

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ALABAMA
SOUTHERN DIVISION**

BOBBY SINGLETON, *et al.*,

Plaintiffs,

v.

WES ALLEN, in his official capacity
as Alabama Secretary of State, *et al.*,

Defendants.

Case No. 2:21-cv-01291-AMM

THREE-JUDGE COURT

EVAN MILLIGAN, *et al.*,

Plaintiffs,

v.

WES ALLEN, in his official
capacity as Alabama Secretary of State,
et al.,

Defendants.

Case No. 2:21-cv-1530-AMM

THREE-JUDGE COURT

MARCUS CASTER, *et al.*,

Plaintiffs,

v.

WES ALLEN, in his official
capacity as Alabama Secretary of State,

Defendant.

Case No. 2:21-cv-01536-AMM

DECLARATION OF MIKE SCHMITZ

I, Mike Schmitz, declare as follows:

1. I am over the age of 19, and the testimony I have set out below is based upon my personal knowledge, which I could testify competently about in court if requested to do so. This is my personal testimony, and I am not speaking on behalf of any other person or entity.

2. I attended the July 13, 2023 meeting of the Permanent Legislative Committee on Reapportionment for the State of Alabama in order to share my views on the importance of keeping Dothan and Houston County stay in line with Montgomery and the counties in between and along the southeastern border of Alabama.

3. I am originally from Wisconsin but now call Dothan, Alabama home. I moved to Alabama in the 1980s, and have been here in the automobile business for 35 years. I sell, among others, Hyundais and Mercedes that were made in Alabama at Mike Schmitz Automotive Group on Ross Clark Circle. I had the privilege of serving as the Mayor of Dothan from 2009 until October 2017 and then, at the end of two terms, became chairman of the board with the public schools for one four-year term which overlapped with the COVID-19 pandemic.

4. About two years ago, I was appointed a Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army representing Alabama South. The position is described at www.army.mil/casa as follows: "Civilian Aides to the Secretary of the Army (CASAs) are business and community leaders appointed by the Secretary to advise and support Army leaders across the country. CASAs come from many professions including business, education, finance, industry, law, the media, medicine and public service. Each is proactively involved in the community and brings to the position an interest in the Army, a high degree of business and civic leadership and an ability to influence the public." In this volunteer role, I represent Fort Novosel (formerly known as Fort

Rucker), Army Reserve, JROTC, Army National Guard and anything to do with the military. I frequently speak to groups about a variety of military topics.

5. During the course of my brief testimony, I emphasized to the Committee the importance of keeping the Wiregrass together both to protect Fort Novosel and Maxwell Air Force Base and to help the communities throughout the Wiregrass continue to thrive economically.

6. I have a 20-year relationship with Fort Novosel, where the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence is located, and about a four-year relationship with Maxwell. From my time serving as Dothan's mayor, I am aware that Fort Novosel contributes more than \$1 billion to the Wiregrass' economy. Just last week, I flew over Fort Novosel with Sen. Tuberville and Fort Novosel officials to familiarize the Senator with the operations there. In my view, it is critical to protect Fort Novosel and Maxwell and help them grow both because of their economic impact and because of their tremendous contribution to national security in a changing world. We have partnerships in place to help with that, including with recruiters. Recruiting is a real issue for the military, and recruiting from the southeast and the Wiregrass has been stronger than in other places.

7. As someone who has been involved in economic development efforts, I am very protective of the Wiregrass. Most of our communities are small and, when we stand alone, cannot succeed. We have created partnerships that have lasted for 50 and 100 years and helped all of our communities grow, and the City of Dothan works with smaller communities to help them create jobs because we know that what benefits them benefits everyone.

8. One example of a partnership is Southeast Alabama Gas District, which was established to provide natural gas service to domestic, commercial, and industrial customers

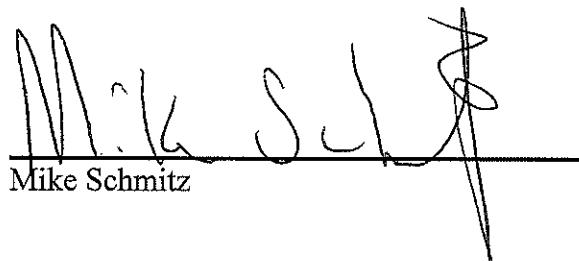
located in the southeast portion of the State. It is owned by 14 municipalities in southeast Alabama from Dothan to Greenville, and provides benefits for the communities and helps them grow. Representatives of the municipalities, usually the mayors, meet every month and work together to see how we can help each other because we don't have anyone else. We have prospered, and we are booming, and I don't want to see that change.

9. Another area of common interest in the Wiregrass is the major role that agriculture plays in the region. When I was mayor, Wayne Farms bought a chicken plant in Dothan and invested millions automating the plant to supply a major restaurant chain. In addition to chickens, the primary crops grown by our farmers are peanuts, cotton, and timber, but there are other crops grown in the Wiregrass as well, including strawberries and pecans. According to the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce, which presented the information at a meeting I attended, approximately 40% of all peanuts grown in the United States are grown within 100 miles of Dothan. This information is routinely shared and widely-known within the community.

10. In my opinion, if the Wiregrass is split up and moved west, Dothan and Houston County will lose our voice and lose our vote.

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on August 4, 2023.


Mike Schmitz