

EX. 15

NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY
JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON REDISTRICTING

TRANSCRIPT OF THE PROCEEDINGS
PUBLIC HEARING CONCLUSION - JAMESTOWN SATELLITE SITE

In Raleigh, North Carolina
Tuesday, August 22, 2017
Transcribed by Brad Worley

Worley Reporting
P.O. Box 99169
Raleigh, NC 27624
919-870-8070

1 (Transcriptionist's note: the following
2 transcript is of proceedings held at the satellite
3 hearing site following disconnection of the
4 communications feed from the central Raleigh site.)

5 REP. STEVENS: We are disconnecting from
6 them, and we will conduct this as a separate
7 hearing, so we don't have to stay here all night.
8 And as -- as you heard, we will record your words,
9 and they will be transcribed as part of whatever
10 goes to the Court. So that being said, Mr. Brown,
11 Cardes Brown, you are first, followed by Kay
12 Brandon, Linda Sutton, Margaret Salinger and Anne
13 Brady. For a time not to exceed three minutes,
14 we'll still do the three-minute time.

15 MR. BROWN: Thank you so much for the
16 opportunity to come --

17 REP. STEVENS: Wait a minute. Do we have
18 our timekeeper? We -- we just need to get our
19 timekeeper.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Real quick, folks, if
21 you'd like to turn your chairs around, so you could
22 see the speaker, feel free, but do not rearrange
23 them as far as where they're at. Just simply pick
24 them up and turn them around; that is fine.

25 MR. BROWN: Thank you so much for this

1 opportunity. I'm Cardes Brown. I have been
2 privileged to serve in the Greensboro area now for
3 more than 50 years as a pastor.

4 I'm very concerned about these
5 proceedings today. The hearing, first of all, at a
6 time when most people could not come that would've
7 come. I think that was intentional, it was
8 deliberate and it's obvious that we are here going
9 through probably an exercise in futility. Our
10 draconian legislators intended to do a mockery
11 of -- of the democratic process. They have been
12 doing that for quite some time, this is nothing
13 new, and I hope that we are aware of what is being
14 done.

15 First of all, they are to have this done
16 by the first of September. They know that it is
17 impossible to do it and do it properly in that time
18 frame. I'm hoping that the Court will take the
19 responsibility away from this draconian legislature
20 and will decide for this state who should draw the
21 map. First of all, we already know, we are wasting
22 money, our money, taxpayers' money, going through
23 this exercise in futility.

24 They have hired the same person to draw
25 the maps that disenfranchised -- in fact, the Court

1 said, like a surgeon, intentionally disenfranchised
2 African-American voters. So I have no hope that
3 this is going to come out in a way that is fair and
4 represents the will of the people. This is still
5 to be a government of the people, for the people,
6 by the people. And what has now happened is
7 legislators have taken these things and they
8 covered these things, they have no desire to
9 represent the people. They are only representing
10 their own selfish ambitions and -- and many of
11 them.

12 I have gone before the General Assembly.
13 I have been arrested. I've gone to jail fighting
14 for something that is a constitutional right, and
15 I'm hoping that we, who are here, will insist that
16 by September 1 -- which they cannot draw maps
17 complicit to the directions of the Court, that we
18 will insist that the Court will take this process
19 over. And many of them know that they would never
20 be elected again. Most people recognize that these
21 folk who have coveted and hoarded these positions
22 would never be elected by the people if this
23 process were fair.

24 So I'm hoping that we will stay together
25 across this state and stand as one voice and insist

1 that we want a democratized government, and if we
2 do it, the people will prevail. I'll stop. Thank
3 you.

4 REP. STEVENS: Still -- still a court
5 proceeding. Still being recorded. No applause,
6 please. Thank you.

7 MS. BRANDON: Good afternoon. I am a
8 resident of House District 57 and Senate District
9 28. The North Carolina legislature has allowed
10 inadequate time to review the proposed map before a
11 public hearing is being held. It appears this was
12 done on purpose, to prevent the public from having
13 the time to analyze the data in any meaningful way.

14 The public has not had an opportunity to
15 comment on the criteria used to draw these maps.
16 The criteria are believed to -- to be tainted
17 because they used the 2011 maps that the Court
18 struck down as being unconstitutional. The 2011
19 maps were racially gerrymandered and should not be
20 used as the benchmark for drawing new maps.

21 The districts of the new map have been
22 drawn with excessive amounts of wasted votes, which
23 is an indication of continued partisan
24 gerrymandering that undermines democracy. The
25 House plan perpetuates the same strategy of racial

1 gerrymandering and unnecessarily packing black
2 voters into districts limiting their statewide
3 political power which was found to have been
4 unconstitutional by the government.

5 My Senate District 28 has been
6 [inaudible]. The Legislature [inaudible]
7 established a bipartisan committee to redraw the
8 districts. It can be done, as is proved by the
9 volunteer panel of retired Supreme Court judges and
10 appellate court judges who created a non-partisan
11 redistricting plan. Non-partisan redistricting is
12 the only way to restore democracy in North
13 Carolina.

14 MS. SUTTON: Good afternoon. My name is
15 Linda Sutton. I'm a voter in Forsyth County
16 affiliated with a lot of organizations. I'm a life
17 member of the NAACP, but I'm mostly proud of being
18 affiliated with Democracy North Carolina, a
19 non-partisan organization that uses advocacy and
20 education. Democracy North Carolina is an
21 organization you need to check out. Go to our
22 website, democracync.org, and you can view the same
23 basic principles that we're giving to all of our
24 legislators and this committee to use in redrawing
25 these illegal maps.

1 Well, I just want to say something about
2 this sham process. We're 200 people waiting in
3 Raleigh and -- and don't know how many in the other
4 areas. With seven locations mostly in small
5 communities, would you expect to hear from the
6 voters? No. It was set up that way. It's a
7 rigged process, okay? The whole system is rigged.
8 Short notice is just per statute. That's it. Just
9 for -- you could've had it earlier. They dragged
10 their feet in drawing this map, or maybe they
11 didn't. Maybe they had the map drawn when, last
12 month, month before last, right? Okay.

13 I'm just saying it's too little, too
14 late. It's not going to make any difference. I
15 believe they've already decided what they're going
16 to do. So we're going to have to give it to our
17 courts, we're going to have to take it further. It
18 cannot be left at this level. Not at all.

19 The only other thing I want to say is --
20 no one has talked about this one, although they've
21 talked about race a lot, but no one's talked about
22 counting incarcerated persons, and so it is
23 possible to count incarcerated persons who -- as
24 residents of where they lived before they were
25 incarcerated. You know, when you think outside the

1 box, this is just common sense.

2 But lastly, let me be clear, the old maps
3 and the new proposed maps are nothing less than
4 another power grab. They equate to the continuing
5 white supremacy, and you know what that is. Money,
6 power, greed and racism, okay? The voters and I
7 are sick and tired of being sick and tired of being
8 disenfranchised, disrespected, dismissed, which is
9 disgraceful. To the point that people are saying
10 North Carolina, you not even a democracy anymore,
11 you know? I'm -- I'm -- I'm ashamed. I'm ashamed.

12 So I urge you, show some decency, some
13 morals and some fairness in drawing these maps.
14 Second thought, don't draw them, let the courts do
15 it. Thank you.

16 MS. SALINGER: Hi. My name is Margaret
17 Salinger. I'm a native of Greensboro. I represent
18 the League of Women Voters of North Carolina.
19 Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the
20 draft maps. The League appreciates the committee's
21 work to produce drafts that improve the current
22 maps, but we certainly have a way of getting there.
23 While we don't see the committee members as foxes,
24 we certainly do not see ourselves as hens. We're
25 still letting the foxes draw the maps. We need to

1 put the voters, not the politicians, in the
2 driver's seat.

3 Voter participation in drawing the maps
4 is the key to making this happen. Real public
5 participation requires time and the means of
6 assessing the degree to which these maps adhere to
7 the criteria set by the committee as well as
8 universally accepted standards of fairness.
9 Citizens have had only three days to look at the
10 House map, two days for the Senate, and just a day
11 for the data. By delaying that drawing until the
12 very last moment, the legislature has denied voters
13 a real chance to have their say.

14 Some of the committee's nine criteria,
15 such as more compactness and less precinct-
16 splitting were appropriate, but others have no
17 place in drawing fair districts. But even
18 including appropriate criteria, the committee did
19 not make it possible to determine how the new
20 districts measure up. For example, the criteria
21 called for splitting fewer districts, but didn't
22 include a target or guidelines on when to split a
23 precinct.

24 As for the maps, we appreciate the
25 committee's reporting of at least some data on how

1 the proposed maps perform against their criteria,
2 and we have used this information to -- to attempt
3 to assess them ourselves. Since time is short, let
4 me just hit on some of the highs and lows. The
5 committee clearly made the right choice in adopting
6 county groupings that conform to the North Carolina
7 constitution, producing a map that improves on the
8 current maps, but even if this does not, by itself,
9 guarantee the districts -- that the districts also
10 comply.

11 We also see some progress on compactness,
12 with somewhat better average scores than last time
13 when the Senate had [inaudible]. The House
14 districts have fewer irregular [inaudible]
15 boundaries; the new maps apparently will
16 [inaudible]. This suggests that we are still
17 falling short of fair districts.

18 The committee decided to avoid pitting
19 incumbents against each other; this criterion
20 simply has no place in a fair process. Elections
21 should be all about protecting voters' ability to
22 have their say, not protecting incumbents.

23 We haven't been able to assess how
24 abusive political considerations of election
25 results affected the maps, but misuse of these data

1 to predetermine election outcomes is what
2 gerrymandering is all about. We share the
3 legislature's belief in the power of competition to
4 benefit -- benefit consumers and businesses. We
5 believe it's good for democracy too.

6 Finally, the exclusion of racial data
7 makes it impossible to say whether minority voters
8 have a decent to elect their preferred candidates.
9 So we can't say whether or not the League
10 [inaudible]. Thank you.

11 MS. BRADY: Hello. My name is Ann Brady.
12 I'm from Rockingham County, and I know we're all
13 getting tired, so please forgive my redundancy.
14 I'll try to be brief. I wanted to start with a
15 quote I just found. Alice Ristroph is a professor
16 at Brooklyn Law School and in the Atlantic, she
17 published, quote, "We have figured out, more or
18 less, how to count every person. We have not yet
19 found a political system in which every person
20 counts equally."

21 This redistricting process was
22 non-transparent, was terrible. We had no time to
23 analyze these maps so that we can give good
24 feedback. We do know that Senator Berger's likely
25 competitors were redistricted out of my district.

1 I do wish I felt my hour drive here would have an
2 effect; is anybody listening?

3 Apparently 90 percent of the districts
4 solidly are in favor of one party or the other
5 where we aren't going to really have good
6 elections. Overall, the new maps appear to be made
7 to favor Republicans. Party favoritism should not
8 be a factor in redistricting. So I also, as have
9 most speakers, ask for these maps to be redone in a
10 fair way, by the courts, by whomever.

11 Let me also mention, in 2015, House Bill
12 92 was introduced to establish a non-partisan, not
13 bipartisan, non-partisan redistricting committee,
14 and there were 83 bipartisan sponsors, and at least
15 one is in here. It was killed in committee, never
16 went to the floor, and so were subsequent attempts
17 at legislation. If you won't do it now, please let
18 a non-partisan redistricting commission bill get to
19 the floor of the General Assembly, at least for
20 debate.

21 At the beginning of this hearing, we were
22 thanked for participating in the democratic
23 process. Make our elections democratic. Every
24 person should count equally. Thank you.

25 REP. STEVENS: Our next five speakers, we

1 have Walter Salinger, Mr. Salinger here? Walter
2 Salinger. Lynn Bennett. Steve Cothran, and Sherry
3 Conway Appel? Apple? Appel. Try to make an
4 orderly line.

5 MR. SALINGER: How many folks are all
6 more alert than I am? My name is Walter Salinger
7 and I have to say that in my more than --

8 REP. STEVENS: Sorry, can I -- can I stop
9 you for just a minute and -- and -- and we're just
10 a little concerned. I'm going to let you have a
11 whole three new minutes, but we're talking about
12 needing to bring the mic that's -- the whole podium
13 up here, because the actual recording devices are
14 here. And there's just some concern that they're
15 not getting a strong enough signal. He was
16 watching the signals. I'm assuming they are.

17 (Discussion off record.)

18 REP. STEVENS: So please feel free to
19 start over; you've got a whole new three minutes.

20 MR. SALINGER: Okay.

21 REP. STEVENS: And I'm sorry; I didn't
22 mean to disrupt you.

23 MR. SALINGER: That's all right.

24 So, my name is Walter Salinger, and in my
25 more than 75 years, I've watched a lot of politics

1 and a lot of politicians. I've seen elected
2 officials who did things in office they knew
3 weren't right, but what's going on right now in
4 North Carolina's state -- court-ordered legislative
5 redistricting process absolutely takes the cake, at
6 least in my limited experiences.

7 What's so amazing about it is that
8 usually when elected officials know that they're
9 doing something wrong, they have the decency to try
10 to hide it. But our brazen legislators don't
11 even -- legislators don't even bother to try. The
12 Supreme Court of the United States of America
13 unanimously declared that our legislature is
14 basically illegal; that current legislators held
15 fake elections by creating and using
16 unconstitutional voting districts.

17 Now, these same fake legislators are
18 telling us that they've drawn fair maps; that they
19 have finally created election districts that would
20 allow us to elect real, not fake, legislators. Yet
21 when they told us what kind of maps they were
22 actually going to draw, they didn't even try to
23 conceal the fact that one of their primary goals
24 was to get themselves reelected. They called it
25 incumbency protection, and somehow we the people

1 are supposed to believe these fake legislators when
2 they now tell us that their new maps are fair.
3 Personally, I find it easier to believe my lying
4 eyes.

5 REP. STEVENS: Ms. Bennett.

6 MS. BENNETT: Hi, I'm Lynn Bennett. I
7 live in Greensboro. Beginning in our school days,
8 many of us elected class officers, voted for chairs
9 of committees and chose leaders of teams. What we
10 learned concerned the democratic process, the power
11 of each person's voice, a fair way to choose
12 direction.

13 Gerrymandering, the manipulation of the
14 democratic process, dilutes individuals' voices in
15 purposeful, unfair political practice.

16 Gerrymandering is about partisan power, not about
17 fair choice. Gerrymandering is not about what
18 citizens need or prefer from their leaders, just
19 the opposite. It is about what the leaders want
20 for themselves. When one person's vote is diluted
21 or denied, all of us feel the effect.

22 It's time for effective, fair, honest
23 leadership by our political representatives. It is
24 they who design the maps which determine for whom
25 we can vote. It is they who have the

1 responsibility to uphold the principles of
2 democracy. The newest political lines must permit
3 every person to have an equal voice at the ballot
4 box. Partisanship has no place in deciding voting
5 districts.

6 At a recent community meeting, several
7 retired judges discussed an exercise demonstrating
8 nonpartisan redistricting. Their process took less
9 than one half a day, and the result was a fair and
10 easily-accomplished map for North Carolina. What
11 is stopping our legislature from doing the same?

12 If they have listened to the people who
13 have spoken today, the result will be a nonpartisan
14 map which honestly, fairly, legally redistricts
15 this state. Make our voting districts nonpartisan,
16 fair and legal and put a stop to this manipulative
17 process.

18 REP. STEVENS: Steve Cothran?

19 REV. COTHRAN: I am the Reverend Steve
20 Cothran. I'm the associate pastor for youth and
21 families at First Baptist Church in Greensboro.
22 And I don't know if y'all heard about this, but
23 there was a total solar eclipse yesterday. That
24 means that the two celestial bodies that provide
25 light to our world, in a rare event, worked

1 together yesterday, and the results were life-
2 altering. Millions of Americans, millions, stood
3 in awe just to catch a glimpse of that display of
4 this incredibly rare phenomenon, and for many
5 people, it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

6 Yesterday, I stood in the backyard where
7 I grew up in South Carolina and during totality, we
8 were able to stare directly at the sun for over two
9 minutes. How on earth is that possible? It's
10 possible because these two bodies worked together,
11 and the world was amazed at the result.

12 You have that same power to amaze the
13 world by working together. I know it's as rare --
14 sorry, more rare than a solar eclipse, but for the
15 people of North Carolina, the people that you
16 represent, or the people you should be
17 representing, for those people, it will be truly
18 even more life-changing. And it will be life-
19 changing for you, our representatives, because that
20 means you will have to give up some of your power.
21 And that's scary, because you might not be the most
22 powerful light in the sky anymore, but oh, what a
23 wonderful opportunity that would open up for all of
24 North Carolina whom you claim to serve.

25 But we don't even have time to ponder how

1 immoral it is for people elected by illegal,
2 racially-gerrymandered maps to then be allowed to
3 redraw those maps. It would be like coming home
4 and your child has eaten your birthday cake and you
5 say, "Son, that was wrong. You want some ice cream
6 with that?" There are black brothers and sisters
7 in this room today, thank God. And how is that
8 possible? Because of the moral courage of four
9 young men at a Woolworth lunch counter right up the
10 road.

11 Do we think that you will do the right
12 thing and fix this? You are fast creating a lot of
13 cynics here, but we wouldn't be here if we didn't
14 believe that you can and will repudiate racism
15 instead of eclipsing equality. Otherwise, it's
16 just about white supremacy. And you'll be
17 redrawing those maps not by the bright light of
18 freedom, but by the dim wit of a tiki torch while
19 you mutter, we will not be replaced.

20 REP. STEVENS: Cheri Conway Appel. While
21 she's on her way up, next will be Martha Shafer and
22 Dominic Patofee.

23 MS. APPEL: Hi. I'm Sherry Conway Appel,
24 and I'm a resident of Hillsborough. Can you hear
25 me? All right. I wanted to thank the

1 representative and those here today who are here.
2 We did not get to -- to speak in front of all the
3 other committee members, but I do hope you will
4 take our message, which is pretty loud and clear, I
5 think, from -- not everyone, but from many of us.

6 I once worked for a member of Congress,
7 and I know and understand the importance of public
8 hearings and getting the public input on issues as
9 critical as redistricting. But today's hearing,
10 however, doesn't really meet the standard. We've
11 had challenges with sound quality, with visual
12 quality. This is the Research Triangle. Can't we
13 do better?

14 But I think that's because of the speed
15 of how this was put together, which was one of my
16 big concerns. The lack of adequate notice, the
17 lack of time, the lack of data that we got -- where
18 we got this information. The criteria, as you have
19 heard, is flawed.

20 We feel very strongly that the Court did
21 not imply that race should not be considered. In
22 fact, we believe the Court ruled that no voter
23 should be disenfranchised because of their race. I
24 am sure that someone -- and I hope someone now is
25 looking at how these new proposed districts will be

1 represented in terms of -- so that each of these
2 North Carolina voters can say they have a vote.
3 But due to the rushed nature of this hearing, we
4 don't have that information right now. Will we
5 have that information in time before the
6 legislature takes action? It's very important that
7 we understand that.

8 Representation in the House and Senate
9 should really roughly represent the way people vote
10 in elections and others have talked about this.

11 In the case of 20 -- of 2016, we had a
12 20 -- 50 percent Rs to 47 percent Ds of the vote.
13 The gubernatorial race was even closer. Clearly
14 with these maps, you will continue to dilute the
15 Democratic vote. You will -- through these maps
16 you are already disenfranchising 20 percent of the
17 voting public in your effort to keep the Republican
18 stronghold on the House and Senate. This is pure
19 gerrymandering by political affiliation. You may
20 think it is legally right, but it is morally wrong.

21 When you think about Hillsborough, which
22 is my area, this has been changed, and it's now
23 combined with the rest of Orange County and Caswell
24 County. One of the criteria that's used in other
25 states is that districts represent a similar

1 community of interest. I would guess that the good
2 people of Caswell may not feel as connected to
3 those in Hillsborough, since only the connection is
4 Route 86. By the way, the Senate map groups Orange
5 and Chatham County together in one district.

6 In Maryland, I saw how the Democrats use
7 political gerrymandering to this -- to their end.
8 It was wrong there, and it's wrong here. Thank
9 you.

10 REP. STEVENS: Ms. Shafer.

11 MS. SHAFER: Hi. I'm Martha Shafer. I'm
12 a native North Carolinian. I live in Summerfield
13 now, which is a rural community north of Greensboro
14 within Guilford County. I'm going to tell a little
15 bit of a personal story.

16 I was upset when I went to vote in 2016,
17 finding that I had no alternative on my ballot to
18 my incumbents, Phil Berger and John Blust. Why did
19 they run unchallenged? Because my districts are so
20 gerrymandered that no sane person would attempt a
21 run against the Republican incumbents. Is this
22 what democracy looks like? So I set out to
23 advocate for my values with my representatives.

24 I have written John Blust 62 times. I am
25 persistent. He has responded to me exactly once.

1 Why is he so unresponsive? Because he knows he can
2 be. He doesn't need to listen to me or any other
3 Democratic constituents in his district.

4 I've written Phil Berger seven times and
5 received no responses from him. I've written
6 numerous letters to the editor -- letters to the
7 editor in the Greensboro News & Record, which have
8 been published with various criticisms of him.
9 Those letters won't matter much to Berger's new
10 constituents, who live in the even safer district
11 he is moving to. Berger is eluding accountability
12 to his former constituents in northwest Guilford
13 County by drawing himself out of my district. Is
14 this what democracy looks like?

15 I was so excited when I learned that the
16 legislative maps would be redrawn, hoping for even
17 some small incremental improvement in the
18 competitiveness of my districts. I naively hoped
19 that as the unconstitutional districts became
20 unpacked, there would be some spillover of
21 Democrats whose -- whose votes had been previously
22 wasted. Clearly, that is not the case. In the
23 very short time I have had to look at the data
24 since it's been made public, it appears that these
25 new maps show that the redistricting committee is

1 collectively thumbing its nose at the federal
2 judges.

3 What you have proposed is not a real
4 remedy. By not considering race as a criterion,
5 you use partisanship as a tool to increasingly
6 waste the votes of people of color. I'd be
7 surprised if any Democratic candidate is willing to
8 run in my districts, which are even less
9 competitive than they were before. Is this what
10 you were trying to accomplish? Is this what
11 democracy looks like? I implore the Court to not
12 accept these maps and to remember that North
13 Carolina has been said to not be a -- a -- a
14 democracy anymore. That'll be doubly true now if
15 the judicial branch does not intervene to put a
16 stop to this malfeasance. This legislature is
17 running hog wild.

18 REP. STEVENS: And you are welcome to
19 submit your comments in writing to the committee.

20 MS. SHAFER: Thank you.

21 REP. STEVENS: Dominic Patofie? I --
22 I've called that three times. I don't think he's
23 here. Gay Dillard? Gay Dillard? Okay. Miles
24 Jones. Miles Jones. Tina Forsberg? Tina
25 Forsberg. Todd Warren. Todd Warren. Lawrence

1 Cormier? You have the floor.

2 MR. CORMIER: Okay. Thank you. My name
3 is Larry Cormier. I am a resident of Jamestown.
4 And first a quote from the movie FM. "I'm mad as
5 hell and I'm not going to take it anymore." This
6 is 2017. We should not be here to demand racial
7 equity. We should be fighting for honeybee
8 survival. What is this? And all I can say is
9 shame, shame, shame.

10 You implement racially-gerrymandered
11 districts, white supremists -- supremacists, excuse
12 me. Shame. You fought and fought until the
13 highest court in the land said unconstitutional.
14 Any idiot could see this was immoral in addition to
15 unconstitutional. Shame. You refuse to assemble
16 in a timely manner per our governor's request. The
17 courts had to demand action. Shame.

18 You released your maps on Saturday. Of
19 course, we could not get any information in a
20 timely manner. Shame. You set up inadequate
21 facilities for three days. Here's three-day
22 notice. What the heck could we find in three days?
23 Actually, less than three days because most of the
24 data wasn't there.

25 These few days, this process is like

1 taking a liquid oozing from pig farms, spraying it
2 with aerosolizers all over us, just like someone in
3 this room wants to do to us. You propose these
4 maps in secret in an unbelievably partisan manner.
5 Shame. The lovely lady early had to ask you if she
6 could use her crayons to do a better job, and I'm
7 sure she would. Shame.

8 You've shown your hatred and immorality
9 towards minorities and marginalized citizens like
10 HB2, the -- the monuments, refusal to -- to take
11 those down, gerrymandering, to the extent that you
12 would rather lose billions of dollars to the state
13 than do the right, moral, legal thing. Shame.

14 HB200 is held up. I -- I'm not sure if
15 HB200 is the right one, but it is the bill for
16 gerrymandering. It is -- it has overwhelming
17 bipartisan support. Move it forward. In response
18 to previous speakers, congratulations on having
19 teachers' pay to what? Number 47 in the nation?
20 Come on, we can do a hell of a lot better than
21 that. I'm so sick of the Republican Party using
22 the I-know-you-are-but-what-am-I argument with the
23 gerrymandering. And of course, the person who
24 brought suit previously, of course, is here.
25 Everything you're doing is illegal. Thank you.

1 REP. STEVENS: Joan Bars. I didn't mean
2 to skip you if I did. Joan Bars. William Porter.
3 Mr. Porter. Then Bill Doom. Bill Doom, you'll be
4 next.

5 MR. PORTER: Good evening. It -- it is
6 evening now almost. My name is William Porter.
7 I'm from Thomasville, North Carolina. That's
8 Davidson County, and I believe it is -- what,
9 Montgomery County now for our senatorial district,
10 but Davidson County for our House district.

11 I'm not going to presume to think that
12 either of you are white supremacists or any of the
13 other citizens who are here today representing our
14 state, but I will say as a son of a US Marine
15 veteran, deceased, who was trained at a segregated
16 base down east, once upon a time, in North Carolina
17 and now a -- a father-in-law of a soldier who's
18 serving at Fort Bragg, I'd like to say that
19 gerrymandering is wrong.

20 It's not good for the citizens. It's not
21 good for the state. I moved here from North
22 Carolina in 1980 -- I mean, from Texas in 1989, and
23 I have phone calls almost daily -- at least
24 weekly -- from my friends around the nation who
25 look at North Carolina and see a sad situation, and

1 I'd like that to change as soon as possible. Thank
2 you very much for your time.

3 REP. STEVENS: Thank you. Mr. Doom.
4 Bill Doom.

5 MR. DOOM: My name is Bill Doom. I'm
6 from Davidson County, and William and I are good
7 friends, and I don't want to speak about these
8 maps. I want to speak about the process.

9 We need an independent board, and these
10 maps make it pretty clear why. Legislation has
11 been submitted to create an independent board that
12 could have a nonpartisan solution, but that just
13 languishes. I suspect that most of the precinct,
14 town and county issues that have been raised
15 earlier this evening were created because the map
16 was seeking favorable combinations of voters. An
17 independent, nonpartisan solution could avoid those
18 problems.

19 We have the same biased process run by
20 the same people as before, with the same goal of
21 disenfranchising as many people from other parties
22 as possible. So these maps may be a little less
23 racist than they were before in hopes that the
24 Court won't notice, but otherwise, they're designed
25 to accomplish the same purpose.

1 The maps are an insult, but this hearing
2 is set up as an insult with the timing, the lack of
3 data, the lack of space, the lack of electronic
4 facilities, et cetera. All tell me that nobody
5 really wanted any feedback, that they're going to
6 do the minimum requirements by law and let it go.
7 That is certainly a disrespect for self-rule. It
8 is a disrespect for one citizen, one vote. It is a
9 disrespect for democracy itself.

10 The argument that well, the Democrats did
11 it before -- true, they did. But that is a middle
12 school excuse for continuing to do the wrong thing.
13 I don't remember Lincoln saying a government of
14 some of the people, by some of the people, for some
15 of the people, so let's stop the charade and do the
16 right thing. Thank you.

17 REP. STEVENS: Rachel Samuels and Sam
18 Sullivan. Is Sam Sullivan here? Then after Rachel
19 Samuels will be Roxanne Griffin.

20 MS. SAMUELS: My name is Rachel Samuels
21 and I am from Greensboro, North Carolina. I was a
22 marcher on 4th and Water Street in Charlottesville,
23 North Carolina [sic], on August 12th. I hold the
24 Republican Party complicit and culpable with
25 inspiring my attacker with their intolerant and

1 dog-whistling rhetoric.

2 I would have been -- I have been a voter
3 since 1996, and I was voting with people who -- who
4 represented Charlottesville Black Lives Matter.
5 They were desperate to be heard. They urged us to
6 run towards our attacker. I will never forget
7 those calls for a medic and help and the terrified
8 faces that I saw that I could not help. That is
9 why I am here today.

10 The Republican General Assembly in the
11 State of North Carolina has a vested interest in
12 disenfranchising minority voters in this state.
13 When have they delivered an open, fair, transparent
14 and equitable process for minority voters? They
15 haven't and they won't, because they want to
16 preserve their privilege. When they don't -- when
17 people are not able to vote, they win every time.
18 But I've been 20 -- voting for 21 years. And they
19 will not change. They never change their colors
20 and they don't change their stripes.

21 So I am urging you in this General
22 Assembly -- you are moral and if you are decent,
23 prove me wrong. Prove me wrong. I'm 39 years old,
24 and all you ever did was prove me right. But y'all
25 ain't up to it. If you ain't up to it, get out of

1 the way. Because I'm part of an impatient
2 generation, and our impatience is going to take
3 over and make waves. Thank you for letting me
4 speak.

5 REP. STEVENS: Roxanne Griffin. After
6 Ms. Griffin will be Jocelyn Tsai and Georene Jones.
7 It's okay, Roxanne. We won't start until you talk.

8 MS. GRIFFIN: Okay. Sorry about that.
9 This country was founded as a result of a
10 revolution over representation or lack thereof.
11 But in nine -- in 1812, the great premise -- that
12 great premise was undermined when Elbridge Gerry
13 signed into law partisan districting for the
14 advantage of his Democratic-Republican Party. So
15 for the next 200 years, we have suffered the tit
16 for tat of our two-political system.

17 Our Constitution does not say, we the
18 politicians. It does not say, we the funders of
19 politicians. It says, we the people. Our
20 Constitution and amendments call for one citizen,
21 one vote. Our Constitution and amendments are
22 supposed to protect us from discrimination. But
23 what it does not protect us from is engineered
24 partisan advantage. Our Republican-dominated
25 General Assembly readily admits that they used

1 racial demographics to allow them to achieve
2 partisan advantage. It's legal.

3 The Swiss cheese of the new maps that we
4 just got on Friday display the clear intent to
5 maintain power, not fair representation. The
6 division of communities for the sake of one party
7 or the other maintaining power may be legal, but it
8 is deplorable and dishonorable practice. One look
9 at our voter rolls where -- where unaffiliated
10 statistics continue to climb shows that there's
11 a -- a clear loss of -- of faith in our government
12 based on partisanship. It's past time that we
13 reject gerrymandering. I urge you to live up to
14 the -- whoops -- I urge you to live up to the
15 ideals that our country was founded upon,
16 representation and fairness.

17 That we only received these maps on
18 Saturday and did not receive documentation to back
19 up the justification for those new lines is
20 unreasonable. This information should have been
21 presented to us long before then so that we had an
22 opportunity to digest it and understand what is
23 being presented. This is not representation.

24 We have had bills presented, or -- or
25 proposals, for nonpartisan districting. Our

1 birthright is the right to vote, the right to be
2 represented. And when we gerrymander, regardless
3 of who does it, and it's wrong no matter who does
4 it, we are short-changing ourselves, all of us.
5 Republican, Democrat, it makes no difference if we
6 undermine our country. Thank you.

7 REP. STEVENS: Just -- just one thing.
8 For the record, make sure to give your name.

9 MS. GRIFFIN: Oh, sorry. Roxanne
10 Griffin, Rockingham County.

11 REP. STEVENS: Thank you. I know I said
12 it a couple of times, but I needed you to be
13 clarifying for me. Jocelyn Tsai. And after her,
14 GeoRene Jones.

15 MS. TSAI: Quick question. Where is the
16 microphone that is actually recording?

17 REP. STEVENS: GeoRene.

18 MS. TSAI: Where is the microphone that
19 is actually recording?

20 REP. STEVENS: Right -- right there.
21 Well, they're recording over here, yes.

22 MS. TSAI: Okay. All right. So I'm
23 going to walk a little bit closer here. So my name
24 is Jocelyn Tsai, and I drove from Carrboro, North
25 Carolina, to say that I am against the proposed

1 maps on the grounds that I cannot trust them. The
2 first reason is the Republican state legislature
3 hired Thomas Hofeller to draw the current proposed
4 maps. Mr. Hofeller drew the original
5 unconstitutional maps in 2011 and is largely known
6 for drawing unfair maps in other states.

7 As somebody trained personally in
8 geospatial analysis, I personally know that there
9 are plenty of mapmakers out there and cartographers
10 without the stained work history. Why did state
11 Republicans hire repeat -- a repeat offender?
12 Well, it appears that Republicans have no interest
13 in creating fair maps to represent the people of
14 North Carolina.

15 A second problem I have with those maps
16 is that they don't consider race. Our current and
17 unconstitutional voting maps disenfranchises black
18 people with surgical precision by creating
19 districts with over 50 percent black voting age
20 populations. As a way to seemingly avoid this
21 issue, the Republicans have claimed for that -- for
22 this round, race will not be used to draw maps.
23 And that sounds awfully nice, but honestly, if you
24 aren't explicitly addressing race, then you aren't
25 showing how you're mitigating the original problem.

1 How do I personally know that the districts are no
2 longer designed to concentrate black voters and
3 thus disenfranchise people of color? In short, I
4 can't trust these maps, because I don't know if
5 they will continue to perpetuate institutional
6 white supremacy.

7 Finally, I want to voice my dissent in
8 the process itself. I'm upset that I did not hear
9 about this meeting until late last week. And I
10 personally called my state senator to complain that
11 the people don't have enough time to prepare or
12 respond to the maps. I also said that I'm upset
13 that a person from Orange County, I have to drive
14 to Guilford or to Raleigh to make sure that my
15 voice is heard. We need open meetings like this in
16 every county at different hours so that all
17 citizens can be heard.

18 As a North Carolina resident that wants
19 fair representation, I cannot accept these maps. I
20 need new maps drawn by a nonpartisan organization
21 with race explicitly addressed. I also need more
22 time and transparency on the overall process so
23 that North Carolina citizens all have the
24 opportunity and time to analyze and comment on the
25 proposed maps. Thank you very much.

1 REP. STEVENS: Interesting spelling, but
2 I will get it right now. GeoRene Jones, please
3 come up.

4 MS. JONES: Thank you. My name is
5 GeoRene Jones. I am a resident of Rowan County,
6 North Carolina, and I serve as the coordinator of
7 social justice and advocacy ministries for the
8 North Carolina Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran
9 Church in America.

10 Today, I have heard citizens
11 overwhelmingly beg you to find a way to toss the
12 old maps, these newly redrawn maps, and establish
13 new district maps with neutrality and fairness.
14 This reminds me of my grandmother's solution when
15 my cousins and I used to argue over the same toy.
16 Since, she would say, you cannot figure out how to
17 play with it together, it's mine now.

18 After reviewing this same issue in 13
19 different states across this country, I've found
20 that those who are successful in ending
21 gerrymandering chose to hand off responsibility for
22 drawing maps to a completely independent,
23 nonpartisan commission. This has been suggested
24 numerous times today, and I support it entirely.
25 Yes, this method pushes against our time limit, but

1 it provides to the Court a significant showing of
2 good faith, particularly since this record of this
3 meeting shows wide-ranging support for such an
4 independent process.

5 I've heard it argued that this would cost
6 us a lot of money. It would be way too expensive.
7 And yet without reasonable independent solution,
8 our litigation costs continue to mount. If we had
9 done this earlier, how much healthier would we be
10 as a state financially, emotionally and
11 spiritually. And I've heard the argument, well,
12 they -- well, if they jumped off a bridge, would
13 you do it, too?

14 As a North Carolina citizen, I am always
15 in favor of North Carolina showing good faith. And
16 in this case, I hope we will place ourselves humbly
17 at the mercy of the Court if necessary in order to
18 provide all North Carolina's voters the unfettered
19 opportunity to exercise the right to cast their
20 sacred vote. Thank you.

21 REP. STEVENS: I'm going to try this name
22 and hope I don't butcher it. Chris Buczynski.

23 MR. BUCZYNSKI: Close enough.

24 REP. STEVENS: Buczynski. All right.

25 I'll let you pronounce it for the record.

1 MR. BUCZYNSKI: Yeah, my name's Chris
2 Buczynski .

3 REP. STEVENS: Buczynski .

4 MR. BUCZYNSKI: Yeah. I'll make this
5 quick. For the last federal legislative election,
6 which is the only legislative election it's
7 impossible to gerrymander, Senator Burr got about
8 51.1 percent of the vote. But somehow Republicans
9 got 77 percent of federal House seats, 69 percent
10 of the state Senate seats and 61 percent of state
11 House seats. How are you doing [inaudible] that is
12 what our representative democracy looks like?

13 It's bullshit. I know it's bullshit.
14 You know it's bullshit. We know what you're doing.
15 The Supreme Court told you to fix it. So fix it.
16 Don't hire the same asshole that drew the last
17 racist-ass map. Give us this new map that says
18 nothing, has no real information on it and give the
19 entire state two hours to discuss it. This whole
20 process is a farce.

21 REP. STEVENS: And our final speaker, the
22 final one I have listed is Leslie Martin. Ms.
23 Martin.

24 MS. MARTIN: So my name is Leslie Martin.
25 I'm from Oak Ridge, and I'm here to speak tonight

1 because, clearly, our legislature is up to the same
2 shenanigans that got us here. A cursory look at
3 the data they provided less than 24 hours ago
4 shows -- and a look at the races that were within
5 10-point margins -- and by the way, that's not
6 particularly competitive in my book. If I just
7 lost a race by 10 points, I don't think I would go
8 home, like, go to bed that night thinking, man, I
9 just missed it. But that's what we're reduced to
10 in terms of thinking about a race in competitive
11 terms now.

12 Looking at the 2012 Presidential
13 election, only 12 of the 120 proposed House
14 districts met that criteria. So it's literally 10
15 percent. Okay? And I know Republicans think
16 they're winning right now because their legislators
17 have drawn themselves into more seats in power, but
18 the only people winning right now are politicians,
19 okay? Because the way that legislators are
20 compacting these districts, the least competitive
21 seats are actually held by Democrats, okay?

22 So there are 10 districts that had
23 50-plus-point margins, 50-point-plus margins in the
24 aforementioned 2012 elections. And nine of those
25 10 seats were Democratic. The safest district in

1 the state is held -- is right here in Guilford
2 County. It's District 57. It's represented by
3 Pricey Harrison, and I love me some Pricey
4 Harrison, okay? And why wouldn't I? 'Cause I'm a
5 liberal Democrat. But if you're a Republican
6 living in Pricey Harrison's seat, in her district,
7 I guess you can just suck it up, buttercup. All
8 right? Because her newly drawn district voted for
9 Obama by 75 points, 75. And if you need to wrap
10 your head around that, that was 87 to 12, 87 to 12.
11 Okay? All right.

12 And as much as I want to see Pricey stay
13 in the House, I don't think she should be given a
14 golden ticket to stay there for the rest of her
15 life. She should compete. Politicians should
16 compete for their seats. The fact is in more than
17 80 districts, if you survive your primary, which is
18 often uncontested, you could walk out in the
19 streets and moon your constituents and get elected
20 in November, and that ain't right. It's not right.

21 That's not democracy. It's not
22 representative government, and it has to change.
23 In Guilford County last year, only one out of six
24 House seats even had a challenger. That's three
25 Democrats and three Republicans, one challenged

1 seats. Because our seats are so uncompetitive that
2 nobody thinks it's worth the effort to run.

3 These maps are just the same. They're
4 not any better. All right? So it's clear that the
5 legislators in Raleigh have no intentions of
6 changing. They're up to the same shenanigans.
7 These maps are an attempt to instill hopelessness
8 in voters, to make citizens of both parties feel
9 that they have no voice, and it is imperative that
10 our judiciary take this responsibility away from
11 the legislators and end this ridiculous nonsense.
12 I'm done.

13 REP. STEVENS: Okay. I want to thank you
14 all for staying with us. I want to thank you all
15 for your comments. I want to thank you for your
16 demeanor, because we've seen some of the others
17 break out much more viciously. The last thing I
18 want to do for the record is to indicate that I
19 have been given certain written statements that
20 will be put into the record. Mr. Buczynski --

21 MR. BUCZYNSKI: I -- I just said what I
22 wrote.

23 REP. STEVENS: Okay. And I -- I've got
24 that in writing. I've got something from the
25 League of Women Voters. I have Anna Fesmire's

1 statement. I have Chanelle Darlene James, who
2 submitted a two-paged typewritten statement. And
3 then I have something from -- I think that says
4 Roberta Lang. It is a two-page printed document
5 from Democracy NC. Are there any other written
6 statements coming forward, anything else we want to
7 receive?

8 MALE SPEAKER: Could I ask a question?

9 REP. STEVENS: Yes, sir.

10 MALE SPEAKER: There was something on the
11 web page that we could send something in. Can we
12 still do that? And submit what we said?

13 REP. STEVENS: You can still submit
14 written statements, and they can be considered by
15 the committee. And -- and -- and again, thank you.
16 And we will declare this meeting adjourned.

17 (End of proceedings.)

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

COUNTY OF WAKE

CERTIFICATION OF TRANSCRIPT

This is to certify that the foregoing transcript of proceedings held on August 22, 2017, is a true and accurate transcript of the proceedings as transcribed by me or under my supervision. I further certify that I am not related to any party or attorney, nor do I have any interest whatsoever in the outcome of this action.

This 28th day of August, 2017.

Brad Worley

Brad Worley, transcriptionist

Worley Reporting

P. O. Box 99169

Raleigh, NC 27624

919-870-8070

brad@worleyreporting.com