

# EXHIBIT E

**GEORGIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Reapportionment and Redistricting on 11/30/2023**

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REAPPORTIONMENT AND REDISTRICTING

GEORGIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

November 30, 2023

Video Runtime: 2:37:28

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1 (Beginning of Video Recording.)

2 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Good afternoon,  
3 everybody. Good to have you all here. My  
4 name is Rob Leverett. I'm chairman of the  
5 House Redistricting and Reapportionment  
6 Committee. And this is our meeting number two  
7 on legislative day two of the special session.  
8 Appreciate everyone being here.

9 I've got a couple of announcements I'll  
10 make, but first thing I would like to do and,  
11 Representative Gilliard, I was going to give  
12 an equal time to the preachers right here. I  
13 was going to ask you if you would open us with  
14 a word of prayer.

15 MR. GILLIARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
16 Lord, we thank you for allowing us to be here  
17 in your presence today as leaders. We ask for  
18 your guidance in making the right decisions.  
19 We know that this will benefit the people of  
20 Georgia. And we serve your people. So today,  
21 Lord, let us come together for the benefit of  
22 those that we serve. In Jesus' name we pray.  
23 Amen.

24 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Amen. Thank you,  
25 Representative. I appreciate that. Well,

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1 good afternoon, everybody. I just have a few  
2 announcements before we get started. We're  
3 here to hear about another map and then get  
4 some public comment and hopefully try to take  
5 some action.

6 There is an overflow room available in  
7 515 CLOB. It doesn't like we would need it,  
8 but if someone -- if we -- if the room  
9 continues to fill and someone walks in, be  
10 sure to tell them if they can't get a seat in  
11 here, 515 CLOB is the overflow.

12 There is a signup sheet if you wish to  
13 give public comment or speak, and it's up at  
14 the front table here. So if you do want to  
15 speak, we would ask you to just come up and  
16 sign up so we'll know kind of how many people  
17 we're going to have to talk, and we can  
18 allocate the time accordingly.

19 Our next meeting is going to be  
20 tomorrow at 1:00 p.m. or upon adjournment, it  
21 will be in the same room. I want to remind  
22 everybody about the public comment portal on  
23 the General Assembly website that's  
24 legis.ga.gov. And you can go on there and  
25 submit comment if you are not able to submit

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1 the comment here today or at another meeting.

2 And proposed maps are available on the  
3 Reapportionment Offices page on the General  
4 Assembly website, and they're under the  
5 proposed plans tab. We've got some copies of  
6 the maps here, although I don't know that  
7 we've got enough for everybody. So if you  
8 have a laptop, you may want to try to access  
9 them. There are two maps currently that have  
10 been prepared by the reapportionment office.

11 The one that we presented yesterday is  
12 the House committee chair map. And that's the  
13 client name is H123. And it's the plan is  
14 House-2023. That's up in the corner. So if  
15 you're looking at one of the plans that's how  
16 you can identify it. And we're going to  
17 receive presentation of another map that's  
18 from the Democratic Caucus. And it's client  
19 number is H143.

20 And the plan is GHDC House plan 2023.  
21 GHDC, I'm guessing being the abbreviation for  
22 House Democratic Caucus. So those are the two  
23 maps we have. In front of each member,  
24 you've got a packet with the meeting notice.  
25 The Democratic caucus map packet with

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1 population breakdowns and that sort of thing,  
2 the map that I presented yesterday, and a copy  
3 of HB1EX, which is the bill that would propose  
4 to enact the map we presented yesterday.

5 And there are also some public comments  
6 that are from the portal since yesterday. So  
7 you can kind of keep up with that. Now,  
8 yesterday we went around and introduced the  
9 members of the committee, and I think at the  
10 early in the meeting, we didn't have two of  
11 the members with us, unfortunately, but they  
12 are here today.

13 And so I would like to for them to just  
14 introduce themselves to the to the room.  
15 Representative Gilliard, if you would just  
16 tell us who you are and where you're from and  
17 where your district is.

18 MR. GILLIARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
19 I am the gentleman from 162 representing  
20 Savannah, Georgia, the great sea coast, and  
21 glad to be here serving on this committee.

22 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: We're glad to have  
23 you. And also, it was just like the data to  
24 tour the coast, I guess. We have  
25 Representative DeLoach, if you'll just

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1 introduce yourself and tell where you're from.

2 MR. DELOACH: I'm Buddy DeLoach. I  
3 represent Georgia House District 167, which is  
4 all of McIntosh and Long County, part of  
5 Wayne, part of Glenn, and part of Liberty, the  
6 beautiful Georgia Coast and the home of the  
7 third Infantry Division, rock of the Marne.

8 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: And thank you,  
9 Representative DeLoach. Contrary to public  
10 belief, Representative DeLoach did not sing  
11 bass for the Oak Ridge Boys. All right.  
12 Thank you all very much. We're glad to have  
13 you all on this committee.

14 So I think our first order of business  
15 today is to hear from the minority leader and  
16 his witness and the presentation of their  
17 plan. So I'll turn it over to you, sir. Glad  
18 to have you with us today.

19 MR. BEVERLY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman,  
20 and good. Good afternoon, Committee. Mr.  
21 Chairman, just by way of orientation, do you  
22 want us to present from here or how do we move  
23 around?

24 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: As you wish.

25 MR. BEVERLY: Okay. Thank you very

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1 much. Today is a -- is a solemn day in the  
2 State of Georgia. And it's solemn, because a  
3 couple of years ago, when we had an  
4 opportunity to choose to draw a map that was  
5 reflective of Georgia, this House failed to do  
6 that. Georgia has changed over the last ten  
7 years, and it's still changing.

8 A million people moved into Georgia  
9 from -- a million plus people moved into  
10 Georgia over the last census. Over 95 percent  
11 of those folk were people of color. And as we  
12 think about the ever-changing landscape of  
13 Georgia, we realize that the state has  
14 changed, and it's making us better.

15 The reality is, is that the map that  
16 was drawn a couple of years ago does not  
17 reflect that change. And so the judge in the  
18 judge's wisdom decided to say to us, we're  
19 going to give you another shot at it, another  
20 chance. Make it right. In the judge's  
21 wisdom, the judge was very clear.

22 You have five seats that Black folk in  
23 the State of Georgia should be able to choose  
24 a representative of their choice. Five.  
25 Because a judge in his order believed that



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1 that was just and equal.

2 And so we find ourselves here today to  
3 carry out that order. As many as you know, we  
4 are a deliberative body. And so -- and I know  
5 that reasonable minds is all the attorneys  
6 will say. And I'm not an attorney. Praise  
7 the Lord.

8 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Source of great  
9 pride and comfort to me --

10 MR. BEVERLY: It's fine. Y'all have  
11 your place. But I'm deeply grateful that we  
12 have a deliberative body and that reasonable  
13 minds can disagree. But this is not a  
14 situation where reasonable minds can disagree.  
15 The judge has an order, and we need to fulfill  
16 that order, because in trying to save one,  
17 you're going to put the jeopardy of the whole  
18 House, you're going to put the whole House in  
19 jeopardy, and we're going to have to make  
20 those decisions.

21 So what we did as a Georgia House  
22 Democratic caucus, collectively, is came up  
23 with a map that we believe, that we're sure  
24 does not violate Section 2 of the Voting  
25 Rights Act. It does not. And we think that

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1 the map that the Republicans, all due respect,  
2 presented will violate at least a couple of  
3 sections, at least two places of the Voting  
4 Rights Act, which will then put us in  
5 jeopardy, the whole House in jeopardy, that a  
6 special master may have to draw a map.

7 And so as we go through this process,  
8 I'm going to have Brian Sales, who is our  
9 attorney to -- and our demographer, to talk  
10 about our map, how it complies with the  
11 judge's order, how it doesn't violate Section  
12 2. And then we're going to talk about the  
13 Republican map and how it does.

14 And then I hope we have public  
15 commentary, and I know we will. And so I  
16 would ask this body today is that and just by  
17 way of orientation, because I don't like  
18 burying the headline, I want to offer a  
19 substitute to your map today. But I also want  
20 you all to consider if you don't allow us to  
21 substitute the best map, our map, the right  
22 map, that you stay open to an amendment  
23 because I suspect tomorrow, we'll have to  
24 vote.

25 And so as we're trying to figure out

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1 how to structure the map, if your map comes  
2 out today, how we structure that, let's keep  
3 it open for some amendments, because I think  
4 what we're going to present is going to have  
5 you all think twice about the map that you  
6 guys are going to push forward. Okay? All  
7 right. Without further ado, I'll give you to  
8 Brian Sales.

9 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Thank you, Mr.  
10 Leader. Mr. Sales, if you'll take the  
11 microphone, just introduce yourself, and then  
12 we'll be glad to hear from you. And glad to  
13 have us. Glad. Glad to have you with us here  
14 today.

15 MR. SALES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
16 My name is Brian Sales. I'm an attorney who  
17 specializes in voting rights.

18 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Likewise, a source  
19 of great disappointment and sadness for you,  
20 but my mom shared the same burdens.

21 MR. SALES: So my specialty is voting  
22 rights and election law. And I've been before  
23 this committee before in 2021. And I'm  
24 pleased today to talk about the Democratic  
25 proposal. The Democratic proposal starts from

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1 the premise of complying with the very letter  
2 of Judge Jones's 516-page order.

3 Now, with respect to the House of  
4 Representatives, that order finds that five  
5 majority Black districts need to be created  
6 for that were drawn by the expert for one set  
7 of plaintiffs, Dr. Esselstyn, and one district  
8 that was drawn by the other set of plaintiffs,  
9 Mr. Bill Cooper.

10 And the Democratic proposal begins  
11 literally by copying and pasting Esselstyn's  
12 four districts and the ripple effects from  
13 those four districts into the 2021 map. Dr.  
14 Esselstyn drew his map in such a way that the  
15 ripple effects were contained to a small  
16 number of districts surrounding the new  
17 districts that he created.

18 So it was possible, therefore,  
19 literally, to copy and paste those districts  
20 into a new map. Now, Mr. Cooper's drawing,  
21 once those four districts were copied and  
22 pasted, Mr. Cooper's map couldn't be copied  
23 and pasted, but it could be more or less drawn  
24 in exactly the area where he drew it and where  
25 Judge Jones said that such a district needed

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1 to be drawn.

2 Once those districts were into the 2021  
3 map, the next step in the Democratic proposal  
4 was to look at its effect on incumbencies on  
5 the members. And the plaintiffs' experts, Mr.  
6 Cooper and Dr. Esselstyn, drew their districts  
7 without regard to its impact on incumbents.  
8 That wasn't their job. But it, in my view, is  
9 a legitimate factor for this body to consider.  
10 And that's what the Democratic proposal does.

11 Dr. Esselstyn's districts paired a  
12 number of Republican incumbents with  
13 Democratic incumbents in these new majority  
14 Black districts, and the Democratic proposal  
15 seeks to undo those pairings. For example, in  
16 the Macon-Bibb area, in the Milledgeville  
17 area, Republican incumbents were carved out of  
18 majority Black new Democratic leaning  
19 districts and put into Republican leaning  
20 districts nearby so that they would have every  
21 opportunity to come back.

22 The Democratic proposal pairs a number  
23 of Republican incumbents for that reason, so  
24 rather than keeping them in a Democratic  
25 leaning district that's required to be drawn,

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1 a number of them were drawn out so that  
2 they -- they would have an opportunity to win  
3 in a Republican leaning district, rather than  
4 being forced to run in a Democratic leaning  
5 district that Judge Jones said needed to be  
6 drawn.

7 So that explains why there are a number  
8 of Republican pairings. Those can be altered,  
9 I think, if the Committee so chooses to make  
10 different political decisions on those. But  
11 that's why those districts exist as they are.

12 The Democratic proposal makes no  
13 further changes to the 2021 map, other than  
14 the ones that are necessary to remedy the  
15 violation that Judge Jones found.

16 In total, the plan alters 23 districts.  
17 That's the five that are created, plus the  
18 small number of ripple effects from that. And  
19 it leaves most of the rest of the districts, I  
20 guess that's about 160 districts, 157  
21 districts unchanged. That was the premise  
22 that that we operated under that those were  
23 the instructions we believe from Judge Jones.  
24 And that's what the Democratic map does.

25 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Thank you. Leader

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1 Beverly.

2 MR. BEVERLY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3 What I'd like for Brian to do is to -- and

4 it's up to you, Mr. Chairman, but to go

5 through exactly what we did, the districts,

6 how we drew them, so that everyone can have a

7 real idea about how we try to preserve and

8 uphold what Judge Jones says. And I think

9 it'd be instructive if he sort of talked about

10 how he drew the map. And you all could see

11 for yourself.

12 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: That'd be perfectly

13 fine.

14 FEMALE VOICE: Do you want to bring the

15 mic?

16 MR. BEVERLY: Yeah. That'd be -- how

17 do you want to do? Mr. chairman.

18 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: I think the only

19 restriction we have because I had to deal with

20 this yesterday, is you got to stay near the

21 mic. So however you would like to do it given

22 that limitation. Yeah. You can go to the

23 podium if you prefer. All right. Well, we

24 need to see it. So I wonder if you could turn

25 it around and we could get a camera on it so

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1 it at least would show up on some of the  
2 screens.

3 MR. SALES: Can you hear me now?

4 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: No. Because we  
5 didn't cut your mic on. Sorry. Should be  
6 there now.

7 MR. SALES: It's on now. Okay. I'll  
8 start by discussing the Macon-Bibb area, which  
9 Judge Jones found needed to add two majority  
10 Black districts. In this map they're labeled  
11 145 and 149. There were two existing majority  
12 Black districts in the area, Districts 142 and  
13 143.

14 And when I copied the districts that  
15 were drawn by the plaintiffs' expert and  
16 approved by Judge Jones, the ripple effect  
17 affected the boundaries of 142 and 143, and a  
18 few of the other districts surrounding the  
19 Macon-Bibb area to paste into the 2021 map.

20 Now, this map does not change the  
21 boundaries of 145 at all from the boundaries  
22 that Judge Jones approved. That's the  
23 district that proceeds from the center of  
24 Macon down into Houston County. The other new  
25 district, 149, extends from Macon-Bibb to the



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1 west and up into Milledgeville.

2 And this map differs from the map  
3 approved by Judge Jones only in a few blocks  
4 in Milledgeville, which were swapped in order  
5 to place a Republican incumbent in District  
6 133 instead of 149. And 133 in this map is a  
7 Republican leaning district.

8 In the map that was approved by Judge  
9 Jones, District 142 included another  
10 Republican incumbent. I believe it's  
11 Representative Washburn whose residence is on  
12 the northern end of Bibb County. And so the  
13 Democratic proposal draws him into District  
14 135, which is a Republican leaning district  
15 and out of 142, which is, again, a majority  
16 Black and heavily Republican district, that  
17 was approved by Judge Jones, but without  
18 regard to its impact on incumbency.

19 And so you can see on this map, that's  
20 why there's a little finger of green into the  
21 north part of Bibb County that is there to  
22 capture that representative's residence. And  
23 those are really the only changes that this  
24 proposal makes in the Bibb County area from  
25 the map that Judge Jones approved.

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1       So I want to emphasize again that the  
2 plan makes absolutely no changes to 145 from  
3 the district that Judge Jones approved.  
4 That's one of the new districts. And almost  
5 all of the boundaries of 143 were the same.  
6 I'm not sure there were any changes at all to  
7 143 either in this map. If there were, it was  
8 to even out the population with 149.

9       But this configuration in Macon-Bibb is  
10 faithful to what Judge Jones found. And I  
11 believe there's virtually zero risk that he  
12 would look at this configuration and determine  
13 that it's unlawful. So I'm going to move now  
14 to the metro Atlanta area, which is where the  
15 other three districts are.

16       One of the districts that Judge Jones  
17 approved was in the southeast metro area in  
18 the Henry County area, and it was designated  
19 as District 117. In coming up with this  
20 proposal again, we copied and pasted Dr.  
21 Esselstyn's District 117, which had a ripple  
22 effect on a number of the nearby districts  
23 including 115, 116, and I believe 118.

24       But the ripple effect was fairly well  
25 contained. 117 kind of in that orange color

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1 is the new majority Black district that Judge  
2 Jones approved. And the boundaries of that  
3 district are exactly as he approved. I made  
4 no changes to those. But the ripple effect  
5 from the way that the plaintiffs' expert drew  
6 that map paired two Democratic incumbents in  
7 districts 115 and 116. That was easily fixed  
8 by swapping just a couple of census blocks.

9 And there were no other changes to that  
10 configuration from the map that Judge Jones  
11 approved. And so we believe that this  
12 configuration carries with it a very low risk  
13 that he would reject this map and find that  
14 it's unlawful.

15 The last district that was drawn by Dr.  
16 Esselstyn was in the West Metro area in the  
17 Douglas and Cobb County region, and again, Dr.  
18 Esselstyn drew his map in such a way that it  
19 was possible to copy and paste his districts  
20 into the 2021 map enacted by this body. And  
21 so that's -- that was the starting point for  
22 the West Metro district. (Inaudible) in this  
23 area are the new ones that Dr. Esselstyn drew.

24 The ripple effect from this district,  
25 however, encompassed pretty much all of

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1 Douglas County and South Cobb County. It was  
2 limited to those districts. We could still  
3 copy and paste, but it affected a slightly  
4 larger number of districts. But again, the --  
5 there were no changes made to this area of the  
6 map at all from what Judge Jones approved and  
7 said needed to be drawn.

8 It was simply copying and pasting.  
9 There -- in the map that Judge Jones approved  
10 that left one Republican in a Democratic  
11 leaning district, and that that person remains  
12 in that district, but could be drawn into a  
13 more Republican leaning district to the West.  
14 I think that's the yellow district.

15 And I apologize, but I can't remember  
16 the name of the representative in that area.  
17 That's not a pairing, however, because there's  
18 no Democratic incumbent in that new seat. So  
19 that's four of the five districts that Judge  
20 Jones said needed to be drawn. Those are the  
21 four districts that were drawn by Dr.  
22 Esselstyn, and the last one was a district in  
23 the south West metro area that was drawn by  
24 Mr. Bill Cooper. That's on this map District  
25 74.

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1 District 74 in the -- in the pretty far  
2 south metro area. That -- that's the area  
3 where -- those are not the precise boundaries  
4 that that Mr. Cooper drew, but his boundaries  
5 were really incompatible with the rest of the  
6 map. And so this -- the boundaries here are  
7 slightly different, but they cover much of the  
8 same ground that Mr. Cooper placed his new  
9 district in and that Judge Jones found were  
10 required by the Voting Rights Act.

11 This district is about a 48 percent  
12 Black district. It's a Black plurality  
13 district, and it's a performing district that  
14 gives Black voters an opportunity to elect  
15 candidates of their choice. And so I believe  
16 that it also would satisfy Judge Jones's order  
17 in that area.

18 And those are the five districts that  
19 the Democratic proposal creates. The impact  
20 of those districts is fairly small. Let me  
21 say one other thing about District 74. There  
22 are two Republican incumbents who live close  
23 to each other at the southern end of that new  
24 District 74.

25 And the Democratic proposal keeps both

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1 of them out of the new Democratic leaning  
2 district and puts both of them in District  
3 134, which is a Republican leaning district,  
4 so that each of them would have an opportunity  
5 to run and to win in a Democrat -- in a  
6 Republican leaning district.

7 That pairing can be undone by putting  
8 one or both of those incumbents in District  
9 74. But then they'd be running in a -- in a  
10 Democratic district. I think that's all I  
11 have to say about the proposal. And I welcome  
12 questions from the committee.

13 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Thank you, sir. We  
14 appreciate that. I know that was a little  
15 difficult to do with the limitations we have  
16 on the microphones here, but thank you very  
17 much. So do -- you ready for questions or do  
18 you have anything else?

19 MR. BEVERLY: Yeah. We're ready for  
20 questions. And then if you want however you  
21 want to go, Mr. Chairman, we can do a  
22 comparison with your map with the Republican  
23 proposal.

24 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Do you want to do  
25 that first?

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1 MR. BEVERLY: It's up to the discretion  
2 of the Chair.

3 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Why don't you go  
4 ahead and do that? And then we'll -- then  
5 we'll do some questions for you.

6 MR. BEVERLY: Yes. So we'll go ahead  
7 and start with --

8 MR. SALES: This might be a little  
9 easier. A little awkward for me.

10 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: We're going to find  
11 out what kind of core strength you have today.

12 MR. SALES: So let me preface my  
13 comments on this map by saying that like  
14 everyone else in the public, we've only had  
15 about 36 hours to analyze this map. And the  
16 bottom line of our analysis of this map is  
17 that it does not comply with Section 2 of the  
18 Voting Rights Act for one simple reason.

19 While it nominally creates five more  
20 majority Black districts, it unravels or  
21 dismantles two protected coalition districts.  
22 And we think, therefore, that Judge Jones  
23 should and is likely to reject this map and  
24 call for a special master to redraw the map if  
25 this goes forward, because it dismantles those

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1 two protected districts. Let me tell you

2 where those two districts are.

3 One of them is District 105, in

4 Gwinnett County. Up here is currently

5 represented by Representative Mughal. And

6 there are only a few changes to that district,

7 but those changes increase the White

8 population by about five percentage points.

9 And in our analysis takes that coalition

10 district from a performing district where

11 minority voters can elect candidates of their

12 choice to one in which the White population

13 will elect candidates of their choice.

14 And so that is a dismantling of a

15 coalition district that we believe is

16 prohibited by Section 2 and therefore would

17 cause this map to be found to be unlawful.

18 The other dismantled coalition district

19 is generally in the North DeKalb/South

20 Gwinnett area. Now, voters are fungible and

21 there are a lot of districts up here. But I

22 like to say that the district that was

23 dismantled is 81, which is currently that

24 number is currently represented by Scott

25 Holcomb, and it's in the North DeKalb area.



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1 And why do I say that? That's the one that's  
2 been dismantled because now it's in Henry  
3 County.

4 Where is that? Right there. That got  
5 moved south. It appears to have been done to  
6 protect the Republican incumbent,  
7 Representative Daniels, who lives smack dab in  
8 the middle of one of the districts that Dr.  
9 Esselstyn drew and that Judge Jones approved.  
10 And rather than going with that district, this  
11 proposal carves her out.

12 It moves essentially a performing  
13 district from North DeKalb into Henry County.  
14 And we think the dismantling of that coalition  
15 district also would lead Judge Jones to find  
16 that this map violates Section 2 and is  
17 therefore unacceptable as a remedy.

18 There may be more things to say about  
19 some of the majority Black districts. It's  
20 obvious that the configuration of the  
21 districts in the Bibb County area, for  
22 example, are very different from the ones that  
23 Dr. Esselstyn drew. And the same is true over  
24 in the West metro area.

25 But at least at this point, it appears

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1 that there are five more majority Black  
2 districts, and we don't have anything further  
3 to say about the configuration of those.  
4 There may be other folks here who do, but at  
5 the moment, based on our quick analysis, the  
6 major issue we see with this map is the  
7 dismantling of two coalition districts that  
8 are protected by Section 2 in the North  
9 Atlanta metro area.

10 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Is that -- do you  
11 have any further comparison you wish to make  
12 or?

13 MR. SALES: Well, in case it isn't  
14 obvious, let me say that I think it's  
15 important for everyone in this room, everyone  
16 in this body that what comes out of this  
17 session is a map that complies with the Voting  
18 Rights Act, so that Judge Jones isn't tasked  
19 with drawing it, because if he is, he's not  
20 going to take into account things like  
21 incumbency and political considerations.  
22 That's not for a federal judge to do. That's  
23 for this body to do. And so it's a bit of a  
24 sword of Damocles hanging over everyone's  
25 head.

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1 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Thank you. I've  
2 got some questions if y'all are ready. I  
3 believe Representative Alexander was first.  
4 First to hit the hit the board here.

5 MS. ALEXANDER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
6 I just wanted to clarify. Gwinnett County was  
7 not in the judge's ruling. However, HD 105  
8 was changed from a majority minority district  
9 to a majority White district based on the  
10 comparison. Correct or incorrect?

11 MR. SALES: What I would say is that  
12 the White population was increased by five  
13 percentage points in District 105. Yes.

14 MS. ALEXANDER: Okay. Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Thank you, Madam  
16 Representative. We have next up Leader  
17 Efstration.

18 MR. EFSTRATION: Thank you, Mr.  
19 Chairman. And thank you, sir, for your  
20 presentation. I know we have an opportunity  
21 for other witnesses to speak shortly, but we  
22 were given a handout that was put up here on  
23 our desk. I don't know, have you seen the  
24 handout from Fair Districts, Georgia that was  
25 put on our desk?

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1 Well, I'll just read to you the  
2 pertinent part from the beginning of the  
3 handout, which is it says court mandate add  
4 five Black majority districts colon two in  
5 south metro Atlanta, one in west metro Atlanta  
6 and two in and around Macon-Bibb. And maybe  
7 you have a copy of it now. Do you see that?

8 MR. SALES: I'm sorry. Where were you  
9 reading from?

10 MR. EFSTRATION: Yeah, just under the  
11 court mandate at the top of the first page.

12 MR. SALES: Yes, I see that.

13 MR. EFSTRATION: Do you agree with that  
14 characterization of what the court mandate  
15 was?

16 MR. SALES: With one caveat I do. The  
17 Court's mandate is to draw a lawful map.

18 MR. EFSTRATION: All right. So that  
19 brings me then down to -- I'm glad you have it  
20 in front of you, because it's easier than me  
21 trying to explain it. You can visualize it,  
22 but it says, what's changed.

23 And what I just heard from you in your  
24 presentation is that you contend HD 64 is  
25 proposed. 117, 145, and 149 would comply with

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1 that mandate, but that you're acknowledging  
2 that your proposed House District 74 would not  
3 comply with the judge's mandate.

4 MR. SALES: No, I disagree with that.

5 MR. EFSTRATION: Okay. If you -- if  
6 you'd explain that to me.

7 MR. SALES: Yes. So the judge's  
8 mandate is to draw a lawful map. He found  
9 that there needed to be five additional  
10 districts in which Black voters have an  
11 opportunity to elect candidates of their  
12 choice. He found that five majority Black  
13 districts could be drawn. However, they were  
14 from two different experts, and they weren't  
15 drawn in the same map.

16 The Democratic proposal creates five  
17 opportunity districts, four of which are  
18 majority Black and one of which is plurality  
19 Black, but which performs for Black voters.  
20 It still gives Black voters an opportunity to  
21 elect candidates of their choice.

22 MR. EFSTRATION: Isn't it true that the  
23 map as proposed by the Chairman here would  
24 provide for five majority Black districts?

25 MR. SALES: I don't dispute that.

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1 MR. EFSTRATION: Okay. And isn't it  
2 true that that complies with that condition  
3 from Judge Jones's order?

4 MR. SALES: Yes. But again, I think  
5 Judge Jones's bottom line is that this body  
6 needs to create a lawful map. So if one fixes  
7 the five opportunity districts for Black  
8 voters, but takes away two opportunity  
9 districts for a coalition of voters, that  
10 wouldn't be a lawful map.

11 MR. EFSTRATION: Just to sum up here,  
12 the Chairman's proposal creates five majority  
13 Black districts. The proposal the minority  
14 leader is bringing here today would create  
15 four majority Black districts. That's a  
16 distinction between the two proposals. Isn't  
17 that true?

18 MR. SALES: Yes.

19 MR. EFSTRATION: All right. Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Thank you, Mr.  
21 Leader. I believe it was Representative  
22 Reeves?

23 MR. REEVES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As  
24 someone who spent some time in Macon, Georgia,  
25 there's a lot of activity going on in Macon.

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1 I see that even though I'm up here in metro  
2 Atlanta now. And Mr. Democratic Leader, I  
3 know that's home and you're caring about it  
4 also.

5 So prior to the court case, there were  
6 already two majority Black districts in Macon.  
7 Correct? And part of Judge Jones's order was  
8 to add two more majority Black districts in  
9 Macon. Right? And Bibb County is just over  
10 50 percent Black, right? So was it difficult  
11 to draw four majority Black districts in  
12 Macon?

13 MR. SALES: No. We just copied and  
14 pasted those from the experts. It was the  
15 experts who essentially drew those districts.

16 MS. REEVES: In order to do that, were  
17 each of those four districts barely 50  
18 percent?

19 MR. SALES: They were much lower than  
20 they were previously. Yeah, I think they're  
21 in the 50 to 55 percent range.

22 MS. REEVES: And I think you answered  
23 this question earlier, but district, I  
24 believe, 135, the one that just has the little  
25 tip up in North Macon, the -- that was not

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1 from any expert in the court case or anything

2 from the court order, right?

3 MR. SALES: No, that was done for

4 political reasons.

5 MS. REEVES: And what -- and tell me

6 again, that political reason.

7 MR. SALES: It was to place a

8 Republican member in an open seat that is

9 Republican leaning.

10 MS. REEVES: And that was Chairman Dale

11 Washburn?

12 MR. SALES: I think that's correct.

13 Yes.

14 MS. REEVES: Okay. And the District

15 142, in Macon. That -- District 145 is

16 Democratic leader James Beverly's district.

17 Correct? 143 is your district. 142 that has

18 a challenger who's presently running for your

19 current seat? Correct?

20 MR. BEVERLY: Not correct.

21 MR. REEVES: Straighten me out on that.

22 MR. BEVERLY: Yeah. So I'm in District

23 143. 143.

24 MR. REEVES: Got it.

25 MR. BEVERLY: Esselstyn, Dr. Esselstyn



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1 drew 143 prior to us being here, prior to any  
2 challenger, prior to any of that. And that's  
3 what you see here. It is District 143, as the  
4 judge ordered through Esselstyn's map. 142 is  
5 Representative Miriam Paris. She, in  
6 Esselstyn's map, was coupled with  
7 Representative Dale Washburne, and that's that  
8 little green slither.

9 In order to keep the integrity of Bibb  
10 County, where it was, we decided politically  
11 to move Representative Washburne out of a 50  
12 percent Black district into a district of his  
13 own so that he would have an opportunity to  
14 run into a Republican potential district, and  
15 Miriam would still be able to run her  
16 district. We uncouple those two. That's the  
17 change that we made to Esselstyn's map.

18 MS. REEVES: Who's in 145?

19 MR. BEVERLY: It's open. No, right now  
20 it's that's what Esselstyn has drawn so.

21 MS. REEVES: And who's in 149?

22 MR. SALES: So as Dr. Esselstyn drew  
23 it, it was Kenneth Vance, the Republican in  
24 Milledgeville. From Milledgeville. But the  
25 Democratic proposal draws him out of the

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1 Democratic leaning district and puts him in  
2 the open seat that I think is 133.

3 MS. REEVES: Is anyone presently  
4 running for the legislature in the area that  
5 comprises 145?

6 MR. SALES: There may be, but we didn't  
7 look at campaign filings or announcements.

8 MS. REEVES: So 145 comprises some of  
9 your current district?

10 MR. BEVERLY: It does.

11 MR. REEVES: Okay.

12 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: I'd like to ask a  
13 question, if I may. So I want to want to  
14 explore the -- the coalition district. But my  
15 concern is first and foremost, as yours is,  
16 I'm sure, complying with the Court's order.  
17 So because my understanding is, you know, if  
18 we pass a map and we're going to pass  
19 something, I assume, you and I will get to  
20 spend a lot of time together in the coming  
21 months.

22 So I don't look forward to getting to  
23 know you in that context. But I do look  
24 forward to getting to know you otherwise. So  
25 and as I have said to other folks, I, you

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1 know, I'm overweight and I don't look good in  
2 horizontal stripes, so I don't want to violate  
3 the court order.

4 And the order, as I read it, seems to  
5 contemplate or almost expressly say, don't  
6 just draw a legal map. It says draw a map  
7 with five new majority Black districts in it.  
8 And so that's a -- that's at least as I read  
9 it on page 509, it says this, the remedy  
10 involves an additional majority Black  
11 congressional district in West Metro Atlanta.  
12 We're getting to that next week. Two  
13 additional majority Black Senate districts in  
14 South Metro Atlanta.

15 Y'all are handling that on the other  
16 side of the hall. Two additional majority  
17 Black house districts in South Metro Atlanta,  
18 one additional majority Black House district  
19 in West Metro Atlanta, and two additional  
20 majority Black house districts in and around  
21 Macon-Bibb. So did I understand you to say  
22 that your map does not, we can't check all  
23 five new majority Black districts?

24 MR. SALES: So majority Black districts  
25 are not what the Voting Rights Act requires.

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1 What the Voting Rights Act requires are  
2 districts in which Black voters have an  
3 opportunity to elect candidates of their  
4 choice. In order to prevail on a Section 2  
5 claim, however, the plaintiffs had to show  
6 that majority Black districts could be drawn.

7 And so Judge Jones found that five  
8 majority Black districts could be drawn, but  
9 not in one map. And so in describing the  
10 remedy, he said -- he used the majority Black  
11 terminology. But what Section 2 requires and  
12 what would be lawful is five additional  
13 opportunity districts.

14 You can see similar language in the  
15 Alabama case, where the three-judge panel in  
16 that case directed the Alabama legislature to  
17 draw an additional majority Black district or  
18 something very close to it that would give  
19 Black voters an opportunity to elect. Now,  
20 that Court found that the Alabama legislature  
21 didn't do that.

22 I think that's the way Judge Jones  
23 should have phrased it. But he was racing to  
24 produce a 516-page order. And I forgive him  
25 for the lack of precision in his language.

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1 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: We certainly  
2 forgive Judge Jones for a lot of things, given  
3 the time frame he was under and the volume of  
4 this order he drafted. As I've tried to note  
5 before, as a lawyer, I just have great -- it's  
6 just impressive. It's nothing short of  
7 impressive.

8 But while I don't do Voting Rights Act  
9 work, so I'm not an expert on the Voting  
10 Rights Act, I am leery of construing a judge's  
11 order in a way that I feel may be -- could  
12 lead me to jeopardy. So I'll just say that as  
13 a concern I have, personally, I certainly  
14 respect your opinion, however.

15 Is this notion of opportunity  
16 districts, is there -- is there unanimity on  
17 the interpretation of the act in the manner in  
18 which you were opining today that it's about  
19 opportunity districts and not about majority  
20 Black districts?

21 MR. SALES: Well, it's about majority  
22 Black districts if a plaintiff is trying to  
23 prove a claim, that's a threshold matter. But  
24 in terms of a remedy, I'm not aware of any  
25 case that would say that a 47/48 percent Black

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1 district that performs for Black voters would  
2 violate Section 2. It absolutely would not  
3 violate Section 2. I am extremely confident  
4 that the Democratic proposal would pass muster  
5 with Judge Jones.

6 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Well, again, the  
7 worry I have is it says additional majority  
8 Black districts, majority every time when he's  
9 talking about House districts. Do you think  
10 maybe you could just convince those folks over  
11 in the Senate to do that and let us go with  
12 the majority Black districts here?

13 MALE VOICE: No comment.

14 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: All right. All  
15 right, I, I respect your opinion. I just hope  
16 you understand my concern. And I'm sorry to  
17 monopolize the questions here. I guess I'm  
18 using the prerogative of the chair. Are there  
19 any other questions for Mr. Sales or is it  
20 Sells? Sells?

21 MR. SALES: Yes. I want to make sure I  
22 get it right. Like I said, we're going to be  
23 friends. Or the leader here. All right. Do  
24 you want to close?

25 MR. BEVERLY: Yeah, I want to close.

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1 So one of the things I want our body to  
2 deliberate, this is our house. And the truth  
3 of the matter is, is that we have delivered a  
4 map that we are sure complies with the judge's  
5 order. You all have not.

6 There is a remedy. If we were to look  
7 at the area down in South Atlanta, Southwest  
8 Atlanta, there's one representative that  
9 potentially y'all are trying to save with your  
10 map, and you should do whatever you have to  
11 do. But that one representative that you save  
12 is going to cost us all in the end.

13 If you accept our map, then one  
14 representative may be eliminated. That's the  
15 will of the voters. If you don't accept our  
16 map and the judge has to do a special master,  
17 then every last one of us, 180 of us are in  
18 jeopardy. Y'all have some big decisions to  
19 make. And thank you for time, Mr. Chairman.

20 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Thank you, Mr.  
21 Leader. And thank you, Mr. Sales, for your  
22 time. All right. I think what the chair  
23 would like to do right now is take a very  
24 brief recess, and then we'll have public  
25 comment on the maps that have been presented.

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1 (Recess)

2 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Folks, just as a  
3 reminder, if you would like to speak to the  
4 committee, if you'll just we have a sign up  
5 sheet. We've actually taken custody of it.  
6 If you come up here, we can get you added.  
7 Oh, we have another one over there. Okay.  
8 It's on the podium or at the corner. We're  
9 going to get underway here in just a second.

10 Ladies and gentlemen, if you start  
11 making your way back into the committee room,  
12 we're going to try to start it back up. And  
13 if you could go ahead and take your seat.

14 We've got a few. Carl's not back and  
15 Jan's not back, but since we're just doing a  
16 hearing. All right, ladies and gentlemen,  
17 thank you. We're going to go ahead and try to  
18 commence with the more public hearing portion  
19 of our meeting.

20 We've got a number of folks signed up.  
21 So I'll just ask you to try to keep your  
22 comments brief. Oh, yeah. That's right. I  
23 was going to allow members. I've got some  
24 members here who want to speak to the plan.  
25 So Representative Oliver has signed up first,



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1 so I'm going to call on her first.

2 MS. OLIVER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman,  
3 I'm State Representative Mary Margaret Oliver.  
4 I represent House District 82 in the middle of  
5 DeKalb County. And I'm here to bring to your  
6 attention the committee's attention, a legal  
7 error that was created in relation to the way  
8 in which House District 82 was changed,  
9 altered significantly, changed in a way that  
10 violates, I believe, many cases set forth on  
11 Voting Rights Act about community of interest.

12 Reapportionment process is about  
13 maintenance of political power by the  
14 majority. And it is about compliance with the  
15 important principles of law. Important  
16 principles of empowering all voters to have an  
17 equal, just opportunity to participate.

18 The history of our state, the history  
19 of our country in eliminating or diluting or  
20 at best creating barriers to Black citizens,  
21 hopefully, ultimately will be remedied in the  
22 process that we're engaged in today and all of  
23 the other litigations.

24 I'm going to talk about the political  
25 process, and I'm going to talk more

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1 importantly about the legal issues. And I am  
2 here to help you avoid a legal issue that is  
3 glaring in the presence of the map you are  
4 offering. I'm here to help you. You do not  
5 need to expose yourself to the legal errors  
6 you have created in the way you have redrawn  
7 House District 82.

8       Let's talk with the -- start with the  
9 political strategy that you must impose to  
10 maintain a majority. Again, under the law,  
11 not the most important issue, certainly not  
12 the most important issue to voters, whether or  
13 not your personal district is drawn in a way  
14 to personally enhance your opportunity to be  
15 elected is not the issue before us.

16       But we know in these processes, and  
17 I've participated in multiple reapportionment  
18 sessions, and I've also done voting rights  
19 litigation myself in my young age, and I will  
20 talk about that in a second. The personal  
21 relationships, the personal injuries we  
22 intentionally or unintentionally have done to  
23 each other, whether it was in the fraternity  
24 house, whether it was on the ball field,  
25 whether it was in our political, we know that

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1 some of those personal issues are carried out  
2 in this political strategy, and we know that  
3 the maintenance of personal political power  
4 and personal opportunity is part of this  
5 process.

6 I'm not going to emphasize that. I  
7 will just say that I've been asked 40 times.  
8 I don't know how many in the last 36 hours.  
9 Why did they do that to you, Mary Margaret?  
10 Why did they do that to you? Because what  
11 this map does to House District 82 is a total  
12 aberration and a total non-connection with the  
13 516-page order of Judge Jones.

14 Let's talk about Voting Rights Act  
15 historically a little bit. In my younger age,  
16 I did voting rights litigation coincidentally  
17 in relation to Spalding and Henry County at  
18 that time in relation to Section 5 violations.

19 Those were technical cases that even  
20 for a very green lawyer, somebody who hadn't  
21 practiced law very long, I was going to win.  
22 I mean, if a county took the position in  
23 federal court that the Voting Rights Act did  
24 not apply to them, that was a case that I was  
25 going to win.

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1 And but it gave me an early insight  
2 into the way in which, in that era, many  
3 counties and school districts and cities went  
4 from single member to at-large districts in  
5 order to avoid the opportunity for Black  
6 citizens to have even a single district in a  
7 five-person county commission, which was the  
8 issue in several of the cases, and because of  
9 the success of their violations, like saying  
10 the law didn't apply to them or other  
11 technical violations, for the first time in  
12 Henry and Spalding County, African-Americans  
13 were elected to the school board and to the  
14 county commission.

15 So I have followed voting rights cases  
16 closely. And as I move from that historical  
17 analysis, I want to talk about what I think  
18 the case law is today in relation to community  
19 of interest and the way in which -- the way in  
20 which you have in a very unprecedented and  
21 unexpected way, redrawn House District 82  
22 creates a glaring error and violation of  
23 community interest.

24 I'm a native of DeKalb County. I grew  
25 up there, and I actually live in the district

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1 that I grew up in and through multiple -- I've  
2 served in the Senate, in the House, as you may  
3 know, and through most many different  
4 districts, Senate and House, the House  
5 District 82 has always been a middle of DeKalb  
6 district.

7 And it has to a certain extent, as  
8 DeKalb County has changed significantly over  
9 my long political career, it has become a  
10 coalition district. In my district, prior to  
11 2021, it was a majority minority district, a  
12 little over 50 percent. Because of coalition  
13 populations.

14 We know that community interest can be  
15 defined in the case law in relation to major  
16 institutions and specific universities. Emory  
17 University has been in the -- my district and  
18 in the 82 district and in the Senate district,  
19 and the other numbered districts that I've  
20 represented continuously, significantly never  
21 changed until this week, the proposal you  
22 make.

23 Emory University is a \$14 billion  
24 entity. It has 35,000 employees. It has  
25 16,000 students. People don't realize that

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1 Atlanta is very much a university city. Agnes  
2 Scott is in the bottom of my current district.  
3 Emory is in the middle and towards the  
4 northern end, close to the end, is Oglethorpe.  
5 The industries of the university, but  
6 particularly the \$14 billion industry of  
7 Emory, is significant.

8 I'm going to give you an example of why  
9 community of interest is a relevant,  
10 significant, and lawful issue that you are  
11 violating in relation to the way you have  
12 changed in House District 82. As a little bit  
13 of a visual aid, I don't think we -- yeah.  
14 would you hold this up?

15 MALE VOICE: Yeah.

16 MS. OLIVER: Thank you. The green  
17 district under the Republican map right in the  
18 middle there. It goes from my house. I'm  
19 getting to the microphone. My house is at the  
20 very tip of that green area. Emory University  
21 is not in my district, although I live 300  
22 yards from it, and it goes 15 miles plus down  
23 to outside to 85.

24 Most of the area of that district is  
25 one precinct wide. So even though Judge

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1 Jones's order did not mention House District  
2 82 and did not mention interior of the  
3 perimeter and DeKalb County, for some reason  
4 they, not sure who they is, decided to redraw  
5 82 to go outside the perimeter in the  
6 southwestern direction.

7 Let me give you an example of why this  
8 is significant to the Emory community. In my  
9 first district, I, on the House, I had four  
10 hard rail line Marta stations in my district  
11 along DeKalb Avenue, Decatur East Lake, around  
12 that area. For 35 years Marta has proposed  
13 that Emory have --

14 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Chairman Oliver,  
15 could I ask you to hold one second? I'm just  
16 concerned about Ken's arms and shoulder  
17 strength over there.

18 MS. OLIVER: You can put it down.

19 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Ken, you're doing  
20 great. I will tell you. I would have been  
21 mine would have dropped by now. I was  
22 thinking maybe we could get an easel over  
23 there to him.

24 MS. OLIVER: I'm sorry. I should have  
25 paid attention.

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1 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: I hate to interrupt  
2 you all, but it was just. It was -- it was  
3 distracting me a little bit, so.

4 MS. OLIVER: I'm sorry. I should have  
5 noticed that.

6 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: And I hope  
7 Representative Vance will post on his website  
8 his shoulder workout for all of us. Please  
9 continue.

10 MS. OLIVER: Thank you. I apologize  
11 for not seeing the green swath again is a  
12 helpful visual. So for 35 years, the Marta  
13 system under federal rules and regulations has  
14 proposed a line from the Lindbergh Hard Rail  
15 Marta station to the Emory community.

16 The law, federal law about  
17 transportation money, does relate to centers  
18 of employment population significantly. So  
19 35,000 employees plus 16,000 students is a  
20 significant number. It is the largest private  
21 provider in the metro area. For good reasons,  
22 understandable reasons, citizens down here in  
23 Southeast DeKalb, outside the perimeter and  
24 inside the perimeter, do not feel that Marta  
25 is treating them well enough.



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1       They feel like the Marta stations along  
2 DeKalb Avenue and up north are sufficient to  
3 aid the Emory community, and they have no  
4 Marta stations in East and South Atlanta.

5 This is an active, relevant current issue  
6 being played out in the news and in all the  
7 administrations going on. And it is an issue  
8 of many hundreds of millions of dollars. And  
9 this map creates an example of a total abuse  
10 of community of interest.

11       I think that this also the aberration  
12 of the drawing of this map when it was not  
13 mentioned in any way in Judge Jones's order.  
14 The reason it wasn't mentioned in Judge  
15 Jones's order, because there's no fair  
16 argument that can be made, I don't think, that  
17 Black voting strength is diluted in DeKalb  
18 County. 100 percent of our elected House  
19 members and senators are Democrats. Most  
20 majority significantly, are African-American.  
21 All of the districts are -- I have right now  
22 under your current map, not the 50/50 map I  
23 had previously before 2021, it's a majority  
24 White district, but is won by President Biden  
25 76 percent.

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1        So you have a collection of non-  
2 minority Democratic districts and you have a  
3 collection, a growing collection, essentially  
4 professional people who have come to CDC and  
5 the institutions. So you are attacking that  
6 coalition combination. You are disregarding  
7 the significance of the way in which DeKalb  
8 County is growing, and you are creating for  
9 your interest a violation of standards of  
10 community interest.

11        We know the case law pays attention to  
12 community interest. We know that Judge  
13 Jones's order pays attention. In no way was  
14 House District 82 ever discussed in any way  
15 prior to 36 hours ago. So it does come as a  
16 shock. It's a visible shock, and it's a  
17 difficult issue. This has been -- let me  
18 close with this. This has been an emotional  
19 week.

20        I was privileged on Tuesday to attend  
21 First Lady Rosalynn Carter's tribute in the  
22 Emory campus on Glenn Memorial, which is about  
23 300 yards from my house. And the purity of  
24 her public service, the amazing career that  
25 she had was very moving and significant to me.

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1       Within six hours of coming out of that  
2 service, this map was presented to me as my  
3 political future and much, much more important  
4 than my political future because I've enjoyed  
5 a very long political career, it really  
6 represents a violation of community of  
7 interest and the history of DeKalb County, and  
8 the history of all the Voting Rights Act and  
9 all the Reapportionments and all the  
10 redrawings that have gone into the assisting  
11 Black voters in DeKalb County achieve full  
12 voting strength in DeKalb County.

13       In many ways, DeKalb County is and  
14 should be a model of the empowerment of Black  
15 voting citizens. All of the history of  
16 Georgia is based on race and region. The  
17 Voting Rights Act is a bill that comes down to  
18 race and region. And you are creating an  
19 issue unnecessarily for yourself that is going  
20 to be brought to the attention of Judge Jones.

21       And the way this map looks, based on  
22 the previous 40 or 50 years of drawing  
23 districts around that part of the middle of  
24 DeKalb, I think you're creating a  
25 vulnerability for yourself. I'm here to help

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1 you, ladies and gentlemen, avoid that  
2 vulnerability. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Thank you,  
4 Representative Oliver. I think we have  
5 Representative Evans next.

6 MS. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and  
7 colleagues. I'm Representative Becky Evans  
8 from DeKalb House District 89, currently and  
9 drawn into the House committee map of 90. I  
10 come before you today to speak against the  
11 Republican House committee map for  
12 redistricting.

13 As you know, Judge Jones's court ruling  
14 found that in 2021, redistricting by the  
15 legislature illegally reduced Black voters'  
16 political power. But the order was very  
17 specific about which districts impacted the  
18 Voting Rights Act in addition to where and how  
19 the new districts were drawn.

20 We were asked to add one Congressional  
21 district, five additional State House  
22 districts, and two additional State Senate  
23 districts with Black majorities.  
24 Unfortunately, the House -- this House  
25 committee map released about 36 hours ago, it

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1 goes well beyond what the court recommended.  
2 It makes, as Representative Oliver has just  
3 said, a deliberate decision to target several  
4 Democrats outside the area that the judge  
5 identified.

6 It includes me and other -- my other  
7 colleague, Representative Draper here, pairing  
8 us with fellow Democrats. So I have  
9 represented a majority Black district for five  
10 years, three election cycles. My first time,  
11 I beat a 16-year Black incumbent by the 30  
12 percent margin. My second time, I won by a 35  
13 percent margin, and this last time with a  
14 Republican candidate, I won with an 82 percent  
15 margin.

16 And this is all -- so this -- I am the  
17 candidate of choice in this district, with the  
18 Black voting population of 62 percent.  
19 Representative Draper, who is paired with me  
20 in this current map, she is also elected as a  
21 candidate of choice for the past year in a  
22 majority Black district of 58.5 percent.

23 By pairing the two of us and creating  
24 one map with the Black voting district of 51  
25 percent, this Republican map effectively

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1 eliminates one -- a candidate of choice by  
2 Black voters. Also, the Republican map  
3 reflects undue partisan gerrymandering mid-  
4 cycle. And it is unnecessarily disruptive to  
5 voters.

6 It modifies 56 districts out of 180.  
7 The Democratic map which was presented earlier  
8 here, it does what the court ordered. It is  
9 more surgical, it is less disruptive to  
10 voters, and it modifies 23 districts.

11 In addition, our leadership team is  
12 preparing an amendment to the House committee  
13 map with a new -- with the new proposal that  
14 will uncouple incumbents and still meet the  
15 judge's ruling.

16 So passing this House committee map is  
17 risky. You've heard today in the view of a  
18 very well-respected voting rights attorney  
19 that Judge Jones has a -- I've heard other  
20 people say 50/50 percent chance of not  
21 agreeing with the current House committee  
22 map -- does not comply with the Voting Rights  
23 Act.

24 As your colleague, I humbly ask that  
25 you vote for the Democratic proposed map that

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1 meets the judge's order and only impacts 23  
2 districts. And if you don't want to vote for  
3 the Democratic map, I ask that you please wait  
4 to vote until you see our proposed amended map  
5 that uncouples incumbents and meets the Voting  
6 Rights Act.

7 I also ask that you read the portal.  
8 Hundreds of Georgians are writing to you  
9 asking you to please not pass this map.  
10 That's it. Those are my comments. Thank you,  
11 Mr. Chairman.

12 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Thank you,  
13 Representative Evans, so much. We appreciate  
14 you being here today.

15 We've got a number of other members  
16 today. I know you all want to -- I'm assuming  
17 you all would like to be heard. I don't -- I  
18 don't know how to call on you. If we could  
19 just go down the row. If you desire to speak.  
20 Representative Draper, Representative Davis.  
21 Former representative, would you like to  
22 speak? Let me just check my other members.  
23 Do they desire. Would you like to speak? No.  
24 Representative Westbrook? No. Anybody else  
25 I've missed? I see some of them outside in

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1 the hall. Well, madam, why don't you go  
2 ahead?

3 MS. MCLEOD: Good afternoon, Mr.  
4 Chairman and members. Let me start by saying,  
5 well, first, I'm a former State  
6 Representative, Donna McLeod. I am the former  
7 state rep for District 105, and I'm also a  
8 constituent of District 105 currently. Let me  
9 start by just saying that we either believe in  
10 this republic and representative democracy or  
11 we don't. And if we don't, that's unpatriotic  
12 and unconstitutional.

13 So let me start with a little history  
14 of District 105. It was created in 2011 after  
15 the 2010 census, and the lines were drawn.  
16 And it was the first election ran for that was  
17 2012. It was a very competitive district  
18 because we did have a Democrat that ran with a  
19 Republican opponent, and the Republican did  
20 win.

21 In 2014, the same young lady Democratic  
22 young lady she ran against another Republican.  
23 And again, it was very competitive. The  
24 Republican did win, but the Republicans  
25 realized that the district was changing. So



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1 in 2015, they gerrymandered the district in  
2 this body because they wanted to keep the  
3 district.

4 So I was convinced by others to run in  
5 2016. And for those of you who don't know, I  
6 am of Jamaican heritage and I had to become a  
7 citizen. So I took my first oath as a  
8 citizen, and then I took a second oath when I  
9 was elected. But in 2016, I ran for the first  
10 time, and I lost by 222 votes.

11 What most people didn't know was in  
12 2017, a few of the folks that helped me run in  
13 2016 stayed with me, and we did an analysis of  
14 that run and found out that 2100 people didn't  
15 vote that were Democratic leaning. I would  
16 have actually won the race if they had voted,  
17 but that's okay.

18 So what we did in 2017, we knocked on  
19 every single person's door, all 2100 that  
20 didn't vote. So by 2018, I ran again, and I  
21 won that seat by over 4000 votes than my  
22 opponent. And in 2020, I was reelected by  
23 almost 8000 more votes than my opponent. The  
24 district had changed.

25 And so in 2020, which is a census year,

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1 the maps were drawn again. And I know they  
2 call it redistricting, but HD 105 was  
3 gerrymandered once again because I asked the  
4 chairwoman at the time, I asked her if there  
5 was any -- when she changed the lines, I said,  
6 was there any oxtail, rice and peas, curry  
7 chicken, jerk chicken up there because that  
8 district did not represent -- the  
9 representative that was representing that  
10 district. It had changed completely. In  
11 fact, there was only three subdivisions from  
12 the old 105 that was in the new 105.

13 And so today we're here again, because  
14 a federal court said that this body drew lines  
15 that were not legal and was not representative  
16 of the people that needed to be represented.

17 Like I said, you either believe in  
18 representative democracy or you don't. You  
19 either want this republic to work or you  
20 don't. And it is a republic. And  
21 representative democracy is important for its  
22 survival. We have a republic if we're willing  
23 to fight and keep it, and I'm willing to fight  
24 to keep it, because that's where I lead is  
25 with a republic and a representative

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1 democracy.

2       So right now, this new map is saying  
3 that 5.5 percent of Black voters will be taken  
4 out of this current map that the Republicans  
5 have proposed. Again, you either believe in  
6 this republic and representative democracy, or  
7 you do not. And if you do not, then you  
8 shouldn't be standing here representing people  
9 at all, because you don't mean this country  
10 well, and because the demographics is  
11 changing, it needs to be represented. They  
12 need to have a voice at the table.

13       This is about people's tax dollars and  
14 about representation and how we use their  
15 money on their behalf. We keep getting it  
16 twisted, and I think it's wrong. And I hope  
17 that enough people are listening and  
18 understand that this is their government, and  
19 it's a government of the people, by the  
20 people, and for the people. When you're  
21 elected, you serve. And if you don't want to  
22 serve, then keep all moving. That's all I  
23 have to say.

24       CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Thank you  
25 Representative McLeod. Representative

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1 Efstration, do you have a question?

2 FEMALE VOICE: You have a question?

3 MR. EFSTRATION: Yes, ma'am. Thank  
4 you. Former representative McLeod, did you  
5 take issue with the redistricting bill that  
6 was passed in 2015?

7 MS. MCLEOD I sure did.

8 MR. EFSTRATION: Are you aware that --

9 MS. MCLEOD: I was a -- I was a  
10 plaintiff on the lawsuit.

11 MR. EFSTRATION: Are you aware that the  
12 minority leader at the time, Stacey Abrams,  
13 voted in favor of that bill?

14 MS. MCLEOD: And trust me, her and I  
15 had conversations.

16 MR. EFSTRATION: No further questions.

17 MS. MCLEOD: I don't care who it is.  
18 Representative democracy matters.

19 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Thank you, Former  
20 Representative McLeod. It's nice to see you  
21 again. Glad to have you with us here today.  
22 All right. Did we -- have we gone through the  
23 list of representatives who wanted to speak?  
24 I think we have. I don't see any hands  
25 raised. So let's go to our remaining folks on

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1 our list here. Cindy Battles with the  
2 People's Agenda. Well, you kept your word to  
3 me, Ms. Battles. You came back. Good to see  
4 you again. You know your way around the room.  
5 So just when you're ready.

6 MS. BATTLES: Thank you, I appreciate  
7 that. Hey y'all again. My name is Cindy  
8 Battles. I am the policy and engagement  
9 director for the Georgia Coalition for the  
10 People's Agenda. Just for brevity and the  
11 sake of time, because I know we are all tired,  
12 I am going to make an assumption about some  
13 action that's going to be taken, and I am  
14 going to continue to focus my comments on the  
15 Republican proposed maps.

16 I just want to make two additional  
17 points to the map. Number one, it feels like  
18 y'all targeted HD 105, which means there's  
19 been another representative of color who has  
20 been targeted by these maps. Kind of adds to  
21 the list. Feels a little problematic. Also,  
22 it looks like there are additional city splits  
23 in Gwinnett when compared to last time.

24 Of particular concern is Snellville,  
25 which is a city with a large POC population

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1 that now appears to be split four ways, and it  
2 was mostly whole in the enacted map. So we  
3 think that that's going to be problematic when  
4 you present these maps to the judge as well.  
5 That's all I've got. I'm happy to take any  
6 questions.

7 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Thank you, Mr.  
8 Battles. Any questions for Ms. Battles?

9 MS. BATTLES: Have a good day.

10 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Doesn't appear to  
11 be any. Let's see. We have Janet Grant. And  
12 you're back again.

13 MS. GRANT: I'm back again. Chair  
14 Leverett and members of the committee, my name  
15 is Janet Grant and I serve as co chair of Fair  
16 Districts Georgia. Thanks for the opportunity  
17 to add to my testimony from yesterday. I want  
18 to now take into consideration the House  
19 Democratic caucus map that we got to see after  
20 the hearing yesterday.

21 Just as a reminder, Fair Districts  
22 Georgia is a grassroots citizen organization  
23 focused solely on advocating for fair  
24 redistricting and redistricting reform.

25 As I said yesterday, we believe that

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1 the maps enacted during this session should  
2 comply with the court's order, number one, and  
3 also exclude any unrelated unnecessary changes  
4 for partisan gain, which is consistent with  
5 our long held belief of opposing mid-cycle  
6 redistricting.

7 So this is not the opportunity to take  
8 advantage of that. You now have in front of  
9 you our second handout, adding to the one on  
10 the chairman's map yesterday. This is about  
11 the Democratic House caucus map. And I know  
12 some of you have already referenced it.

13 So on our two-part pass-fail test, we  
14 do find that this map in a strict sense, as  
15 we've already had the discussion today,  
16 doesn't pass that first test of having five  
17 new Black majority districts. It has four.

18 However, in addition to those four  
19 Black majority districts, this map does create  
20 two new Black opportunity districts, one of  
21 which, HD 74 that we've talked about, is 48  
22 percent Black and a strong coalition district.

23 So on the second test, this one does  
24 pass. There aren't any unnecessary changes.  
25 You heard Mr. Sales earlier talk about the

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1 very precise changes they made and no ripple  
2 effects other than what was necessary to add  
3 the five -- or the five districts.

4 So now as a group, we've discussed  
5 three different House maps. The Esselstyn map  
6 from the plaintiffs that Chair Leverett  
7 mentioned several times yesterday that was  
8 used as a guide for the development of the new  
9 Black majority districts in his map.

10 Actually, Brian referenced the Cooper  
11 map also. So we've got several maps there.  
12 The difference that we're concerned about --  
13 and then you've got the two maps, obviously,  
14 that have been introduced to this committee.

15 The difference we're concerned about is  
16 the unnecessary disruption of voters in the  
17 Chair's map, with impacts across 57 districts  
18 and moving 15.7 percent of the statewide  
19 population. I happen to be one of those.

20 The Esselstyn and Democratic caucus  
21 maps have demonstrated that the court order  
22 can be met without that kind of broad  
23 disruption and potentially vote dilution of  
24 the Chair's map.

25 Esselstyn's map is surgically precise,



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1 impacting only 25 districts and 6 percent of  
2 the population. And the Democratic caucus map  
3 we saw earlier is 23 districts and 6 percent  
4 of the population as well. So this, as you've  
5 heard now from many people, puts the chair's  
6 map, should it pass, at risk for being struck  
7 down by Judge Jones, in which case a special  
8 master will draw the maps for the Court, and  
9 it may or may not result in a lot less  
10 attention to incumbent protection.

11 So we strongly encourage that you  
12 revisit the map, take control, and pass a map  
13 that you know that fully reflects the growing  
14 diversity of Georgia and doesn't have that  
15 risk of being overturned by the Court. Again,  
16 thank you for the opportunity today.

17 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Thank you, Ms.  
18 Grant. I think you may have a question or two  
19 if you stay up there, Representative Reeves.

20 MS. REEVES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And  
21 may I ask quick questions if there are  
22 multiple. Multiple but quick.

23 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Yes.

24 MS. REEVES: Ms. Grant this handout.  
25 You gave us one yesterday? I appreciate you

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1 preparing it. You prepared this handout,

2 correct?

3 MS. GRANT: Yes, I did, along with our

4 team at fair districts.

5 MS. REEVES: And you marked an X, no.

6 MS. GRANT: We did.

7 MR. REEVES: On the Democrat plan that

8 it does not provide five new majority Black

9 districts. Right?

10 MS. GRANT: Yes. From a technical

11 perspective, it does not.

12 MS. REEVES: Okay. Representative

13 Evans, a little while ago mentioned a

14 potential second Democrat map that reduced the

15 number of incumbent pairings. Did you hear

16 that a few minutes ago?

17 MS. GRANT: I did hear her speak to it.

18 I'm not familiar with it.

19 MS. REEVES: You haven't seen that map?

20 MS. GRANT: No, we have not.

21 MS. REEVES: Do you know if anybody's

22 seen that map yet?

23 MS. GRANT: I do not know.

24 MR. REEVES: Okay.

25 MS. GRANT: We'd love to see it.

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1 We'll -- we'll score it.

2 MS. REEVES: And then in the  
3 presentation earlier, when I was asking some  
4 questions about Macon, there was a  
5 representation that Democrat District 135  
6 proposed district, which went from Pike County  
7 to Bibb County and took in Dale Washburn's  
8 house that that put Dale Washburn in an open  
9 seat without an incumbent in it. Do you know  
10 if that's accurate?

11 MS. GRANT: I do not know that. We  
12 don't have all of the member addresses in our  
13 system, so we didn't want to comment on that.

14 MS. REEVES: Well, thank you for coming  
15 twice.

16 MS. GRANT: Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: One other question,  
18 Chairman DeLoach.

19 MR. DELOACH: This is quick and easy  
20 and probably a yes or no. What we heard  
21 earlier, when the Democratic map was  
22 presented, was that they cut and paste the  
23 Esselstyn and Cooper districts, and the only  
24 changes they made were for two reasons. The  
25 number one reason was to avoid pairing

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1 incumbent Democrats. The second reason they  
2 gave was to pair incumbent Republicans. Now,  
3 do you believe that's a fair approach?

4 MS. GRANT: That -- I'm not sure that's  
5 what I heard. So I guess I probably shouldn't  
6 comment. I mean, it sounded to me like they  
7 did a lot of adjustment in order to actually  
8 not have the impact on Republicans, that  
9 otherwise it would have had. But I'm not  
10 speaking for their map, but I'm not sure that  
11 that's what I heard.

12 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Thank you, Chairman  
13 DeLoach. I don't see any other questions, Ms.  
14 Grant. Thank you again for being with us.  
15 Anna Dennis with Common Cause.

16 MS. DENNIS: Good day. I'm Anna  
17 Dennis, executive director of Common Cause.  
18 Good afternoon, Committee and Chair. Thank  
19 you for those who have presented maps  
20 discussed today. This map does comply with  
21 the judge's order to add four additional Black  
22 majority districts, and includes additional  
23 opportunity competitive districts that allow  
24 Black voters to choose their candidate of  
25 choice.

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1        This map limits disruptions to the  
2        current districts versus what we've previously  
3        seen. As communities in Georgia, we firmly  
4        believe that the state should move toward  
5        inclusive redistricting processes by creating  
6        independent redistricting committees and  
7        commissions. This would aid in transparency  
8        and increase the confidence in communities  
9        that we all have, as people in Georgia can be  
10       centered in our redistricting processes.

11       As a member of the GRA, which is a  
12       Georgia Redistricting Alliance, we have  
13       coordinated with local communities and elects  
14       to pass local redistricting resolutions. We  
15       passed these resolutions in the counties of  
16       Gwinnett, Clayton, and the cities of  
17       Lawrenceville, Clarkston.

18       And as a resident of South Metro Area  
19       and as a person who was raised actually in  
20       Clayton County and very proud of it, for over  
21       30 years I have seen so many changes to  
22       demographics and populations in those areas.  
23       And I'm very concerned about what the maps  
24       have been presented this week and what will  
25       happen to those populations there who have

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1 definitely struggled and urged to have more  
2 representation, to be more civically involved.

3 We are urging this body to follow the  
4 court's order as mandated, and draw districts  
5 that empowers communities and centers  
6 communities, and adopt fair maps for Black  
7 voters and all voters. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Thank you. I think  
9 you have one question. Who is it down there?  
10 Madam Pro Tem?

11 MS. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
12 Yes, I just had a follow up question. Thank  
13 you for your comment. In the judges 400 plus  
14 page decision, did he, to comply with Section  
15 2 of the Voting Rights Act, did he require  
16 five minority additional five -- five  
17 additional minority majority districts?

18 MS. DENNIS: So in the order --

19 MS. JONES: Specifically.

20 MS. DENNIS: Specifically, which was  
21 definitely over 500 pages, a good read for  
22 those who enjoy getting into the legal weeds.  
23 It actually says that there needs to be Black  
24 majority districts. However, technically when  
25 you have opportunity districts and there are

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1 high populations of certain demographics,  
2 those districts can be considered a  
3 demographically minority or majority district.

4 MS. JONES: So that's what he said in  
5 the decision?

6 MS. DENNIS: No. He specifically said,  
7 to your question, to specifically answer it,  
8 it was actually Black majority. However,  
9 technically, what we've seen today were  
10 districts that were presented that were  
11 actually more than five Black. That would be  
12 more than five Black majority districts  
13 because there are opportunity districts.

14 MS. JONES: So in other words, are you  
15 saying that the Democrat caucus presented map  
16 that has four additional minority majority  
17 districts, Black majority districts does not  
18 meet the requirement that the judge said in  
19 his decision for five?

20 MS. DENNIS: I wouldn't say that. I  
21 think they went above and beyond which we did  
22 not see in the maps that were presented  
23 yesterday.

24 MS. JONES: So in other words, it does  
25 not meet what he specifically said?

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1 MS. DENNIS: If you want to look at  
2 things technically.

3 MS. JONES: Generally, that's what  
4 we're doing today. But thank you very much.

5 MS. DENNIS: You're welcome.

6 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Thank you. You  
7 have no further questions.

8 MS. DENNIS: Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Thank you so much  
10 for being here. All right. We have  
11 Representative Ray Martinez. I think we  
12 missed him earlier.

13 MR. MARTINEZ: Thank you so much,  
14 Chairman. I had no plans to speak today, but.  
15 So my name is Reynaldo Martinez. I represent  
16 District 111, which is Gwinnett County,  
17 Dacula, a little bit of Walton County. My  
18 district will be getting precinct, the  
19 Lawrenceville precinct, which is that 5  
20 percent that they were talking about.

21 I'm going to rest assured, okay.  
22 Because I heard that that 5 percent would not  
23 be represented. I will rest assured for that  
24 5 percent in Lawrenceville precinct, they will  
25 be represented because that's going to be my



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1 new precinct. And I'm going to rest assured  
2 that this Latino in Gwinnett County will  
3 represent those 5 percent.  
4 I'm very familiar with that 5 percent  
5 area in Lawrenceville, which is Martin Chapel,  
6 Sugarloaf Parkway. I'm very familiar with  
7 that. I even know the mayor of Lawrenceville,  
8 David Steele, so they will be rightly  
9 represented. So I just want to say that  
10 because I just want to set the record  
11 straight, because I heard that that 5 percent  
12 and 105 will not be represented. That's going  
13 to be my new precinct, Lawrenceville, and I'm  
14 very familiar with that. And thank you for  
15 giving me the time. Chairman.

16 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Thank you,  
17 Representative, I think you've got one  
18 question, Ray, if you come back up to the mic.

19 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Yes, sir.  
20 Representative Reeves, there we go.

21 MS. REEVES: You mentioned Latino.  
22 Just so it's clear. What is your background?  
23 Where were you born? How did you get to the  
24 USA?

25 MR. MARTINEZ: Yeah, absolutely. My

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1 parents are Cuban. They fled Cuba. And they  
2 went to Puerto Rico. So I was born in Puerto  
3 Rico. I grew up in Miami, and now I'm here.  
4 So I consider myself Cuban, Puerto Rican, so  
5 Latino American. Yes, sir.

6 MS. REEVES: And before you got elected  
7 to the Georgia House of Representatives, had  
8 you been elected by the people of Gwinnett and  
9 Walton County before?

10 MR. MARTINEZ: Absolutely. I served --

11 MR. REEVES: Tell us about that.

12 MR. MARTINEZ: Absolutely. Thank you  
13 for the question. I served seven years  
14 representing Gwinnett and Walton County in the  
15 city of Loganville as a city council member.  
16 And then I was the first Latino mayor ever in  
17 the whole State of Georgia, representing  
18 Gwinnett and Walton County as a mayor. So I  
19 know Lawrenceville very well.

20 Going back to that, they will be -- I  
21 could guarantee you they will be represented.  
22 I know that area very well, representing  
23 Loganville, Martin, Shapur, Sugarloaf, a  
24 little bit of Grayson. I'm so excited to be  
25 part of that new precinct, Lawrenceville. And

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1 you better believe that this person of color

2 is going to represent those folks very well.

3 So thank you for the question, Matt.

4 MS. REEVES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 MR. MARTINEZ: Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Thank you,

7 Representative. I see you have no more

8 questions. Thank you for coming today. Jada

9 Richard.

10 MS. RICHARD: Hello.

11 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Good afternoon.

12 MS. RICHARD: My name is Jada Richard.

13 I'm a voter and resident in McDonough,

14 Georgia. Thank you for listening to my

15 testimony today. After reviewing the newly

16 drawn chair maps, it appears that the voting

17 power and influence of the Black community in

18 McDonough will be hurt by these new maps.

19 Although you were able to draw on five

20 new majority Black districts, my city's lines

21 have been redrawn to diminish our voting

22 power. The new map makes it so McDonough

23 residents will have to -- will likely have to

24 address three different representatives to

25 receive things like natural disaster aid,

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1 community development initiatives, and other  
2 things.

3 Now I live in McDonough. The city is  
4 growing rapidly into an Atlanta suburb, yet  
5 the new district would stretch to whiter, more  
6 rural areas of the state. Now the interests  
7 of those living in farmland, Georgia are very  
8 different to the interests of those living in  
9 a suburb. This could cause my new rep to have  
10 to choose whose competing concerns to  
11 prioritize.

12 I'm asking that this committee go back  
13 to the drawing board, because equitable  
14 representation of Black voices and needs is  
15 the purpose of the court order, not keeping  
16 the current power balance in place. Thank you  
17 very much.

18 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Thank you. Hold on  
19 a second. I did have a question or two for  
20 you. So which district are you referencing as  
21 extending into rural areas that goes into  
22 McDonough?

23 MS. RICHARD: Now, I'm no expert here,  
24 so I will direct you to the organization that  
25 I'm with. Public policy director. Okay?

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1 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Okay.

2 STEPHANIE: Hey, y'all. My name is  
3 Stephanie. I work for New Georgia Project,  
4 and Jada is one of our supporters who lives in  
5 Henry County. So yes, Jada lives on the split  
6 of McDonough, where it would be what it --  
7 would be the new 147 and 81. And so it goes  
8 south from 147, goes south around down into  
9 Locust Grove. 81 goes well into Newton and  
10 down close over to Butts County, which I'm  
11 assuming Butts County is what Jada means when  
12 she describes rural.

13 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Okay. So 117 does  
14 go down to Locust Grove and 81 does extend  
15 out, but you've got to have population of a  
16 certain size population to fit in the  
17 district. So it's difficult to keep it more  
18 compact. I would just say our thought was  
19 splitting. McDonough gives you three, three  
20 representatives you can talk to when you need  
21 something done, which is kind of a nicer,  
22 dense weight there.

23 STEPHANIE: Well, I don't want to speak  
24 for Jada, but I think her point and the point  
25 I would agree with is when you split a

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1 community that has to speak to multiple  
2 representatives, that means that you're not  
3 being able to have an organized, equal front.  
4 There's perfect examples of this happening  
5 across the state.

6 I think people earlier I heard someone  
7 mentioned Savannah, but it's happened in some  
8 other larger cities like Macon, where you end  
9 up being at crossways. I always think about a  
10 natural disaster happening, and as you try to  
11 work through things like state supported  
12 funds, you're having to talk to multiple  
13 people. So as nice as it is to get to know  
14 more people. Never good to have to work  
15 through more bureaucracy.

16 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Well, I would -- I  
17 would just note that the city is currently  
18 split. We're not adding an additional split  
19 that doesn't already exist, and the large bulk  
20 of McDonough is going to be in the new  
21 district that we're drawing in order to comply  
22 with the court order.

23 STEPHANIE: It is. It is a -- it is a  
24 split district. And I think this is an  
25 opportunity for the people of Henry County and

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1 the people of McDonough to pull them into a  
2 singular majority Black district.

3 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Well, I would -- I  
4 would submit that our map is attempting to do  
5 that. But I acknowledge your disagreement  
6 with that, and I appreciate your testimony.

7 STEPHANIE: Thank you chairman.

8 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Thank you ma'am.  
9 And thank you, Ms. Richard. Is it, Ms.  
10 Miller?

11 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Fenika, thank you.  
12 That's what I thought, but I was -- I didn't  
13 want to get it wrong.

14 MS. MILLER: Good afternoon. Thank you  
15 all for the opportunity. My name is Fenika  
16 Miller. I am the deputy national field  
17 director with Black Voters Matter, and I'm a  
18 resident of Houston County. In October,  
19 Federal Judge Steven C. Jones published an  
20 opinion in which he agreed with plaintiffs who  
21 said current Georgia legislative maps do not  
22 adequately represent Black communities.

23 Again, I live in Houston County, which  
24 is located in the Black Belt. We know that  
25 that is the land across the middle of the

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1 state, from Augusta region to the Alabama  
2 line. We had the highest population of  
3 enslaved people, and now you have a large and  
4 high concentration of Black people who still  
5 reside in these communities.

6 And again, this includes Macon and  
7 Warner Robins. And this is important. And I  
8 continue to lift it up because according to  
9 Judge Jones's order, there's an opportunity  
10 for two additional Black districts in located  
11 in the middle Georgia and central Georgia  
12 region.

13 Based on 2020 census counts, the number  
14 of Black Georgians has grown by about 484,000  
15 people. Since 2010, 33 percent of the state  
16 now identifies as Black, and the number of  
17 White Georgians has actually dropped by 52,000  
18 over the last decade.

19 While Houston County is the fastest  
20 growing county in the middle Georgia region,  
21 and we have the population for three state  
22 House seats, with one being majority Black  
23 just like we did before 2010 and for those  
24 districts to be drawn in a manner that keeps  
25 our county whole.



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1 I lift that up because redistricting  
2 should be about keeping communities of  
3 interest together, and drawn in a manner that  
4 places the power to choose representatives  
5 that will best advocate for our interests, our  
6 issues, and best represent our communities and  
7 districts with the ability to be present, as  
8 Stephanie mentioned before, for the people  
9 that they serve.

10 Now, I've looked at both proposals  
11 again with a laser focus on the Black belt  
12 counties. The House caucus map gets us closer  
13 to complying with the judge's order. However,  
14 not sure if anyone believes that those will be  
15 passed even though they're trying to help you  
16 by presenting a better version, albeit with  
17 only four of the five suggested new Black  
18 districts. It's unlikely to pass.

19 And that unnecessarily increases the  
20 likelihood that a special master will draw  
21 Georgia's maps. I urge this committee to go  
22 back to the drawing board to fairly draw all  
23 five majority Black districts and comply with  
24 the judge's orders, and also to give another  
25 look to the illustrative maps. Thank you.

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1 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Thank you so much.

2 David Garcia.

3 MR. GARCIA: Good afternoon, chairman  
4 and members, I'm David Garcia. I work for an  
5 organization named Galeo Impact Fund, and we  
6 advocate for the Hispanic community throughout  
7 Georgia. And I'm here to oppose the

8 Republican map for a number of reasons,  
9 including the fact that it appears that eight  
10 House members were drawn into the same  
11 districts with members from their own party,  
12 six of them Democrats and two Republicans.

13 It appears that members of color were  
14 targeted in the new map, including  
15 Representative Sam Park, who was paired with  
16 another Democratic incumbent. It appears that  
17 there were significant changes to HD 105, a  
18 coalition district performing for Hispanic  
19 voters and other voters of color, even though  
20 no changes were needed pursuant to Judge  
21 Jones's order in order to target  
22 Representative Farouk Mughal.

23 HD 81, another coalition district  
24 previously performing for Hispanic voters and  
25 voters of color was also dismantled. It also

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1 appears that some cities in Gwinnett were  
2 divided. Of particular concern is the city of  
3 Snellville, which contains a large population  
4 of color. This city appears to be split four  
5 ways by the proposed plan, although it was  
6 mostly united in the 2021 maps.

7 Judge Jones's order did not require the  
8 city to be divided. Although the proposed map  
9 makes widespread changes to the plan,  
10 including in areas that were not implicated by  
11 Judge Jones's order, it continues to  
12 perpetuate racial vote dilution and racial  
13 gerrymandering from the 2021 plans.

14 In Chatham County near Pooler and  
15 Savannah, there is a large Black and Hispanic  
16 community that shares common policy interests  
17 and socioeconomic characteristics. This  
18 community is compact and large enough to  
19 support an additional compact Hispanic and  
20 Black coalition district.

21 The proposed plan, like the 2021 plan,  
22 continues to split this community up, thus  
23 diluting the voting power of Hispanic and  
24 Black voters in that area. The 2021 plan also  
25 dismantled several districts in which voters

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1 of color were electing candidates of choice,  
2 or districts in which voters of color were on  
3 the verge of electing candidates of choice,  
4 such as House Districts 44, 48, 49, and 104.  
5 In the proposed plan, these districts remain  
6 racially gerrymandered. Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Thank you. I think  
8 you had one question. Mr. Garcia, if you'll  
9 just -- thank you. It's -- is it  
10 Representative Reeves?

11 MS. REEVES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr.  
12 Garcia. Mr. Garcia, you mentioned that the  
13 Republican plan, which is H 123, had eight  
14 pairings of incumbents together or four  
15 pairings, eight total affected. The Democrat  
16 plan H 143, which I got today, how many  
17 incumbents does it pair together?

18 MR. GARCIA: I can't recall.

19 MS. REEVES: And then the Democrat  
20 plan. How many Republicans does it place into  
21 heavily Democrat districts?

22 MR. GARCIA: I can't recall the  
23 specific details.

24 MS. REEVES: How long have you had the  
25 Democrat plan?

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1 MR. GARCIA: I looked at it for -- the  
2 Democrat plan? Today.

3 MS. REEVES: When did you get it?

4 MR. GARCIA: Earlier today.

5 MS. REEVES: Earlier today. Okay.

6 Thank you.

7 MR. GARCIA: Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Thank you, sir.  
9 Jill Howard.

10 MS. HOWARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 My name is Jill Howard. I am the civic  
12 engagement manager with the 9 to 5 Georgia.  
13 It's a nonpartisan organization that's been  
14 around for over 50 years. And we work for the  
15 economic and social justice for working women  
16 and their families.

17 Now, many of the women and their  
18 families that are drawn in these maps, they're  
19 affected by how these maps are drawn. And I  
20 want to just petition to the committee to look  
21 at these new maps, to consider all of the  
22 suggestions that have been made so that no  
23 voter is disenfranchised.

24 Every voter has the right to be able to  
25 pick their own representative, that all of

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1 their -- every vote should be able to count,  
2 and it should matter in terms of how they are  
3 able to pick those representatives to  
4 represent them, their families within that  
5 community.

6 And I also ask that you just really  
7 take note and account to all of the public  
8 testimony that has been given today. This is  
9 not about, you know, just getting so many new  
10 counties within for Black folks, this is about  
11 the citizens of Georgia. This is about our  
12 state, and this is about our democracy. And  
13 so I just want to take this time to present  
14 that to you all, and thank you for your time.  
15 And thank you for listening.

16 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Thank you so much  
17 for your testimony, Ms. Howard. Is it Luis  
18 Zaldivar? Did I say that right? Zaldivar.  
19 Zaldivar. Zaldivar. He may have stepped out.  
20 We'll try to come back to him in a minute.  
21 And then Niles Francis. Good afternoon, Mr.  
22 Frances.

23 MR. FRANCES: Good afternoon. How are  
24 you, sir?

25 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: I'm good. I think

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1 we're going to get the map set up for you

2 here.

3 MR. FRANCES: Thank you. You're going

4 to have to play around with the microphone

5 here, am I?

6 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Yes. Right.

7 MR. FRANCES: Okay. This should be

8 interesting.

9 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Yeah.

10 MR. FRANCES: So good afternoon,

11 Committee members. How are you guys doing?

12 So Judge Jones, as we know, instructed the

13 committee to draft a map that includes five

14 additional majority Black districts. But in

15 doing so, the draft map that we see here, it

16 basically reshuffles and rennumbers existing

17 majority Black districts.

18 It eliminates coalition districts. And

19 it's still dilutes Black voters. Like the

20 enacted District 117, which was struck down

21 was 55 percent White. On the map that we're

22 looking at here, District 117 becomes district

23 81 and is 66 percent White. On the enacted

24 map, the enacted map, District 64 was 58

25 percent White. On this map here it becomes

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1 District 40 and is 63 percent White.

2       Additionally, many of the voters in the  
3 new majority Black districts already lived in  
4 majority Black districts, like take District  
5 115 on the enacted map. It includes most of  
6 McDonough and is 52 percent Black on the map  
7 that we're looking at here. District 117  
8 includes most of McDonough and is 63 percent  
9 Black.

10       The enacted District 78 includes most  
11 of south Clayton County on the enacted map,  
12 and is 72 percent Black. On the map that  
13 we're looking at here, district 78 essentially  
14 becomes District 74 and is 66 percent Black.  
15 So I would just implore all of you to actually  
16 to comply with Judge Jones's order and create  
17 new majority Black districts without having to  
18 continue to further dilute Black voters to do  
19 so.

20       And I just want to remind everyone that  
21 we've all been talking a lot about a special  
22 master today. Judge Jones does not need to  
23 appoint a special master. He has already  
24 pointed to several maps in his ruling that he  
25 could easily say, by order of this court, the



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1 State of Georgia is instructed to adopt the  
2 Cooper map or the Esselstyn map, or whichever  
3 of the remedial maps he's pointed to in his  
4 ruling.

5 So I know no member of this committee  
6 wants to go back to court, so I would just  
7 implore you all to redraw these maps in a way  
8 that complies with the judge's order. Thank  
9 you.

10 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Thank you, sir, and  
11 I agree with you. Judge Jones had it within  
12 his power to redraw the maps himself, but he  
13 did not. Which we greatly appreciate that  
14 he's given us a shot at it. So that's a very  
15 good point to make.

16 All right. Do we have any other. All  
17 right. We don't have anyone else signed up.  
18 Is there anyone else who wishes to speak to  
19 either of these maps? Why don't you come on  
20 up, ma'am, if you'll just give us your name,  
21 we'll get you to sign the signup sheet in a  
22 little bit before you leave.

23 MS. SANDERS: Hello everyone, esteemed  
24 honorables. I am Elena Sanders. I am a  
25 resident of Georgia. But I also come before

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1 you as an elected official. I'm a county  
2 commissioner in Newton County. And to sit  
3 here and to hear the residents speak on the  
4 dilution of the Black vote and to hear some of  
5 the responses of some of you I look up to.

6 I come to the state capital looking for  
7 officials and those who are on another level,  
8 to be respectful to the residents. I was  
9 disheartened by some of the conversations and  
10 some of the responses that I received. I am a  
11 public servant before I'm a politician, and  
12 those who are serving in the capacity of the  
13 elected officials should respect the  
14 taxpayers, because if it wasn't for the  
15 taxpayers, we wouldn't be here. You wouldn't  
16 be sitting in these seats.

17 So we should be respectful. It's great  
18 to ask questions and to be able to get your  
19 answers, but to be disrespectful is not  
20 warranted. So I had to say that because  
21 sitting here, I was very disheartening of how  
22 people are responding to those who are  
23 concerned about their livelihood, concerned  
24 about their vote, that their ancestors fought  
25 for us to be able to have that right.

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1 And so you should be able to sit here  
2 and listen with respect, ask your questions  
3 with respect. It doesn't take that much. If  
4 I would have did what some of you all did, I  
5 would be called the angry Black woman. Y'all  
6 would look at me as passion. I'll be called  
7 angry.

8 But when I get up and speak, I have to  
9 be gentle. Because of the stereotype of what  
10 Black women are perceived as. So I just ask  
11 that you have a little gentleness when you're  
12 speaking to people. Because sitting here, if  
13 I was the boss, some of you wouldn't have your  
14 seats. Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Thank you for your  
16 testimony. All right. I think that's the  
17 conclusion of the people we've got on our  
18 list. Is there anybody else who wishes to  
19 speak to either map? All right. All right.  
20 Then I think it's time for us to consider  
21 taking some action. So we have before us two  
22 plans.

23 Okay. Yeah, let's do the at least the  
24 LC number. House Bill 1EX which would adopt  
25 the plan that I described yesterday is LC

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1 472575. And so that's the only bill that's  
2 been assigned to the committee at this point.  
3 I don't believe a bill has yet been created on  
4 the plan that was offered by the minority  
5 leader.

6 I would just note, we've -- we have not  
7 known of the judge's order any longer than the  
8 other party, and we've had equal amounts of  
9 time to prepare them. Generally, we cannot  
10 act on a bill that is not filed and assigned  
11 to this committee.

12 However, I, due to my great respect for  
13 the minority leader and the desire to at least  
14 allow a hearing, I have told them that the  
15 Chair would, if it's permissible, entertain a  
16 motion to amend House Bill 1EX or amend by  
17 substitute House Bill 1EX by making whatever  
18 changes.

19 I know that that one change would be to  
20 replace the description of the districts  
21 that's done by precinct and census tract with  
22 a description which I think does currently  
23 exist. It's just not before this committee.  
24 That would basically adopt the map that was  
25 offered by Leader Beverly, which is how --

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1 client number H143 plan GHDC House plan 2023.

2 I don't know if additional changes are  
3 desired to House Bill 1EX, but the chair would  
4 entertain at this time a motion to make  
5 that -- to move do pass by that substitute.

6 Thank you, Molly. Reminded me. First  
7 of all, we got to get a bill before the  
8 committee. So let me go ahead and call for a  
9 motion on House Bill 1EX itself. All right.  
10 I've got a motion to pass 1EX. Do I have a  
11 second. I have a second. All in favor,  
12 signify by saying aye. Aye. All right.  
13 Oh, I did all right. Wait a minute.  
14 Let's -- the Chair decides to rescind that  
15 vote. Now, we would call for amendments.  
16 We've got a motion and a second. Now we call  
17 for amendments first. All right. So why  
18 don't we have some discussion and then we'll  
19 allow amendments to -- to that bill. All  
20 right. There's no discussion. Does anyone  
21 wish to make a motion to move the substitute  
22 that the chair proposed?  
23 All right. Hearing no motion, the  
24 chair will now go back and entertain a motion  
25 or entertain a vote on the on House Bill 1EX

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1 without any amendments. Is there any  
2 discussion? All right. The chair will call  
3 the question. All those in favor of the  
4 passage of House Bill 1EX without amendment,  
5 signify by saying aye. Those opposed signify  
6 by saying no.

7 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Why don't we -- why  
8 don't we poll the committee?

9 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: All right. So I'm  
10 going to go -- go down the list here. Vice  
11 Chair Hong.

12 MS. HONG: Yes.

13 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Secretary Reeves.

14 MR. REEVES: Yes.

15 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Representative  
16 Alexander.

17 MS. ALEXANDER: No.

18 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Representative  
19 Ballenger is absent. Chairman DeLoach.

20 MR. DELOACH: Yes.

21 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Leader Efstration.

22 MR. EFSTRATION: Yes.

23 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Representative  
24 Fleming.

25 MR. FLEMING: Yes.

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1 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Representative

2 Gilliard.

3 MR. GILLIARD: No.

4 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Representative

5 Jackson.

6 MR. JACKSON: No.

7 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Pro Tem Jones.

8 MS. JONES: Yes.

9 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Representative

10 Prince. I'm sorry. Chairman Prince.

11 MR. PRINCE: No.

12 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Representative or

13 I'm sorry. Chief Deputy Whip Scott.

14 MS. SCOTT: No.

15 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Chairman Smith.

16 MS. SMITH: Yes. Which Smith?

17 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: I'm sorry. Got two

18 of them, don't we? Natural resources Chairman

19 Smith.

20 MS. SMITH: Yes.

21 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: Rules Chairman

22 Smith.

23 MR. SMITH: Yes.

24 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: And Chairwoman

25 Taylor.

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1 MS. TAYLOR: Yes.

2 CHAIRMAN LEVERETT: All right. What is  
3 our tally? The Chair declares that the bill  
4 passes nine to five. All right. I believe  
5 that's all the business we have today. Is  
6 there anything else to come before the  
7 committee?

8 We will have a meeting tomorrow  
9 afternoon. I anticipate we'll be considering  
10 a Senate map, and it will be hearing only. It  
11 will be the same place at 1:00. Meeting is  
12 hereby adjourned. Thank you for your  
13 attendance.

14 (End of Video Recording.)

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1 CERTIFICATE

2

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

6

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DATED this 8th day of December, 2023.

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WENDY SAWYER, CDLT

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