

1/11/2022

House State Legislative Redistricting Subcommittee

Audio Transcription

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House State Legislative Redistricting Subcommittee  
Transcription of Audio File  
January 11, 2022

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1 (Recording begins)

2 CHAIR BYRD: The State Legislative  
3 Redistricting Subcommittee will come to order.

4 Sam, please call the roll.

5 THE CLERK: Chair Byrd.

6 CHAIR BYRD: Here.

7 THE CLERK: Vice-Chair Robinson.

8 VICE-CHAIR ROBINSON: Here.

9 THE CLERK: Ranking Member Daley.

10 RANKING MEMBER DALEY: Here.

11 THE CLERK: Representatives Arrington.

12 REPRESENTATIVE ARRINGTON: Here.

13 THE CLERK: Barnaby, excused.

14 Bell?

15 REPRESENTATIVE BELL: Here.

16 THE CLERK: Brannan.

17 UNIDENTIFIED: Here.

18 THE CLERK: Brannan.

19 REPRESENTATIVE BRANNAN: Here.

20 THE CLERK: Chambliss.

21 REPRESENTATIVE CHAMBLISS: Here.

22 THE CLERK: Garrison.

23 REPRESENTATIVE GARRISON: Here.

24 THE CLERK: Hart.

25 REPRESENTATIVE HART: Here.

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1 THE CLERK: Hawkins.  
2 REPRESENTATIVE HAWKINS: Here.  
3 THE CLERK: Maney.  
4 REPRESENTATIVE MANEY: Here.  
5 THE CLERK: McClain.  
6 REPRESENTATIVE MCCLAIN: Here.  
7 THE CLERK: Melo, excused.  
8 Mooney.  
9 REPRESENTATIVE MOONEY: Here.  
10 THE CLERK: Persons-Mulicka.  
11 REPRESENTATIVE PERSONS-MULICKA: Here.  
12 THE CLERK: Salsman.  
13 REPRESENTATIVE SALSMAN: Here.  
14 THE CLERK: Snyder.  
15 REPRESENTATIVE SNYDER: Here.  
16 THE CLERK: Tant.  
17 REPRESENTATIVE TANT: Here.  
18 THE CLERK: Valdes.  
19 REPRESENTATIVE VALDES: Present.  
20 THE CLERK: Woodson.  
21 REPRESENTATIVE WOODSON: Here.  
22 THE CLERK: Quorum is present, Mr. Chair.  
23 CHAIR BYRD: Thank you, Sam.  
24 Members, a few reminders before we begin.  
25 Please silence all electronic devices, and if you are

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1 here today to give public testimony, please take time  
2 now to fill out an appearance form and turn it into the  
3 sergeant's staff. I'd also ask everyone to please  
4 silence any electronic devices and turn on your  
5 microphone when you're speaking and off when you are  
6 finished.

7 Members, welcome to the first day of regular  
8 session and our first subcommittee meeting of the new  
9 year. I'm excited for this next stage of our  
10 redistricting cycle.

11 For those of you who may be returning -- or  
12 tuning in for the first time, I would like to recap our  
13 progress. Throughout interim committee weeks, this  
14 Committee took time to diligently educate members and  
15 the public on the constitutional and legal requirements  
16 for redistricting, debuted and demonstrated a tailored  
17 map drawing application that lives on the legislature's  
18 joint redistricting website and is available for any  
19 individual to use, and end capped the year with a  
20 workshop of an initial round of maps to tangibly  
21 illustrate different policy choices that will come  
22 before this Committee for a vote.

23 For our first meeting of the regular session,  
24 Chair Leek and I have chosen to devote it solely to  
25 hearing public testimony. Contrary to some comments

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1 I've heard since this meeting's agenda was announced,  
2 I'd like to point out that this is actually the  
3 Committee's 6th opportunity to hear public testimony,  
4 along with the continuous ability to provide and view  
5 public input on floridaredistricting.gov.

6 Once we conclude the public testimony today,  
7 Committee members should plan to shift their focus to  
8 reviewing and preparing to review and vote on our  
9 formal Committee work product, which will be debuted in  
10 the near future.

11 Ranking Member Daley, I understand you sent a  
12 letter at the end of last week. We are working through  
13 that letter, but I wanted to make sure to acknowledge  
14 publicly that we received it, and we thank you for  
15 sending your questions to the Committee.

16 All of the educational efforts we've  
17 undertaken as a Committee will have prepared us to  
18 appropriately review, understand, and ultimately vote  
19 on a work product that will then move on to the full  
20 Redistricting Committee.

21 We're now going to move into the purpose of  
22 today's meeting, which is public comment. I would  
23 remind all speakers to keep their comments on topic and  
24 to the extent your comments align with our  
25 constitutional standards would be beneficial, as the

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1 maps we must ultimately vote on have to be in alignment  
2 with these standards. And as always, please address  
3 your questions through the Chair.

4 First up, we have Kathy Bryant, Marion County  
5 Board of County Commissioners.

6 Commissioner Bryant, welcome. You are  
7 recognized.

8 KATHY BRYANT: Good afternoon, Chair Byrd and  
9 committee members. I'm Marion County Commissioner  
10 Kathy Bryant.

11 First, I would like to thank the Committee  
12 for their work on redistricting and bring to your  
13 attention some concerns that Marion County has about  
14 the proposed redistricting maps. Marion County's  
15 identity is defined by our historic areas, such as,  
16 first and foremost, Fort King, which was the first  
17 county seat of Marion County, as well as being the  
18 county seat when Marion County was recognized by the  
19 State of Florida.

20 Secondly, but just as important, Silver  
21 Springs, which is a major tourist attraction and draws  
22 hundreds and thousands -- or I'm sorry -- hundreds of  
23 thousands of visitors to Marion County each year, not  
24 to mention Orange Springs, Juniper Springs, Fort McCoy,  
25 Lake Weir, Lake Kerr, Salt Springs, and the Ocala

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1 National Forest.

2 With that said, the proposed redistricting of  
3 Marion County could possibly affect Marion County's  
4 minority representation. By dividing the city of  
5 Ocala, breaking apart the Ocala National Forest and  
6 Marion County springs areas, our minority population  
7 would be splintered into small pieces across several  
8 districts, which could lead to these groups having less  
9 of an impact on any single election.

10 Additionally, passing these areas to  
11 surrounding counties will be a disservice to these  
12 communities and will reduce the dedicated attention  
13 necessary for maintaining, promoting, and protecting  
14 our water resources, economic vitality, and the needs  
15 and interests of our residents and businesses.

16 I am requesting the Committee pay special  
17 attention to House Districts 20 and 27 and not break  
18 Marion County lines, not divide the city of Ocala, and  
19 ensure that the Ocala National Forest and its springs  
20 remain whole.

21 It would be a detriment to our County if  
22 voters in Alachua, Putnam, or Volusia Counties overly  
23 influenced the decisions in these areas.

24 Thank you so much for your time today. We  
25 respectfully request that the redistricting lines

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1 follow the county lines so that Marion County citizens  
2 are fairly represented at the state level. And again,  
3 thank you for your time today.

4 CHAIR BYRD: Thank you, Commissioner Bryant,  
5 for being with us.

6 COMMISSIONER BRYANT: Thank you.

7 CHAIR BYRD: Appreciate that. All right.  
8 Next up we have Ralph Thomas, Wakulla County Board of  
9 County Commissioners.

10 Commissioner Thomas, you're recognized.  
11 Welcome. Thank you.

12 COMMISSIONER THOMAS: Thank you,  
13 Mr. Chairman. Thank you, committee members. My name  
14 is Ralph Thomas. I'm a County Commissioner in Wakulla  
15 County.

16 We adopted a resolution in Wakulla County,  
17 specifically in support of Map H007. House District 7,  
18 as you know, is the largest geographical district in  
19 the state, nine counties. It's always been  
20 historically a very rural district, some of the, you  
21 know, smallest and poorest cities and counties in the  
22 state. And we just believe that in order for us to  
23 continue to have a voice in Tallahassee, the best  
24 option is Map 7 so we can maintain the rural nature of  
25 that district.



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1 Bringing us into Map 5 would force us to  
2 compete with, you know, very important issues of urban  
3 Tallahassee, but although important, completely  
4 different than the issues we have to deal with in rural  
5 North Florida. And so we definitely would appreciate  
6 your support of Map 7. Thank you very much.

7 CHAIR BYRD: Thank you, Commissioner Thomas.

8 Is there anyone else from the public wishing  
9 to address the Committee today? Anyone else? Speak  
10 now or forever hold your peace.

11 All right. Then, members, this concludes our  
12 business.

13 Yes. Ranking Member Daley, for what purpose  
14 do you ask a question?

15 RANKING MEMBER DALEY: Sorry, Chair. You  
16 know, my only point in speaking today, and I thank you  
17 for the time -- for the opportunity for the public to  
18 weigh in.

19 I think my concern is there were first couple  
20 meetings of this Committee that coincided with the  
21 congressional map committee. We got away from that for  
22 a meeting or two, and now we seem to be back at it. So  
23 I can't help but wonder if there are folks who are  
24 currently in the Congressional Redistricting Committee  
25 that was noticed at the same exact time that are not

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1 here today. So in the future, if we could just make  
2 sure that we put them at separate times. I'd like to  
3 reiterate that request. Again. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

4 CHAIR BYRD: Thank you. And I'll be certain  
5 to pass on that -- your comments to Chair Leek when we  
6 schedule in the future.

7 So I'd like to thank all members of the  
8 public that traveled here today to share your thoughts  
9 on the workshop maps and the redistricting process. I  
10 look forward to this next stage of our process, and  
11 with that, I hope everyone has a great session. This  
12 concludes our Committee agenda for today.

13 And with that, Representative Woodson moves  
14 we rise. Meeting is adjourned.

15 (Recording ends)

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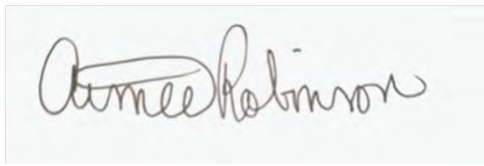
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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, Aim e Robinson, court-approved  
transcriber, hereby certify that the foregoing is a  
correct transcript from the official electronic sound  
recording of the proceedings in the above-entitled  
matter.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Aim e Robinson". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

AIM E ROBINSON, AAERT CET 761

DATE: July 17, 2024