistricting plans should not have the purpose or effect of making minorities worse off than they already are under existing plans. Vote dilution can occur through use of gerrymandering techniques such as packing, stacking and cracking. It is vitally important not to pack African-Americans into too few districts. Complying with the federal Voting Rights Act is a key redistricting criteria. At the same time, recognizing and protecting important communities of interest in North Carolina is also an important
committee from Buncombe County. Thank you for being here, Senator.

Going back to Nash County, Representative Lewis, do you have another speaker there?

REP. LEWIS: Yes, Senator, we do. It's my pleasure to invite Rocky Mount City Councilperson Andre Knight to address the committee. Mr. Knight, please feel free to come forward. We welcome your input and look forward to your remarks.

ANDRE KNIGHT: Thank you for allowing us to be here. I'm Andre Knight, president of the local branch of the NAACP. I wanted just to give you a background of the history of elections here in Edgecombe and Nash Counties and Rocky Mount.

In the beginning, in the early 1890s, African-Americans in Rocky Mount began to assume a more active role in the electoral process as both the registrars and poll-takers. In 1897, as a result of political and social objectives, the legislative action of the Fusionists who gained control of the state administration in 1894 and expanded their majority in 1896. In order to increase the minority participation, representation in federal, state and local government, after the
Democrats regained control following Reconstruction, the Fusionists passed a number of legislative reforms, including new laws that enabled the election of African-American candidates to political office.

One method that was employed by the new legislative majority was to abruptly amend the municipal charters to open the election process. I just want to say in the communities of District 7, in Nash County, authority to pass a racial, economic class, and geographical entity in the merger of Rocky Mount City Schools. And the schools in Halifax County continue to be faced with the same issues, having three school systems in the county that are divided along issues of race, economic class, county and city lines. The communities that we're talking about today in District 7 continue to focus -- continue to form a community of interest around these educational issues, and the recent election of the first black school board member from a predominantly black school board district in Nash County, inner-city part of Rocky Mount. That the communities in the district still face racial polarization in Rocky Mount with a negative attitude toward the majority
black City Council.

The challenge by the white community to black candidates in Wards 4 and 2 in Rocky Mount City Council races, and the challenge in Whitakers to black residents electing the candidates of their choice, or getting white support for black candidates of mayor or town commission. While there are many more factors that join the communities in District 7 as a community of interest, these are some of the key points that people shape our identity as a community of interest.

While we want to protect our majority-minority district and the opportunity for blacks to elect a representative of their choice who would represent these interests we have described, we also want to warn against packing more blacks in our district than are necessary to minimize the influence of black voters in other districts in the county and the cracking of our community of interest, or to provide voters to other districts.

So we would just ask currently that district redrawing, and we continue -- we want that process to continue with District 7 in both Edgecombe, Nash and Halifax Counties. Thank you.
with Harnett and Moore County Senate. Those are
also rural counties and are communities of
interest.

The 2nd Congressional District is not as
bad as our Congressional District 13, but it is
definitely a gerrymandered district. I look
forward to the new leadership in the House and
Senate providing fair and legal redistricting
process to all the citizens of North Carolina
represented by true communities of interest, and
I'm an interested party. Thank you.

SENATOR RUCHO: Thank you for your
comments. We're going to come back to Durham, and
our next speaker will be Bob Hall. We need your
name and your organization, please, Mr. Hall.

MR. HALL: You know I'm with an
organization. Yes. My name is Bob Hall, and I'm
speaking today on behalf of Democracy North
Carolina. We're a member of the coalition of
nonpartisan organizations called The Alliance for
Fair Redistricting and Minority Voting Rights.
There is a perception that racism no longer exists,
and that race should not even be considered in the
redistricting process. I'm here to say that that
perception is wrong and that race should be used by
all and by -- justice should be used in the
redistricting process.

Historically, North Carolina has used
literacy tests and other restrictive methods to
restrict or exclude persons of color from
participating in the political process. I have
personally been involved in this decade in
investigating cases of discrimination and, sadly,
they still exist. The voter photo ID bill, House
Bill 351, which is on deck in the General Assembly
now, is a current example of a practice that if put
in place, would have a discriminatory impact.
African-Americans make up 22 percent of active
registered voters in our state, 22 percent, but
they are 32 percent of the active registered voters
who do not have a North Carolina state ID card, a
government-issued photo ID from North Carolina. 22
percent versus 32 percent. That means that if
you're an African-American active voter, you're 48
percent more likely not to have an ID in North
Carolina. Let me -- that's a -- that's an example
of the practice of discrimination.

There is still a legacy that has affected
us and white folks like myself in our ability to
vote across race lines. And this happens not
everywhere, but it does happen. Just looking at the data that is available to us, let me just take in Bladen County, for example, two precincts, both of them 71 percent registered Democrats, 71 percent registered Democrat. One has 4 percent black, that's 4 percent black. In that precinct, they voted for Obama, the Democrat, the African-American candidate. 9 percent voted for Obama, with 4 percent black. Same number of registered Democrats. In another district in Bladen County, it was 41 percent black. Obama got 47 percent of the vote. There's a correlation there based on race. Same kind of thing in Pamlico. You can see this in state after state. So I do believe that we do have to look at race as a factor.

I am saying that minority voters -- I would urge you not to draw redistricting lines that make minority voters worse off than they are now, and I would urge you to also consider looking at the data to encourage coalition districts where they can be made possible. Thank you very much.

SENATOR RUCHO: Thank you, Mr. Hall.

Appreciate your comments. We're going to go to Vance County with Senator Brock. And Senator Brock, I have listed Charles Faulshauer [phon.]. I
accordingly.

We'll go to -- I think we're coming back here to Durham, and before I do so, I, again, was remiss in not recognizing -- I did recognize Representative Jordan as a member of the General Assembly, but also another alumni of the Math and Science School, so you all ought to be proud that you've got two folks here.

We're going to go next to Don Moffitt.

Okay. Don Moffitt is not here. Let's go to Toye Shelton. Am I pronouncing that correct?

MS. SHELTON: Toye.

SENATOR RUCHO: Toye. Excuse me. Thank you.

MS. SHELTON: Good evening, gentlemen.

My name is Toye Shelton. I am a member of the AFRAM organization, which is the Alliance for Fair Redistricting and Minority Voting Rights, as well as a student of North Carolina Central University.

Do you remember when you were a child coloring in a coloring book? Your teacher urged you to stay inside the lines. We did not know how important the lines or the boundaries or the colors would be then, but we now know redistricting draws the lines and boundaries that determine major
political outcomes in history, and it has told us what colors, or to be more frank, people of color are permitted to be inside the pictures in the political process.

Let me discuss what we, the general public, now know. We now know that the public has entrusted you to facilitate a process that is, one, transparent, two, includes meaningful participation and, three, legally maximizes the voting strength of minorities and all North Carolina residents.

In terms of specifics, by transparent meaning that the data, time lines, criteria, goals, draft -- draft maps and responsible committee to the matters of public record be easily accessible to the public on the General Assembly redistricting page.

By meaningful participation, we mean that the process should provide for participation by the general public through extensive public hearings. We appreciate your current efforts in this regard. It is very helpful to have the public hearings spread throughout so that we may receive feedback -- so that you may receive feedback, rather, by various North Carolinians. Also, redistricting plans must provide African-Americans
and other racial and ethnic groups protected by the 
Voting Rights Act an equal opportunity to 
participate in the political process. I state this 
again, an equal opportunity to participate in the 
political process and elect representatives of 
their choice. Otherwise, you will be in jeopardy 
of telling us that our colors do not fit in the 
picture and the law no longer upholds such action.

In this regard, coalition districts were 
justified by voting patterns and power disen---
disenfranchised people of color. What we of color 
now know is that it is no secret that the process 
is influenced by partisanship and incumbency 
desires. While you have the right to afford some 
protections to incumbents, please consider that you 
were elected to serve the interests of the people, 
not the interests of yourselves or other elected 
officials.

Now that I have discussed what we, the 
general public, now know, I am compelled to discuss 
what we do not. While I truly appreciate the 
opportunity to share my thoughts on the process, it 
is very difficult to comment without set criteria. 
We now know the law and are familiar with the 2011 
redistricting guide. However, that does not
suffice in the place of you including posting the
block assignment files on the General Assembly
website prior to the end of the public hearings
scheduled so that voters can easily and readily
review and comment on what you're proposing to
enact.

We applaud your hard work in holding
these hearings, but we also know that the committee
has not yet adopted its redistricting criteria, nor
have you made the public draft plans under --
published under consideration. Thus, at this stage
it is difficult for the public to provide
meaningful comment, because we simply do not know
what the criteria is or the plans being drafted.
We need to be afforded the opportunity to know the
criteria in order to comment on what it entails.
If you truly value the opinion of the constituents
in regards to this issue, you will no doubt make
your redistricting plans public well before the
last hearing on May 9th.

Please remember, as you begin to work
towards the finalization of this plan, that
African-Americans and all people of color fit
inside the lines and should not ever be
marginalized and pushed out of the picture. After
all, I think that we can all agree that it is the colors that we use that make the pictures more vivid and beautiful. So being that I am a college student, I have one question more for you. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, how are your coloring skills? Thank you for listening. We appreciate your time and presence today.

SENATOR RUCHO: Thank you for your comments. Members of the audience, just so that you can be aware, you have access on the Internet as far as information like -- and there are also -- there's also an opportunity to sit at a computer screen where the block census data and the like is there, and you can communicate through the General Assembly and the ISD department to find access to those. So that is available to members of the public.

Our next spot is in Vance County again.

Senator Brock, I have Wadie Ryan.

MS. RYAN: Mr. Chairman and members of your committee, good evening. My name is Wadie Ryan, and I am from the great, growing, expanding county of Warren. I speak to you today as a citizen, as a retired educator and as a person of interest in what's going on with our redistricting.
to keep our districts intact.

Now, what I do find somewhat disturbing
is that North Carolina is considering modeling our
redistricting plan after the Iowa model. Surely,
with all the universities in our state, we have
enough scholars to pull from to assist with the
plan. We are not followers. We are usually the
trailblazers. So let's not move backwards. Let's
continue to be the leaders in our country. We
should use the redistricting plan that is currently
in place. It is effective, and let's keep North
Carolina intact with our districts. Thank you.

SENATOR RUCHO: Thank you for your
comments. I'm going to go back to Senator Brock.
Senator Brock in Vance County, have you any other
speakers that are scheduled?

SENATOR BROCK: Yes. Terry Garrison, who
is a Vance County Commissioner.

SENATOR RUCHO: Thank you, Senator Brock.
Will you have Mr. Garrison speak, please?

MR. GARRISON: Mr. Chairman and members
of the committee, Senator Brock, thank you for your
service and time and the willingness to offer
yourselves to the citizens of this state. I can
certainly empathize with you and relate to the job
that you do, and undertaking the task that you have
before you at this present time.

I'm a six-term County Commissioner and
Past President of the North Carolina Association of
County Commissioners, and have had an opportunity
to work with commissioners across this state and
legislators across the state for a number of years.
And I can tell you that in my experiences in
working with the Association at the board level for
some 20 years, that we have found a way to serve
the citizens of this great state by being inclusive
in every respect, with respect particularly as it
relates to parties, as it relates to race, as it
relates to geographic -- geography, as it relates
to demographics. And having done so, we think that
has bode us well in terms of finding ways to
represent the citizens of our state, as well as
making requests to our General Assembly and to
those in Congress and to the President for at least
our constituents of the state.

With respect to Vance County being
served, the current districting that is in place
seems to have served Vance County well with our
member of Congress -- members of Congress, with our
state representatives, with our state senator and
with our county officials. I urge you to be
cognizant of that as you consider that for Vance
County, as well as for this good state. Yes, the
Voting Rights Act has put in race for a purpose,
and I think it's important for you as elected
officials to be cognizant of that as you move
forward.

There are a lot of opinions about how
things should -- how you should do your job, and at
the end of the day, this is a decision that you
will have to make. But all votes will rise
together with the tide, and the more often that we
can be mindful of the fact that every decision that
we make that impact all our citizens, the more
positive we can do that, the greater our chances
are for advances and improvement for our state.
And I just urge you to be very cognizant of what --
of the district assigned that is in place now for
Vance County as it stands, and we would like to see
that continue.

And with respect to race, unfortunately,
Vance County was formed on the basis of race, not
for a good reason, but for a bad reason, but
despite that, today we have a county that is
represented by elected officials, and we have a
citizenry that works together for the good of all
the citizens, and I thank you for your time.

SENIOR RUUCHO: Thank you for your
comments. We're coming back to Durham, and trying
to reach Don Moffitt. Mr. Moffitt?

MR. MOFFITT: Thank you, senators and
representatives. I just have a couple of things
very briefly. First, I wanted to say that I live
only two blocks west of here, that -- that this
part of Durham is a true community of interest,
between Duke, between the neighborhoods, between --
the people work together. We have a community of
interest here that should be in a single district.

The second thing I want to say is that I
also believe, separate from that, that this is an
opportunity to seriously look at the redistricting
process, creating a redistricting process which
removes it from the political sphere, and I urge
both parties to seriously consider that in the
opportunities that are at hand today. Thank you.

SENIOR RUUCHO: Thank you for your
comments. Senator Brock in Vance County, do you
have another speaker there?

SENIOR BROCK: No, sir. No speaker.

SENIOR RUUCHO: As I mentioned to
voter fraud are not there, I could have been three of them myself back in 1996. Thank you.

SENATOR RUCHO: Thank you for your comments. Our next speaker, Lavonia Allison.

MS. ALLISON: North Carolina, North Carolina, first in freedom, first in freedom, first in freedom, litigation, litigation, litigation. You guys have an awesome responsibility. We can be praised all over the United States for the next district lines that you're going to put together.

My name is Lavonia Allison, and I serve as Chair of the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People, President of the North Carolina Leadership Conference, Inc., and a life member of the NAACP. I voted in District 2 when Mickey Michaux won the primary and then he was deceived in the general election. Kenneth Spaulding ran, carried the primary, lost in the general election. I was very privileged to participate with Jamie Hodgkins Lucas, the predecessor to -- was a great senator, the first African-American female to sit in the awesome body of the North Carolina State Senate.

Minorities -- racial minorities in our
state have faced discrimination in voting, during past redistricting cycles, partisanship, incumbency motivation, lack of clear understanding of how race should and should not be considered. And I want to take just a little bit of time to look at the overview, consideration of minorities and persever--- mention consideration of race. Race has been, is, and continues to be a factor not only in North Carolina, but throughout our nation. Participatory democracy is the goal that all of us wish for, but this ideal hopefully may be positively impacted by what the lines will, in fact, be put together for the next ten years.

As I said, basically, for Section 2 and the Voting Right Act of 1965 prohibits minority voter dilution. Any voting practice that has a discriminatory effect is unlawful. With that said, we need to understand that there is a misunderstanding and a misrepresentation that race cannot be used. It can be used. The key is that racism exists, but although Shaw versus Reno prohibits certain use of race in redistricting, the Voting Right Act requires that you create districts that combine an opportunity for racial minorities to elect a candidate of choice, a candidate of
choice. Also, consideration of race is permissible in the redistricting process, if and when necessary, to satisfy a compelling state interest, such as complying with the Voting Right Act. Additionally, you can voluntarily use race as a factor even when the Voting Right Act does not compel you to do so.

Hopefully, we are looking for talent, and one of the things that we would hope that you will make possible, that your lines and what you have done, you will be able to, in fact, make it possible for it to be transparent and timely so that we will be able to ensure that fairness and equity exists and there has not been dilution of racial minority voting strength, especially when you look at the representation of what our state would be if it was fair. 22 percent, 26 members of the House, the Senate 50, 22 percent. We know that there's not fair representation. And, of course, all of that is not necessarily as the remedy relates to the lines, but we would hope that you would make it possible for us to have an opportunity in a timely way to look at what the drafts will be, and once the drafts are made, that we will have an opportunity, a meaningful
opportunity, to continue to have some input.

Public hearings, you know, are very, very good, but until we see at least a draft of what's going to happen, many of our comments may not, in fact, be as meaningful as if we had had an opportunity to look at what the draft is going to -- the draft that you have already put together.

The other thing in terms of what we are dealing with, I'd like to just mention that the situation in terms of the Voting Right Act, Section 2, that can be, in fact, made impacting all of the hundred counties, whereas in the Section 5, it is only the 40 counties, and one of the things we are concerned about, that there are problems in counties that are not covered by Section 5. And we surely hope that you will, in fact, look at that.

I think that's my time. Thank you very much.

SENATOR RUCHO: Thank you, Ms. Allison. Appreciate your comments. Next speaker, Justin Valas.

MR. VALAS: Hi. I wanted to thank you all for your being here. My name is Justin Valas, and I am -- that's all right. No accent, nothing fancy. I am actually here with the North Carolina
entity. How possibly can our interests be
represented with the silenced voice of our voters?
The Rockingham County Republican Party does not
propose or endorse in any way the practices of the
past redistricting committee, whose aims were
inconsistent with the Constitution of North
Carolina. We do, however, expect fair and
legitimate districts to be established in
accordance with the North Carolina Constitution and
federal guidelines. Thank you.

SEN. RUCHO: Thank you for your comments.
I'd like to introduce Representative Maggie Jeffus.
Thank you for being here, Representative. We
appreciate that.

Let's go next to Guilford, and we'll be
talking with Bill Davis. Mr. Davis, thank you for
being here.

MR. DAVIS: Thank you very much. My name
is Bill Davis. I am currently chair of the
Guilford County Democratic Party. The fairness of
voting is the underlying essence that drives a
democracy, and the people of Greensboro have
already experienced what happens when redistricting
infects the voting process and is approached the
wrong way. We've seen what happens when public
hearings are offered, but there's no proposal or map on the table. We've seen what happens when in turn, a map is passed without an opportunity to see it, to digest it, and to respond to it by the people who it affects. The result of this for a democratic system is disaster. This is not a way to handle important issues in a democracy.

Likewise, we've seen what happens when a map is passed that divides communities and undermines minority representation. Again, this is not the way to handle important issues and uphold a democratic system. Rather, in a democracy, the people are given the chance to respond and to be heard, not only ahead of time in the abstract, but rather, when the essence of an issue is known. When a definite proposal is on the table that people can look at and respond to.

The people can't have true input into their political system if the people who are speaking, as they are here today, haven't actually had the access to specific maps or proposals that they can make a response to.

In a democracy, also, we seek to respect the communities and all the groups that make up the communities, including minority communities, so
that all the people who are participating in the
democracy have a fair voice in representation in
their government. This can't be done if the
communities are lumped together into a single,
minority ghetto district. Likewise, it can't be
done if their representation is split apart into so
many separate districts that they have no voice,
you can't raise their voice together as one, to
make a difference in the political system. That's
not how a democracy should work. Rather, democracy
should work in a way that supports the communities
of the people who are responsible for overseeing
their government.

Redistricting should not be a political
game that seeks to enforce a predetermined party
system goal by shifting votes from one Republican
to one Democrat, or the other way around, for that
matter. This should not be a party-driven,
politics as usual process.

The redistricting committees should seek
to craft specific proposals that keep power over
the government in the hands of the people, and that
respects all the communities that make up the
people in our state. Then, they should make those
proposals known publicly so they can be examined by
the people who they will affect, and those people -- we should be given an opportunity then to respond to those maps. A hearing beforehand isn't enough; we need the opportunity to be heard after those maps and proposals have been made public. Only then can we claim that redistricting has really upheld a democratic system in our state, and only then can we claim that the result will be a true democratic voting process for the people of North Carolina. Thank you.

SEN. RUCHO: Thank you for your comments. We'll go to Forsyth, and I believe I have Fleming El-Amin? Senator Brock?

SEN. BROCK: He's on his way up.

SEN. RUCHO: Thank you, sir.

MR. EL-AMIN: Good evening. I want to thank you for organizing this event for community participation, but I want to suggest next time we have some signs up so people know how to get into the room.

My name is Fleming El-Amin, and I'm speaking as a private citizen with five grandkids who are all citizens of North Carolina. And I want to start with a few quotes, and I'll also submit this to you in writing for your deliberation later
I want to end with this. I want to thank the legislators and their staff for their time spent and all they're going to take in this effort. It's not easy. And thank you, have a good evening.

SEN. RUCHO: Thank you for your comments. We'll again return to Guilford, and James Burroughs for your comments. Is James Burroughs here?

MR. BURROUGHS: Yes. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is James Burroughs, III, and I am the executive director of Democracy At Home, a non-profit organization that registers people to vote, educates them on the issues, and encourages them to vote responsibly. This evening I'm proud to speak on behalf of the Alliance for Fair Redistricting and Minority Voting Rights.

I live in the 12th Congressional District, a district where almost half the population is black. As a young African-American male, I know that racism still exists. Although Shaw v. Reno prohibits certain uses of race in redistricting, the Voting Rights Act requires that you create districts that provide an opportunity for minorities to elect a candidate of their choice. Also, consideration of race is permissible
in the redistricting process if and when necessary to satisfy a compelling state interest such as complying with the Voting Rights Act. Additionally, you can voluntarily use race as a factor even when the Voting Rights Act does not compel you to do so.

Do not listen to the hype. Consideration of race in and of itself is not impermissible race discrimination. Considering race is no more illegal than your awareness of age, economic status, the political implications of shifting lines, and other demographic factors when redrawing district lines. The Supreme Court has never held any plan to be invalid simply because redistricting is performed with consciousness of race, or because a majority-minority district was intentionally created.

The committee should preserve current majority-minority districts and work to create districts that fairly reflect minority voting strength. The minority coalition districts, crossover districts and influence districts should be enacted to empower previously disenfranchised people of color. Furthermore, while only 40 of the 100 counties in North Carolina are covered by
Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act and therefore are subject to pre-clearance, no plan should be retrogressive and have the effect of making minorities worse off than the current plans.

The committee should avoid use of gerrymandering techniques to create an advantage for a particular party, or to manipulate geographic boundaries to create partisan or incumbent-protected districts. Packing, cracking, stacking or otherwise disenfranchising minorities should be clearly avoided.

While race cannot be the dominant factor in the process, you can and should consider the impact that shifting lines will have on minorities and our ability to elect the candidate of our choice. Thank you.

SEN. RUCHO: Thank you for your comments. Again, we'll go to Forsyth, and, Representative Dollar, I'm looking for Olivia Swinton.

MS. SWINTON: Mr. Chair, members of the subcommittee, my name is Olivia Swinton, and I have lived in Winston-Salem for the last 14 years after living in the Washington, D.C., area with all the big guys. And I'm glad to be back home in Winston-Salem. I grew up here. And this is a wonderful
after hearing and learning some of the things that are going on. So at this time I would like to introduce our first speaker. And we're going to start here in -- at -- in Charlotte in the Central Piedmont Community College. And I'm going to ask if June Kimmel would come up. Please identify yourself and any organization that you may be representing, Ms. Kimmel. Thank you.

BY MS. KIMMEL:

Thank you, Senator Rucho. My name is June Kimmel, and I live in Davidson, North Carolina, and I'm an active member of the League of Women Voters in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. We are working in concert with the Alliance for Fair Redistricting and Minority Voting Rights on the issue of redistricting. The League of Women Voters US is a nonpartisan national organization formed in 1920. Unofficially that means that if we live in a Republican district, we're considered Democratic. And if we live in a Democratic district, we're considered Republican. It encourages active and informed citizens to be part of the civic life of their communities and avail themselves
of the right to vote. We've taken positions on the electoral college, redistricting, and voting requirements. Voting patterns moved us, after the 1990 and 2000 censuses, to look at redistricting in North Carolina. And our criteria include it being an open process including accepting nonpartisan proposals for serious consideration, respect for existing relationships, and drawing new district lines based not on incumbency but city, county, and local identifications. And some of this has been codified and made explicit in the law. Respect for communities of interest, social, ethnic, racial, economic considerations should be included in the same way that political considerations are -- compact, contiguous territories, distinct geographic boundaries, and the encouragement of dialogue. Altering districts to reduce a minority presence is clearly unacceptable, just as making an island of minority votes is. The whole point of voting is to elect legislators who represent all their voters. Because of our history of court challenges we must be particularly sensitive and alert to changes that mindfully
and inadvertently weaken the minority vote.

As we should expect, incumbents want to retain their seats or possibly regain them. Supporting the unknown is hard, but it's also hard to make a case for continued representation over a very long period.

Taylor Batten in the April 3, 2000, Charlotte Observer estimated that 42 out of 50 North Carolina Senate seats were decided by more than 10 percentage points and 100 of our 120 House seats were equally safe. Safe seats, whether Democrat or Republican, discourage voters from taking an active role because they rightly intuit that their vote does not really matter, whether they're in the majority or the minority. Our belief, our legislative bodies would accomplish more if they were less safe and therefore less polarized. If politics is the art of compromise and a legislator has no reason to learn to compromise, decisions do not recognize the voice of all citizens. How can the polls show that 70 percent of those asked would be willing to have taxes raised to support schools, but it has no purchase with legislators who are carefully insulated from
their constituency? Future leadership comes from competition and an informed airing of issues, that makes people want to vote and helps make our legislators truly representative and accountable. Thank you for your attention.

BY SEN. RUCHO:
Thank you very much for your comments. I'd like to move to Rowan County and Senator Brock. Senator Brock, I have Paul Leonard.

BY SEN. BROCK:
Yes, sir. He's coming to the podium now.

BY SEN. RUCHO:
Thank you, sir.

BY MR. LEONARD:
Good morning, people here and at the other sites. My name is Paul Leonard, private citizen. I'm here with my wife. I'm a Caucasian of ancestry. My wife is Puerto Rican. I have lived and worked for 10 years in South America in the jungles of Peru, three of those years -- over three years with United States Peace Corps. And we have -- and I have been involved in community development in one way or another. We've been -- we've traveled
after hearing and learning some of the things that are going on. So at this time I would like to introduce our first speaker. And we're going to start here in -- at -- in Charlotte in the Central Piedmont Community College. And I'm going to ask if June Kimmel would come up. Please identify yourself and any organization that you may be representing, Ms. Kimmel. Thank you.

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BY SEN. BROCK:

Yes, sir. He's coming to the podium now.

BY SEN. RUCHO:

Thank you, sir.

BY MR. LEONARD:

Good morning, people here and at the other sites. My name is Paul Leonard, private citizen. I'm here with my wife. I'm a Caucasian of ancestry. My wife is Puerto Rican. I have lived and worked for 10 years in South America in the jungles of Peru, three of those years -- over three years with United States Peace Corps. And we have -- and I have been involved in community development in one way or another. We've been -- we've traveled
Assembly to consider our resolution during the upcoming redistricting (inaudible) establish a majority, minority district. Thank you.

BY SEN. FORRESTER:

Thank you.

BY SEN. RUCHO:

Thank you for your comments. We're going to move to Cleveland County, Senator Clary. And I have Mary Degree.

BY SEN. CLARY:

Thank you, Senator Rucho. Mary Degree is making her way forward.

BY SEN. RUCHO:

Thank you, Senator.

BY MS. DEGREE:

Good morning. I am Mary Degree, a citizen of Cleveland County, Shelby, North Carolina. And I am District 2 director of the NAACP. We come to remind you that as a committee we are legally obligated to consider race in the redistricting process. We understand that race cannot be a predominant factor in the process, but the Voting Right Act requires the creation of districts that provide opportunity for minorities to elect their candidates of
choice. We want you to reserve the current majority, minority voting districts and to add any others where appropriate as indicated by the census data. In creating these voting districts we want you to avoid packing the districts so that the minority population is overconcentrated into any one election district. Consider not only the minority population when creating these voting districts, but also the minority voting age population. We want you to avoid redistricting plans that dilute the minority vote. This includes cracking where district lines are drawn so that an area of concentrated minority population that is large enough for separate representation is divided and spread among several districts -- are not predominantly white. Also avoid stacking where you draw district lines so that a large minority population concentration is included with a larger white population with the effect of depriving minority voters of a voting majority. Redistricting plans should comply with the United States Constitution Section 2 and 5 of the Voting Rights Act, the North
Carolina Constitution, applicable federal and state case laws, and traditional redistricting principles. While only 40 of the 100 counties in North Carolina are covered by Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act and therefore are subject to preclearance, no plans should be retrogressive and have an effect of making minorities worse off than the current plan. In closing, we want to encourage more dialogue in the minority community. Again, I want to thank you.

BY SEN. RUCHO:
Thank you very much for your comments. We're next going to Central Piedmont and we would like to have Beth Henry speak. Please identify yourself and any group you may be representing.

BY MS. HENRY:
My name is Beth Henry and I'm not really representing a group, although I belong to some groups. I live in Plaza Midwood, a very diverse neighborhood close to uptown Charlotte. I love living in a neighborhood that includes people of many different nationalities and backgrounds. Right now I'm
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BY MS. HENRY:

My name is Beth Henry and I'm not really representing a group, although I belong to some groups. I live in Plaza Midwood, a very diverse neighborhood close to uptown Charlotte. I love living in a neighborhood that includes people of many different nationalities and backgrounds. Right now I'm
can. So that whether it's a minority community, a Democrat community, or a Republican community, that we can all be fairly represented in that great institution of the General Assembly that we all know and love. And I know you guys are going to do a good job. Just remember I'm here to remind you, let's be as fair as we can about these lines and the people that we represent. We're all North Carolinians. Thank you.

BY SEN. RUCHO:

Thank you for your comments. We're going to return to Central Piedmont again. And our next speaker will be Maxine Eaves.

BY MS. EAVES:

Chairman and members of the Committee also, my name is Maxine Eaves, and I am with the League of Women Voters and Democracy North Carolina and the Alliance for Fair Redistricting. When I started I did not know as much about redistricting as I do know. I also ran for city council a couple of years ago and the same thing happened to me, not savvy about redistricting, I was -- my base precincts are always moved into another district, so
therefore I'm trying to be knowledgeable now about redistricting. And I have five concerns: fairness, transparency, meaningful participation, protect minority voting rights, and legality. The redistricting process should be fair and responsive to the public input. Committees should avoid the use of gerrymandering techniques creating an advantage for a particular party or to manipulate geographic boundary to create partisan and or incumbent protective districts. Also districts should fairly reflect minority voting strengths without packing, tracking, stacking, or otherwise disenfranchising minorities. Transparency, the process should be open and transparent. The data, time lines, and criteria, maps should be a matter of public record easily accessible on the internet, guidelines for public submission. The proposed redistricting maps should be clearly stated on the website. The public should be allowed to watch the actual map-drawing process via video stream. It's already implemented during public hearings and other meetings hosted at the
General Assembly. And the meaningful participating, the Committee has not yet publicized its redistricting criteria nor given public access to planning under consideration. At this stage it is difficult to provide meaningful comment. Redistricting plans should be made public well before the last hearing on May 9, 2011. The public should be afforded an opportunity to provide feedback on proposed maps prior to the submission to the United States Department of Justice for preclearance. Protect minority voting rights, the Committee is legally obligated to consider race in the redistricting process. While race cannot be a prominent factor in the process, the Voting Rights Act requires the creation of districts that provide an opportunity for minorities to elect their candidates of choice. The Committee should observe -- the Committee should preserve currently majority, minority districts and work to create districts that fairly reflect minority voting strata, minority coalition districts, crossover districts, and influence districts should be
enacted to empower previously disenfranchised people of color. Legally, the redistricting plan should comply with the United States Constitution Section 2 and 5 of the Voting Right Act and the North Carolina Constitution, applicable federal and state case law, and traditional redistricting principles. While only 40 of the 100 of the counties in North Carolina are covered by the Section 5 of the Voting Right Act and therefore subject to preclearance, no plan should be retrogressive and have an effect of making minorities worse off than the current plan. Thank you.

BY SEN. RUCHO:

Thank you very much for your comments. I'm going to check Senator Brock. Do you have anyone in Rowan County -- Rowan-Cabarrus Community College that would like to speak now or ---

BY SEN. BROCK:

No one else.

BY SEN. RUCHO:

Okay, sir. If someone else does appear, let me know. I'm going to -- going to Catawba and -- with Senator Forrester, Senator Hise. I've
I'd like to again go to Representative Cook in Beaufort County.

And I have Zeno Edwards. Would you ask the speaker to come forward, please.

REPRESENTATIVE COOK: (Inaudible.) Do you think they can see him?

UNIDENTIFIED: They should.

DR. EDWARDS: Robert, I -- I haven't seen any of your plans, so I really would reserve commenting. But I would like to echo what Greg Dority said. Every word he uttered represents my thoughts on this; and I think it represents the thoughts of most people from Beaufort County.

Thank you.

I've got a tooth bothering me, for too long.

SENATOR RUCHO: Dr. Edwards, thank you for being there; and we appreciate your comments.

All right. Then I think I would like to move to Mary Perkins-Williams.

Would you mind speaking, please?

MS. PERKINS-WILLIAMS: Thank you.

Good morning to all of you. And I appreciate the opportunity to address the situation. Of course, the Voting Rights Act does
address the fact that they should be sure that minorities have an opportunity to participate in the process.

Oddly enough -- I've been around for a little while -- it's hard to tell on a local district who represents whom. And it is important that we know who our representatives are throughout the county. I'd like to see us with some consistency in Pitt County that we know who represents us. I don't know who my state representative is for the Senate; I really don't. And, frankly, it's hard for me to get to know who the person is because I don't know where the line is. The county is so chopped up I don't understand the local elections. I do otherwise know beyond that.

What bothers me about the process is that African Americans, through -- historically, has been disenfranchised in the voting; and I don't see much of it coming together. I'd like very much, even though I don't think it's a -- it is racially historically, because we were the only people who had to qualify to vote. And, unfortunately, you have that position. And I don't know anyone in this county, other than one person, who has been
elected by an at-large voting in Pitt County who
will elect an African American.

If you look at the election returns and
you look at the precinct voting results, you will
know that people throughout the county does not
vote beyond their race; and that's why we need
African-American representation. All people need
to be represented in our state government. And for
some reason, it is hard for African American and
women to get elected, particularly black women.

I would like very much for you in your
process to ensure and keep with the Voters' Right
Act. I do realize that the county is chopped up
tremendously, and it has been unfortunate. Since
Senator Ed Warren -- I don't know who it was. I do
know Senator Bob Martin was there. But beyond
that -- and every year -- let me tell you one thing
that concerns me. After the Census take place,
local government officials had an opportunity to
shift the lines. If they don't shift beyond three
percent, they don't have to go before the Justice
Department; and the lines through the process of
the census, from one census to the next, shifts
until it ensures that people remain in process, and
further disenfranchising African American voters.
I live within three miles of one voting precinct. My neighbor lives within nine. That neighbor over there has to drive nine miles. With gas, it is ridiculous how we are sent to polling places. There should be a better consensus of that.

So all of this disturbs the voting process for African Americans. This is my opinion. And -- but I do say that it -- it's just chaotic the way we are sent all over the place to vote and how -- who represents us.

Thank you so much for a great opportunity. I know you've got a job to do, but let's do it better.

SENATOR RUCHO: Thank you for your comments.

Before we continue forward again, I'll just explain a little bit about what our process will entail from this point forward.

We will be meeting this afternoon; and I mentioned the counties that we'll be attending some additional public hearings. We'll be having our last public hearing in Raleigh on May the 9th, from 4 to 7 p.m. And again, that is going to be available on streaming; part of our effort to try
Mr. Chairman, we are very -- we are very fortunate to have another speaker at this time. And as I will almost certainly mispronounce his first name, I will ask him to introduce himself for the record.

So, Mr. Knight, you have the floor, sir.

MR. KNIGHT: Thank you.

Good morning, everyone. Good morning, Mr. Chairman.

My name is Taro Knight, and I am a representative, city councilman for Ward 7, in Tarboro.

You know, Monday night, we will have our first, not hearing, but the first unveiling of our new ward map system.

In order to make sure that we included the -- re-strengthened the minority representation based on the 2010 census, which says that Tarboro is now 49.1 percent African American, approximately three percent Hispanic, that we draw our wards in a way that minority representation will be as strong as it can be.

According to the maps that we have now, that we worked with our attorneys up in Raleigh to
develop, Tarboro, of the eight wards, we will have
four wards that are predominantly minority. The
numbers have been strengthened.

The last census, they were approximately
58 percent -- in the four wards, 58 percent
minority, 42 percent Caucasian.

This time around, each ward will have
approximately 65 percent majority-minority, with a
fifth ward at a 55/45 relationship.

So hopefully, this map, we will -- we
will also have a public hearing in the Town of
Tarboro. But hopefully this is the one that we can
go forth with and the Department of Justice will
approve.

As it looks, we will still have to
postpone our municipal elections to sometime in
2012. We're not sure yet if it will be in the May
elections or sometime earlier. But we do not feel
we're going to get much opposition from this map;
I'm sure it was done fairly; and it really
strengthens the ability for minorities to have
equal representation on the Tarboro Town Council;
something that has not been done in my lifetime.
And we are hoping that we have more representatives
now, more people that step forward and want to run
for elected office. The numbers are there, but we have to get the people to run. Thank you.

   REPRESENTATIVE BRYANT: Do you want to say anything about congress or legislator, or what it means? But we will be --

   UNIDENTIFIED: Public assistant.

   MR. KNIGHT: I -- I'm sorry. But --

   REPRESENTATIVE BRYANT: About your personal Congressional district or the -- or the Senate -- Senate or House district.

   MR. KNIGHT: We want to -- as it relates to First Congressional District, we have not had much discussion in my community about it. Personally, I want to make sure that it is strengthened; but I do not want that to happen at the expense of some more democrats. I don't want to see the packing going on in different --

   different districts so that the -- maybe create another minority district, but lessen those other democrats that have an ability to win an election.

   As it relates to our Senate district, from my conversations with our senator, he is pretty resolute in his district; but he's also worried that others will be lessened and weakened based on trying to get as many African Americans
for so long. We risk a lot as a party if we don't do this. We're good folks, and this process is just another way that we prove it to all of North Carolina, that we just don't talk the talk, but we walk the walk.

And this is -- this is our first real step in that process. I would like to take a moment to thank Representative Bryant and Senator Ed Jones for actually being -- actually there, involved in this redistricting process, taking the lead for Halifax County, representing us. We owe them very much for taking time away from their families and their friends to do this, and I just want to take a moment to thank them.

REP. LEWIS: Thank you very much for your comments. At this time, we'll go to Elizabeth City. Representative Owens, I have the name of Keith Rivers. If he's there, would you -- would you please recognize him and extend the floor for a time not to exceed five minutes.

REP. OWENS: Thank you very much, Representative Lewis. This is Keith Rivers, and he's representing the NAACP.

MR. RIVERS: Thank you, Representative Owens. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,
as stated, I am Keith Rivers, president of the Pasquotank County branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. I am also a member of the Alliance for Fair Redistricting and Minority Voting Rights.

The redistricting process should be fair and responsive to the public input. The committee should avoid the use of gerrymandering techniques to create an advantage for a particular party or to manipulate the geographical boundaries that create partisan and/or incumbent-protected districts. Also, districts that fairly reflect minority voting strength without packing, cracking, stacking or otherwise disenfranchising minorities.

The committee is legally obligated to consider race in the redistricting process. While race cannot be the predominant factor in the process, the voting act -- the Voting Rights Act requires the creation of districts that provide an opportunity for minorities to elect their candidate of choice. The committee should preserve current majority-minority districts and work to create districts that fairly reflect minority voting strength.

Minority coalition districts, crossover
districts, and influence districts should be enacted to empower previously disenfranchised people of color. I want to thank you for this opportunity, and we look forward to you and your committee doing the right thing to move North Carolina forward, not backwards, by protecting the minority voting rights. Thank you again for this opportunity, and we know you're going to do the right thing.

REP. LEWIS: Thank you so much for your comments. We now go to Chowan County, the two individuals -- I have two individuals signed up to speak, and the first of those is Benjamin Hobbs. So, Mr. Chairman, if Mr. Hobbs is there, would you please introduce him and allow him --

SEN. RUCHO: While he's getting ready, Mr. Chairman, I would like to say thank you to each of the sites for allowing us to have the public hearings and the videoconferencing. It really opens up the opportunity for the people to get a chance to hear the public comment as much as we on the committee also have that opportunity. Mr. Hobbs?

MR. HOBBS: Thanks for the chance to provide input into this process. For ten years --
We here in the east have many of the same problems as the rest of the state, but essentially only one congressman. I feel we deserve at least one more.

I thank you for holding this hearing before you map, and I echo the sentiments of the gentleman who suggested a hearing afterwards. I will be very happy to come and see you. Thank you.

REP. LEWIS: Thank you very much. Thank you very much for your comments. We'll move back to Halifax County. Before introducing our next speaker, I will point out that we've been joined by Mr. James Pierce, a county commissioner. In fact, the chair of the county board of commissioners, and we're very pleased that he is here.

Our next speaker is Ms. Kathy Whitaker Knight. Ms. Knight, you have the floor.

MS. KNIGHT: Thank you, everyone. Thank you for my legislators being here, as always, for all you do, for sure.

I want to talk a little bit about the 7th District, the House district. I, like Mr. Manning, I'm concerned about us being split. And we are -- Halifax is a big county, but if we need more people to include to make our district reach the desired
number, to me, the only logical thing to do is to allow us to have Halifax County in one district. I think that it's a bit much for us to have to have two legislators. It creates all sort of confusion during our elections, and I just think it's the only logical thing to do. Although we're well-represented by the two persons, I think it would be in our best interest that we have one district in Halifax County.

I also am completely in favor of a continuing partnership between Halifax and Nash Counties. I think it's been an effective partnership over the years. We sort of create a community of interest in that we have common struggles, for one thing, with poverty, maintaining industry and jobs, and I think that we work well together. We have lots of common interests. We have common cultures. And I would like to see that partnership continue.

And although I've heard a couple of people mention that they have concerns about the committee looking at race when lines are being drawn, I would love for it not to be an issue. However, in the United States, it has and probably always will be an issue, and I would like to see it
continue to be considered as we look at keeping folks enfranchised.

The 7th has afforded us the opportunity for the first time to have an African-American female to represent us, and I think without having that consideration and looking at our history, that would not have been possible. I think the districts have to be drawn that way.

So I don't have a whole lot more that I want to say about it, but I do encourage the committee to please continue, as long as it matters in our country, I think we need to continue to let race be a part of our consideration so that all of the citizens are heard. Thank you.

REP. LEWIS: Thank you, ma'am, for your comments. We'll go back to Dare County -- we'll go back to Dare County, Representative Dollar. The next name that I have on the list is Audrey Esposito.

REP. DOLLAR: Ms. Esposito, you have the floor.

MS. ESPOSITO: I'm Audrey Esposito. I live in Southern Shores, and right now, I'm the co-president of the League of Women Voters of Dare County. I would just like to thank the
process. So that's really our main focus.

We applaud you for doing this, and we hope that you will consider allowing full citizen involvement as the process continues from beginning to end and holding more public hearings. Thank you.

REP. LEWIS: Thank you for your comments. We'll go back to Halifax County, and the next speaker is Mr. Nehemiah Smith, Jr. Mr. Smith, you have the floor.

MR. SMITH: Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Nehemiah Smith, Jr. I am a resident of Edgecombe County and the owner and editor-in-chief of the Weekly Defender, the only African-American newspaper within a 50-mile radius of Rocky Mount that covers local, regional, state, national and international news as it pertains to the African-American community and the broader African diaspora.

Hearings like this are important because a mapmaker should never have more impact on the electoral process than the voter. I welcome the opportunity to participate in this and other hearings across North Carolina, particularly in my newspaper's coverage area, because ultimately, this
process transcends political outcomes and should be free of partisan agendas. More importantly, it is about the communities of people who are affected by the process. It should be about ensuring power to the people, for the people and of the people.

Redistricting will have a major impact on who wins elections, and by extension, on all types of legislative decisions, including passage of laws, funding decisions and community investment. Therefore, transparency must be at the forefront of any deliberations.

These redrawn boundaries will be in effect for ten years, so they must provide for fair electoral opportunities for all voters. The fairness must be relevant to the current numbers while taking into consideration growth and the number of eligible voters that will enter the electorate within the next decennial.

It is important that citizens feel welcome to participate in their state and local redistricting processes. Therefore, the Weekly Defender will be monitoring the process closely and will look to participate and have citizens participate in the engagement of meaningful dialogue as various plans are introduced.
Communities of color have faced sundry obstacles to meaningful participation in this country's political process. The Weekly Defender is doggedly committed to watching and reporting to keep the redistricting process honest, both statewide and locally, in an effort to ensure that compliance with state and federal Voting Rights Acts are followed.

I am sure that there are those who may advocate that any new map should fairly represent the voting patterns of North Carolina, but that is flawed reasoning. These new districts should reflect the parity in accordance with population makeup.

Any redistricting must provide fair and effective representation, and any semblance of impropriety in the process will be met with unrelenting resistance. The Weekly Defender covers cities in Edgecombe, Nash, Wilson, Halifax and Pitt Counties, and we expect this process will be responsive and accountable to communities of color and that their interests will be reflected in the new plans. We will be watching, but more importantly, we will be participating. Thank you.

REP. LEWIS: Thank you very much for your
I understand Mr. Webb is not currently present.

With that -- is there anyone else who wants to speak here? We do have another speaker here in Halifax County. The chair apologizes. If you will, sir, if you will please -- please come to the floor and introduce yourself, and you have the floor.

MR. HARVEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and the Committee. I did sign up when I came in, as a matter of fact. My name is David Harvey. I am president of the Halifax County NAACP, and I appreciate the opportunity to come before the committee and the opportunity to come before Representative Bryant and Representative Jones.

My concern with redistricting, and my primary -- what our primary -- what we would primarily like to see here in Halifax County is that we continue to include the committees in Halifax County in our current district, and to keep our current Senate district. We know we'll have to add additional population in the district, but we'd like to keep the core intact of the district.

And for the following reasons. District 7, which is represented by Angela Bryant, Representative Bryant, the communities eastern --
of eastern North -- Nash County from District 7, along with Halifax County. This is a majority-minority district that is linked by the history of voter right efforts and elected -- to elect minority representatives at every level. These communities are linked by high poverty rates, the need to overcome disparities in employment, education, housing, health care, recreation and youth development. The district includes communities and small towns linked by 301 and 95, and the common issue of overcoming racial and economic disparity and the need to help with infrastructure, communities and economic development.

While we want to protect our majority district -- our majority-minority district, and the opportunity for blacks to elect representatives of their choice, we also want to warn against packing more blacks in majority-minority districts than are necessary to meet the Voting Rights Act requirement.

I thank you for allowing me to come. I, too, agree that there should be further hearings after the -- after the map has been drawn, and -- and I wish you well in your continued effort.
SENATOR RUCHO: Thank you very much. And just for the information of all the participants in the public hearing today, when the maps were -- VRA maps were put on the NCGA website, along with that was a letter explaining the criteria as to how those maps were drawn and why, and that probably would be very valuable for people to get on to so that they can understand how they were drawn up through this point. So you might take advantage of that information that has been shared with the public. We'll go on to Guilford Tech. Senator Brunstetter.

SENATOR BRUNSTETTER: Okay. Stet Clark.

Stet Clark.

MR. CLARK: Hello. I've been very happy with my representative. I'm pleased with the legislative district that I live in and electing the candidate of my choice. Thank you.

SENATOR RUCHO: Thank you. We'll go on to Roanoke-Chowan Community College, Chairman Lewis.

REPRESENTATIVE LEWIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our next speaker will be Ms. Florine Bell. Ms. Bell, you've got the floor.

MS. BELL: Thank you. To our -- good afternoon to our elected officials and to citizens
throughout North Carolina today. I appreciate and
I thank you for this opportunity to speak today
regarding the proposed redistricting plan.

First of all, I find it very odd that after
nearly 50 years out from the passage of the
landmark 1965 Voting Rights law, we find ourselves
here today pursuing and spending our time, efforts
and money to readdress the lawful decision of the
Voting Rights Act.

My opinion, I oppose it. It has a distinct
flavor of gerrymandering and manipulation of
district lines, which would grossly impact
minority voters in certain areas.

My first lesson in the political process came
as a result of hearing my grandfather speak
regarding the difficult times that he encountered
during the Hoover administration. At that time,
he said it wasn’t a good time. Ladies and
gentlemen, today, in my opinion, this is not good
at all, this proposed plan.

I have been a resident of Halifax County for
nearly my entire life. I am testifying today to
urge this esteemed committee to keep our
communities and small towns bordering Interstate
301 and 95 in the majority-minority District 7
that includes those certain areas of Nash County and most of Halifax County. These areas continue to suffer the plight of high poverty rates, health disparities, high unemployment, community exclusion, lack of recreational and youth development that is a contributing factor to juvenile delinquency, additionally, issues involving racial injustice, inequality of education and economic development, et cetera, et cetera.

Obviously, the communities of District 7 have a prolonged history of neglect when it comes to resources. Okay. However, over the past 10 years, the northeast counties of Nash and Halifax Counties have forged together to become witness to a movement that is leading towards correcting many of the aforementioned issues of inequality. And because the people of the 7th District chose to round up and get more involved in the political process, as a representative and attorney, Angela Bryant was elected by a majority of the votes to continue to affect this movement toward real necessary change. Representative Bryant's constituents continue to put their support not only behind her, but the present voting
districting lines without change -- underline
without change -- because she has supported us in
our efforts to thwart a proposed waste transfer
station at the Lincoln Heights community, the
annexation of the involuntary annex Grant Creek
community, and proposal to lower the threshold
from 100 percent to 75 percent required property
owners' signatures for a voluntary annexation of
communities excluded in North Carolina.

Again, I urge you to please reconsider not
changing our present Voting Rights Act district,
which includes District 7 of which I am a member,
that we and our ancestors have fought so
vigorously to -- by blood, sweat and tears to have
and to maintain, and I would be willing to submit
a copy of my statement to you. Thank you.

SENATOR RUCHO: Thank you. Thank you very
much. I believe we'll be going to UNCW again,
Senator Rabon and Roberta Penn.

SENATOR RABON: Yes, sir. And I'd like to
mention the fact that Senator Brown has just
joined us.

SENATOR RUCHO: Great. Welcome, Senator
Brown.

SENATOR BROWN: Thank you, Senator Rucho.
SENATOR JONES: Thank you.

SENATOR RUCHO: Thank you, sir. All right.

Back to Wake County, and I have Irving Joyner.

Mr. Joyner, if you'll please identify yourself and --

MR. JOYNER: I'm Irving Joyner, and I'm representing the NAACP and AFRAM, which is a group of civil rights organizations in the state.

And we have looked at the several maps that have been introduced and distributed, and I think to title them would probably best be described as the bleaching out maps because it is clear that these maps are designed or these lines are drawn to bleach out from a lot of these districts African-Americans and to ensure that the influence and impact of African-Americans are limited.

And I'm not going to repeat some of the things that I've heard already, which I agree with, but I want start out with a comment that you had made in a release in which you indicated that no one had provided you with any case in which -- or any legal decision dealing with the issue of stacking. I want to direct your attention to the case of Miller versus Johnson, which is a United States Supreme Court case from 1995, in which the
U.S. Supreme Court discusses what was then described as the Black Max Plan, which was a scheme by the Republican Party to pack African-Americans in various Congressional districts around the country. And as a result of that, the State of Georgia had such a plan, as did Louisiana, Florida and Texas. And in that case, the court talked about the fact that those efforts were unconstitutional, that when you try to stack and pack large numbers of African-Americans into one district and to remove them from surrounding districts in which they could have influence, that was a violation of the Voting Rights Act.

The court also looked at what is described as the traditional districting principles, compactness, contiguity, respect for community of interest and respect for political subdivisions. Each of those traditional principles which the U.S. Supreme Court has endorsed, talked about, have been violated in all of the maps that have been drawn and presented here. You have here in these maps cases of racial gerrymandering. You also have cases of political gerrymandering. And on each of those instances, they are extreme.

In the past, the U.S. Supreme Court has held
that a political party is free to draw lines to advantage that party. Well, they made it clear that that advantaging cannot be extreme. And, Senator, I think that these maps have crossed the line with respect to political gerrymandering. Clearly, with respect to racial gerrymandering, these maps have crossed the lines. They split precincts. They split towns. They split cities. They split counties. The number is pretty clear. In Wake County and the southeastern portion of the state, there is a clear effort here to defy all of the traditional districting principles.

Without a doubt, the lines that we've seen here or that we see here are among the most bizarre lines drawn in the United States. These lines have been discussed in prior opinions. I've talked about Miller versus Johnson, but the case of Shaw versus Hunt is just one more example where the Supreme Court talks about this notion of bizarre lines. And every time you find a bizarre line or district drawn on these maps, it includes an instance where African-Americans have been packed and bleached out from the surrounding districts of other African-Americans who could have influence and impact in the elected --
election of representatives to those districts.

Thank you.

SENATOR RUCHO: Mr. Joyner, just so I can --

I'm not sure I heard you correctly. You said that

that was a court case dealing packing?

MR. JOYNER: Yes.

SENATOR RUCHO: Packing.

MR. JOYNER: Miller versus Johnson.

SENATOR RUCHO: All right. Would --

MR. JOYNER: It wasn't called packing. It

was called Black Max, Black Maximization, which

was a scheme developed by the Republican Justice

Department to compel states to draw lines in which

African-Americans were pushed together in a small

number of Congressional districts for the purpose

of increasing the number of Republicans who could

be elected to Congress. So the court did not say

it was stacking, but it is stacking and it is

exactly what these lines are doing in the state of

North Carolina.

SENATOR RUCHO: As a follow-up, I know the

NAACP has testified a number of times. For the

benefit of the committee, would you, as you

described it, describe what packing is? What do
you -- what is packing?

    MR. JOYNER: It's taking lines and drawing
them so that you include every little pocket of
African-Americans that you can find into one
political district, and in doing that creating
bizarre lines that leaves the rest of the
community basically lily white. So you take the
few -- and I think the statistics where you have
50 percent of the entire black population of the
state of North Carolina drawn into 11 State Senate
districts, that's 40 districts in which African-
Americans will have little or no impact. At the
House level, you've -- 52 percent of the black
population is confined to 27 counties. That's 93
districts in which African-Americans will have no
or very little impact on the election of
representatives.

    Now, if you look at the present map, it
doesn't carry those extreme lines and the packing
and stacking that is occurring in the proposals
that is before the House and the Senate now and
which likely will be passed because you obviously
have the votes to do it.

    SENATOR RUCHO: Just as a follow-up that
would help the committee, the term minority-
majority district, would you please, on behalf of
-- I guess you represent the NAACP -- explain what
-- in your mind, how do you define a minority-
majority district?

MR. JOYNER: A majority-minority district
under the Voting Rights Act would be one in which
more than 50 percent of the population is African-
American. That's the Voting Rights definition of
a majority-minority district. We find that in the
age where we've moved past racially polarized
voting, that there are any number of people across
racial lines that are willing to vote for African-
Americans. Consequently, in the state of North
Carolina, all the State Senators are elected from
districts where -- that's not in a majority-
minority district, yet these maps go back now and
concentrate all of these African-Americans in
districts in which those districts now are made in
excess of 50 percent. But when you do that, you
take away the influence that those minorities
would have representing those community of
interest, those traditional, political
subdivision, you take them out and have them
packed into a few districts for the advantage of
one political party.
SENATOR RUCHO: You mentioned -- one more question, if I may. Well, you mentioned the fact that there was no polarized voting existing in North Carolina as it is now.

MR. JOYNER: No. I didn't -- I didn't -- I didn't say that.

SENATOR RUCHO: Well, you mentioned the fact that polarized voting wasn't affecting these districts, yet Anita Earls, who I have a lot of respect for, in the study that she presented said that it is -- that polarized voting is consistent throughout the state.

MR. JOYNER: I said there is less polarized voting today than there was prior to the enactment of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. There is clearly some polarized voting today, but we are at a point now where people across racial lines are coming together to vote for the best candidate of their choice. It does -- that does not mean, nor did I intend it to say that there is not still in existence polarized voting today, because there is, and North Carolina is just one of the states in which that polarized voting would -- would show up.
SENATOR RUCHO: Thank you, Mr. Joyner.

SENATOR McKISSICK: Can I ask you this, Mr. Joyner? I know you identified this case of Miller versus Johnson. I see you have documents in your hand. Do you have a case citation for that?

MR. JOYNER: I have the case. You want it?

SENATOR McKISSICK: Yeah, please.

MR. JOYNER: Okay.

SENATOR McKISSICK: That would be appreciated.

SENATOR RUCHO: You can provide it to the staff person.

SENATOR McKISSICK: And I believe you're an attorney. Isn't that correct, sir?

MR. JOYNER: That's what I'm told.

SENATOR McKISSICK: Can you state a little bit about your background just for the record, since we are accumulating a record, compiling one here. And listed at this case citation is 115 Supreme Court, Order 2475.

MR. JOYNER: Yeah. I teach Race and the Law and Civil Rights at North Carolina Central University School of Law. And I served as the Chair of the Legal Redress Committee of the NAACP, and I've represented a number of political groups
and organizations in the past 30 years dealing
with these same issues.

SENATOR RUCHO: Thank you, sir.

MR. JOYNER: All right. Thank you.

SENATOR RUCHO: Going to Nash County and
Representative Burr, I have Cynthia Stewart, I
believe.

REPRESENTATIVE BURR: She is not here with us
right now, Mr. Chairman, and we have -- we can go
on the sign-up sheet now, if you'd like.

SENATOR RUCHO: Yes. I have Representative
Farmer-Butterfield on my list.

REPRESENTATIVE BURR: That's correct. She
was going to hold off for a moment, and we were
going to move to Reverend Maurice Barnes.

SENATOR RUCHO: Okay. Very good. Thank you.

REVEREND BARNES: Good afternoon, Senator,
members of the General Assembly, President and
also citizens. As I've been listening during this
particular session, throughout this time that I've
been here, words such as fairness, justice, even
equality have been mentioned over and over and
over again. And for a lot of us, as citizens of
this state, we are concerned, particularly given