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Common Cause, et al.        )  
  )  
v.                                 ) 4:22-cv-109  
  )  
Cord Byrd                        )  

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TRANSCRIPTION OF VIDEO RECORDING  
LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS CONFERENCE  
APRIL 22, 2022

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DIGITAL EVIDENCE GROUP  
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Washington, D.C. 20036  
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1 APRIL 22, 2022

2 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Okay. Good morning  
3 everyone. I am a State Representative Kamia Brown.  
4 I represent House District 45 in the Florida House  
5 of Representatives. That area is the West Orange  
6 parts of area that includes the areas of Pine Hills,  
7 the Orlo Vista area. I have also the areas of  
8 Apopka, Ocoee, and parts of Winter Garden, as well  
9 as Rosemont and Lockhart.

10 I am the chair of the Florida Legislative  
11 Black Caucus. Standing with us today are members of  
12 the Florida Legislative Black Caucus, of the House  
13 and Senate. We have today -- they will be speaking  
14 along with, you know, Reverend, Dr. Spooner, who  
15 will be speaking on behalf of the constituents of  
16 District 10.

17 We have today standing in support with us,  
18 Tim Ayers of the Orange County Democratic Black  
19 Caucus. We have Wes Hodge, who is also here on  
20 behalf of the Orange County Democrats. We have also  
21 who have joined us in solidarity, State  
22 Representative Carlos Guillermo Smith, who also  
23 serves in the Florida House of Representatives.

24 Every 10 years, we have a chance to make  
25 sure the maps that we draw for electoral districts

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1 are fair, and so that Floridians get to elect the  
2 leaders of their choosing, not the other way around.  
3 These leaders then work on behalf of their  
4 constituents to ensure their communities have the  
5 resources they need for roads, schools, hospitals,  
6 and so much more. They work to ensure that the  
7 policies that govern our everyday lives are fair and  
8 provide everyone the opportunity to have a fair shot  
9 at the American dream. The stakes are high, and we  
10 have one chance every 10 years to get this right.  
11 This year is that chance, and Democrats came into  
12 the process with one goal in mind, to draw free and  
13 fair maps for all people in Florida, not just some.

14 A free and fair map was not what we were  
15 forced to accept up there in Tallahassee this week.  
16 It was a blatant attempt to rig districts to favor  
17 the Republican Party and to systematically  
18 disenfranchise Black voters and their voices in  
19 Congress.

20 The Governor bullied the Legislature into  
21 being used as his pawns. I've said it many times  
22 before that I am tired of his games, but this was  
23 never a game for Floridians. This was a direct  
24 attack, not only on black voices and voters, but  
25 also on democracy itself.

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1 American democracy functions with three  
2 branches of government, each meant to ensure checks  
3 and balances. And so the Governor disregards the  
4 decisions made by the courts, forces his own maps  
5 upon the Legislature, and vows to end their  
6 districts amendments, which were passed by the  
7 supreme majority or super majority of Floridians in  
8 2010. We are left now to prioritize the needs of  
9 one man over everyone else, and that's the Governor  
10 himself.

11 Floridians are struggling with a housing  
12 crisis, an environmental crisis, multiple health  
13 crises, and so much more, all in the midst of a  
14 pandemic. Meanwhile, the Governor focuses on  
15 starting culture wars and tearing down our democracy  
16 in his desire to be president.

17 In the wake of the Governor's political  
18 ambition, he has left destruction and division, and  
19 the ones who are hurting the most are from --that  
20 are hurt the most from this are Floridians, folks  
21 like you and like me. Since its establishment in  
22 1964, the Florida Legislative Black Caucus has  
23 fought for equity and equality throughout the state.  
24 The caucus exists for the same reasons that the  
25 Civil Rights Act exist, the same reason that Fair



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1 District's Amendment exists, because black people  
2 and black voices continue to be silenced, whether it  
3 be a protest, the ballot box, or in their own  
4 backyards.

5 Those of us who stand here today are able  
6 to be here because of the brave people who marched,  
7 bled, died, and sacrificed everything for dreams of  
8 a better tomorrow not just for black folks, but for  
9 every single American. We will not let their legacy  
10 be in vain. We will do as they did, stand up, stand  
11 out, and not let our voices be silenced. We will  
12 carry the torch, and especially in times like these,  
13 in times of darkness.

14 I think the Governor forgets that in a  
15 democracy, power does not go from the top to the  
16 bottom. It goes from the bottom up. Our power  
17 comes from the people, and when you try to diminish  
18 the voices of the people, you diminish the  
19 democratic freedoms and the ideals of this great  
20 country; and that is what it's built upon.

21 Every Floridian deserves to be seen, heard,  
22 and represented. This blatantly unconstitutional  
23 map was a slap in the face of democracy. And we  
24 refuse to stand by and just take that. We are going  
25 to keep causing good trouble, necessary trouble, and

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1 all of us together, not alone, will redeem the soul  
2 of America.

3 I will now turn it over to Senator Randolph  
4 Bracy.

5 SENATOR BRACY: Thank you all for being  
6 here.

7 Thank you, Representative Brown,  
8 Representative McCurdy, Representative Smith, and  
9 the rest of the folks that are here today.

10 What you have seen from the Governor has  
11 been thug-like behavior. He is clearly violating  
12 the law. Our jobs as legislators and his job as the  
13 Governor is to uphold the law, but he is  
14 intentionally breaking the law. He's breaking  
15 federal law, and he's breaking our own state  
16 constitution. And he has a Republican Legislature  
17 that he has bullied into joining him in this  
18 unconstitutional fight.

19 And so we're going to fight also. We're  
20 going to fight tooth and nail so that he knows, and  
21 this Republican majority knows that you cannot break  
22 the law. And the people of this state are counting  
23 on us to stand up with them, and so we will continue  
24 to do that. This fight will continue in court. We  
25 will keep speaking about it, and we will not let him

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1 get away with it.

2 So again, I thank my fellow legislators for  
3 standing up yesterday in the House, performing a  
4 sit-in, which was necessary to bring attention to  
5 what the Governor is doing. And so I applaud their  
6 efforts, and we will continue to fight. Thank you.

7 REPRESENTATIVE MCCURDY: Hey, good  
8 afternoon. I am Representative McCurdy. I  
9 represent House District 46. And obviously, I was  
10 one of the two representatives that began the sit-in  
11 -- the demonstration yesterday. And it was really  
12 an attempt to disrupt the process because the  
13 process is disrupting the lives of so many people in  
14 the state of Florida. And it seems the Governor's  
15 political ambition, his desire to be president, it's  
16 always on the backs of black people.

17 When you talk about the anti-protest bill  
18 or you talk about his mentions about CRT, it's  
19 always a direct attack on black people and this  
20 process that's going to craft the state and the  
21 power of this state for the next 10 years. It was  
22 too crucial for me. I felt personally to come back  
23 home and just tell my people we did all we could  
24 without trying to disrupt the process.

25 I also felt we should not have been even



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1 debating or voting on a map that wasn't drawn by the  
2 Legislature because it's the Legislature's  
3 constitutional duty to draw legislative and  
4 congressional or redistricting maps. So now the  
5 Governor is essentially grading his own work by  
6 being able to sign and pass maps that he drew.

7 Representative Brown, Senator Bracy, they  
8 mentioned it so eloquently. But this attack on  
9 black people, this attack on democracy was something  
10 that we cannot -- we got to stop playing defense,  
11 and we have to get on offense. We got to shed light  
12 to these things that they're trying to do in the  
13 dark, and that's what yesterday was a first attempt  
14 to do. So I have no regrets for our actions  
15 yesterday.

16 I'm proud that a lot of majority of my  
17 democratic colleagues joined us in solidarity on the  
18 floor and here back at home in our districts. And  
19 these press conferences are happening simultaneously  
20 across the state of Florida with black caucus  
21 members right now because we need to let people know  
22 that, yes.

23 We did what we did yesterday, but we need  
24 you all to stand with us. And how can you do that?  
25 That's by registering to vote. That's by being



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1 engaged, and that's by actually voting. And if  
2 we're going to stop this dictatorship style of  
3 governing in the state of Florida, it's up to the  
4 people. So there's only so much that we can do in  
5 the minority, but we're committed to do everything  
6 that we can.

7 And my message for Tallahassee is I'll see  
8 you in May.

9 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: At this time, we'll  
10 call up Dr. Spooney.

11 DR. SPOONEY: Good Morning. The Reverend  
12 Dr. Martin Luther King once said, "On some  
13 positions, cowardice asks the question: is it  
14 expedient? Expedience asks the question: is it  
15 politic? Vanity asks the question: is it popular?  
16 Conscience asks the question: is it right?"

17 There comes a time when we must take a  
18 position that is neither safe nor politic, nor  
19 popular, but he must do it because his conscience  
20 tells him or her that it's right. In other words,  
21 we ought to be people, men and women of integrity,  
22 people who are honest and who will adhere to a sense  
23 of dignity. We are always to do good works. I'm  
24 here today because the church is called to be  
25 engaged. The church is called to lend voice, moral

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1 authority, resources, and an organized effort to  
2 resist evil and to reorder, if necessary, common  
3 life so that the most vulnerable can be protected.

4 I'm not a politician. I'm just a preacher.  
5 I'm a man of faith. And as a man of faith, I am  
6 adamantly opposed to the government's overreach and  
7 the map that Governor DeSantis has forced down the  
8 throat of the state of Florida, the Florida  
9 Legislature, and consequently, down the throat of  
10 the people of Florida.

11 And I have today the authorization to state  
12 that the Florida General Baptist Convention, the  
13 largest African-American Baptist Convention in the  
14 state of Florida, consisting of over 600 churches,  
15 also is adamantly opposed to this map. We are under  
16 the leadership of Dr. C.P. Preston, by the way.

17 We know that this map is not fair. We  
18 believe in fair representation. We believe in the  
19 democratic process, and we believe that the majority  
20 rules. We understand, unequivocally, that this  
21 plot, this devious plan is nothing more than a  
22 strategy to weaken the voice of black Americans in  
23 the state of Florida through what I call,  
24 demographic manipulation.

25 Democracy is based on the concept of

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1 majority rule, and spreading the black vote across  
2 congressional districts in the manner indicated in  
3 these maps, which I have looked at over and over and  
4 over, will make black people the minority in the  
5 congressional Districts 10 and 5. Therefore, our  
6 voices are technically being silenced.

7 In essence, this map is a violation of our  
8 constitutional rights and the word of God, which  
9 states, "For I was hungry, and you gave me food. I  
10 was thirsty, and you gave me drink. I was a  
11 stranger, and you took me in. I was naked, and you  
12 clothed me. I was sick, and you visited me. I was  
13 in prison, and you came to me. Assuredly, I say to  
14 you, in much as you did to one of these -- to the  
15 least of one of these my brother, and you do it to  
16 me."

17 In other words, your faith -- for all of  
18 those legislators who claim to be men and women of  
19 faith, your faith ought to always guide you to do  
20 the right thing. Disenfranchising and blocking the  
21 right to vote for hundreds of thousands of black  
22 Americans just so that you can stay in power is not  
23 the right thing to do.

24 This map is gerrymandering, and I'm not a  
25 politician. I'm not the smartest man in the world,



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1 but I can look at it and see that it is  
2 gerrymandering at its best. And it is an attack on  
3 democracy as it already has been stated, just like  
4 the invasion of the Capitol in January was an attack  
5 on democracy.

6 And the legislators who voted for this map  
7 know that it will eliminate any possibility of  
8 American -- black Americans to be elected from the  
9 state of Florida to serve in the United States  
10 Congress from these two districts. They ought to be  
11 ashamed of themselves, and they ought to understand  
12 that they really have a lack of integrity for bowing  
13 to the bully.

14 I actually heard one legislator on the news  
15 compare the protests of the black caucus yesterday  
16 in the House of Representative to be likened to that  
17 of the riot that was in Washington DC. That's  
18 absolutely unbelievable for those words to even be  
19 uttered. Isaiah 1, in 17, tells us, "Learn to do  
20 good. Seek justice. Correct oppression. Bring  
21 justice to the fatherless, and please the widows'  
22 cause."

23 I applaud the state legislators of the  
24 black caucus and from Orange County as they stand  
25 against this injustice. As a matter of fact, I just



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1 stopped by here to tell you -- in the words of a  
2 black preacher, I just stopped by to tell you today  
3 to let all those who voted on this injustice,  
4 whether you black or white, you know, God hates  
5 injustice.

6 Psalms 89:14 tells me that. It tells us  
7 that, "God rules his world, and he rules it justly."  
8 He rules it in justice. It says, "Righteousness and  
9 justice are the foundation of your throne.  
10 Steadfast love and faithfulness go before you." God  
11 delegates authority. He delegates responsibility,  
12 and he gives that to us as human beings so that we  
13 can bring it and make just decisions in his image.  
14 And he expects us to do the same.

15 I tell you, social justice is giving people  
16 what they are due, especially with respect to the  
17 administration of the law. It is the fair  
18 distribution of economic means, educational  
19 prospects, political influence, and many other  
20 opportunities for the community. Any failure to do  
21 so is a grave injustice. As a matter of fact, in  
22 the Old Testament, it brought the threat of God to  
23 those who did that.

24 Just a word, Ron DeSantis, if you are  
25 listening, don't sign this bill. Be fair to the

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1 people and not just to your political party. Be  
2 fair and ask yourself, as a Christian, what would  
3 Jesus do, because the eyes of the Lord are on you.  
4 We will vote. We will begin to move forward to get  
5 as many people registered to vote so that our rights  
6 can still be protected. We'll fight this to the  
7 bitter end, because it's the right thing to do. God  
8 bless you.

9 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: At this time, we  
10 will take questions.

11 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: All right, ma'am.  
12 Can you talk about the impact that this new map will  
13 have on voters' representation?

14 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Well, what this map  
15 actually shows is you're talking about a decrease of  
16 50 percent of the black representation here in  
17 Florida. Originally, there were four that were  
18 found and found by the courts. There were four  
19 seats by four minority seats, and now with this map,  
20 it diminishes it to two. Again, what we're doing by  
21 diminishing it is really silencing the folks. And  
22 again, part of those silences means a lack of  
23 resources to those communities.

24 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: And even when you look  
25 at Democrats as a whole, Democrats or Republicans or

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1 registered voters are pretty close in terms of  
2 numbers in the state of Florida. How does this map  
3 really adjust the democratic voice in general?

4 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Well, this map isn't  
5 the beginning of silencing those voices. When you  
6 look at since this man has been in office, each  
7 year, we have dealt with a bill that silences  
8 Democrats and black people, right. You've seen it  
9 with the, now, the unnecessary police force bill.  
10 We've seen that back during Bloody Sunday. And so  
11 many of our uncles, our parents, you know, our  
12 family members have seen where those leaders choose  
13 to use police as threats and to guard voting boxes.  
14 You've seen it also --

15 SENATOR BRACY: Can I add?

16 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Give me a second.

17 We've seen it also with the ballot box  
18 bill. We've seen them continuously. There is an  
19 elections bill that constantly is an attack  
20 specifically on black voices, and we've had enough.

21 Senator Bracy, do you want to add to that?

22 SENATOR BRACY: To answer your question,  
23 Republicans represent 36 percent of the state, but  
24 under these maps, they will represent 70 percent of  
25 the state. It's clearly gerrymandered, and it's



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1 clearly unconstitutional.

2 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Do you feel like the  
3 Governor and the Republican legislators are  
4 underestimating your resolve?

5 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Absolutely. I think  
6 you're looking at because -- and we've heard about  
7 it, you know. Republicans are continuously  
8 registering people to vote. But again, you have  
9 folks that are already on the rolls, and it is  
10 important for us to make sure those folks get out to  
11 the polls. It would not -- if our vote was not  
12 power and if it wasn't worth anything, you wouldn't  
13 continue to attack it.

14 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: You mentioned that  
15 you will continue fighting. Obviously, this still  
16 needs to go to the Governor's desk for his  
17 signature. But what is the next step in the plan?

18 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Well, that next step  
19 is litigation. You have fair districts. You have  
20 quite a few folks that are preparing again to  
21 litigate this unconstitutional map. In the  
22 meantime, you have various groups and organizations  
23 that do this great work, boots on the ground, that  
24 are looking to mobilize and make sure we have a  
25 great turnout.



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1 REPRESENTATIVE MCCURDY: Thank you. Can I  
2 add to that? Yeah. Obviously, we're not the only  
3 ones that know that the next step is litigation  
4 because the Governor put a million dollar  
5 appropriation in this bill in anticipation of  
6 litigation. So that tells you right there, it was a  
7 terrible bill to begin with, and it should not have  
8 been something that we debated or worked on in this  
9 special session, where we have individuals whose  
10 rent is increasing. We have property insurance that  
11 we delayed to May, hopefully. But these are issues  
12 that we could have addressed right now, that we  
13 actually sent letters to the Secretary of the State,  
14 asking for an expansion of the call. But actually,  
15 while we were commuting to Tallahassee, he expanded  
16 a call, not for those issues, but to fight Mickey  
17 Mouse.

18 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I know the  
19 (indiscernible) before these districts opens, it's  
20 just a matter of months. Will we have kind of  
21 resolution with litigating in time for that?

22 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: That will be up to  
23 the courts. Right now, that's in limbo as to what  
24 really -- if we do have time for it. But what we  
25 are looking forward to is the litigation that will

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1 come along with these maps and for them to overturn  
2 them, and in hopes draw some maps for us.

3 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Is that something  
4 you're worried about, that that litigation, that  
5 this won't go through in time to make that?

6 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Definitely, we are  
7 concerned. You know, everyone has prepared for this  
8 moment and have prepared to make sure we get folks  
9 to turn out during these mid-term elections and to  
10 have to come and redo this thing. It causes  
11 problems, but also it costs taxpayers to not -- for  
12 us to not do our job.

13 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: So there are other  
14 states with Democrat majorities, New York, Illinois,  
15 that have redrawn their maps that arguably removed  
16 Republican representation. Is that wrong too, or  
17 why is this different?

18 SENATOR BRACY: They drew.

19 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Drawing  
20 unconstitutional maps are wrong, period, point  
21 blank.

22 SENATOR BRACY: Well --

23 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I have a question about  
24 the sit-in --

25 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Go ahead.

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1 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: -- protest. Was that  
2 spontaneous, or you feel like all of your democratic  
3 colleagues support you in the decision to make that  
4 step -- or take that step?

5 REPRESENTATIVE MCCURDY: Myself and  
6 Representative Nixon, we spoke about it. Obviously,  
7 we had shirts on, so it couldn't have been this  
8 spontaneous, right?

9 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Well, for us, other  
10 members not to be aware.

11 SENATOR BRACY: For others -- yeah. And we  
12 talked about just the two of us, so we did not alarm  
13 other members. It was spontaneous for not just  
14 members of the Republican party, but for also of our  
15 own caucus because we felt it was up to us.

16 First of all, I live in CD 10. I represent  
17 CD 10. It's in my House district. Representative  
18 Nixon represents and lives in CD 5. So we felt a  
19 direct connection to these issues. The Senate had  
20 already gone home, and this was our final attempt to  
21 shed some light on this issue. And that's why we  
22 did it.

23 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: And also, just, you  
24 know, from a leadership and democratic perspective,  
25 you know, our members have been frustrated



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1 throughout this entire process. It has not been --  
2 not only are these maps unconstitutional, and not  
3 only did you bring us back up here to redo maps and  
4 then now say that we're using someone else's maps,  
5 the process was fastened, you know. There were time  
6 limits. Here it is, you're talking about affecting  
7 people's lives, right, and you're talking about only  
8 providing two hours after you noticed the bill a  
9 couple hours before or an hour, and then you give  
10 someone two hours. So questions were never let's  
11 talk about this whole process. I'm on that  
12 committee, and members were not able to ask all the  
13 questions they need to fully vet someone else's map  
14 that shouldn't even be at my desk to vote on in the  
15 first place.

16 SENATOR BRACY: That's right.

17 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Okay. There were  
18 folks that have come up from Orlando, from our  
19 districts, Jacksonville, those districts that were  
20 affected by these maps. And not only were they  
21 unable to speak, they were -- well, they were able  
22 to speak, let me be clear. They were able to speak,  
23 but they were placed on a time of one minute to  
24 speak and to get out whatever they needed to get out  
25 to the members that they put in office. That is a



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1 serious problem to me. And then we have to get on  
2 the floor and you have 60 minutes -- you have an  
3 hour for 40-plus members to sit and debate about  
4 this bill? That's not fair. And so with that comes  
5 frustration.

6 And again, this is something that has  
7 continuously happened when it has come to huge  
8 issues like this, right, that affects African-  
9 Americans tremendously. Quit silencing us. And  
10 then it probably broke the rules, but for many of  
11 our members, they felt that it was necessary.

12 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: And your response or  
13 anyone's response from the group to Rep. Fine and  
14 other Republicans from calling what happened  
15 yesterday an insurrection; what's your response to  
16 that use of language?

17 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Well, first off, I  
18 would ask them to look at the definition of  
19 insurrection. That's the first thing. Last time I  
20 checked, I was invited by the constituents that  
21 elected me into that building just the same way  
22 Representative McCurdy was also placed in there by  
23 his constituents. And so there is far from that.  
24 What that was is a demonstration of civil  
25 disobedience. I will give you that. But if you

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1 look at the past of African-Americans and how we  
2 were able to move forward in this country, that is  
3 what it took for us to be treated halfway as equal.

4 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: And in the court of  
5 public opinion, do you think you're harmed at all by  
6 it?

7 REPRESENTATIVE MCCURDY: No.

8 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Harm? What harm?

9 REPRESENTATIVE MCCURDY: Sure. That's  
10 enough.

11 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Thank you for being  
12 here. And it's important that you all are here,  
13 because, again, folks are not really being able --  
14 folks are not paying attention to really what's  
15 going on in Tallahassee, and how there are  
16 continuous bills that attack our democracy.

17 REPRESENTATIVE MCCURDY: Yeah.

18 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: This is bigger than  
19 partisan politics. We're talking about human lives.  
20 You have an administration that has failed  
21 Floridians, period.

22 You have folks that again -- we have a  
23 housing crisis. What have we done with that? We  
24 have had hundreds of million dollars brought here to  
25 Florida. How has that helped folks get back to

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1 work, to stay in their homes?

2 You have where the mortgage crisis and  
3 folks have often asked for assistance. I have  
4 hundreds of issues that sit in my office that can't  
5 get attention because the State has them on hold.  
6 That is what his job should be doing, is making sure  
7 folks all have the assistance so that they are able  
8 to live a safe, healthy, and prosperous life. That  
9 should be our focus every time we go to Tallahassee,  
10 not Mickey Mouse and what he's doing because he made  
11 someone upset?

12 We have to stop. We have to really stop  
13 this partisan politics and think about the  
14 Floridians, the everyday Floridians that these types  
15 of laws are hurting.

16 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: In that light,  
17 Representative, and do you think this whole special  
18 --

19 (Cross talk)

20 SENATOR BRACY: (Indiscernible) And then  
21 I'm going to say something.

22 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: -- dissolving a  
23 special district, is that overshadowing a more, in  
24 your opinion, important issue with regarding  
25 redistricting or senator, whoever would --



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1                   REPRENSATIVE MCCURDY: What was your  
2 question?

3                   UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I'm just saying,  
4 obviously, a lot of focus this week has been on the  
5 Reedy Creek (indiscernible).

6                   SENATOR BRACE: Uh-huh (affirmative).

7                   UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Is that, in your  
8 opinion, overshadowing more important issues?

9                   SENATOR BROWN: That was a part of the  
10 reason for the demonstration yesterday. We couldn't  
11 let this redistricting be drowned out by Disney  
12 World and the Governor's fight with Disney World.  
13 This is too important. This is going to craft the  
14 next 10 years in this state. And you talk about the  
15 slashing of African-American representation by 50  
16 percent.

17                   It was too important for us to come back  
18 home and people outside not knowing what they're  
19 trying to do to us in Tallahassee. And so that is  
20 the -- we knew we weren't going to change the  
21 outcome of the vote in those chambers yesterday.  
22 The purpose for that was to enlighten and awaken the  
23 public to know there's an election a few months  
24 away, and we don't have to continue like this, you  
25 know.

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1           SENATOR BRACY: Can I say I believe that  
2 the Reedy Creek bill and dealing with Disney was  
3 designed -- the timing was designed that way to  
4 overshadow what he was doing with the maps. I think  
5 that was clear. But to go back to answer your  
6 question about Democrats possibly gerrymandering in  
7 other districts, this was a bipartisan map that we  
8 passed only three weeks ago. Republicans and  
9 Democrats in both chambers agreed to this. So to  
10 now have a partisan map is unconstitutional, and it  
11 goes against our fair district's amendment.

12           And to answer your question about what's  
13 the next step, you know, I was on a call yesterday  
14 where not only are people registering, but there are  
15 people so fired up that they want to start protests.  
16 You're going to start seeing people in the street  
17 because it has gotten to that point. He has been so  
18 vindictive, so aggressive toward people of color,  
19 LGBTQ folks. I mean, the list doesn't stop. And so  
20 -- women -- and people are fed up. And so I think  
21 not only are we going to deal with it in the ballot  
22 box, but people are going to take to the streets.  
23 And so this is the environment he's created.

24           UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: And since we're  
25 touching on Reedy Creek, if I could just ask one

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1 question on that to whoever would like to address it  
2 of: just why you think the legislation was drafted  
3 in a way so that special districts wouldn't be able  
4 to go on it in referendum?

5 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: You want to --

6 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: I can talk on that.

7 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Since she wants  
8 (indiscernible).

9 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: So on the Reedy  
10 Creek Bill, look, the reality is that they drew --  
11 they passed a law that is in conflict with existing  
12 law that says that a majority of the landowners at  
13 Reedy Creek have to approve the dissolution of their  
14 district. The Legislature doesn't have the  
15 authority to do it.

16 And I also just want to point out the  
17 tremendous impact that that bill will have on Orange  
18 County and Osceola County taxpayers. Disney has a  
19 billion dollars' worth of bonds and debts that will  
20 become immediately payable when it dissolves at a  
21 date certain, when the district dissolves at a date  
22 certain. And then Orange County and Osceola County  
23 taxpayers are going to be left holding the back.  
24 And there's also 800 employees of the Reedy Creek  
25 District, about 400 that work for the District



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1 directly as government employees and another 400 who  
2 are utility workers for the Reedy Creek District.  
3 Their jobs will be abolished when this ends.

4 But I just want to point out that it speaks  
5 to -- there's a common theme between the  
6 authoritarian consolidation of power by diluting the  
7 black vote in Florida that they did through these  
8 congressional maps and these other authoritarian  
9 moves to use the full power of the State to punish  
10 any individual or business that speaks out against  
11 their extreme right wing agenda.

12 RERESENTATIVE MCCURDY: Yeah.

13 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: People should be  
14 very concerned, if not frightened, about the  
15 escalation of how the Governor and Republicans are  
16 using their power to go after individuals and  
17 businesses who challenge their agenda in the so-  
18 called free state of Florida.

19 And I also just want to say thank you to  
20 Chair Brown for inviting me to be here with the  
21 black caucus in solidarity, because I believe very  
22 strongly that an attack on one of us is an attack on  
23 all of us.

24 And that's why it's important for other  
25 members of the Legislature and other communities to

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1 stand together because they're coming after us one  
2 by one by one. And that's why I think it's  
3 important that we stand together against these  
4 attacks. So thank you.

5 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: We'll take one more  
6 question. All right.

7 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Question for Senator  
8 Bracy.

9 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Okay.

10 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Does this change your  
11 thinking in terms of running for Congress, your  
12 political future at all, the maps that were put by  
13 the Legislature?

14 SENATOR BRACY: Well, currently I'm still  
15 in the race to run for that district, but it  
16 obviously impacts my decision. I mean, you're  
17 talking about a district that was mostly minority,  
18 and it is protected that way federally because of  
19 years, decades of voter suppression, and diluting  
20 minority vote. And so, of course, it impacts my  
21 decision, but I'm still in this race to run for  
22 Congress. And so -- but it's deeply troubling.

23 I mean, if you think about it, where I live  
24 in Ocoee, they're going from voting for the first  
25 African-American, possible vice presidential

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1 candidate, to now their representative possibly  
2 being Anthony Sabatini.

3 So no. I just want you to get the contrast  
4 of what this bill is actually going to do. So that  
5 most likely will be their representative in  
6 Congress, a group of black people in West Orange  
7 County. So I just wanted you to get the impact of  
8 what this is actually doing.

9 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Thank you so much.

10 (END OF VIDEO RECORDING)

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1 CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIPTIONIST

2 I certify that the foregoing is a true and  
3 accurate transcript of the digital recording provided  
4 to me in this matter.

5 I do further certify that I am neither a  
6 relative, nor employee, nor attorney of any of the  
7 parties to this action, and that I am not financially  
8 interested in the action.

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Julie Thompson, CET-1036

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