

**Senate Committee on Reapportionment
October 18, 2021**

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1 Ray Rodrigues: The Committee on Reapportionment will now come to order. Dana
2 please call the role.

3 Dana: Chair Rodrigues.

4 Ray Rodrigues: Here.

5 Dana: Vice-Chair Broxson.

6 Doug Broxson: Here.

7 Dana: Senator Bean?

8 Ben Bean: Here.

9 Dana: Senator Bracy? Senator Bradley? Senator Burgess?

10 Danny Burgess: Here.

11 Dana: Senator Gibson?

12 Audrey Gibson: Here.

13 Dana: Senator Harrell?

14 Gayle Harrell: Here.

15 Dana: Senator Rodriguez? Senator Rouson

16 Darryl Rouson: Here.

17 Dana: Senator Stargel? Senator Stewart? A quorum is present, Mr. Chair.

18 Ray Rodrigues: Thank you. I would ask that all Senators and members of the public to
19 please take this opportunity to silence all of your electronic devices and would also point out that
20 COVID-19 precautions are in place. Anyone wishing to testify before the committee must fill out
21 an appearance card and hand it to a member of the sergeant's office. Should you waive your
22 speaking time, your position will be read into the record.

23 Senators, as I read last week, the purpose of today's meeting is to provide our staff with

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1 directives and instructions to begin drawing legislative and congressional redistricting plans for
2 workshopping at the select subcommittee level. At our first two meetings, I think we had very
3 productive discussions and informative presentations from both staff and counsel. We've covered
4 the basics, learned the terminology, viewed the timeline, understood the data, went over the
5 website, reviewed the map-drawing application, have been briefed on the applicable federal and
6 state laws, and reviewed the caselaw that will guide this process. Aside from public comments,
7 for which we will continue to reserve time at each of our meetings, the only item on our agenda
8 today is the discussion of the map-drawing and the directives to staff.

9 Members, after considering the materials presented to us and consulting with counsel,
10 both staff counsel and our Senate counsel I have prepared a set of directives for staff that we will
11 discuss today. Should the committee arrive at a consensus and agree with the proposal, it is my
12 intention to memorialize the directives in a memo to the staff, which will be sent out later this
13 afternoon. After walking through my proposal, I can take questions from members and then we
14 will have an opportunity for discussion. While there will not be a roll call vote on the directives,
15 members of the committee will have the opportunity to voice their objection, and any objections
16 will be noted for the record. That said, I'm hoping we can unanimously arrive at a consensus
17 since this proposal is based on the criteria that has been outlined in the Constitution as it was
18 adopted by our constituents. So, if you have any questions or need clarification, then this meeting
19 today is the time to bring it up.

20 Members, now that we have reviewed the census data, the features of the map-drawing
21 application, and the relevant criteria, history, and legal standards, I believe we have the proper
22 foundation upon which to direct staff to produce a series of maps for our consideration. First and
23 foremost, I propose that we direct staff to the plain language of the Constitution, federal law, and

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1 the judicial precedents that exists today in regards to that language. The Constitution sets forth
2 two tiers of redistricting standards and provides that the Tier Two standards apply unless
3 complying with them would conflict with the Tier One standards or conflict with federal law. The
4 Tier One standards control in the event of a conflict with any Tier Two standard, but in all other
5 circumstances the Tier Two standards must control the drawing of the lines – the district lines.

6 I therefore propose that we direct staff to comply with the objective criteria outlined in
7 Tier Two of Article III, Sections 20 and 21 of the Florida Constitution, balancing them in a
8 manner that does not establish any priority of one standard over another, unless complying with
9 the Tier Two standards would conflict with the Tier One standards or federal law. In accordance
10 with Tier Two standards of the constitutional requirements, we – we'll get to questions in a
11 moment, Senator. In accordance with the Tier Two standards of the constitutional requirements
12 related to equal population – actually no, let's stop here. Let's take the questions as we go
13 through each of these. Senator Gibson you are recognized.

14 Audrey Gibson: Thank you Mr. Chair. So, we're not going to have anything in writing of
15 your proposal, it's just going to be read to us?

16 Ray Rodrigues: Staff do we have it in writing, has it been set up?

17 Audrey Gibson: Can we read as you talk?

18 Ray Rodrigues: Yes, distribute please.

19 Audrey Gibson: Thank you.

20 Ray Rodrigues: Are there any other questions on the first part? You're recognized.

21 Audrey Gibson: Thank you Mr. Chair. Can staff remind us again the presentation where
22 the constitutional discussion is on the tiers? I know we did it so it's – is it memorialized
23 somewhere in here or do I need to call my staff for the documents, the previous documents.

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1 Ray Rodrigues: Are you asking for what we went over in our previous meeting?

2 Audrey Gibson: Yes. Is that –

3 Ray Rodrigues: I don't know that we had brought that here today.

4 Audrey Gibson: No, okay, I'll just call them.

5 Ray Rodrigues: But, if you go to the website, I know that we have that on our committee
6 page if you want to pull it up and review it.

7 Audrey Gibson: Thank you Mr. Chair.

8 Ray Rodrigues: Staff will get with you on that. Are there any other questions on the first
9 part we've just discussed? Next, in accordance with the Tier Two standard of constitutional
10 requirements related to equal population, I recommend that we direct staff to prepare Senate
11 plans with district population deviations not to exceed 1% of the ideal population, 538,455
12 people, and to prepare congressional plans with population deviations of plus or minus one
13 person of the ideal population of 769,221 people. This deviation from the ideal population with
14 legislative districts, it is far less than the 10% that, as we've heard in presentations, courts have
15 allowed in legislative plans, and this 1% is consistent with the deviations of the benchmark
16 Senate plan that was ordered by the court during the last redistricting cycle. The plus or minus
17 one person deviation for a congressional plan is in keeping with the interpretations of the U.S.
18 Supreme Court, as well as the benchmark plans for the congressional districts.

19 To comply with Tier Two standard related to compactness – Let's stop there, are there any
20 questions on population deviation? Senator Harrell.

21 Gayle Harrell: Thank you very much. It may be addressed later on when you talk about
22 the Tier Two standards. In order to keep that compactness and in order to keep municipal
23 boundaries whole and county boundaries whole, would it be acceptable to allow that 1% to

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1 deviate to 2 or 3%? When you have overriding things such as the boundaries of various
2 municipalities and counties, so, how hard a standard is that 1%?

3 Ray Rodrigues: I believe we will address that when we complete going through the
4 standards and then if not, let's come back to the question, if you don't have that addressed.

5 Gayle Harrell: Thank you.

6 Ray Rodrigues: To comply with the Tier Two standard related to compactness, I propose
7 that we direct staff to draw districts that are visually compact in relation to their shape and
8 geography and to use mathematical compactness scores where appropriate. As reviewed last
9 week in committee, those mathematical scores are the Reock, Convex Hull, and Polsby-Popper
10 scores that were used by the Legislature and the courts during our last redistricting cycle.

11 To comply with the Tier Two standards related to utilizing existing political boundaries, I
12 propose that we direct staff to examine the use of county boundaries where feasible.
13 Furthermore, I recommend that staff explore the concepts that, where feasible, result in districts
14 consisting of whole counties in less populated areas and to explore concepts that, where feasible,
15 keep district wholly within a county in the more densely populated areas.

16 With respect to municipal boundaries, I would propose that we ask staff to explore
17 concepts that, where feasible, keep cities whole, while keeping in mind what we learned last
18 week about the impermanent and changing nature of municipal boundaries.

19 I propose that we further direct staff to examine the use of existing geographic boundaries
20 where feasible, specifically railways, interstates, federal and state highways, and large
21 waterbodies such as those that were deemed to be easily recognizable and readily ascertainable
22 by Florida's Supreme Court. I recognize that these geographic boundaries afford us an
23 opportunity to create districts with static boundaries, and would therefore ask staff to present a

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1 boundary analysis report with each plan so that we can determine the coincidence of districts'
2 boundaries with those features.

3 I also propose that we direct staff, when drawing compact districts consistent with the
4 population equality requirements and that utilize political and geographic boundaries where
5 feasible, to confirm that the districts comply with the Tier One constitutional standards and with
6 federal law. Specifically, that districts are not drawn with the result of denying or abridging the
7 equal opportunity of racial or language minorities to participate in the political process or
8 diminish their ability to elect representatives of their choice. I propose that we direct staff to
9 conduct a functional analysis on relevant districts to confirm that any map presented for
10 consideration by this committee or its select subcommittees comply with these Tier One
11 standards and requirements of the Florida Constitution and the federal Voting Rights Act. Senator
12 Bradley.

13 Jennifer Bradley: Thank you Mr. Chair. I think my question actually goes back to the
14 political and geographic boundaries. I know that last cycle, the Senate came up with a
15 quantitative sort of matrix, if you will, to determine how effective those boundaries were being
16 considered. Is the thought that that formula will be used again as we move forward with
17 assessing our maps this time?

18 Ray Rodrigues: I'm told that yes, we have a similar formula that will be utilized in this
19 process. Senator Gibson.

20 Audrey Gibson: Thank you Mr. Chair, since we went back a little bit. So, Jacksonville is
21 a city and a county in one. And so in the standards for using county or city boundary lines, that
22 gets to be a little difficult. So is there a – where is the wiggle room in there?

23 Ray Rodrigues: I would say Senator Gibson, you are right. That Duval and Jacksonville

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1 are totally unique situations in that they are the only city-county that have been consolidated. So,
2 going back, counsel has just pointed out to me the language of the Constitution. So I will read
3 that to you.

4 Audrey Gibson: Okay.

5 Ray Rodrigues: It says, unless compliance with the standards in this subsection conflicts
6 with the standards in subsection (a) or with federal law – that’s the Tier One or federal law –
7 districts shall be as nearly equal in population as is practical, districts shall be compact, and
8 districts shall, where feasible, utilize existing political and geographical boundaries. So, we’re
9 required by the Constitution, where it’s feasible, to keep those together. In the case of Duval
10 County, as you said, there may be some difficulty. I think the Constitution recognizes that by
11 telling us to follow the directive where it’s feasible.

12 Audrey Gibson: Thank you Mr. Chair, and political boundaries speaks to the party of
13 people or city council kind of boundaries.

14 Ray Rodrigues: The political boundaries would be considered the counties and the
15 cities.

16 Audrey Gibson: Okay thank you.

17 Ray Rodrigues: Because those were defined by the Legislature. Next, I would propose,
18 in compliance with the Tier One standard related to the intent to favor or disfavor a political
19 party, that we instruct staff to draw districts without reviewing political data, other than where a
20 review of political data is required to perform an appropriate functional analysis to evaluate
21 whether a minority group has the ability to elect representatives of their choice.

22 To comply with the Tier One standard related to the intent to favor or disfavor an
23 incumbent, I propose that we direct staff to draw districts without the use of any residence

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1 information of any sitting member of the Florida Legislature or Congress and to draw districts
2 without regard to the preservation of existing district boundaries. I believe that by limiting the
3 considerations to those that were adopted by the citizens of Florida, this process will produce a
4 constitutionally compliant map.

5 While the standards that are to be considered require a balancing act, it is important to
6 remember that the standards themselves are not optional. Choices made by staff and approved by
7 this committee should be made based on compliance with the objective constitutional criteria.
8 Should we proceed with the directives I just described, I will ask staff to produce a series of
9 plans for each of our select subcommittees to workshop. All plans brought forward by staff will
10 comply with the complex layering of federal and state standards, and I will ask staff to explain
11 the various tradeoffs within the co-equal Tier Two standards presented in each of the plans. It is
12 within the balancing of those tradeoffs that we must exercise our legislative discretion and
13 produce a constitutionally compliant map. Are there questions over any of the criteria that I've
14 laid out? Senator Gibson you're recognized.

15 Audrey Gibson: I think it's a criteria question so, in the third paragraph on page 2,
16 functional analysis to evaluate whether a minority group has the ability to elect representatives of
17 their choice, is that also inclusive of coalition? Are coalition groups considered minority groups?
18 Or opportunity – I forgot are they called coalition – ? So let's say you have a – I thought we had
19 – is it coalition or – what's the proper word? Opportunity districts?

20 Ray Rodrigues: Are you looking for minority access districts terminology or is it
21 different?

22 Audrey Gibson: I think it's called – I thought it was called coalition districts where you
23 may have a double minority, so that is still a minority group, right? Okay, and then the other

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1 question I had on the maps that will go to the committees. So, if a Senator decided they wanted
2 to introduce a map drawn by – that's in the website where constituents have placed maps. Are
3 those introduced in the subcommittees if one wants to introduce one? Or where do the maps
4 citizens come into play? As introduced by a legislator?

5 Ray Rodrigues: Let's take your first question first and then we'll come to the second one.
6 The standards that the court have articulated is that we cannot produce a redistricting map that
7 diminishes the opportunity for minorities to participate in the political process – that's racial or
8 language minorities – or elect a candidate of their choice. What we have is the benchmark of
9 what we cannot regress from. That's what will be looked at, and functional analysis will be
10 performed to ensure that we are not engaging in retrogression in diminishing those opportunities.

11 Regarding the second questions, which is if maps have been submitted by the public and
12 a member of the committee wishes to have those maps included or considered. The process
13 would be: the member needs to communicate with the member of the public that has submitted
14 the map to understand the methodology that they have used to produce the map and to ensure
15 that those maps were produced in a constitutionally correct manner. Meaning a map cannot be
16 drawn to favor an incumbent. A map cannot be drawn to favor a political party. So it's on us as
17 members, the responsibility to discuss with those whom we would wish to champion their maps,
18 that their maps were not drawn with unconstitutional intent. Once we have that, and you've
19 satisfied yourself that it is constitutional, you may work with staff as they are preparing the maps
20 that will be workshopped in the subcommittees. For them to consider what you are bringing forth
21 and what they are drawing.

22 There is actually a second opportunity should it not be included, in that which was
23 produced by the committee to be workshopped. When the recommendations are made by these

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1 select subcommittees to come back to us as a full committee, the map, as long as it is a statewide
2 map, would be available to be offered as an amendment to the map that we are considering as a
3 committee. There is really two bites at the apple as I see it. You have the ability to work with staff
4 as they are preparing the maps that will be workshopped, and you have an ability to offer an
5 amendment to the full committee when we're considering the map that we're going to adopt. Are
6 there any other questions? Yes ma'am, Senator Gibson you are recognized.

7 Audrey Gibson: And I just want to be very clear. So, the – it's my responsibility to look
8 at a map by a citizen to determine whether it meets the criteria that we're putting forward today.
9 Is that what you said? With or without staff?

10 Ray Rodrigues: What I would say –

11 Audrey Gibson: How did I do?

12 Ray Rodrigues: What I would say is it's all of our responsibilities to look at what the
13 public is submitting for our consideration, if there is something there that captures our interest.
14 So, before we do that, my counsel to each of us is to speak with those that have prepared those
15 maps for submission. To understand that it meets constitutional methodology. And that we're
16 comfortable putting our name on that map to be submitted for consideration by either staff as
17 they're preparing what will be workshopped, or by this body if we are going to submit it as an
18 amendment.

19 Seeing no further questions, we are now in the discussion phase. Is there any discussion
20 on what we are proposed to provide to staff as to direction? Seeing no discussion, are there any
21 objections to the directives as we have discussed and laid out today? Seeing no objections, I
22 would like the record to reflect that the directives were agreed to by the members of the
23 committee without objection.

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1 Now before we move to public comment, I'd like to announce that I anticipate this to be
2 the last full committee meeting until we are back in Tallahassee for Session in January. We are
3 now at the point of the process where the criteria has been agreed to by the committee. That
4 criteria will be communicated to staff in a memo this afternoon. They will present their work
5 products to the two select subcommittees that have been established. As you know, the Senate
6 Select Subcommittee on Congressional Reapportionment will be chaired by Senator Bradley and
7 the Select Subcommittee on Legislative Reapportionment will be chaired by Senator Burgess.
8 Under Senate rules, the select subcommittees are charged with studying or investigating a
9 specific issue falling within the jurisdiction of the standing committee.

10 When the subcommittees have completed their work, the full committee will then
11 reconvene to consider their recommendations, which will include either a map or a set of maps
12 that will then be brought up to the full committee for our review. That will be the appropriate
13 time for members to offer amendments, as we discussed in the question-and-answer portion. As
14 we discussed, these amendments can be publicly submitted plans, they can be concepts from
15 publicly submitted plans, or plans drawn by Senators themselves. However, it must be a full
16 statewide map. Our staff is available to assist you with the drafting and the filing of it. Staff can
17 also provide you with the appropriate metrics or analysis that you will need to aide you in the
18 process. If it is your intent to offer an amendment that is a publicly submitted plan or a plan that
19 contains concepts from or parts of a publicly submitted plan, it would be appropriate to reach out
20 to the submitter to discuss their intent and their methodology. It's incumbent on you as the
21 amendment sponsor to ensure that your amendment is constitutional.

22 Regarding amendments and the changes to the maps, I would like to point something out.
23 Early in the litigation that occurred in the last cycle, Florida courts frequently quoted the Florida

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1 Supreme Court opinion that was issued *In Re Apportionment Law 1992*. That opinion issued by
2 that court stated that it was the duty of the court not to select the best plan, but rather to decide
3 whether to the one adopted by the legislature is valid. However, by the conclusion of the
4 litigation in the last cycle and as a result of the finding made by the courts in that litigation, the
5 Legislature's choices regarding the drawing of the districts in the remedial phase were not given
6 deference, and the lower courts were directed to determine which map proposed by the parties or
7 which portions of each map best fulfills the Florida Supreme Court's criteria and the
8 constitutional requirements. That was found in *Apportionment VIII*, quoting Lewis' trial court
9 order, issued on December 2, 2015. I mention this only to point out that our mandate as
10 articulated by the courts previously is not to enact a plan that best complies with any one
11 numerical standard. We as a Legislature have discretion in how to balance the Tier Two criteria
12 to arrive at a constitutionally compliant map. But passing a plan that does not demonstrate
13 adherence to the objectively measurable constitutional criteria may cost us our legislative
14 discretion, as this body learned in the last round of redistricting. That is a serious consequence
15 that every member of the committee should take all appropriate measures to avoid.

16 And so, while balancing the criteria laid out in Article III, Sections 20 and 21 of the
17 Florida Constitution may involve tradeoffs, it's my intention to ask that the committee reject
18 amendments to any map recommended by the select subcommittees unless the amendment
19 measurably improves compliance of the map as a whole with the constitutional standards. I will
20 also ask the committee to vote down any amendments that appear to have been drawn with
21 improper intent to favor or disfavor an incumbent or political party, or that may have the intent or
22 result of denying or abridging the equal opportunity racial and language minorities to participate
23 in the political process, or if the maps diminish their ability to elect representatives of their

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1 choice.

2 Are there any questions about the amendatory process that we've discussed? Seeing no
3 questions, is there discussion on the amendatory process that we've discussed? Senator Gibson
4 you're recognized.

5 Audrey Gibson: Thank you Mr. Chair. I wanted to go back to Senator Harrell's question
6 about the – we didn't go back before we said, oh yeah, we agree. The 1%, 10%, is the 1%
7 deviation, is that a compactness issue? If there's no room in depending on the lay of the land. Is
8 1% totally attainable? 1% deviation?

9 Ray Rodrigues: Senator, I would point out that if you look at the benchmark plan that the
10 court ordered adopted for us, it has a 1% population deviation. So what we are doing with the
11 directive to staff to order them to draw maps for that Tier Two, have a 1% population deviation.
12 We're asking them to meet the standard that the court has already imposed upon us with the
13 maps that we are currently operating under and not to exceed that. Even though legally by statute
14 and by court findings, we could go up to 10%.

15 And to go back to Senator Harrell's original question of, is there wriggle room. The
16 standards have been given to the staff to produce the maps. We recognize that there may be
17 tradeoffs between the multiple Tier Two standards. So what we will see where maps that address
18 those Tier Two standards and they will explain to us the tradeoffs are. In some cases, you may
19 see municipalities that are split. And they'll say that we adhered to the Tier Two standard of
20 having the equal population deviation. But in this case, these municipalities are split. Or there
21 could be a map which may not split municipalities but they – say your population deviation
22 would be this if we go down that road. Then it will be up to the body to decide what they want to
23 recommend to bring forward to the full committee. You have a follow-up question.

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1 Gayle Harrell: Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. Thank you Senator Gibson for
2 readdressing the issue. Specifically to counties. In keeping counties whole and deviating from
3 that hard 1%, will we see maps that perhaps do that or is that hard 1%, does that take
4 precedence? I can understand cities because cities' boundaries move and they're a little different
5 in nature. But when we are talking about counties are we going – what is the number one
6 priority, is it the 1% or is it keeping counties whole?

7 Ray Rodrigues: I would say if you go back and look at the plain language of the
8 Constitution, it clearly states that none of the Tier Two standards hold importance over any of the
9 other Tier Two standards. So we're not allowed to prioritize, on Tier Two, any one above the
10 others. That's why we have given the staff the criteria of each of the Tier Two standards to draw
11 maps around. They may produce maps that deal with each of those Tier Two standards with,
12 assuming that, this is the one that we choose to balance as the most balanced one. Ultimately,
13 that's the decision that the committee is going to make. Or on the subcommittee level when you
14 make the decision of what you all recommend on what to come forward. But looking at the plain
15 language of the Constitution, we're not allowed to say, any one of these criteria is the most
16 important and everything should revolve around it. Yes ma'am.

17 Gayle Harrell: Thank you, and yes, thank you for reminding me of that. I appreciate that
18 greatly. And whether it's cities or counties. But the question goes to the self-imposed limit of 1%
19 and does that take precedence over the Tier Two standards? Do we say we must split counties or
20 cities in order to maintain the 1% or are we going to be able to deviate from that 1% self-
21 imposed limit in order to perhaps keep a city whole or keep a county whole?

22 Ray Rodrigues: I would go back to the language that's in the Constitution, which we
23 read earlier, but which I'll touch on again. The plain language of the Constitution, which is what

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1 we are directing the staff to follow, is, unless compliance with the standards in this subsection
2 conflicts with the standards in subsection (a) – which is Tier One – or with federal law, districts
3 should be as nearly as equal in population as is practicable. Districts shall be compact, and
4 districts shall, where feasible, utilize existing political and geographical boundaries. It's a
5 balancing act. So we're directing staff to bring us maps that do these things. Ultimately, which of
6 those we choose to balance as our priority will be the decision that will be made as we go
7 through the process – select subcommittee process. The select subcommittees will make the
8 decision of which maps are recommended to come up to the full committee. But the plain
9 language of the Constitution says where it's feasible. There is no mandate, there is no direction
10 that any one is greater than the others.

11 But what I would caution you on, one of the reasons we've chosen the 1%, is that is what
12 the court imposed us, in the current maps, the benchmark maps that we're operating under now.
13 So from the court's perspective, they know that 1% standard can be met, because they met it in
14 the last cycle. Therefore, I think it is our responsibility to start there and see what we can do.
15 Further discussion? Vice-Chair Broxson you are recognized.

16 Doug Broxson: Mr. Chairman, just a procedural, I understand that the members can
17 submit their own maps. How about a constituent in your district that refuses to go through the
18 website that wants you to submit a map. Do you have to voluntarily agree to that or can you refer
19 them to the website and require that they deal directly with the staff?

20 Ray Rodrigues: Well let me begin by saying what we've discussed previously and have
21 agreed to as a committee is that the staff will only work on something if a member has sponsored
22 it and put our name on it and said we want this to be done. If you have a member that does not
23 want to go through the website to put their map in, then that member must not want that map to

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1 be considered by this body because that is the procedure that we laid out for the public to
2 participate when it comes to submitting maps that have been drawn.

3 I'll go a step further. We have a form that they had to disclose, have they collaborated
4 with anyone in the drawing of the map? What methodology have they used in the drawing of the
5 map? If they don't want to complete the form and disclose whom they've worked with, then they
6 must not want the map to be considered by this body. We've done these things because we're
7 learning from the mistakes that were made in the last cycle. Where there was a shadow operation
8 that engaged with redistricting and ended up resulting with maps that were rejected by the court.
9 We're doing everything we can to produce maps that are constitutional, that are compliant with
10 all the Florida Statutes, and that meet all the federal requirements. Those are the standards we're
11 putting on ourselves and those are the standards we're holding out for the public as well. Yes,
12 Senator Stargel.

13 Kelli Stargel: Just to follow-up on Senator Broxson's question. Isn't this, I mean, I know
14 it's redistricting, but isn't this similar to how we're doing regular legislation and the public is
15 making suggestions regarding language or bills or things that we file. We take their input into
16 consideration, then change our bills, potentially? But it's a similar kind of process where we
17 would bring the idea to us and then we would take that idea going forward?

18 Ray Rodrigues: I would agree with that assessment. In any other legislation that's done,
19 the member submits the bill to be drafted and if someone wants to influence that bill, they work
20 with the member to convince you to submit an amendment that reflects their position, and it's
21 their job to convince you that their position is the right one. By establishing a redistricting
22 process that we've established, we are mimicking that process. Which is one, frankly, the public
23 should be accustomed to, because it's what we've done on everything we've done, on the

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1 legislation that's passed this chamber. Senator Bradley, you've had discussion.

2 Jennifer Bradley: Yeah, thank you Mr. Chairman. It goes back to the idea of counties and
3 county splits. Certainly with the thought to keep as many counties whole as possible, and if you
4 take that to its logical conclusion. You could end up with our denser counties having an
5 inordinate number of splits. But the way I read this, where in that last sentence, where it says
6 where feasible will keep the districts wholly within a county and more densely populated areas.
7 So is that going to be a situation where you have potentially more counties split that our larger
8 counties wouldn't experience an inordinate number of splits because you try to keep a whole
9 district within that larger county?

10 Ray Rodrigues: I would actually start with the beginning of the paragraph, which deals
11 with our more rural counties. The thought process being, our goal is: look at the political
12 boundaries and keep as many of them as whole as possible. So in counties – or in districts,
13 potential districts that are made up of rural counties, the goal would be to keep those counties
14 whole as they go in there. Now, some counties like Duval are so large that they're more than a
15 Senate seat. But they may not be two Senate seats. So they're going to have to be split. The goal
16 in working with the more denser counties is to minimize the splits where feasible. So that the
17 political boundaries are honored.

18 Any other discussion? Seeing none, let's move on to the next order of business, which is
19 Tab 2, public comment. Andrew Taramykin who is speaking on information purposes. Andrew
20 you are recognized.

21 Andrew Taramykin: Thank you for your time, good morning. My name is Andrew
22 Taramykin I am a sophomore at the University of Florida and a redistricting fellow at Fair
23 Elections Center's Campus Vote Project. The purpose of this fellowship is to empower students

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1 to engage with their state's redistricting process and ensure that the often overlooked youth vote
2 voice is heard loud and clear as our legislators make these vital decisions that will determine the
3 quality and character of our representation for the next decade. Now, as many of you may be
4 aware, speaking of keeping communities whole. College campuses in towns across America are
5 frequent victims of unfair redistricting practices. Particularly diluting student voting power by
6 dividing our campuses or surrounding communities into two or more different districts where the
7 votes and therefore the interests of student residents are vastly outnumbered. We can look at my
8 own campus community in Gainesville. The boundaries of the 20th and 21st Florida House
9 districts cut cleanly between the campus proper and the of-campus communities where thousands
10 of us live, myself included. My apartment is less than a mile away from my dorm last year, yet I
11 have a different representative in the State House than I did when I was a freshman. Or we can
12 look at this city, Tallahassee, which has three college campuses and is divided right down the
13 middle in both the Florida and U.S. Houses of Representatives. The implications of dividing up
14 college communities become even more dire when looking at Florida's historically Black
15 colleges and universities or minority-serving institutions. Notably, all four Florida schools that
16 are classified as HBCUs – Florida Memorial, Bethune Cookman, Edward Waters, and Florida
17 A&M – are either on or near district boundaries in one or more legislative bodies under current
18 apportionment plans. This leaves these communities vulnerable to division should the borders be
19 adjusted anymore in their direction. The same can be said of many of Florida's MSIs, most of
20 which are classified as Hispanic-serving institutions by the Department of Education. FIU and
21 FAU for example, lie directly adjacent to district boundaries and one or more bodies and the
22 student communities surrounding the University of Central Florida, which is both an HSI and the
23 largest public school in America is split into two districts for both chambers of the Florida

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1 Legislature. Dividing up college communities, especially HBCUs and MSIs, only further
2 marginalizes young voices, which are already disproportionately underrepresented in our
3 government. Our populations are often younger and more diverse than the communities
4 surrounding us. Our political, economic, and personal interests are distinct from what the wider
5 population may be concerned about and consequently what the average elected official is
6 concerned about. Yet I firmly believe that is exactly why it is so important for young voices to be
7 kept together. To be protected and amplified from City Hall, to this Legislature, to Washington,
8 D.C. It may be easy as it is for many to write off college communities in towns because much of
9 our populations are not from here and many of the individuals who live here will be gone in four
10 years. But I would urge you to bear in mind that we're here now. We pay taxes and use public
11 services in our communities now. The students who come after us will have the same interests as
12 we do today. The faculty and staff who make our communities run will still be here. The diverse
13 meaningful communities that live around our campuses will still be there. At all levels, from the
14 State House through U.S. Congress, college towns deserve to be kept whole to the fullest extent
15 possible and represented by leaders who care about our communities, our people, and our
16 concerns. Thank you so much for your time and God bless the State of Florida.

17 Ray Rodrigues: Thank you for your comments. Next, up we have Jonathan Webber with
18 the Florida Conservation Voters.

19 Jonathan Webber: Thank you so much, good morning. My name is Jonathan Webber,
20 Deputy Director, Florida Conservation Voters. I had a moment of panic this morning trying to
21 this document online. I'm hoping it will be posted later so we can all review it and see it. I might
22 have missed something when you were speaking because I was frantically searching for the
23 document. So hopefully that will be posted. Second, one of the rules that I thought I heard you

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1 say was that the current district should not be considered in the map making process. If there is
2 any more clarification on that, I'd be interested in hearing it. Just trying to get my head straight.
3 And finally, the last thing I have is many of our fellow Floridians do not have access to a
4 computer or regular internet service. Nor do they have internet skills to operate the map, which
5 I'm still struggling with a little bit. I'm sure you all are too, I mean I'll get there, I know we will.
6 But I really want to make sure as many of fellow Floridians as possible can review and submit
7 maps if they so choose to. So if there is anything you can do to help them who don't have access
8 to a computer that would be extremely helpful that's all I have. Thank you.

9 Ray Rodrigues: That concludes public comment. Senator Gibson you're recognized.

10 Audrey Gibson: I know, before we finish. So when we talk about the political
11 boundaries, as council districts I think we mentioned. There are some cities, Jacksonville is going
12 through their own redistricting now, or reapportionment, whichever word is correct. In using the
13 political boundaries, are we using, I guess, the benchmark from the previous map regardless of
14 how they draw their council districts? Because –

15 Ray Rodrigues: I believe the political boundaries would be what is the current
16 boundaries of the county and the municipalities –

17 Audrey Gibson: Okay.

18 Ray Rodrigues: – in the data that we received from the U.S. Census Bureau. If you'll
19 recall, in one of our earlier meetings we discussed the fact that since the Legislature abolished a
20 city after the Census Bureau was collected, we'll actually have a municipality in the Census data
21 that no longer exists.

22 Audrey Gibson: Mm-hm.

23 Ray Rodrigues: But when we're looking at political boundaries, we're looking at the

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1 defined boundaries of the county and the municipalities in total. We're not looking at their
2 individual districts.

3 Audrey Gibson: Okay, thank you.

4 Ray Rodrigues: Is there any other business before the committee today? Seeing none,
5 Senator Stargel moves that we adjourn. Seeing no objection, we'll show that the meeting is
6 adjourned.



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