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Common Cause, et al.)
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v.) 4:22-cv-109
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Cord Byrd)
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TRANSCRIPTION OF AUDIO FILE
House Congressional Redistricting Subcommittee
The Florida Channel
October 20, 2021

DIGITAL EVIDENCE GROUP
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1 (Beginning of Video Recording.)

2 MR. SIROIS: Good Afternoon, members.
3 The Congressional Redistricting Subcommittee
4 will come to order. Sam, please call the
5 role.

6 MALE VOICE: Chair Sirois?

7 MR. SIROIS: Here.

8 MALE VOICE: Vice Chair Tuck?

9 MS. TUCK: Here.

10 MALE VOICE: Ranking member Skidmore?

11 MS. SKIDMORE: Here.

12 MALE VOICE: Representatives Beltran?

13 MR. BELTRAN: Here.

14 MALE VOICE: Benjamin? Benjamin?

15 Brown? Fabricio?

16 MR. FABRICIO: Here.

17 MALE VOICE: Fetterhoff?

18 MS. FETTERHOFF: Here.

19 MALE VOICE: Fischer?

20 MR. FISCHER: Here.

21 MALE VOICE: Giallambardo?

22 MR. GIALLAMBARDO: Here.

23 MALE VOICE: Harding?

24 MR. HARDING: Here.

25 MALE VOICE: Hunschofsky?

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1 MS. HUNSCHOFSKY: Here.

2 MALE VOICE: Joseph?

3 MS. JOSEPH: Here.

4 MALE VOICE: Massullo.

5 MR. MASSULLO: Here.

6 MALE VOICE: Morales?

7 MS. MORALES: Present.

8 MALE VOICE: Perez? Plakon? Silvers,

9 excused. Toledo? Trabulsy? Trabulsy?

10 Williamson?

11 MR. WILLIAMSON: Here.

12 MALE VOICE: A quorum is present, Mr.

13 Chair.

14 MR. SIROIS: Thank you, Sam. Members,

15 a few reminders before we begin. Please

16 silence all electronic devices and if you wish

17 to make public comment, please fill out a

18 speaker form and turn it into the Sergeant's

19 staff.

20 Also a reminder for our members and

21 presenters today, please ensure that you turn

22 your microphone on when you're speaking and

23 off when you're finished. Members, welcome

24 back to Week 3. So far in our committee

25 process we have benefitted from a

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1 redistricting primer, a Legislature University
2 course on how to use the map-drawing
3 application, and then a more advanced training
4 on the map-drawing tools available to help us
5 analyze maps in alignment with Constitutional
6 standards.

7 Today, we will take the next step in
8 our efforts by reviewing the concepts that we
9 have learned -- that we have learned about and
10 apply them while looking at the currently
11 inactive Congressional Maps. Our goal is to
12 view more tangible examples of concepts that
13 we have been discussing such as compactness
14 and using county boundaries.

15 Seeing how these concepts can
16 potentially interact with one another will
17 help us understand some of the future decision
18 points we may encounter as we deliberate maps,
19 and it will also enable us to apply a
20 consistent methodology for our maps as we
21 continue to move through our process.

22 I'd also like to take a moment to point
23 out the same concepts we'll review today can
24 additionally be used when members are viewing
25 the publicly submitted maps on our website.

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1 The same concepts will help to provide a
2 framework for which you can review a map or
3 even help find trends that may appear
4 throughout public submissions.

5 Now, as we move through today's
6 presentation, there's something for you --
7 that I'd like for all of you to keep in the
8 back of your mind. And it's actually
9 something that we touched on during our last
10 meeting last week. It's very important and it
11 warrants repeating.

12 There is no single correct map. There
13 is no such thing as a best map. Even as we
14 see within the tiers of our standards,
15 decisions must be weighed among one another
16 with the goal of drawing a legally compliant
17 map. And as I think we will come to
18 appreciate it more each day, Florida is a
19 unique shape, and it has a unique geography.
20 We have an abundance of waterways and
21 coastlines across the state. counties that --
22 we have counties that don't always have smooth
23 boundary lines either. As well as cities with
24 their own unique boundary lines.

25 As we work to create new district

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1 boundaries, all of these considerations will
2 come into play. Now I'd like to turn it over
3 to Mr. Poreda, to present on the current
4 Congressional map. Mr. Poreda, you're
5 recognized.

6 MR. POREDA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
7 So as the Chairman said, we're going to be
8 looking closer at the currently enacted
9 Congressional map that was first used in the
10 2016 elections. Can you move to the next
11 slide?

12 So you see here, we're going to look
13 through some examples of how we can apply the
14 standards that we talked about in the last
15 several meetings and looks at some concrete
16 examples throughout the map to kind of show
17 you where some decision points may come up
18 during the map and to help outline some of the
19 concepts that were used to draw it but also as
20 we start to evaluate other maps or as we begin
21 the drawing process for this coming cycle, we
22 can apply those same concepts and -- to the
23 new maps.

24 We'll also take a little closer look at
25 Florida's geography and some of the uniqueness

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1 that the Chairman just referred to.

2 So real quick, these are the standards
3 which we have shown now several times. We're
4 going to be focusing or starting on the Tier 2
5 standards and going from there. So next
6 slide.

7 So real quick, something that we
8 haven't really shared yet, these are some of
9 the topline statistics for the 2016
10 Congressional map. Obviously, we still have
11 67 counties, in the Congressional map, 49 of
12 them were kept whole and not split by a
13 district. There were 18 counties that were
14 split. Of the 410 incorporated municipalities
15 within the 2010 census geography when the map
16 was drawn, 397 of them were kept whole and 13
17 were split.

18 And as we've discussed previously and
19 as we'll talk a little bit more about today,
20 the population deviation between the 27
21 Congressional districts in the current map, it
22 was plus or minus one person using the 2010
23 Census population data.

24 Below you'll see the average for the
25 three mathematical compactness scores that are

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1 primarily used drawing the map, so that's an
2 aggregate average of the 27 districts, and
3 remember those are ratios between 0 and 1.

4 So when you look at the overall average
5 of compactness test for a map, it can give you
6 a reference point on whether a particular
7 District is above or below that particular
8 average.

9 So moving on, real quick, where do you
10 start when you're looking at a map? Well, one
11 of the easiest and best places to start is
12 simply looking at the county population
13 totals. And for the 2016 Congressional map,
14 you can see there were seven counties that
15 were over the ideal population of a
16 Congressional District at the time, which was
17 696,354 people.

18 So those seven counties had to be split
19 purely based on population within the state.
20 60 of the 67 counties were under the ideal
21 population of a district, and you can see that
22 we'll be focusing on the population equality
23 standard in reference specifically to
24 Congressional districts as well as the
25 utilizing political and geographical boundary

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1 lines, which county lines fall into. And
2 later we'll talk about incorporated
3 municipalities.

4 So the ideal population and the
5 deviation for Congressional districts. So the
6 ideal population of a district is calculated
7 by taking the state total population and
8 dividing it by the number of districts in that
9 particular map.

10 So in 2010, our population was a little
11 bit over 18.8 million people divided by 27,
12 comes out to that number of 696,345. You can
13 see in now the 2020 census population numbers,
14 we have 21,538,187 people divided by now 28
15 Congressional Districts, comes up with our new
16 ideal population of 769,221 people.

17 Now, with Congressional districts there
18 is that population equality of plus or minus
19 one standard. Legislative districts have a
20 different standard that's usually considered
21 plus about 10 percent, which is plus or minus
22 5 percent. That's generally the accepted
23 range where the burden of proof will shift, so
24 if things are under 10 percent it's generally
25 considered acceptable when talking about say,

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1 legislative lines. Over that, it's up to the
2 map drawers to prove that they had to deviate
3 more than 10 percent to achieve whatever the
4 State goals happen to be at the time.

5 But for Congressional districts the
6 standard of plus or minus one person, which
7 has become known as the one vote -- one
8 person, one vote principle, that was
9 established in 1964 with the Westerby verse
10 Sanders case before the U.S. Supreme Court.

11 Since then that has been the standard
12 that has been generally accepted for the
13 drawing of Congressional districts nationwide.

14 Now, there have been some exceptions
15 made to that particular standard throughout
16 the decades. As you learned with most things
17 with redistricting, there's usually a set
18 standard and exceptions that can be made
19 throughout it in different specific
20 circumstances, the most recent of which is in
21 West Virginia where in the Tenant versus
22 Jefferson County, West Virginia, there was a
23 Supreme Court case where the Supreme Court
24 allowed a slight deviation in West Virginia's
25 Congressional Districts.

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1 The State was able to keep all their
2 counties whole within the State of West
3 Virginia. All three of their Congressional
4 districts followed this principle and that
5 specific exception that the Supreme Court made
6 for West Virginia was because the State was
7 able to apply that principle Statewide to all
8 three of their Congressional districts.

9 To this point, the Supreme Court has
10 not put in a minimum standard that is an
11 allowable deviation for Congressional
12 districts called the De Minimis Standard. No
13 such standard exists got Congressional
14 districts, any exception that has been made
15 throughout the decades for deviations in
16 population for Congressional districts are
17 usually very specific to that State, to that
18 district, and to that redistricting cycle.

19 So just because West Virginia had that
20 exception made last time, doesn't mean it will
21 be allowed to have that same exception made in
22 the future.

23 Florida has never deviated from that
24 plus or minus one person standard since the
25 principle was put into effect. And that's it

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1 for that slide.

2 So now we're going to move on to the
3 principle of keeping counties whole. So we
4 looked briefly before at the total population
5 counts throughout the map and the counties
6 that could be kept whole or not kept whole.
7 So that can be looked at in two different
8 ways, and we'll talk about them both. The
9 first is keeping counties whole.

10 So 60 counties were too small to fit a
11 Congressional district into so they could in
12 theory be kept whole by adding the populations
13 of those counties together with other whole
14 counties or other parts of a county to create
15 an entire District.

16 Some examples of that are Congressional
17 District 1 and Congressional District 3. So
18 you can see since we're using the principle of
19 keeping counties whole in the panhandle, it's
20 generally an easy place to come up with an
21 example like this because you have to start in
22 Escambia County, you can't go North into
23 Alabama, you can't go into the Gulf, and you
24 can't go West. So you have to just add whole
25 counties together until you achieve the

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1 population of a Congressional District.

2 So District 1 is the populations of
3 Escambia County, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, and
4 Walton counties. And then there's a county
5 split made in Holmes County to achieve equal
6 population with a Congressional District. And
7 the decision was made to do that all within
8 one county rather than putting a split into
9 two counties and dividing that population up.

10 With Congressional District 3, you can
11 see that five-county combination of Union,
12 Bradford, Clay, Alachua, and Putnam counties
13 were combined together with the populations,
14 some population in Marion County, including
15 the entire incorporated municipality boundary
16 of the City of Ocala. That's the kind of
17 bump at the bottom of the District.

18 So this is -- these are both examples
19 of keeping counties whole and combining them
20 with a portion of another county to achieve
21 equal population in a Congressional district.

22 So the next the kind of flip side of
23 that keeping counties whole is keeping
24 districts wholly within a county. So in a
25 Congressional district context looking at the

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1 2010 population, there were seven counties
2 that were too big to be kept whole. So where
3 it was feasible, districts were kept within
4 those counties. If you look throughout the
5 map you can see that in five of those seven
6 counties.

7 This is an example in Orange County,
8 Congressional District 10 was kept wholly
9 within Orange County, and that is an example
10 of Orange County being too big for one
11 Congressional District, so this was an
12 opportunity to keep a district entirely within
13 the county.

14 You can see here there's two examples
15 side by side in Hillsborough County and
16 Pinellas County. If you look at Congressional
17 District 13 and Congressional District 14,
18 both are wholly within their respective
19 counties.

20 Congressional District 13 is also a
21 good example to look at kind of like with the
22 panhandle where if you want to try to minimize
23 county splits, keep districts wholly within
24 county, when looking at a county like Pinellas
25 county which is almost entirely a peninsula,

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1 you have to start at the bottom and work your
2 way up. Otherwise, you'll end up with a
3 district that's in the middle and some
4 population that's on the bottom that would
5 then have to be connected across whatever body
6 of water that peninsula is attached to get the
7 remaining portion of the population.

8 So in this particular case, it was
9 started in the South and worked its way North.
10 It actually did end up splitting the City of
11 Clearwater, but because Congressional
12 districts have to achieve that population
13 equality, that was just a mathematical
14 decision as you work your way up and achieve
15 that equal population. They mathematically
16 had to split the City of Clearwater.

17 In Congressional District 14, the City
18 of Tampa was actually kept wholly within that
19 district. That actually accounts for the kind
20 of diamond shaped flag coming off the top of
21 Congressional District 4, that actually
22 follows the municipal lines of the City of
23 Tampa.

24 So looking real quick in our current
25 situation. So if we look at the county

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1 population totals using the 2020 Census data,
2 you can see that it's actually the same seven
3 counties that are over the new ideal
4 population of a Congressional district, which
5 is 769,221 people.

6 So we are going to move past counties
7 and move onto the other part of political
8 boundaries when we start in map-drawing
9 context.

10 This is actually a map of Florida's 412
11 incorporated municipalities throughout the
12 state. It's kind of a big statewide image,
13 and can kind of see how it all breaks down.
14 You can also get a pretty good sense for how
15 much of the state is within an incorporated
16 municipality and how much of the state is not.
17 But where we can, we do try to utilize these
18 boundary lines, though maybe not as often as
19 county lines, and we'll get into some examples
20 of why Florida municipalities present
21 different challenges when drawing a map or
22 when evaluating a map.

23 So here's kind of a zoomed-in look.
24 The next couple of slides are kind of more
25 zoomed in of that statewide image, so you can

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1 kind of get a better sense of the area within
2 counties that are incorporated municipalities
3 and how much of our state is not incorporated.

4 Down in Central Florida and then the
5 next slide you can see in South Florida. So
6 you can see in South Florida a little bit more
7 of the population is condensed to the
8 coastlines and a little bit more incorporated
9 municipalities, but there's still a lot of
10 area in between that's not.

11 It should be noted that the area in
12 pink that we have been looking at, those are
13 the 412 incorporated municipalities. The
14 Census Bureau does have another designation
15 called Census Designated Places and other
16 types of places. There's 955 of them in the
17 State of Florida, but we only look at the
18 incorporated municipalities because they have
19 legally defined boundaries by their local
20 governments.

21 Census Designated Places and other
22 places of that nature don't have a legally
23 defined boundary that we can use for the
24 purpose of redistricting.

25 So looking in the context of that ideal

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1 population for a Congressional district,
2 there's actually only one incorporated
3 municipality that is more than that 769,221
4 person number that you'll hear a lot in this
5 particular committee. That is the City of
6 Jacksonville.

7 So incorporated municipal lines
8 actually present interesting challenges when
9 you're looking at a map. Here is an example
10 of the City of Davie, Southwest Ranches, and
11 Pembroke Pines in Broward County. And you can
12 see that those three cities essentially
13 intertwine with each other. There are
14 discontinuous portions of each of those
15 cities. There's holes within the cities.

16 So in order to keep one of those cities
17 whole, you might have to split another or have
18 to keep all three of them together in the same
19 District. Actually in the current
20 Congressional map, Congressional District 23
21 actually does keep all three of them together
22 within a single house -- or a single
23 Congressional district, but that may not be
24 possible based on how the map breaks down in
25 this current decade.

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1 But these are just an example of kind
2 of the uniqueness of Florida municipal
3 boundary lines that we have to take into
4 account. So it may not be possible to keep
5 every city whole, just based on their
6 geography.

7 Here's another example of that in
8 Volusia County where you can see the City of
9 Edgewater and New Smyrna Beach have a lot of
10 very small discontinuous portions of their
11 municipal lines. Just another example showing
12 how irregular some of those boundary lines can
13 be and how much of the other territory in
14 between that we would have to account for.

15 And finally, this is another example,
16 this is the City of North Port, which is
17 actually split by the Myakka River so there's
18 actually two completely separate parts of that
19 City, but they're all the City of North Port.

20 Interestingly enough, kind of a Florida
21 fun fact, we actually do have four
22 municipalities in the state based on the 2020
23 census geography that actually cross county
24 lines. So the City of Longboat Key is both in
25 Manatee and Sarasota counties. Marine Land is

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1 in Flagler and St. Johns County. Flagler
2 Beach is in Flagler and Volusia County. And
3 Fanning Springs is split between Gilchrist and
4 Levy County.

5 So this just presents another example
6 in Florida's uniqueness where, if we choose to
7 keep particular counties whole, it may split
8 one of these cities. Or if we have to keep
9 those two cities -- or those two counties
10 together in order to keep the city whole or
11 maybe parts of the county together to keep the
12 cities whole. That's just another interesting
13 nugget of Florida's geography.

14 So this is an example of a District
15 where there was an effort made to keep a city
16 whole. If you look at Congressional District
17 15, the boundary between 15 and 11, there
18 appears to be this kind of bump on top of
19 Congressional District 15. That bump was
20 actually done so in the context of the 2010
21 geography to keep the City of Groveland whole
22 within a particular Congressional District
23 because the city itself divides the highway
24 that kind of goes right through the Lake
25 County.

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1 And if you see the next slide it kind
2 of does a zoomed-in version of that so you can
3 kind of see that's the City of Groveland.
4 Now, what's interesting about this is that
5 this is also an example of how city boundaries
6 can actually decade from decade. The Census
7 Bureau, in between the decades, does do an
8 effort to update and improve its block lines
9 and its municipal lines that it has on file,
10 but cities also go through more changes than
11 county lines do typically throughout the
12 decade.

13 So you can see here this is the current
14 boundary of the City of Groveland and how it
15 has actually expanded beyond the bump that was
16 drawn into allow for the City of Groveland,
17 but in the 2010 municipal line geography the
18 City of Groveland was kept whole within
19 Congressional District 15.

20 So here is an example of using
21 waterways, moving more into the geographic
22 boundaries that Congressional districts and
23 other districts can use throughout the city or
24 throughout the State of Florida.

25 This is an example of between

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1 Congressional District 3 and 4 where actually
2 the county line, which is a political
3 geography, also corresponds with the actual
4 physical geography of the river, the St. Johns
5 River that happens to be right there. If you
6 zoom into the next slide, you can see a more
7 zoomed-in version of that.

8 So unlike some states out West that are
9 mostly rectangular in shape and have square
10 county lines, because we have so much water in
11 our state, we have so much uniqueness to our
12 geography, even our county lines can have
13 squiggly shapes to them, and when we try to
14 keep counties whole and abide by those
15 Constitutional standards. it's going to lend
16 itself to some odd-shaped lines or odd-shaped
17 geography throughout it. This is an example
18 of that.

19 This is actually an example of using
20 some more geographic boundaries that don't
21 happen to coincide with a county line. The --
22 if you look at Congressional District 17 and
23 Congressional District 9, you see this
24 boundary line right there that mostly divides
25 those two districts, uses mostly municipal

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1 boundaries in addition to major roadways and
2 railways.

3 And on this next slide here you can see
4 the pink areas that are highlighted, those are
5 actually the major roads kind of county Roads
6 that are in Polk County. That green section,
7 that is a railway that runs through there, and
8 the highlighted yellow portion at the top is
9 the City of Frostproof. So that boundary
10 between those two districts utilizes all of
11 those boundaries.

12 This is an example, again, of using
13 waterways, but waterways that don't happen to
14 coincide with a county line. So here you
15 have -- see the Alafia River which divides
16 Congressional District 15 and Congressional
17 District 16 in Hillsborough County. And if
18 you move to the next slide there, you can see
19 the division there. I'm sorry if I
20 mispronounced that. My apologies.

21 But here you can see that throughout
22 the entirety of those two districts within
23 Hillsborough County, the river does -- is --
24 the boundary line there, it does not deviate
25 off that entirely.

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1 This is another example, the Suwanee
2 River which also happens to coincide with
3 county lines throughout the big bend of
4 Florida. So you can see Hamilton County,
5 Columbia County, Suwanee County, Lafayette
6 County, Gilchrist County, Levy County, and a
7 few others, use the Suwanee River along their
8 County lines, respectively.

9 And the Suwanee River is an older
10 river, it has a lot of bends and turns, so if
11 you zoom in on the next slide, you'll see that
12 if we utilize those county boundaries in that
13 river, you're going to have a lot of little
14 jagged edges, which might be negatively
15 impacted on compactness, mathematical
16 compactness (inaudible).

17 So waterways are something else that we
18 have to use here in Florida a lot when a lot
19 of unique geography here. One of the best
20 examples is Lake Okeechobee, which actually
21 borders five counties -- Okeechobee County,
22 Martin County, Palm Beach County, Hendry
23 County and Glades County, all share some of
24 the shore of Lake Okeechobee.

25 The way the Census Bureau divides Lake

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1 Okeechobee or these big lake or other water
2 bodies that exist in the map is that it finds
3 a point in the geographic center of the lake
4 and then draws the counties out to the center
5 of that point back to its shoreline. That
6 creates a lot of jagged points that you could
7 see within most of the maps that we have now
8 currently.

9 The best example is Hendry County kind
10 of on the bottom with that little, tiny point
11 that goes right up to the top, it's a very
12 skinny little point. That's just part of some
13 of the uniqueness of our county boundaries
14 that we have to account for when we're drawing
15 a map. So you might see some of those points
16 throughout district maps but those are simply
17 following the county line.

18 Water blocks is another thing that we
19 have here as we have coastline along most of
20 our state. The coastline along the East Coast
21 of Florida goes out three miles. On the Gulf
22 Side it actually goes out nine miles, which is
23 the territorial waters of the State of
24 Florida. That was a Supreme Court ruling in
25 1960, and actually the Census Bureau just

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1 updated those boundary lines back in 2019 in
2 their geographic files.

3 So these blocks can be difficult to
4 work with. You can see here the blue line
5 going across, that's the county line between
6 Collier and Lee County. So if we were to keep
7 Collier County and Lee County whole on a
8 particular map but on separate districts, it's
9 going to naturally create a flag sticking off
10 of Collier County. That's just part of
11 Florida's geography that we have to deal with.

12 The Florida Everglades is another
13 interesting, unique part of our geography in
14 that it has a lot of very large, oddly shaped
15 blocks and generally very low population, if
16 any population at all. But those are all
17 blocks that have to be included into some
18 district somewhere and that we have to account
19 for.

20 This is an example of compactness
21 another Tier 2 standard. District 3 is the
22 district within the Congressional map that
23 scores the highest actually in all three
24 mathematical compactness scores. You can see
25 it is generally shaped like a circle so that's

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1 very good for the Reock test. It also doesn't
2 have a lot of jagged edges and points which
3 score well in Convex Hull. And even though it
4 does follow the river there a little bit in
5 St. Johns County, there's not a lot of tiny
6 squiggles and jagged lines following other
7 like the Suwanee River, so it scores pretty
8 well with Polsby-Popper.

9 So this is one of the most compact,
10 mathematical districts within the map, but
11 that's when you're looking at and evaluating
12 compactness.

13 Beyond visual compactness which we can
14 kind of see whether or not a district we think
15 looks compact or not, the mathematical tests
16 give us a sense of where that District is
17 going to perform and you can compare that to
18 the average in the state map that we looked at
19 at the beginning to determine whether or not
20 that District may fall kind of on the upper
21 end or the lower end of all the Districts
22 within the map.

23 Another kind of Florida fun fact is
24 that we are one of six states that actually
25 have valid noncontiguous territory. So one of

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1 our Tier 1 standards is contiguous territory,
2 and although you have to draw your Districts
3 entirely there will always be one point in
4 Monroe County that is actually noncontiguous
5 from the other, but that is expected and okay.
6 The other states that have noncontiguous
7 territory are New York, Rhode Island, Hawaii,
8 Alaska, and one other, Washington State, oh
9 and Rhode Island, I'm sorry, not Washington
10 State, Rhode Island. And that's it, Chair.

11 MR. SIROIS: All right. Thank you very
12 much, Mr. Poreda, for the presentation.
13 Members, do we have any questions? Any
14 questions on today's presentation? Ranking
15 Member?

16 MS. SKIDMORE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
17 have a couple questions that I wanted to
18 raise. One is on the Senate side, we heard
19 from Chair Rodriguez that the intention is to
20 not begin with the existing districts or the
21 existing district map. And I'm curious as to
22 what the position of this committee and the
23 House is in terms of the beginning point?

24 MR. SIROIS: Thank you very much,
25 Ranking Member, for the good question. You

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1 know, I think it's important for members to
2 understand, and today's exercise is a part of
3 this. We are tasked with drawing 28 new
4 Congressional districts. So we're going to
5 look at the information that the Census
6 provided us.

7 We are in the process now of continuing
8 to build out this foundational knowledge.
9 Examining the current map and the different
10 features involved and how the tiers apply is a
11 part of that process. But in terms of how we
12 move forward, our Committee is tasked with
13 drawing 28 new Congressional districts.

14 Now, that's not to say that the work
15 product that we reach doesn't, in some ways,
16 look very similar to the map that we operate
17 under now. And as you know, as we learned
18 today, there are a lot of features in our
19 state -- rivers, railroads, major highways,
20 county boundaries, municipal boundaries --
21 these are things that have not changed
22 necessarily over time.

23 So we are going to take the new Census
24 data that we have. We are going to apply it
25 to these standards, and we are going to come

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1 up with 28 new Congressional districts.

2 MS. SKIDMORE: Follow up?

3 MR. SIROIS: You're recognized.

4 MS. SKIDMORE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

5 My comment would be that we know that the
6 Court has approved the existing map and those
7 lines, and so it would be a good starting
8 point in terms of being able to meet the
9 Constitutional muster and Court -- and pass
10 the Court process. So we would be interested
11 in knowing how that beginning point is going
12 to start.

13 MR. SIROIS: Thank you very much,
14 Ranking Member, for your comments. You know,
15 I -- and I think we have seen that as we have
16 been moving through this education process
17 that the entire Committee has been going
18 through.

19 We've examined the tiers, we've
20 certainly talked about the Court precedent,
21 and I think that all of that should be
22 foremost in our minds as we begin our
23 deliberations eventually on our work product.
24 So I thank you for raising those good points.

25 MR. SIROIS: (inaudible) leave that on.

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1 Other questions, members? Representative
2 Joseph, you're recognized.

3 MS. JOSEPH: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
4 It's not directly to the presentation, it was
5 just a follow up on an outstanding question
6 from the last Committee meeting we had at
7 which I asked if there was going to be outside
8 of the website any means contemplated for
9 public participation?

10 So and I know you said you were going
11 to talk to somebody, I think Chair Leek, but I
12 don't remember who you said you were going to
13 talk to. I was just trying to see if there
14 was any update?

15 MR. SIROIS: Thank you, Representative
16 Joseph, for the question. You know, while I
17 will say that those -- that is certainly part
18 of the conversation, you know, we're up a
19 couple of -- we're up against some time
20 constraints now, and we have a website that
21 has a tremendous amount of capability.

22 The residents of our state can submit
23 their own proposals for maps. They can submit
24 comments to us through that website. Just
25 like the budget or any other bill that this

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1 legislature takes up, there's the opportunity
2 for members of the public to provide testimony
3 to us here at the Capital.

4 And we haven't had anybody take us up
5 on that offer yet, hopefully there are some
6 members of the public here today that would
7 like to speak with us and share their views.
8 But the website does have tremendous
9 capability, both in terms of submission of
10 proposals and comments, and I encourage all
11 Floridians to make good use of that tool.
12 Representative Joseph, you're recognized.

13 MS. JOSEPH: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
14 While I understand and appreciate the website,
15 the reality is a lot of people do not,
16 necessarily, have access to a website or to
17 the internet, period, especially in
18 particularly in rural and certain parts of
19 urban areas that even though the internet
20 exists there, like, they, themselves, don't
21 have the internet at their house.

22 And that's something that we saw,
23 particularly during the pandemic, that we had
24 to address with, like, children, for example,
25 who didn't have access, so we got them access.

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1 I guess what I'm saying is, I hear what
2 you're saying about the bills, but the
3 redistricting process I would posit is much
4 more than a run of the mill bill, and it would
5 be really good if we could figure out a way to
6 contemplate some kind of, if not public hard
7 core participation, at least some kind of
8 interaction or education or some kind of
9 component where people who may not have access
10 to a website might be able to participate in
11 this process, even if it's just to let them
12 know what's going on.

13 And this is just a request, but it
14 would be good, like I understand what you're
15 saying with the website, no problem with the
16 website, just reiterating the request that I
17 believe you said you were going to talk to the
18 Chair Leek or somebody to see what we could do
19 about it.

20 So just in case that fell by the
21 wayside I'm just bringing it back up again,
22 please. Thank you.

23 MS. SIROIS: Thank you, Representative
24 Joseph. I hear you. We will continue those
25 conversations and I'll keep you posted. I do

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1 appreciate you bringing it up. Members, other
2 questions? All right. We'll go to
3 Representative Massullo and then to the
4 Ranking Member.

5 MR. MASSULLO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
6 Very good presentation, Mr. Poreda. Is there
7 any legal precedence to prioritize any of
8 those issues that you said tried to keep whole
9 like counties, Cities, etcetera when we're
10 actually reviewing these maps?

11 MR. SIROIS: Mr. Poreda, you're
12 recognized.

13 MR. POREDA: Thank you, Chairman. No,
14 so within the context of them all being on the
15 same tier, so a political, geographical,
16 boundaries they are all in the same tier of
17 consideration, so one is not put before the
18 other.

19 Though I will say that county
20 boundaries, the Supreme Court have said has
21 relied on more. They tend to change less than
22 even municipal lines, and they tend to be more
23 recognizable. And the Supreme Court has erred
24 to those. But no, within the one tier there
25 shouldn't be a priority made over any other.

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1 MS. SIROIS: Representative Massullo,
2 you're recognized for a follow up.

3 MR. MASSULLO: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
4 So then we won't prioritize them over any
5 other population area then, correct or not?

6 MR. SIROIS: You're recognized.

7 MR. POREDA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
8 I'm not sure if I understand the question.

9 MR. MASSULLO: As we look to draw these
10 maps, these news maps for these 28 new
11 Congressional Districts for our State, will we
12 prioritize the county lines individually above
13 any other aspect of geography?

14 MR. POREDA: We will prioritize them
15 like was -- like the Supreme Court has
16 suggested. So all the political and
17 geographical boundary lines will all be
18 considered among the same, and when you're
19 drawing districts it's all a balancing of all
20 of those standards, particularly the ones
21 along the same tier.

22 MR. MASSULLO: Okay. Thank you.

23 MR. SIROIS: Thank you. Ranking
24 Member?

25 MS. SKIDMORE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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1 Just a couple of comments at this point, if
2 that's appropriate. Just reiterating again
3 the concern that Congressional and Legislative
4 Committees meet at the same time, thereby
5 limiting the ability for people who are
6 interested in both processes to be able to
7 participate fully.

8 I know it's been raised, but just
9 again, making the point. I'm also request if
10 possible, I know things move fast and
11 furiously, but the lateness of the packet that
12 we received for today's meeting was difficult
13 for us to, you know, sort of dive into as it
14 gets a little more complicated. That's going
15 to be more difficult, and obviously as it get
16 a little more complicated, it might get even
17 later, so just giving us an opportunity to be
18 able to review the packet in advance.

19 And my last comment is in regard to
20 what I would refer to as prison
21 gerrymandering, and a request or a question as
22 to how the House is going to approach that
23 subject. I know that other states, 12 other
24 states, I believe, apply a correctness and
25 either count the person back at their last

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1 known address so that they're relocated to
2 where they actually should be counted, thereby
3 changing and correcting the counts.

4 If you look at a map of the prisons, I
5 think there are 108, you know, prison
6 facilities, not counting, you know, the
7 federal, which we don't have the accurate
8 counts of, but certainly we know where all the
9 state prison inmates are. And that skew the
10 counts in different districts, right, and
11 changes the numbers.

12 And so just as a point of interest for
13 our caucus, other states have made the change
14 to count the folks where they live or lived,
15 where they're going to go back to after they
16 complete their incarceration, and curious as
17 to what the process in the House might be.
18 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

19 MR. SIROIS: Thank you very much,
20 Ranking Member, for your comments. I will
21 look into the issue of when the materials are
22 available to members. On the issue related to
23 where inmates -- where inmates are counted.
24 The Census Bureau counts the inmates where
25 they reside on Census day. Pursuant to

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1 Florida law, we do not manipulate the Census
2 data when it arrives. So the data that we are
3 given is the data that we are going to use for
4 this process. You're recognized.

5 MS. SKIDMORE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
6 That -- understand that that's a choice that
7 we are making, but that it is not the rule,
8 and understanding that prisons do close. And
9 I think three prisons have closed in the State
10 of Florida this year.

11 And so I think that there is
12 opportunity for the State to -- or the House
13 to make the decision and that it is not a
14 mandate in any way that we cannot count them
15 where they live or will live.

16 MR. SIROIS: Thank you very much,
17 Ranking Member. And I hear what you're saying
18 and I'd point out that college dormitories,
19 nursing home, assisted living facilities, are
20 treated in the same respect. So you know,
21 that is similar in terms of how there treated
22 with the collection of that data on Census day
23 where those folks reside.

24 Members, any other questions? All
25 right. Thank you very much for your good

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1 questions, Members.

2 Members of the audience, do we have any
3 public speakers to provide testimony with us
4 today? Do we have any comment cards? All
5 right.

6 Well, Members, I want to thank you once
7 again for your time this afternoon, and I want
8 to thank you for your comments, Ranking
9 Members, always thank you for your comments
10 and your input as well.

11 Members, I hope you found today's
12 exercise to be another step in understanding
13 our Constitutional standards as well as a
14 little more about our great states and Florida
15 fun facts as well. And I look forward to
16 future meetings where we will dive into Tier 1
17 of our Constitutional Standards.

18 That concludes our meeting agenda for
19 today. Representative Trabulsy moves that we
20 rise without objection. Thank you.

21 (End of Video Recording.)

22

23

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1 CERTIFICATE

2 I, Wendy Sawyer, do hereby certify that I was
3 authorized to and transcribed the foregoing recorded
4 proceedings, and that the transcript is a true record, to
5 the best of my ability.

6 DATED this 9th day of March, 2023.

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24 WENDY SAWYER, CDLT
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