

# EXHIBIT G

**GEORGIA SENATE FLOOR**  
**Hearing - Senate Floor on 12/01/2023**

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10 GEORGIA SENATE FLOOR

11 December 1, 2023

12 Video Segment: 1:37:50 to 5:37:08

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1 (Beginning of Video Recording.)

2 LT. GOVERNOR JONES: Now moving on to  
3 the Rules calendar. I recognize the Senator  
4 from the 49th.

5 SENATOR ECHOLS: Mr. President, thank  
6 you. Colleagues, I'm here today to present  
7 our new map as prescribed by Judge Jones.  
8 I'll briefly, not briefly, I'll talk about the  
9 map-drawing process, and then, I'll also walk  
10 through district by district so that everyone  
11 has an understanding of the changes.

12 We began the process by carefully  
13 reviewing Judge Jones's order. The order was  
14 very specific about what needs to be done in  
15 the Senate. He said, and I quote, "The remedy  
16 involves two additional majority-Black Senate  
17 districts in south Metro Atlanta. That's on  
18 Page 509 of his order.

19 Judge Jones also noted that the  
20 districts drawn by the various plaintiff  
21 experts overlapped in areas. Shortly after  
22 Governor Kemp called for a special legislative  
23 session, I sent out emails to every senator  
24 from the affected areas to meet.

25 Because of the short amount of time

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1 that we had to prepare, I allocated several  
2 days to be at the Capitol and even more days  
3 to meet virtually. I met with one member at  
4 7:30 in the morning at the Capitol. I talked  
5 to one member while I was at a UGA football  
6 game.

7 I would like to thank those senators  
8 for taking time to meet with me. Your  
9 discussions were very helpful, especially when  
10 I found out that one member had moved and we  
11 didn't have her correct address.

12 We consulted with legal counsel and  
13 began drawing districts with Gina Wright in  
14 her office. We -- the first thing we did was  
15 we drew the new majority-Black districts that  
16 were required by the order in south Metro  
17 Atlanta. Those new districts are 28 and 17 on  
18 the plan in front of you.

19 So in the packet that you have, you've  
20 got -- the first page of it has the whole map  
21 of Georgia with all of the reflected changes.  
22 But if you'll flip to the next page, there's a  
23 map where only the affected districts are  
24 highlighted. And that's the map you see up  
25 here today.

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1 With this configuration, almost all of  
2 the Black voters covered by the areas in the  
3 plaintiff's experts' districts in those areas  
4 are included in majority-Black State Senate  
5 districts. The only area not included is  
6 Griffin, but that area was not included in a  
7 majority-Black district for one of the  
8 plaintiff's expert's plans either.

9 Placing districts in the south part of  
10 Metro Atlanta meant that other districts had  
11 to move north. You can think of that as a  
12 ripple effect of moving districts.

13 As a result, majority-White Senate  
14 District 42 moved from the northern part of  
15 DeKalb to eastern Metro Atlanta, and majority-  
16 White Senate District 6 moved from the  
17 northern part of Fulton County to western  
18 Metro Atlanta.

19 Our proposed Senate plan, all in all,  
20 the proposed Senate plan involves changes to  
21 15 districts, all within Metro Atlanta. Our  
22 primary goal in creating this district plan is  
23 to comply with Judge Jones's order in every  
24 respect. I told each member that I met with  
25 that my primary goal is simply to comply with

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1 the judge's order.

2 After drawing the districts required by  
3 the court order, we then followed our existing  
4 traditional redistricting principles to work  
5 on the remaining districts. Those traditional  
6 redistricting principles include: maintaining  
7 distinct district populations, so that  
8 deviations from the ideal district size are  
9 less than 1 percent; to comply with the U.S.  
10 Constitution requirement of one person, one  
11 vote.

12 We also planned to limit additional  
13 split counties by only adding one additional  
14 county split; drawing new districts utilizing  
15 the most recent precincts from county  
16 governments -- some counties updated their  
17 voter precincts this summer, and these maps  
18 recognize those county voting precinct  
19 changes; ensuring all districts are  
20 contiguous;

21 Ensuring all districts are reasonably  
22 compact in shape, ensuring communities of  
23 interest are protected as far as possible --  
24 many of you described your communities of  
25 interest in our meetings, and your input was

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1   invaluable with that;

2       Avoiding the unnecessary pairing of  
3   incumbents by ensuring that every incumbent  
4   senator of both parties is not paired, and  
5   we've done that.

6       As part of our efforts to ensure every  
7   incumbent senator had a district to run in and  
8   win in, we also worked to maintain the  
9   continuity of representation as much as  
10   possible, which involved partisan, political  
11   considerations to ensure that the Senate plan  
12   remained balanced between the political  
13   parties as it was in 2021.

14       This means that we also used extensive  
15   partisan data, including election returns from  
16   2018, 2020 and 2022.

17       Now, I'm going to discuss the new  
18   majority-Black Senate districts. The first  
19   one that I'll discuss is Senate District 17.  
20   District 17 is one of the new majority-Black  
21   districts required by the court order. It is  
22   located in almost exactly the same location as  
23   the plaintiff's experts' districts in this  
24   area.

25       The district contains the panhandle and

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1 southern part of Clayton County, combined with  
2 most of Stockbridge and McDonough. The  
3 district includes all of Hampton, as well.  
4 Judge Jones relied on the inclusion of most of  
5 McDonough, Locust Grove, and Hampton in the  
6 same district for this area in his order at  
7 Pages 285, 286 and 316.

8       The district boundary of District 17  
9 matched those communities centered on  
10 McDonough. This district boundary has only  
11 one single incumbent.

12       Next is Senate District 28. District  
13 28 is the other new majority-Black district  
14 required by the court order. The plaintiff's  
15 experts drew this district in two different  
16 places.

17       One expert anchored the district in  
18 South Fulton, as we have done here. The other  
19 expert utilized population from District 16  
20 and 34, which resulted in higher Black voting  
21 age population percentages in adjoining  
22 districts.

23       District 28, as proposed, is anchored  
24 in south Fulton County, where one of the  
25 plaintiff's district was, and ensures that



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1 Black voters in Fulton, Fayette, and Clayton  
2 counties are all in majority-Black districts.  
3 District 28 also relies on some of the  
4 same highways and healthcare system Judge  
5 Jones relied on Pages 325 and 326 in his  
6 order. The district includes part of the City  
7 of South Fulton and moves north into Austell,  
8 areas that Judge Jones found to share strong  
9 connections on Pages 190 and 191 of his order.

10 The district connects a number of  
11 suburbs around Metro Atlanta that are all  
12 experiencing growth and are diverse  
13 communities. This configuration also limited  
14 the number of adjoining districts that had to  
15 be touched. And this district has one single  
16 incumbent.

17 Because we began the map-drawing  
18 process by first creating the new majority-  
19 Black districts that Judge Jones called for,  
20 adjustments had to be made to surrounding  
21 districts to account for that population  
22 shift. A few things to know about these  
23 remaining districts.

24 First, both plaintiff's experts  
25 testified that they didn't know a lot of

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1 details about Georgia geography. Our process  
2 was informed by Ms. Gina Wright, the State  
3 cartographer, and her extensive knowledge of  
4 Georgia and my meeting with -- meetings with  
5 senators about their districts.

6 We believe we've reached a plan that is  
7 far better than those proposed by the  
8 plaintiffs, while complying with everything  
9 the judge requires because we know Georgia  
10 better.

11 Second, it's important to note that the  
12 ripple effect is real when drawing plans.  
13 When new districts are located in the southern  
14 part of Metro Atlanta, nearby population has  
15 to be adjusted. Those changes then ripple  
16 out, primarily north, until they are resolved.

17 Third, the 15 changed districts here  
18 are less than those proposed by the  
19 plaintiff's experts, so we were able to  
20 maintain district cores in a better way than  
21 their experts were. Mr. Esselstyn changed 22  
22 of the enacted Senate districts, and Mr.  
23 Cooper changed 35 of the enacted Senate  
24 districts on their proposed plans. Ours  
25 changes 15.

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1 Fourth, we also took into account the  
2 work on county elections officials. Those  
3 officials have to update the voter  
4 registration database. By drawing the map  
5 this way, we're working to minimize the amount  
6 of work required of those officials before the  
7 2024 elections.

8 Fifth, the plan does not eliminate any  
9 existing minority-opportunity districts. Let  
10 me restate that. This plan does not eliminate  
11 any existing minority-opportunity districts.  
12 Judge Jones was clear on Page 510 of the order  
13 that we cannot eliminate any existing  
14 minority-opportunity districts.

15 While he doesn't define that term, it's  
16 clear he is referring to existing majority-  
17 Black districts. On Page 511, he refers to  
18 whether the plan provides Black voters with  
19 additional opportunity. districts. There are  
20 also references to opportunity districts that  
21 clearly refer to Black voters on Pages 106,  
22 145 through 146, 268, 417 through 20, and 427.

23 This plan does not eliminate any  
24 existing majority-Black districts, and it  
25 takes two existing majority-White districts,

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1 District 17 and District 28, and converts them  
2 into majority-Black districts.

3 Six, it's important to remember that we  
4 believe our 2021 Senate plan complies with the  
5 Voting Rights Act and are pursuing an appeal  
6 of the judge's order. That's why you will see  
7 language in this order that reverts to the  
8 2021 plan if the appeal is successful.

9 This mirrors language used by a  
10 Democratic majority in 2002 when the State  
11 Senate plan was not pre-cleared in time for  
12 use in that election.

13 But if anyone is upset with how a  
14 district is configured, remember we did not  
15 draw these districts this way in 2021  
16 originally, and we did not want to redraw  
17 these districts now. We're doing this because  
18 we were sued by democratically affiliated  
19 groups.

20 Now I'm going to walk through the  
21 remaining changed districts. Senate District  
22 25. I'll start on the east and work my way  
23 west. District 25 stays largely the same with  
24 slight adjustments in the Locust Grove area to  
25 accommodate the addition of District 17. This

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1 ensures that voters in this district will  
2 largely maintain existing representation.

3       District 42. Because of the ripple  
4 effects of moving districts north, Senate  
5 District 42 was previously a majority-White  
6 district in DeKalb County and is now a  
7 majority-White district in eastern Metro  
8 Atlanta. It is much of the territory of the  
9 prior District 17, which has become a  
10 majority-Black district.

11       It includes areas with strong  
12 connections like Newton, Morgan, and Walton  
13 counties and growing areas of Henry County.  
14 The boundaries include many rural areas and  
15 areas where people are moving from Henry  
16 County into as they get older. Here,  
17 Covington is made whole.

18       This map also follows Newton County's  
19 newest precincts that were enacted this past  
20 summer. This configuration also ensures more  
21 of Newton County stays together.

22       Senate District 43. In order to make  
23 room for District 17, District 43 moves north  
24 into Gwinnett County, similar to the  
25 configuration of the existing District 55.

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1 Otherwise. This district is largely unchanged  
2 with all of Rockdale and portions of Newton  
3 and DeKalb, all suburban areas. This district  
4 shares connections through I-20 into growing  
5 areas of Gwinnett County.

6 Senate District 55. Senate District 55  
7 also ripples north, taking in Tucker and some  
8 areas that were previously in Senate District  
9 41. It remains in both DeKalb and Gwinnett  
10 counties, and includes areas along I-285 on  
11 the eastern portion of the city.

12 Although Tucker isn't whole, it  
13 includes almost all of the city along with  
14 areas of Stonecrest. All of Stone Mountain is  
15 in this district.

16 Senate District 41. As part of the  
17 ripple effects around the area, District 41  
18 shifts to the west, taking in all of Clarkston  
19 and moving over north of Decatur. This  
20 district previously ran from Stonecrest to  
21 Clarkston, so it includes a number of areas  
22 that were already -- that were previously in  
23 it.

24 This configuration enables the district  
25 to stay majority Black while moving north

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1 because of the locating of District 17 to the  
2 south.

3 Next is Senate District 10. District  
4 10 is directly affected by the creation of  
5 District 17 because it previously ran through  
6 that part of south Henry County now included  
7 in District 17. As a result, the district  
8 shifts north to include areas around Decatur.

9 The district previously included  
10 Stockbridge with portions of Stonecrest and  
11 will continue to do so, but with less of  
12 Stockbridge included. This district remains  
13 majority Black even as it shifts north.

14 Senate District 44. Like District 10,  
15 District 44 has to give up population in the  
16 southern portion of the district to create  
17 District 17, so it moves north, as well. In  
18 so doing, it takes in Decatur, ensuring that  
19 we included portions of Decatur that were  
20 excluded in 2021 because these boundaries had  
21 not been updated.

22 The mayor of Decatur had asked for all  
23 the city to be in one district. The district  
24 includes all of Decatur and most of Avondale  
25 Estates, areas that were previously in

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1 district 42, while keeping those communities  
2 whole. This district remains majority Black  
3 even as it shifts north.

4 Moving over to the other side of Metro  
5 Atlanta, the next set of districts or changes  
6 necessary to add other new majority-Black  
7 district in South metro Atlanta. There are  
8 some blank spaces you'll notice on your map  
9 because no changes were needed in Districts  
10 36, 34, and 16.

11 Senate District 39. District 39  
12 maintains its current north-south orientation,  
13 shifting to the west slightly to accommodate  
14 the changes to add District 28 as a new  
15 majority-Black district.

16 The north-south orientation has been  
17 consistent with how this district has existed  
18 for several cycles of redistricting. This  
19 district has only minor changes and mostly  
20 remains the same.

21 Senate District 38. District 38 shifts  
22 east and north to accommodate the addition of  
23 District 28 in the south. It exits Cobb  
24 County and now will be wholly within Fulton  
25 County, connecting areas from Palmetto and



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1 Union City to stay whole to areas of Buckhead.  
2 There's a strong community in Fulton County,  
3 and the district maintains its majority-Black  
4 status even as it shifts north.

5 Senate District 35. This district  
6 shifts significantly to the north to  
7 accommodate the new majority-Black District  
8 28, in south Metro Atlanta. Instead of  
9 running south, it now runs from South Fulton  
10 up to the Smyrna area while maintaining its  
11 majority-Black status.

12 These areas are connected as growing  
13 suburbs, located primarily along the 285  
14 corridor on the west side and sharing a number  
15 of, common interest as growing areas. This  
16 district connects the Smyrna-Vinings area with  
17 Atlanta and South Fulton County.

18 Senate District 33. In order to  
19 accommodate the shifts of adding District 28,  
20 District 33 shifts north and east, taking in  
21 areas toward East Cobb. The district  
22 maintains its primary east-west orientation,  
23 connecting Powder Springs with Marietta as it  
24 did previously.

25 The district is wholly within Cobb

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1 County and keeps Powder Springs whole. The  
2 core of this district remains the same.

3 Senate District 6. In the process of  
4 creating District 28, there was significant  
5 population left where District 6 is now  
6 located. This district keeps Coweta and Heard  
7 counties whole, avoiding a split of Coweta  
8 County.

9 In order to come up to the population  
10 needed, it moves into the southern part of  
11 Carroll County, where District 28 previously  
12 connected Coweta, heard, and parts of Carroll  
13 in the map prior to the 2021 districts.

14 District 6 connects the University of  
15 West Georgia with Newnan, where there are  
16 strong, growing communities and ensures that  
17 small areas in rural Carroll County, which  
18 share a strong similarity to Heard County, can  
19 remain in a district that is similar.

20 Senate District 30. District 30  
21 remains largely the same, with the same  
22 boundaries in Haralson and Paulding as it  
23 previously had. The district previously  
24 included a portion of Douglas County, and now  
25 takes more of the western part of Douglas in

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1 an area that is very similar to Carroll,  
2 including Villa Rica, which is a city that  
3 straddles the county line.

4 The district includes most of  
5 Carrollton, and Carroll County remains the  
6 largest county in the district. The district  
7 shifts east to help accommodate the creation  
8 of the new majority-Black District 28.

9 This is a job that I take seriously.  
10 It's important to me that this map complies  
11 fully with Judge Jones' order, and I truly  
12 believe it does. I have spent hours over a  
13 few weeks talking with senators about their  
14 districts to gain a better understanding of  
15 their districts.

16 I know there's been criticism from  
17 people who spoke at the committee hearing that  
18 they've not had much time to comment on the  
19 map. I understand their frustration, but with  
20 the limited time that we were given by Judge  
21 Jones to complete this, I had the map released  
22 on the day we finalized it. The map was  
23 released two days before our special session  
24 convened.

25 From the time that map was posted, the

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1 online public comment portal was opened, and  
2 we began receiving comments. I've spent a  
3 significant amount of time reading those  
4 comments. I also made sure that every person  
5 who wanted to speak at our hearings was given  
6 an opportunity to speak.

7 I am proud that during the public  
8 comments, representatives from the ACLU said  
9 we added the districts that were supposed to  
10 be added. Fair Districts Georgia Foundation  
11 also agrees that our map complies with Judge  
12 Jones's order. They provided this flier to us  
13 at the committee hearing that says complies  
14 with the mandate.

15 You know, redistricting is complicated  
16 and highly technical, so much so that it takes  
17 specially trained people to even create the  
18 redistricting plans.

19 As chair of the Reapportionment and  
20 Redistricting Committee, when we sat down with  
21 specialists in map drawing and law, I made  
22 clear I wanted these maps to comply with Judge  
23 Jones's order and otherwise follow all of our  
24 traditional redistricting principles. We  
25 relied on the experts in the law and in map

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1 drawing to make sure those goals were met, and  
2 I'm confident that we are.

3 Mr. President, I'll yield for  
4 questions.

5 LT. GOVERNOR JONES: You do have --  
6 thank you, Senator. You do have some  
7 questions, Senator from the 56.

8 SENATOR ALBERS: Thank you, Mr.  
9 President. Will the chairwoman yield?

10 SENATOR ECHOLS: I will.

11 SENATOR ALBERS: Madam Chair, first, I  
12 want to thank you for your hard work. I know  
13 this has been a challenging and very time-  
14 crunched process. I'd like to ask you a few  
15 questions as it relates to traditional  
16 redistricting principles. I know you've  
17 mentioned some of these, but I think it's  
18 worth us reiterating what was done.

19 Isn't it true that we only added a  
20 single county split out of all 159 counties in  
21 your map?

22 SENATOR ECHOLS: The senator knows of  
23 what he speaks.

24 SENATOR ALBERS: Will you yield for  
25 another question?

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1       SENATOR ECHOLS: I will.

2       SENATOR ALBERS: Isn't it true that we  
3 followed the 2022 precinct boundaries as much  
4 as possible, based on the order?

5       SENATOR ECHOLS: This is true. The  
6 senator knows of what he speaks.

7       SENATOR ALBERS: And one final question  
8 if I can, Madam Chair. In terms of  
9 incumbents, all 56 of us that are here right  
10 now, isn't it true that in your map, not one  
11 single incumbent from either party was paired?

12       SENATOR ECHOLS: The senator knows of  
13 what he speaks.

14       SENATOR ALBERS: Thank you.

15       SENATOR ECHOLS: Thank you.

16       LT. GOVERNOR JONES: Senator from the  
17 1st. You have a question?

18       SENATOR WATSON: Thank you, Mr.  
19 President. Does the Senator yield?

20       SENATOR ECHOLS: I yield.

21       SENATOR WATSON: Madam Chair, we  
22 certainly appreciate what you have done, what  
23 your committee has done. I had a couple of  
24 clarifications, if you don't mind. One thing  
25 I know we're grateful for is Judge Jones being

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1 very clear in his order about what we're  
2 supposed to do.

3 From here, do you have any concerns  
4 about whether this plan complies with that  
5 order?

6 SENATOR ECHOLS: I have no concerns  
7 with the plan complying. I fully believe the  
8 plan complies with the judge's order.

9 SENATOR WATSON: Thank you. And one  
10 more point of clarification. After we  
11 conclude with this session, can you explain to  
12 us the process with the court from this point  
13 forward?

14 SENATOR ECHOLS: Sure. So Judge Jones  
15 will have the opportunity to review these  
16 plans, and we're confident he will conclude  
17 that we have fully complied with his order.  
18 If he disagrees, then, he would redraw the  
19 court-drawn plans for use in 2024. But we  
20 believe our maps will be used in the 2024  
21 election.

22 SENATOR WATSON: Thank you, Madam  
23 Chair.

24 LT. GOVERNOR JONES: Senator from the  
25 10th.

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1 SENATOR JONES: Thank you, Mr.

2 President. Would the senator yield?

3 SENATOR ECHOLS: I yield.

4 SENATOR JONES: Senator, will you yield  
5 for a series of questions, please?

6 SENATOR ECHOLS: I yield.

7 SENATOR JONES: Thank you. Are you  
8 familiar with the terms pack, stack and crack  
9 as it relates to redistricting?

10 SENATOR ECHOLS: I am familiar with  
11 those terms, but I am no expert.

12 SENATOR JONES: Senator, further yield?

13 SENATOR ECHOLS: I further yield.

14 SENATOR JONES: Do you mind explaining  
15 what your familiarity is with those terms,  
16 please?

17 SENATOR JONES: I see what we're trying  
18 to do here. What I have said is that I have  
19 consulted with experts who know the legal  
20 terminology, and I have relied on their  
21 expertise to help me with drawing this map.

22 SENATOR JONES: Senator, further yield?

23 SENATOR ECHOLS: I'll further yield.

24 SENATOR JONES: Senator, I'm not asking  
25 any trick questions here, and I'm not trying



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1 to take you anywhere. I'm just simply asking  
2 what your familiarity was with those  
3 particular terms because I had a couple of  
4 questions, and I wanted to make sure they were  
5 phrased in the right terminology.

6 SENATOR ECHOLS: Okay.

7 SENATOR JONES: Senator, further yield?

8 SENATOR ECHOLS: Sure.

9 SENATOR JONES: Senator, you stated  
10 earlier that you -- that what you've drawn in  
11 these maps should -- that your intention was  
12 to fully comply with the judge's order; is  
13 that correct?

14 SENATOR ECHOLS: That is correct. And  
15 we have fully complied with the judge's order.

16 SENATOR JONES: Senator, further yield?

17 SENATOR ECHOLS: I yield.

18 SENATOR JONES: So if I'm able to point  
19 out an area anywhere in these maps where you  
20 did not comply, which you then agreed that  
21 your maps would be out of compliance?

22 SENATOR ECHOLS: The judge required  
23 that we draw two additional majority-Black  
24 districts in south Metro Atlanta, and that is  
25 precisely what we have done.

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1       SENATOR JONES: Senator, yield?

2       SENATOR ECHOLS: I yield.

3       SENATOR JONES: Senator, that wasn't my  
4 question. My question, if you mind me  
5 phrasing it again, was, you stated publicly  
6 several times that your maps and your  
7 intentions were to fully comply with the  
8 judge's order. So my question is, if I was  
9 able or if anyone in our caucus was able to  
10 identify an area in your maps that you drew  
11 that did not comply with the judge's order,  
12 which you then agreed that your maps would be  
13 out of compliance?

14       SENATOR ECHOLS: I have consulted with  
15 legal counsel, who specializes in this, and  
16 Gina Wright, who is acknowledged by the judge  
17 as an expert in this, and we all feel and I  
18 feel that these maps do comply. So I don't  
19 think you'll be able to point out an area that  
20 doesn't comply.

21       SENATOR JONES: And I accept that,  
22 Senator, but if I did, again, it's simply a  
23 yes or no question; would you agree? Yes or  
24 no?

25       SENATOR ECHOLS: I see what we're

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1 trying to do here. I'm not going to get  
2 trapped into anything. I have said, and I  
3 will say again, I believe our maps fully  
4 comply with the judge's order.

5 SENATOR JONES: Senator, again, I'm not  
6 trying to trap you. I'm just trying to get  
7 some simple questions.

8 SENATOR ECHOLS: You can move on to  
9 your next question.

10 SENATOR JONES: I'd be glad to. Thank  
11 you, Senator. Senator, can you explain why in  
12 your maps, district numbers for certain  
13 legislators like the 35th, 28th, the 44th and  
14 the 17th were changed?

15 SENATOR ECHOLS: District numbers  
16 changed because the judge wanted specific  
17 districts to be drawn as majority-Black  
18 districts in south Metro Atlanta. So to  
19 comply with that, numbers were changed.

20 SENATOR JONES: Is that the only  
21 reason, Senator?

22 SENATOR ECHOLS: To my knowledge,  
23 that's the only reason, yes.

24 SENATOR JONES: Senator, further yield?

25 SENATOR ECHOLS: I'll further yield.

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1       SENATOR JONES: Senator, why does the  
2 Republican proposal leave Senate Districts 16  
3 and 34 unchanged when the court ruled that  
4 both districts, as drawn, violates the Voting  
5 Rights Act.

6       SENATOR ECHOLS: So the judge's order  
7 said that the areas of those districts. And  
8 we've accommodated for that in our maps.

9       You know what, Mr. President? I'm  
10 probably going to get quoted on a lot of  
11 things that I've said, but I probably won't  
12 get quoted on this one. But you guys have had  
13 all week to ask me questions on behalf of your  
14 constituents on this map. We had a committee  
15 hearing. Not a single person asked me a  
16 question when given the opportunity in the  
17 committee hearing.

18       So all of a sudden now, when the  
19 cameras are on, everybody wants to ask  
20 questions. Mr. President, I yield the well.

21       LT. GOVERNOR JONES: Senator has  
22 yielded the well.

23       (Background conversation)

24       LT. GOVERNOR JONES: State your  
25 inquiry.

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1       SENATOR JONES: Mr. President, isn't it  
2 true that given the gravity and the nature of  
3 what we are discussing and that its  
4 important --

5       LT. GOVERNOR JONES: I can't hear you,  
6 Senators. Speak up. I'm sorry.

7       LT. GOVERNOR JONES: Senator -- I'm  
8 sorry, Mr. President. Given the gravity and  
9 the nature of what we discuss and that is  
10 critically important that all of the questions  
11 that we have in the Democratic caucus should  
12 be answered in whatever form those questions  
13 are asked.

14       LT. GOVERNOR JONES: Senator who  
15 authored the bill always retains the right, as  
16 you well know, Senator, being a distinguished  
17 member of this body for so long, they can --  
18 senator can yield the well at any time. And  
19 it does go through the committee process,  
20 which we put it through. But I'm sure there's  
21 going to be other speakers here that you -- if  
22 you still have questions that you'd like to  
23 ask, you'll be able to ask.

24       SENATOR JONES: Thank you, Mr.  
25 President.

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1 LT. GOVERNOR JONES: Senator from the  
2 31st, would you like to speak? No? Senator  
3 from the 55th. I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm  
4 sorry. Minority leader, I'm sorry. That's  
5 the 50th (inaudible). I apologize, Senator  
6 from the 50th. The 50th, I apologize. You'll  
7 be next.

8 SENATOR HATCHETT: Thank you, Mr.  
9 President. When I was first put on this  
10 committee at the beginning of this, this term,  
11 a mentor of mine back home who held the seat  
12 previously said that, Well, if you get into  
13 redistricting, just to let you know, it's the  
14 most complex process you'll ever go through  
15 under the gold dome.

16 And I don't think you can really  
17 appreciate that bit of knowledge until you've  
18 gone through it.

19 In the court case, which we're here for  
20 today, the plaintiff's expert, Mr. Esselstyn,  
21 described redistricting as a deliciously  
22 complex puzzle. Now that we've gone through  
23 this process, I believe he's not necessarily  
24 referring to the drawing of the map itself,  
25 but the complexities of the surrounding

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1 process.

2       What do I mean by that? Well, when we  
3 first saw the order and we were told that we  
4 would be called into special session, Madam  
5 Chair reached out to a long list of senators,  
6 asking to come in, meet with her, and discuss  
7 their districts, and let us know what we need  
8 to know about their districts. And we have  
9 the list of everyone we reached out to.

10       Then, we have a list of those who  
11 actually took us up on that offer, and the  
12 list of senators who came in to meet versus  
13 the list of senators who were offered a  
14 meeting is very discouragingly short. But I  
15 will say, for those that did come in, they  
16 were very passionate about their district.

17       And an overarching theme in our  
18 discussions was, hey, I like the maps how they  
19 are now. Please don't change my district. I  
20 agree with that. I believe that the maps that  
21 were drawn two years ago were good maps. I  
22 believe most members in this chamber were  
23 happy with them.

24       Unfortunately, the federal judge  
25 disagreed. And so we're here now in response

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1 to an order that a judge asked us, and the  
2 judge had very specific instructions in that  
3 order, which when we sat down to draw these  
4 maps, we made it clear to the experts that we  
5 sat down with, we want to comply with this  
6 order 100 percent. There's too much at stake  
7 for us not to comply.

8 And that's what we did. We complied  
9 with the order. We complied with traditional  
10 redistricting process. And I think one of the  
11 most discouraging things that I've seen  
12 throughout this process is, I'll say, the lack  
13 of involvement. The lack of wanting to be  
14 involved with the process itself.

15 We had meetings leading up to special  
16 session. We've had committee meetings, and  
17 very few individuals even approached us to  
18 talk about what they wanted, what they thought  
19 would be a good district. But if you go on  
20 social media, or you turn on the nightly news,  
21 or you look in the paper, you would think  
22 that's all that's been talked about down here.

23 You would think that everyone has been  
24 knocking on our doors, trying to tell us how  
25 we should draw the maps. I've seen quotes



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1 that what we're doing is criminal, what we're  
2 doing is rushed, and that we've taken no  
3 input. For those in this room, your job as  
4 legislators is to advocate for your district.

5 The way to advocate for your district  
6 is to advocate in the committee rooms, is to  
7 advocate amongst your colleagues. It is not  
8 to run to the media and get on social media  
9 and try to get soundbites.

10 We complied with the judge's orders. I  
11 am confident that we did what we were supposed  
12 to do. And I hope if you're voting no on this  
13 piece of legislation, you go back to your  
14 district and you tell them how involved you  
15 tried to be, how involved you were, and not  
16 just that you talk to the media. And with  
17 that, Mr. President, I'll yield the well.

18 LT. GOVERNOR JONES: Senator has yield  
19 the well. Senator from the 55th, the minority  
20 leader.

21 SENATOR BUTLER: You got my red light  
22 on. Is that an indication? Thank you, Mr.  
23 President and members of the Senate. There  
24 are a couple of things I want to address  
25 before I begin my remarks. And one of them is

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1 a letter to the members of my caucus received  
2 from the chair of the Reapportionment and  
3 Redistricting Committee.

4 And in that letter, it states that a  
5 member could set up an appointment to come and  
6 talk about their prospective districts and  
7 also that they could bring anyone with them  
8 that they chose to bring.

9 And when that happened, the person that  
10 they took, which was (inaudible)'s legal  
11 counsel, was not allowed to come in the room.  
12 So that's the first thing I wanted to address  
13 because the chair said that anybody could come  
14 and talk.

15 And the other was questions from the  
16 members of the committee. There was never --  
17 yesterday, there was never an invitation for  
18 the committee members to ask questions. I was  
19 there. I made a presentation.

20 I was never offered to ask a question  
21 of the chair, and so I just wanted to clear  
22 that up because it was stated that any member  
23 had the opportunity to ask questions.

24 And the other -- the third thing is  
25 that everybody did not get to speak that

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1 wanted to speak. If you -- we had a couple of  
2 processes that we were following. If you had  
3 spoken the day before, then, you couldn't  
4 speak the next day. And that's not usually  
5 how the committee is run.

6 The same process takes place on  
7 Wednesday and it takes place on Thursday. So  
8 that did not happen.

9 But good morning. I rise today to  
10 discuss the proposal for redrawing the  
11 Senate's legislative maps in accordance with a  
12 federal court order and more importantly, in  
13 accordance with the Voting Rights Act.

14 The Democratic caucus recognizes that  
15 fair maps are crucial to ensuring that every  
16 vote in Georgia counts equally, and that no  
17 voter in Georgia is subject to discrimination  
18 in the election process.

19 Therefore, we have not taken the  
20 federal court's order lightly. Last month,  
21 Judge Jones issued a 516-page order which  
22 found that the 2021 map proposed and passed by  
23 Senate Republicans violated the Voting Rights  
24 Act and discriminated against Black voters.

25 Specifically, the court identified

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1 Senate Districts 10, 16, 17, 25, 28, 30, 34,  
2 35, 43, and 44 as the area in which the map  
3 violated the Voting Rights Act. To remedy  
4 this violation, the court ordered that the  
5 Senate enact a map that includes two  
6 additional majority-Black districts,  
7 specifically in the area identified by the  
8 court.

9 To be clear, the court's order  
10 contained two directives. First, that the two  
11 new majority-Black districts be created, and  
12 second, that the new majority-Black districts  
13 be created in the vote-dilution area that the  
14 court identified as not providing Black voters  
15 with an equal opportunity to elect the  
16 candidates of their choice.

17 The proposed map we have before us from  
18 the majority does not follow the court's  
19 directive. In truth, the matter proposed by  
20 my Republican colleagues failed to comply with  
21 the Voting Rights Act and continues to dilute  
22 the voting power of Black voters in south  
23 Metro Atlanta.

24 In many ways, the Republican proposal  
25 is a hoax. In the specific area where the

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1 court found Voting Rights Act violations, the  
2 majority's proposal moves nearly as many Black  
3 residents out of existing majority-Black  
4 districts as it moves into majority-Black  
5 districts.

6 This means that a net of only  
7 approximately 3,000 Black voters in the vote-  
8 dilution area identified by the court were  
9 moved into majority-Black districts.  
10 Republicans tried to cover up this hoax with  
11 smoke and mirrors. They attempt to obscure  
12 what has been done in this map by reassigning  
13 the district numbers of multiple existing  
14 incumbents.

15 But you can't obscure the truth. The  
16 Republican proposal dilutes Black voting  
17 power, just like the 2021 Republican map did.  
18 The Republican proposal does little, if  
19 anything, to improve Black voters' ability to  
20 elect candidates of their choice.

21 Given this, the Democratic caucus  
22 presented an alternative map, but it was voted  
23 down in committee. We believe that it should  
24 have been adopted because it actually complies  
25 with the Voting Rights Act and specifically

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1 complied with the federal Court's order.

2 Had this proposal also been in front of  
3 us, you would see that the Democratic proposal  
4 does exactly what the court order demands. It  
5 draws two additional majority-Black districts  
6 in the vote-dilution area, where the court  
7 specifically found violations of the Voting  
8 Rights Act.

9 In our proposal, the 16th and 17th  
10 districts are new majority-Black districts,  
11 and all of the proposed changes in our map are  
12 made in the area identified by the court. In  
13 that area, our proposals bring almost 150,000  
14 Black residents that currently live in non-  
15 majority-Black districts. It brings them into  
16 majority-Black districts.

17 Our proposal does not move any Black  
18 voters out of existing majority-Black  
19 districts and into non-majority-Black  
20 districts. Additionally, by focusing on only  
21 the area identified by the court, the  
22 Democratic proposal leaves 46 Senate districts  
23 exactly the same and only modifies the  
24 boundaries of ten Senate districts, that is,  
25 the ten identified by the court.

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1 By comparison, the Republican proposal  
2 modifies the boundaries of 15 Senate  
3 districts. Of the 15 districts, only 8 of  
4 them were identified by the court as diluting  
5 Black voting power.

6 Further, the Democratic proposal does  
7 not pair any incumbents. It also does not  
8 unnecessarily change district numbers where  
9 district boundaries have not dramatically  
10 changed. Keeping the same district numbers as  
11 the 2021 maps will decrease voter confusion.

12 It would decrease voters from  
13 wondering, what district am I in now? Where  
14 do I go to vote? Where is my polling place?  
15 It would prevent confusion in the 2024  
16 election cycle and increase voter confidence.

17 Additionally, there will be little to  
18 no voter confusion in the 46 Senate districts  
19 that have not been changed.

20 In contrast, the majority proposal  
21 before us, fewer than 4,000 Black voting age  
22 residents in the vote-dilution districts would  
23 achieve new status because the new districts  
24 were created primarily from areas that were  
25 largely already in majority-Black districts or

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1 in the case of substantial populations in  
2 Douglas and Newton County, were previously in  
3 majority-Black districts, but were cracked  
4 into non-Voting Rights Act compliant  
5 districts.

6 The Republican proposal achieves  
7 additional majority-Black districts by packing  
8 and reconfiguring non-affected areas elsewhere  
9 on the map.

10 If the Republicans can pass -- plan  
11 passes, the federal court's findings of  
12 disenfranchisement center on the areas around  
13 Henry County, Griffin and Spalding County,  
14 northwest Fayette County, central Newton  
15 County, and western Douglas County would still  
16 apply.

17 That would mean that tens of thousands  
18 of Black voters in those areas would still not  
19 have equal opportunities to elect the  
20 candidates of their choice.

21 As we did in 2021, Senate Democrats are  
22 again pleading with Republicans to pass a map  
23 that complies with the Voting Rights Act and  
24 that does not discriminate against Black  
25 voters. We believe that passing the



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1 Republican map will only lead to more  
2 litigation and waste taxpayer dollars.  
3 Georgians deserve fair maps, and it is  
4 our duty to create fair maps that reflect the  
5 diversity of Georgia and that comply with  
6 federal law. Mr. President and members of the  
7 Senate, I appreciate your time, your  
8 willingness to listen to my comments. And I  
9 just hope that you can abide by my request.

10 Thank you, Mr. President, I yield the well.

11 LT. GOVERNOR JONES: Thank you,  
12 Senator. Senator has yielded the well. We're  
13 going now to Senator from the 43rd. There she  
14 is.

15 SENATOR ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr.  
16 President. Good morning, colleagues. I rise  
17 today to talk about redistricting maps  
18 proposed by our majority colleagues. I could  
19 stand in this well and talk about how the  
20 majority's map does nothing to address the  
21 concerns that Judge Jones laid out in his 516-  
22 page ruling.

23 But everyone in this chamber already  
24 knows that this map does nothing to strengthen  
25 Black voting power in the areas identified by

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1 the court. Instead of talking about this  
2 map's failings, I am going to speak to you as  
3 a woman, more specifically, a beautiful Black  
4 woman.

5 Indeed, I am coming to you as a member  
6 of the community that the court's order  
7 specifically says is being discriminated  
8 against by this state that I love. I am  
9 coming to you as a member of the community  
10 that the court's order rules is not being  
11 given an equal opportunity to vote.

12 My colleagues claim that they care  
13 about and listen to Black people and Black  
14 women. The majority claims that they value  
15 the votes and the voices of Black people and  
16 Black women. But all evidence to the this is  
17 contrary.

18 Voting for this map means ignoring the  
19 voices, lived experiences, concerns, and  
20 rights of Black voters. It also means  
21 ignoring the voices of Black people in this  
22 very room. You may think mapping and morality  
23 have very little to do with each other, but in  
24 this case, they go hand in hand.

25 Our state constitution invests the

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1 power of creating and passing laws in our  
2 legislature, whose members are elected every  
3 two years by the people of their district. So  
4 the discussion about redistricting and mapping  
5 is indeed a political one, but we cannot  
6 overlook the moral aspect of it.

7 We are watching a process again where  
8 accumulated power to diminish the political  
9 impact of Black voters in Georgia is  
10 happening. This doesn't just make it more  
11 difficult for Black people to vote and to feel  
12 fairly represented, it makes it more difficult  
13 for us to be heard, issues such as healthcare.

14 Georgia ranks low on access to  
15 healthcare. Maternal mortality, we rank  
16 higher than the national average for Black  
17 maternal health. Gun violence, reproductive  
18 rights, and unequal pay disproportionately  
19 affect Black women.

20 Black people also generally experience  
21 lower educational attainment and income levels  
22 and are twice as likely to be unemployed when  
23 compared to White people. This is no secret.  
24 And actually the federal court pointed to this  
25 in their order.

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1 And when the Republicans shove people  
2 who disagree with their policies into a few  
3 districts, they are reducing Black voters  
4 voices and uplifting a very vocal minority.  
5 By packing Black voters, Republicans can make  
6 a deliberate choice to ignore Georgians.

7 I've mentioned this before, but  
8 Philippians 2 and 4 says, instead of each  
9 person watching out for their own good, watch  
10 out for what is better for others. So when  
11 you say we value women voters or we value  
12 Black voters, my question is, do you? Do you  
13 value the voters or just the votes?

14 If you value the voters, especially the  
15 Black women voters, prove it. Hear them,  
16 listen to them, represent them, represent  
17 their concerns. Where can we access quality  
18 healthcare? How are you going to fix the  
19 abysmal maternal mortality rate among Black  
20 women?

21 Then, I hear in the community questions  
22 like, can you enact common-sense gun laws so  
23 no other mother has to bury her child?  
24 Another question I hear is, where can we find  
25 safe and affordable healthcare while we work?

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1 These are the questions I hear in the  
2 community. These are the voices I represent.  
3 This is there is no fair and right  
4 representation of all Georgians with the  
5 majority's new maps. Instead, the majority  
6 has made the Senate a trading place for  
7 voters' voices and voters' rights, reducing  
8 them, you, me, as a Black woman, to marks on a  
9 tally sheet, rather than doing justice, loving  
10 mercy and walking humbly;

11 In other words, doing the right thing  
12 and making their case to the voters.  
13 Republicans undermine Black voters' voices.

14 So yes, this is about maps, and  
15 districts, and the Voting Rights Act, but it's  
16 also about very real consequences of looking  
17 at specific groups of voters, people, as more  
18 valuable than others. And that's immoral.  
19 Our democracy deserves better. Our people  
20 deserve better, and Georgia definitely  
21 deserves better. Thank you, Mr. President. I  
22 yield the well.

23 Thank you, Senator. Senator has  
24 yielded the well. I'll recognize senator from  
25 the 35th, and you can speak from your desk.

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1       SENATOR JAMES: Thank you, Mr.  
2 President. I am, I guess, the new Black  
3 district. And I've been here the first time  
4 since 94, and I've always had a majority-Black  
5 district, but now my whole house has been cut  
6 out of my district that I've been representing  
7 and put in another district.

8       So I speak today because I'm deeply  
9 saddened and concerned about the map being  
10 proposed by my Republican colleagues. I am  
11 saddened for myself, yes, but more  
12 importantly, I'm saddened for the Black voters  
13 in south Metro Atlanta.

14       For too long, Black voters in Georgia  
15 have been discriminated against by rooms  
16 filled with people who don't even look like  
17 them. Dating back to this country's founding  
18 and extending into today, Black people and  
19 Black voters have been told that their voices  
20 and life experiences don't even matter. This  
21 has been for so long.

22       Black people who are voters here in  
23 Georgia have been told to trust the system,  
24 the political process, because your votes are  
25 important not only to be shown, time and time

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1 again, that their votes matter only to the  
2 extent that the people in this room allow them  
3 to matter.

4 It's time to end this tragedy. It's  
5 time to end this partisan game played for the  
6 success of a few over the masses. It's time  
7 to end this partisan game where the true  
8 victims are not either political party, but  
9 Black voters who've been fighting for  
10 centuries now for equal treatment under the  
11 law.

12 Black people have marched. Black  
13 people have been beaten. Black people have  
14 died for this right to vote. And here we are  
15 still having the same debate.

16 Here we are yet again with the majority  
17 party attempting to stifle Black citizens'  
18 ability to have meaningful participation in  
19 the election process, to have a meaningful  
20 ability to elect candidates of their choice.

21 And we continue to have this  
22 conversation, even though a federal court  
23 judge has already ruled that the map passed by  
24 this Senate in 2021 violated Black voters  
25 rights under the Voting Rights Act. This

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1 Republican proposal will suffer the same fate.  
2 As many of my colleagues have already  
3 stated, Judge Jones ordered that the Senate  
4 redraw its maps to remedy specific  
5 discrimination against Black voters in ten  
6 districts, including District 35, which I  
7 represent. Instead of doing that, the  
8 Republican proposal makes most of its changes  
9 in districts not identified by the court  
10 order.

11 To cover up this gamesmanship, the  
12 Republican proposal changes district numbers,  
13 including mine, for no apparent reason. It's  
14 changed the district numbers of Black voters,  
15 and it was not necessary. None of you should  
16 be fooled by this. The Republican map being  
17 proposed violates federal law. Period.

18 This is just smoke and mirrors to  
19 change numbers of existing Black districts.  
20 The Republican proposal does nothing to  
21 increase equality for Black voters in south  
22 Metro Atlanta. Period. This map continues to  
23 discriminate against Black voters, including  
24 the voters that I currently represent.  
25 Period.



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1 And no one in this room should support  
2 it. Period. Yesterday, during the committee  
3 meeting on this map, one of my colleagues  
4 highlighted that Georgia has made significant  
5 progress toward racial equality in the  
6 election process.

7 No one's going to deny that. We are  
8 all proud to represent this great state of  
9 Georgia, where I was born and raised, third  
10 generation on my mother's side and fourth on  
11 my father's.

12 However, progress does not mean  
13 equality. Progress means that we're getting  
14 closer. But as the court made clear, we are  
15 not there yet. So in his order on Page 9 and  
16 in different words on page 516, Judge Jones  
17 said, and I quote --

18 "The Court commends Georgia for the  
19 great strides that it has made to increase the  
20 political opportunities of Black voters in 58  
21 years since the passage of the Voting Rights  
22 Act of 1965. Despite these great gains, the  
23 court determines that in certain areas of the  
24 state, the political process is not equally  
25 open to Black voters."

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1        This means that the progress that we  
2   have made is not enough for Black voters in  
3   the south Metro area, and I'm standing here  
4   saying it. Many other Democrats have already  
5   said it. The court has said it. And the  
6   sentiment of has echoed in the public comments  
7   over the last few days.

8        So this means that the Republican  
9   proposal is not enough for Black voters in  
10   south Metro Atlanta because it contains --  
11   continues to ignore that this right to  
12   equality should be upheld. The Republican  
13   proposal is not enough. It violates the  
14   Voting Rights Act. This map clearly violates  
15   the Voting Rights Act.

16       So everyone in this room should be just  
17   as disappointed as I am. Everybody in this  
18   room should oppose this map. It's not about  
19   me. It's about the best for the State of  
20   Georgia. I just thank you, Mr. President, and  
21   I yield the well. Thank you.

22       LT. GOVERNOR JONES: Thank you,  
23   Senator. Senator from the 2nd would like to  
24   speak. I didn't even know you were up next,  
25   Senator.

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1       SENATOR MALLOW: Thank you, Mr.

2       President.

3       Today I rise in opposition to the maps  
4       created by the majority party and passed out  
5       of committee as they were done to be nothing  
6       more, in my opinion, than a shell game because  
7       Black voters in the dilution area identified  
8       in Judge Jones' order have no new  
9       opportunities because all we did was change  
10      the numbers.

11      So history would suggest in Selma, when  
12      Dr. King wrote these words before President  
13      Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Voting Rights  
14      Act, Dr. King said, we see a classic pattern  
15      of disenfranchisement typical of southern  
16      Black belt areas where Blacks are in the  
17      majority.

18      What Dr. King knew was that if  
19      districts weren't drawn so Black folks could  
20      elect their representatives of their choice,  
21      they would not have any political power.  
22      Judge Jones' order says that the map should  
23      create additional opportunities, not play with  
24      the district numbers around the map.

25      All we -- and when I say we, I'm

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1 speaking for Black folks -- is for you to be  
2 true to what Judge Jones said on paper.  
3 Matthew 25 and 40 says, when the disciples  
4 asked Jesus, when had they done all of these  
5 things, when questioning Jesus about the  
6 parable before him, Jesus answered and said,  
7 when you've done them to the least of these,  
8 you've also done them to me.

9       And so you should just do the right  
10 thing and follow Judge Jones' order by doing  
11 the right thing for Black voters to have that  
12 right to elect a candidate -- because I heard  
13 in committee someone say, we hope that there  
14 are Black voters in the GOP. Black folks are  
15 not a monolith.

16       In my own Senate district, I had a  
17 primary and a general. Both candidates were  
18 Black. I have a majority-Black district, and  
19 I had a Black Republican challenge me in that  
20 district. Why not draw districts so that  
21 Black folks are the majority and can elect a  
22 candidate of their choosing?

23       Because whether you are a Republican or  
24 a Democrat, you ought to go out and talk to  
25 Black folks. Don't be afraid to talk to Black

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1 voters and ask them for their vote because if  
2 you talk to them and ask them for their vote,  
3 they might vote for you.

4 But if you draw on partisanship because  
5 you don't want to talk to those voters, then,  
6 they never have an opportunity. And so you  
7 shouldn't make it partisan; make it about  
8 Judge Jones' order. And that order is about  
9 creating majority districts for Black folks in  
10 the affected areas.

11 Don't tell me this map passes because  
12 this map doesn't do enough. Do the right  
13 thing by the Black voters in this state  
14 because we deserve it. As I close, I'm  
15 reminded of the words of a Baptist preacher  
16 that said, we are caught in an inescapable  
17 network of mutuality, tied to a single garment  
18 of destiny. Whatever affects one directly,  
19 affects all indirectly.

20 And what you have done here just blocks  
21 Black voters because you think that it will  
22 affect your majority, because you're saying  
23 you won't give Black voters what the judge  
24 ordered. As we're wrapped together in that  
25 single garment of destiny, I'm reminded that

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1 there's nothing you can do to escape it

2 because we're all tied together.

3 As I heard one of my colleagues say

4 yesterday, we're still all God's children. So

5 as I take my receipt, I'm reminded of a

6 proverb that says, until the lion gets a

7 chance to tell his story, the hunter will

8 always be the hero.

9 So when the lion tells his story, it

10 will be a story of how justice rolls down like

11 waters and righteousness like a mighty stream

12 because just like the lion, Black voters want

13 the chance to elect their own representatives

14 who will also tell their story.

15 And as I take my seat, Mr. President,

16 one of the great activists, none other than

17 Ms. Fannie Lou Hamer, said that she was sick

18 and tired of being sick and tired. And just

19 like Sister Fannie Lou Hamer, I'm sick and

20 tired of being sick and tired of having to

21 have the conversation about fighting for Black

22 folks.

23 All I ask my colleagues in the majority

24 to do is just do the right thing by Black

25 voters and give them just what the judge

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1 ordered. With that, Mr. President, I yield  
2 the well.

3 LT. GOVERNOR JONES: Senator has  
4 yielded. Thank you, Senator. Senator from  
5 the 9th, you wish speak?

6 SENATOR MERRITT: Thank you, Mr.  
7 President. I rise today to talk in opposition  
8 to the proposed map that we have before us  
9 this morning. But first, I want us to get a  
10 few facts straight.

11 No, it's not our job to get soundbites  
12 and try to be on the news, but it is our job  
13 to be transparent, to tell the truth, and to  
14 be factual. And we need to tell the truth to  
15 Black voters. And that's not what is  
16 happening on this map.

17 I know all of the talk about numbers  
18 and redistricting gets very confusing to the  
19 public, but I'm going to break this down  
20 really, really simple why this map is bad.  
21 Violates the Voting Rights Act. Fails to  
22 comply with the judge's order, and the  
23 Republicans love to say how they are the party  
24 of law and order.

25 Illegally gerrymanders. Dilutes the

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1 voting power of Black voters. This is what  
2 this map does. Another untruth. Our chairman  
3 from the 49th, respectfully, she said that  
4 adequate testimony was allowed during  
5 committee.

6 I listened to the committee hearing  
7 when Republicans presented their map. We got  
8 a lot -- a lot of testimony was allowed from  
9 the public. I think it was over an hour.  
10 Upon closing, no questions were allowed --  
11 permitted to be asked of the committee, the  
12 Republicans in control of that committee,  
13 about their maps. No question. Closed out.  
14 We're done for the day.

15 However, the Democrats go to present  
16 their map the following day, yesterday. All  
17 of a sudden, we can't hear testimony from the  
18 public.

19 And as they were pressed on that, the  
20 lack of testimony from allowing -- allowing  
21 testimony from public, they yielded a little  
22 bit, allowed five people to speak for five  
23 minutes, and then proceeded to ask Democrats a  
24 series of questions about the Democratic map.  
25 Yet they answered not one question about the



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1 Republican map.

2 Also to note, during their hearing on  
3 the Republican map, not one person came up in  
4 testimony for that map, not one.

5 Transparency, folks, and what is right is  
6 right and what's wrong is wrong. And we're  
7 not talking about soundbites; we're talking  
8 about telling the truth.

9 So let's talk more about transparency  
10 or the lack thereof from the Republicans.  
11 Being transparent means being upfront about  
12 your motivations. It appears to me the  
13 motivation is to not represent Black voters or  
14 talk to them. It means that you have nothing  
15 to hide when it comes to revealing what you  
16 stand for and what you're trying to  
17 accomplish.

18 What are we accomplishing here? What  
19 were we sent to accomplish here? To create  
20 minority voting districts under specific  
21 guidelines. We took districts that weren't  
22 even part of the order, and I still -- we  
23 still don't have an explanation from that.  
24 The chairwoman never really answered that  
25 question.

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1       The court ordered all of us to ensure  
2   that our district maps comply with the Voting  
3   Rights Act. To do so, we are obligated to  
4   make sure that the voters in the designated  
5   Black communities have a chance to make a  
6   meaningful impact with their votes. They  
7   deserve their votes -- their voices to be  
8   heard, and their votes to be counted.

9       That they have a real chance to elect  
10   representative that are reflective of who they  
11   are and what they stand for. We want that for  
12   all Georgians. So again, what is this map  
13   accomplishing really? The statistics speak  
14   for themselves.

15       In the Republicans' map, only a net of  
16   approximately 3,000 additional Black voters in  
17   Georgia are given this opportunity to be  
18   reassigned to a district where their power of  
19   their vote is not weakened by the -- is not  
20   weakened by being forced to vote in a district  
21   where the majority does not share their  
22   political values.

23       Whereas in the Democrats' map the  
24   opportunity is afforded to an additional  
25   105,000 people. Republicans, we see through

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1 you, and the public sees through you.  
2 When we take a second look at what  
3 you've done, we see that you have moved Black  
4 voters from one Black-majority district to  
5 another. Why would you do that? What are you  
6 trying to accomplish? Your court-ordered task  
7 was to ensure that fellow Georgians of color  
8 have a chance to make their voices heard, and  
9 that their voices carry all the way to the  
10 gold dome.

11 Your task was not to ensure that  
12 nothing changes politically. The expert cited  
13 in the court-- the expert cited in the court  
14 order agreed. Race and politics can sometimes  
15 be intertwined, but the way to measure whether  
16 district lines have been redrawn in a way that  
17 complies with the order is not to assess  
18 whether there are changes along political  
19 lines.

20 It's to see how many eligible voters in  
21 the Black community in Georgia have an  
22 opportunity to cast a vote that's going to  
23 matter. 3,000 versus 105,000. Help me.  
24 3,000 on the Republican maps versus 105 on the  
25 Democratic map.

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1       Republicans, we see through you. We  
2 see what your priorities are. At the  
3 committee hearing yesterday, I also observed  
4 that the senator from the 46th said that he  
5 voted in favor of the Republican maps in 2021  
6 because he was advised by legal counsel that  
7 they weren't discriminatory.

8       Wasn't really sure what he meant by  
9 that, but perhaps the topic could have come up  
10 again earlier, and we could have asked that  
11 question, if Democrats were allowed to even  
12 ask a question about the maps that the  
13 Republicans presented.

14       That's part of having testimony. You  
15 want to clarify, you want to clarify some  
16 questions about what's happening here. We  
17 want to clarify maybe some past statements  
18 that were made. Democrats were not allowed to  
19 ask any questions during the Republican  
20 committee hearing. That was a lie.

21       In fact, the Republican leaders of the  
22 Reapportionment Committee created entirely  
23 different rules for Democrats after they  
24 presented and were not intending to allow any  
25 public comment after the presentation of the

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1 Democratic map. This process was not fair.

2 And the Republicans' proposal is not fair.

3 And what we're trying to accomplish

4 here is fairness. Fairness so that Black

5 voters have their voices heard at the ballot

6 box. And with that, Mr. President, I thank

7 you, and I yield the well.

8 LT. GOVERNOR JONES: Thank you,

9 Senator. Senator has yielded the well.

10 Senator from the 40th wishes to speak.

11 SENATOR HARRELL: Thank you, Mr.

12 President. Members of the Senate, I must

13 start by saying that as I look out across this

14 Senate body, I see mostly my Democratic

15 colleagues right now. I see a few

16 Republicans, and I thank you for being in your

17 seats to listen to us.

18 We came here this special session to

19 deal with one thing and one thing only, and

20 that's these maps. And it bothers me that I

21 see so many empty seats because during regular

22 session, there are a lot of reasons to be out

23 of the chamber, but there are no reasons to be

24 out of the chamber this morning.

25 This week, I've been feeling a little

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1 bit of Deja vu because I was here in the other  
2 chamber, in the House, in 2004 when we went  
3 through a similar process. Most of you were  
4 not here then. Some of you were. So let me  
5 kind of tell a little bit of history.

6 We had gone through redistricting in  
7 2001. We were a Democratic State, House,  
8 Senate and Governor's Office. That was  
9 beginning to change. And so I'll admit, the  
10 redistricting process did become partisan.  
11 There was some gerrymandering that happened,  
12 and there were some court cases, some  
13 constitutional challenges to the map.

14 One of those court cases did win, and  
15 we had to redraw the maps under threat of a  
16 special master taking that process over if the  
17 legislature could not do it.

18 Now, there's one big, big difference  
19 between what happened then and what has  
20 happening today. And that's the challenge in  
21 2004 was a constitutional challenge, but it  
22 had nothing to do with racial discrimination.  
23 It had to do with packing districts.

24 Now, we are here today to deal with the  
25 issue of racial discrimination. And that is

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1 very, very different. In 2004 or in 2001, we  
2 were still under -- we had to get our maps  
3 precleared to make sure they weren't diluting  
4 Black vote before we passed those maps.  
5 Because of a U.S. Supreme Court case in  
6 2013, we -- this is the first time we've gone  
7 through that where we didn't have to get our  
8 maps pre-cleared. So nobody was really  
9 scrutinizing those maps very carefully.  
10 Someone said previously, legislative counsel  
11 said these maps were fine. These maps did not  
12 dilute Black votes, the maps we passed in  
13 2021.

14 But I will say you tend to not see what  
15 you don't want to see. So I venture to say  
16 that the federal government probably looked a  
17 little closer than our legislative counsel  
18 did, and we need to look -- and Judge Jones,  
19 being a Black man himself, looked a lot more  
20 carefully at that map than we looked at it in  
21 2021 and probably more carefully than  
22 legislative counsel looked at it.

23 Now, what happened in 2004 is the  
24 legislature was given three weeks to pass a  
25 new map. We were in session. It was toward

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1 the end of session, and that was the session  
2 where we were no longer fully Democratic.  
3 Sonny Perdue had won the Governor's  
4 Office. The Senate was elected Democratic,  
5 but flipped to Republican after the election  
6 when people changed parties. The House was  
7 still Democratic.

8 So you had a challenge where Georgia  
9 had functioned as a one-party state for 135  
10 years, all of a sudden was a two-party state,  
11 and they had to draw maps together. They  
12 didn't know how to do it, so they failed to  
13 draw a map in three weeks.

14 So it was handled -- then handed to the  
15 special master to redraw a map completely  
16 blind of incumbent addresses. The map came  
17 out, committee chairmen, powerful committee  
18 chairmen, were paired with other powerful  
19 committee chairmen. Nobody liked that map.

20 At the end of that session, 350 years  
21 of legislative experience walked out and did  
22 not return to the election process. I did  
23 that; I left because my district, it was like  
24 if my district was like this and I lived here,  
25 my district did this. It was a completely new



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1 district, and I had a two and a four year old  
2 and an unemployed husband.

3 And so I said, this is not worth it. I  
4 am not going to run again. A lot of other  
5 people made that same decision; 350 years  
6 walked out. 56 of those years were, if you  
7 might remember, Senator Hugh Gillis, who was  
8 elected, served 56 years in this chamber and  
9 was elected in 1948. He left, too.

10 Now I say that because as I walk the  
11 halls this week, I feel like I'm breathing in  
12 very thick air. But there's probably a couple  
13 reasons why I'm feeling that way. I'm feeling  
14 that way because I feel like Georgia is at a  
15 turning point, that we are at a point in terms  
16 of our racial progress, that we are turning  
17 around and going backwards, and that hurts my  
18 heart.

19 But I also feel like the air is thick  
20 because there are people who are afraid of  
21 losing their seats. This map here, I think,  
22 worked harder at protecting Republican  
23 incumbents than it did fixing the problem that  
24 the judge ordered. Not one Republican is  
25 losing a seat here.

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1       And I think some of that thick air I'm  
2 feeling is people walking around thinking, I  
3 don't want to lose the power that I have.  
4 That's hard to walk away from. I admit that;  
5 I had to do it. I enjoyed the power I had  
6 when I served in the House. But I left, and I  
7 was okay.

8       I believe that countries have souls.  
9 And you see this so clearly in the Middle East  
10 right now, where you have populations of  
11 people who are fighting over the soul of the  
12 land. I also believe that states have souls,  
13 and I am proud of Georgia's soul.

14       And I believe that Georgia has a soul  
15 of progressiveness that goes way back to the  
16 1700s, when General George Oglethorpe started  
17 the Colony of Georgia because General  
18 Oglethorpe based the beginnings of this state  
19 on criminal justice reform and self-  
20 determination. He wanted to reform the  
21 prisons in England.

22       There were people being held in prisons  
23 who were held there simply because they were  
24 in debt. And he wanted to give them a second  
25 chance. He brought them to Georgia. He said,

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1 let's make silk, let's plant mulberry trees.  
2 He kind of missed the point that the Georgia  
3 coast had a sandy soil and might not grow  
4 mulberry trees.

5 But the point is the beginning, the  
6 seed of Georgia, our first story was about  
7 giving people a second chance. And so I  
8 believe at the root of Georgia's soul is a  
9 spirit of inclusiveness, of self-  
10 determination, and of forgiveness. And I  
11 believe that at this moment in history, we are  
12 putting that at risk.

13 In this room, we have lots of stories.  
14 It is important for us, as members of this  
15 body, to get to know each other and to hear  
16 each other's stories. There are very few  
17 opportunities in our country right now where  
18 people of different backgrounds, such as we  
19 have in the Senate, can come together and talk  
20 to each other because we are such a  
21 politically divided country right now.

22 So what, I ask, as a White member of  
23 this chamber, is that we as White people take  
24 more opportunity, and I wish some of my  
25 White -- more of my White Republican

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1 colleagues were here to hear this, but we need  
2 to sit down with our Black colleagues and hear  
3 their stories because I think if we did that,  
4 we wouldn't end up with this map.

5       As a White person, as I faced struggles  
6 and challenges, the message that I heard was  
7 you can do anything. As I hear stories from  
8 my Black colleagues, sometimes what I hear is  
9 that they were told, when they were children,  
10 is I know you're -- I know this is upsetting,  
11 but don't rock the boat because if you do, bad  
12 things can happen.

13       Those are two very different stories.  
14 And that is why -- and two different  
15 experiences. And that is why it's so  
16 important to not dilute Black votes. You have  
17 Black communities embedded in these districts  
18 that rely on their Black leaders to know what  
19 to do and to learn how to advocate for  
20 themselves.

21       If you take -- if you crack one of  
22 those communities, and put it into a strongly  
23 Republican district, and take their leader  
24 away, they no longer have the confidence in  
25 their leadership. And what happened in the

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1 south of Atlanta is some of these communities  
2 were cracked into districts that vote like 80  
3 percent Trump.

4       These are populations that don't talk  
5 very well to each other. These are polarized  
6 populations. And that is exactly why the  
7 judge picked this area south of Atlanta. We  
8 were supposed to stay in that area and make  
9 these changes there. Instead, the map drawers  
10 went north.

11       Now, it's hard when you look at these  
12 maps to see this racial dilution because it's  
13 so -- when you look at gerrymandering, you  
14 used to look at gerrymandering and see oddly  
15 shaped districts. Now, because of the data we  
16 have, it's -- we do everything by numbers.  
17 And so you can hide this racial  
18 discrimination; you can hide this this  
19 gerrymandering.

20       I beg you to listen to these stories of  
21 your Black colleagues. Our senator from the  
22 15th has written a book. And the title of it  
23 is something his mother told him, right? Our  
24 senator from the 15th was told that to survive  
25 in his world, he needed to learn how to get

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1 butter from a duck.

2 Now, I ask you, the White members of  
3 this body, did you have to get butter from a  
4 duck to survive in your world? I believe that  
5 if we are going to heal as a state, we all  
6 must look into each other's eyes in this very  
7 body and set the example for talking across  
8 these lines, looking into each other's eyes  
9 and seeing our common humanness because life  
10 is hard.

11 We all have hard things that we have to  
12 live through. And the more we know about that  
13 from each other, the more we can better serve  
14 the people of Georgia. If we don't do this, I  
15 do believe that Georgia will lose its soul,  
16 and that would be a tragic burden to leave to  
17 the next generation.

18 So I hope that we can do better with  
19 these maps. Thank you, Mr. President. I  
20 yield the well.

21 LT. GOVERNOR JONES: Thank you,  
22 Senator. My former suitemate, senator from  
23 26.

24 SENATOR LUCAS: Thank you, Mr.  
25 President. You know what I've learned over

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1 the years comes from experience.

2 In 1969, I was at Tuskegee Institute  
3 then, majoring in political science and  
4 playing football to pay for me going to  
5 school. And I never would forget that we had  
6 an African instructor by the name of Ninjaka  
7 (phonetic). And a class project was to go to  
8 Barbour County, Eufaula, Alabama and register  
9 Black voters.

10 That was the first time that I was ever  
11 shot at by folks who didn't look like me  
12 because I was trying to get folks who looked  
13 like me to become registered voters. After  
14 leaving school, I wanted to play professional  
15 football. My eyes were on the money, and I  
16 wanted to have me some of it. But the deal  
17 didn't work out.

18 So in 1974, I was asked to run for  
19 office because of this process, redistricting.  
20 And we gained two predominantly Black seats in  
21 Macon, Georgia, and I ran for one, Billy  
22 Randall ran for the other, and I won, and he  
23 won. So over those years, since '75, I've  
24 been part of the General Assembly, except for  
25 one year.

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1 I've seen it go around. I've seen  
2 folks cry when they leave here because they  
3 were drawn out of a district. I've seen some  
4 rejoice because they kept that district. But  
5 let me say to you, there is no fun when a  
6 special master does it. It's done by figures,  
7 not who you are or not where you live.

8 And it doesn't make any sense whether  
9 you are paired with anybody. They don't care.  
10 They just look at numbers. But what's amazing  
11 about this process? The other party reminds  
12 me of the Isley Brothers. Here We Go Again.  
13 Or the Spinners, The Games People Play.

14 See, what you call yourselves doing is  
15 not answering the judge's call. Number 1, a  
16 week or so ago, you appeal to the 11th  
17 Circuit. Now, the 11th Circuit is known to be  
18 one of the most conservative circuits in our  
19 judicial process.

20 You did not follow the judge's order.  
21 You went outside the judge's order. The judge  
22 made a finding and gave you a remedy to the  
23 finding and said, I want it by December the  
24 8th.

25 Now what's going to happen is we're



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1 going to be in court. You're hoping that you  
2 get a favorable three-judge-panel ruling. But  
3 what you forget is there's a process called en  
4 banc, which you appealed, if you get that  
5 ruling the 11th circuit, which means then you  
6 go to the 21 judges in the 11th circuit.

7 And they have to be polled. And what  
8 will happen is they will make a decision and a  
9 vote on the hearing that's presented to them.  
10 In the meantime, we told you in '21 what you  
11 were doing wasn't right. Here we are again,  
12 doing the same thing all over, which ain't  
13 right.

14 And of course, we as a body, Republican  
15 are going to be on one side and Democrats are  
16 going to be on the other, but that's all  
17 right. We going to be in court litigating.  
18 So here we go with the '24 election. It might  
19 not have the lines drawn by then because we're  
20 fighting in court.

21 Back home, folks are calling me, asking  
22 me, what are we going to do? We want to meet  
23 with you. We want to talk about what's going  
24 on. For instance, in the special master, he  
25 talks about a Metro Macon district. That says

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1 Macon would pick up two more representatives.

2 That would be four coming out of Macon, but

3 it's split.

4 It's split between (Inaudible) County,

5 Bibb. Part in Macon, part Bibb, Twiggs and

6 Wilkinson. But what the House did, rather

7 than create what the judge said because he

8 gave a finding and a remedy, they decide to

9 take the minority leader in the House and put

10 him in Haralson county to create a district.

11 Y'all know what you did. You changed the

12 numbers.

13 This ain't nothing new. I've been

14 through it before. Ain't nothing new. In the

15 final analysis of what's going to happen, the

16 judges in the Supreme Court are probably going

17 to be asked to settle a case. You're going to

18 be just like Alabama. They told you to do it.

19 You said we ain't going to do it. So they

20 sent a special master in.

21 The Eighth Circuit, which covers

22 Louisiana and Mississippi, questioned whether

23 or not an individual or a group of individuals

24 can challenge what the state did. And what

25 they were saying is that the only somebody

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1 could do it is the United States Justice

2 Department.

3 Well, the United States Justice

4 Department will be part of this hearing

5 because you're dealing with voting rights.

6 They will be part of this hearing because

7 you're dealing with voting rights. The

8 argument about whether individuals or groups

9 can challenge what the state did was turned

10 down by the judge who made the ruling.

11 So when you look at the justices being

12 involved, how do they go against the judge?

13 It took the MSAs, the Metropolitan Statistical

14 Area, that dealt with populations.

15 When you take Georgia to brought in

16 over a million new folks of color in

17 population and you deny them that right to

18 elect somebody that looked like them. That

19 said they have to get elected, but it says do

20 deny them the right to elect somebody that

21 looks like them. Here We Go Again, the Isley

22 Brothers. The Games People Play, the

23 Spinners.

24 But yet taxpayers are paying for us to

25 be here. We've talked about healthcare, folks

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1 getting good health care. The only somebody  
2 can remedy that problem is those of us who are  
3 sitting in these seats right now who have  
4 refused to deal with healthcare.

5 Now, we're talking about  
6 reapportionment, who you vote for, what the  
7 numbers are going to look like. Listen.

8 People have come to this state. A lot of us  
9 do not do the jobs we used to do before.

10 We don't pick the vegetables. We don't  
11 pick the fruit. Other folks do it. They come  
12 here, they work, get a check, take half of it,  
13 send it back home to try to take care of the  
14 family they left.

15 But we're going to learn that  
16 populations make a difference. Many come here  
17 for other reasons, employment. And we will  
18 decide today. We will decide today. We made  
19 all kind of excuses.

20 And I refuse to do what the judge said  
21 to do. Took districts, involved districts  
22 that had nothing to do with what the judge  
23 talked about, change the numbers of districts,  
24 and we say it's all right. That's what we are  
25 doing, y'all. That's what we are doing.

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1 And the only reason I say it to you,  
2 this ain't my first rodeo. I've been here.  
3 I've seen it. And we doing it all over again.  
4 All over again. I would ask you to vote down  
5 this map. Let's get it right. And let's go  
6 home. Mr. President, I yield the well.

7 LT. GOVERNOR JONES: The senator has  
8 yielded the well. The chair recognizes the  
9 Senator from the 36th.

10 SENATOR ORROCK: Thank you, Mr.  
11 President. good afternoon, almost,  
12 colleagues. we're here yet again, debating  
13 maps and making decisions that impact the  
14 right of Black Georgians to access the ballot  
15 box.

16 And the immortal words of the gentleman  
17 who just now left the well, this ain't my  
18 first rodeo either. I guess this is Number 4  
19 reapportionment for me. But there's a much  
20 longer history here that I just want to touch  
21 on briefly, to put in context where we are.

22 You know, the entire history of our  
23 nation has been marked by the struggle to have  
24 access to the ballot box, to secure the right  
25 to vote. In the documents of our founding

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1 fathers, there was an artful little  
2 designation of how to count enslaved Black  
3 men. Was it three-fifth?

4 So that was just the beginning of the  
5 tricks that have been played to attempt to  
6 marginalize and oppress the African-American  
7 population that was brought here in chains.  
8 This is the history, the origins of where we  
9 still are today.

10 How long will it take for us to  
11 understand that coming together and embracing,  
12 building, and ensuring a true democracy is the  
13 foundational way that we will as a nation hold  
14 together and move forward? So this is a  
15 battle about access to the ballot box.

16 You know, Albany State students marched  
17 down, attempting to register to vote in the  
18 60s, and they were all kicked out of school,  
19 kicked out of school for that. In Danville,  
20 Virginia, people went down, marched to vote,  
21 beaten down in the streets.

22 Everybody's seen the footage. If you  
23 don't -- if you haven't, you're blind of what  
24 has happened across the South, in particular,  
25 but not isolated to the south, of African

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1 Americans struggling for full citizenship and  
2 full rights, the right to live their lives as  
3 they choose.

4 And that's what we're facing here  
5 today. I mean, that's the history. The  
6 Voting Rights Act was passed in the wake of  
7 people, including our own John Lewis, being  
8 beaten to the ground, beaten unconscious, in a  
9 voting rights march.

10 When the Voting Rights Act was passed,  
11 it was an enormous landmark, historic victory  
12 that was hard fought and that was won by the  
13 shedding of blood and the taking of lives. I  
14 mean, the all of this is history that you can  
15 choose to ignore, or you can embrace, and  
16 learn from, and be informed by, and have that  
17 guide and shape your values and how you behave  
18 as a member of this body, what policies you  
19 support.

20 And do you know, no surprise, the  
21 Voting Rights Act is now hanging by a thread.  
22 The act that, for the first time, brought into  
23 southern legislatures significant numbers of  
24 African-American leaders from across our  
25 southern states, and it changed the tone, and

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1 tenor, and nature of legislatures all across  
2 the South.

3 The history is long and deep and  
4 layered. It's all there for us to learn from  
5 if we will look at it. But as right-wing  
6 judges hammered away with decisions, the  
7 Voting Rights Act, which used to be -- it was  
8 embraced. It was a bipartisan vote.

9 Senator from the 15th, we remember this  
10 well, don't we? We lived through it. It was  
11 a bipartisan vote to pass that Voting Rights  
12 Act.

13 You best believe that those White  
14 southern members of Congress did not embrace  
15 it. And we had one of our own who lost his  
16 seat for voting for that act, Charles Weltner.

17 But I will say to you here today, as  
18 the Voting Rights Act is hanging by a thread,  
19 and with this long, extensive history, since  
20 the founding of our nation and before all of  
21 the oppression of African-American people,  
22 that's at the core of what we're dealing with  
23 right now, that's at the core of what we're  
24 dealing with.

25 Are people going to have access to the



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1 ballot? And a Black federal judge took his  
2 legal mind, wrote an extensive opinion, 516  
3 pages, to say and to point out that the maps  
4 that were passed and signed into law by the  
5 governor, the maps that were passed, the 2021  
6 maps, dilute Black voting power in Georgia.  
7 Pure and simple, pure and simple.

8 And I think it's been well documented  
9 by many of my colleagues that have been in the  
10 well already, and particularly those that  
11 serve and sit on the reapportionment  
12 committee, that the process has been hurried,  
13 the process has -- the ball has been moved all  
14 over.

15 Oh, it's your turn. Well, you should  
16 have debated that yesterday. Oh, well, you  
17 talked yesterday, so then, you can't talk  
18 today. I mean, it's really -- it's  
19 preposterous. It's ludicrous. If it weren't  
20 so serious, one would kick back in the chair  
21 and laugh at it, at the games that are being  
22 played.

23 And to renumber districts so that you  
24 can call them new districts that are -- that  
25 are majority-Black districts and that you've

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1 created new districts with this numbers game,  
2 and we didn't have an opportunity. The chair  
3 of the committee chose to leave the well.  
4 There were many questions to have been posed.

5 And that was one is, what was this  
6 numbers game that you were playing with taking  
7 districts and giving them new numbers? And  
8 then, (inaudible) you can say here, here are  
9 the new districts that the judge asked us to  
10 draw.

11 The Alpha Phi Alpha plaintiffs in the  
12 underlying lawsuit in this case sent a letter  
13 to the committee this week and maintaining  
14 that the Republican proposal does not comply  
15 with the Judge Jones's order or the Voting  
16 Rights Act.

17 And as has been pointed out a few  
18 minutes ago, we're going to be in litigation  
19 ad nauseam because these maps will not pass  
20 scrutiny, these maps will not pass scrutiny.  
21 And we leave the voters of Georgia very poorly  
22 served by these machinations.

23 The disenfranchisement of Black voters  
24 has a history as old as this country. We  
25 could and we have the opportunity before us to

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1 have done the right thing, and had no more  
2 litigation, and go forward with maps that  
3 didn't dilute Black voting power, and that  
4 everyone could go home and know what the lines  
5 they were going to run on, and we could move  
6 forward.

7 And our voters across the State of  
8 Georgia, could have some understanding and  
9 some confidence in the stability and  
10 predictability of their access to the ballot  
11 box.

12 That's not what the majority party here  
13 has chosen to do. And it's regrettable. It  
14 was avoidable. And I'm sure there are people  
15 on both sides who see this differently, but I  
16 think that the facts just are undeniable.

17 Under the Republican plan, 80 percent  
18 of the Black voters on the map who are being  
19 redistricted come from outside the districts  
20 the court identified as problem areas. And  
21 it's been stated before, I'll say it again, in  
22 our maps, the maps of the Democratic caucus,  
23 100 percent of the voters who are being  
24 redistricted come from the area that is  
25 diluted.

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1       That's 105,000 Black voters in Georgia  
2 who would now have a chance to cast a vote  
3 that would make the kind of change they would  
4 want to see, that would give them the option  
5 of choosing their representatives. We're in a  
6 state with one third of our population is  
7 African American.

8       You go over to Montgomery, plan a trip  
9 over there, and take some time, and look  
10 through the history that has been carefully  
11 cataloged, and captured, and presented to make  
12 it accessible to people. The wealth of this  
13 nation was built on the backs of African  
14 Americans. That's not debatable.

15       Cotton was king, and it was  
16 internationally traded, and it was grown, and  
17 harvested, and processed by the enslaved  
18 population. The wealth of this nation rests  
19 on the backs of the African-American  
20 population that was enslaved, whose  
21 families -- half the families in that  
22 population were broken up.

23       But all that's over there in Montgomery  
24 Museum. In the words of the lady from the  
25 40th, open our eyes and learn, and how can you

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1 deny the reality that we have a job to do. We  
2 know what path is the right path to be on, and  
3 we could do it together. We could do it  
4 together. But this map does not move us in  
5 the right direction.

6 The time is late. There are others  
7 that will be speaking. I will take my seat  
8 and urge you to think deeply beyond this  
9 moment and beyond this vote what you're going  
10 to do as a leader elected to a high position  
11 in Georgia to seek fundamental change in the  
12 approach that we use to access to the ballot  
13 and building a true and full democracy in  
14 Georgia and in this nation.

15 Thank you. And, Mr. President, if  
16 there are no questions, I'll yield the well.

17 LT. GOVERNOR JONES: You have no  
18 questions, Senator. The Senator has yielded  
19 the will. The chair recognizes the Senator  
20 from the 33rd.

21 SENATOR RHETT: Thank you, Mr.  
22 President, my fellow senators, colleagues and  
23 you all. I'm here today because I'm  
24 concerned that District 33, a minority-  
25 opportunity district, Black population, has

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1 gone from majority to minority. The Black  
2 voting population has gone below 37 percent.  
3 This hampers their ability to elect a  
4 candidate of choice. And when you don't have  
5 your candidate of choice, which is me up here,  
6 what that means is that you're no longer --  
7 you all will no longer be excused in the  
8 mornings by me. The senator from the 1st,  
9 3rd, 4th, 15 and 35th, et cetera won't be  
10 around anymore to laugh -- won't be able to  
11 laugh at my corny jokes anymore.

12 Also, I won't be able to sell to the  
13 Senator from the 18th Blue Ties because his  
14 initials are JFK. But also, I won't be  
15 traveling across the state anymore resolving  
16 development authority concerns. What District  
17 33 needs is to add back the City of Austell,  
18 Precinct 1 and 2, also add Clarksdale and  
19 Marietta, 5B precincts, and remove the  
20 districts in the northeast to restore balance,  
21 so that we won't fall below that 37 percent  
22 threshold.

23 Let's ask everybody here to work  
24 together so that we can create an empowerment,  
25 voting, empowerment. Thank you, Mr.

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1 President, and I yield the well, and I won't  
2 try to sell you any more blue Democratic ties  
3 because your initials.

4 LT. GOVERNOR JONES: Thank you,  
5 Senator. Senator has yielded the well. The  
6 chair recognizes the senator from the 42nd.

7 SENATOR PARENT: Thank you, Mr.  
8 President, and good afternoon, colleagues.

9 I rise today to use my voice, as I have  
10 tried to countless times in this chamber, to  
11 speak for those who are being silenced, those  
12 who are being disregarded. This is a moment  
13 to remember that this is every Georgian's  
14 Senate, and every Georgian's voice should echo  
15 in the walls of this chamber.

16 We know that the pool of voters of  
17 color in Georgia is growing. Grew by about a  
18 million people between 2010 and 2020. Vast  
19 majority of those, in fact, all of them were  
20 voters of color. The proportion of the White  
21 population actually decreased. And among that  
22 increase, the majority of those new  
23 individuals are African American.

24 But despite all that, the maps being --  
25 in the maps being drawn by the Republican

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1 majority, 80 percent of the Black voters on  
2 the map who are being redistricted come from  
3 outside these new growth areas, where there  
4 are large and growing Black populations and  
5 that the court specifically identified as  
6 disenfranchisement areas within the order.

7       80 percent, 80 percent just shuffling  
8 around Black voters. This is like the  
9 Republicans' mothers scolded them and said,  
10 clean your rooms. And instead of doing that,  
11 they hung up a couple of shirts and left all  
12 the dirty underwear all over the floor, but  
13 bunched it in a pile and tried to shove it  
14 under the bed to hide what they're really  
15 doing.

16       All the dirty underwear is still out  
17 there, but there are some new numbers to try  
18 to make it look to the mamas like it got  
19 cleaned up. And why is that? Because the  
20 Republicans wanted to make sure that Black  
21 voters, who currently tend to vote in favor of  
22 Democrats, could not rise to the level where  
23 they could actually make a difference in this  
24 esteemed body.

25       In the maps proposed by the Democratic



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1 caucus, 100 percent of the voters who are  
2 being redistricted come from the area where  
3 the court stated that there is vote dilution.  
4 That is, 105,000 Black voters in Georgia who  
5 would now have the chance to cast a vote that  
6 has real influence.

7       Black voters make up a third of  
8 Georgia's voting eligible population, and  
9 these Georgians are colleagues, family  
10 members, teachers, doctors, and friends --  
11 deserve to feel that their representatives  
12 reflect who they are as a people and what they  
13 stand for as a community.

14       Drawing district lines is a sacred  
15 responsibility that we have as legislators.  
16 Our analysis, decisions, and policy making  
17 affect real people. This is not a matter of  
18 numbers, shapes, or probabilities of winning  
19 political campaigns.

20       This is about including every Georgian  
21 in the electoral process that they are  
22 legally, and ethically, and rightfully  
23 entitled to participate in, and about every  
24 Georgians right to have an equal voice in  
25 determining their representation.

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1       We're here because of a court order  
2 striking down maps that violate the Voting  
3 Rights Act, making Black votes matter less  
4 than White votes. And now we're here voting  
5 on another map that violates the Voting Rights  
6 Act, violates a court order, and makes Black  
7 votes matter less than White votes.

8       But when the Democratic caucus  
9 presented its proposed maps to the committee  
10 on reapportionment, I heard a lot more  
11 questions from my Republican colleagues  
12 expressing concerns about the proportion of  
13 their majority than about how our maps impact  
14 communities.

15       Perhaps that is because the map that we  
16 are considering today is another manifestation  
17 of Republican fear of losing seats. And I  
18 heard a comment, and it was a great one, one I  
19 appreciated, from the senator from Athens,  
20 saying, well, I hope we get more Black voters  
21 to vote for us.

22       I would humbly suggest to you that  
23 continually passing maps that violate the  
24 Voting Rights Act by diluting Black votes make  
25 that a less attractive proposition. If you

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1 want to win Black voters, you can't  
2 continually demonstrate that you don't want  
3 them to have an equal say in the political  
4 process.

5 We are not here to protect ourselves  
6 from being thrown out of office. We are here  
7 to ensure that no voter is thrown out of the  
8 electoral process. That is the foundation of  
9 our democracy and of the state and federal  
10 constitutions we swore an oath to support.

11 I have repeatedly advocated during my  
12 tenure of over a decade for creating an  
13 independent, citizen-led commission to draw  
14 districts, relieving politicians of the  
15 responsibility to draw our own districts but  
16 particularly removing the power to advocate  
17 for oneself or one's party, first and foremost  
18 above the people.

19 This new Republican gerrymandered map  
20 is, sadly, but another cut in the fabric of  
21 our democracy. Afraid democracy equals afraid  
22 Georgia and afraid America. The sad, sad  
23 truth right now is that only one political  
24 party is fully committed to democracy.

25 The Republican Party has become more

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1 and more enamored by tactics that enable  
2 minority rule. And these districts are  
3 another example. What Georgia needs is that  
4 Republicans, Democrats, Independents,  
5 Libertarians and citizens of all political  
6 stripes to come together to say, we believe in  
7 democracy.

8       We believe in the great democratic  
9 experiment that is the United States of  
10 America, a democracy that is provided a beacon  
11 to the world. We believe in a future for  
12 Georgia, where people of all racial, economic,  
13 and religious backgrounds participate in that  
14 democracy.

15       We believe, as our founding fathers  
16 envisioned, that the best results for all of  
17 us will be produced by a battle of ideas  
18 between individuals and parties and a  
19 government that can enact the mandate of the  
20 people. But right now, right now, today, only  
21 one party seems to believe in those values and  
22 that future.

23       The Republican map we're voting on  
24 today demonstrates that again as it subjugates  
25 Black votes to White votes. The future of

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1 Georgia is as a multiracial democracy, and the  
2 politicians that recognize that and embrace it  
3 will be the ones leading that future.

4 We must curb the anti-democratic  
5 impulses that have tainted these redistricting  
6 efforts. Let's come together to demonstrate  
7 that we, the Georgia State Senate, are  
8 committed to democratic values. Let's vote no  
9 on this map, this map that is failing Georgia  
10 on judicial and ethical benchmarks.

11 Thank you, Mr. President. If there are  
12 no questions, I will yield the well.

13 LT. GOVERNOR JONES: Senator, you have  
14 no questions.

15 MS. PARENT: Thank you. I yield the  
16 well.

17 LT. GOVERNOR JONES: Senator has  
18 yielded the well. The chair recognizes the  
19 distinguished dean of the Senate, Senator from  
20 the 15th.

21 SENATOR HARBISON: Thank you, Mr.  
22 President. Thank you very much. I don't  
23 intend to be long. I think all of the  
24 eloquent speakers have really touched upon  
25 what I feel about the map, as well. Like the

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1 senator from the 26th stated, to him and to  
2 me, it's like deja vu all over again.

3       The current map, the current Republican  
4 map, in my humble opinion, does not comply  
5 with Judge Jones' order. To bolster that  
6 assertion, a plaintiff, Alpha Phi Alpha  
7 organizations, sent a letter to the  
8 Redistricting Committee verifying that the  
9 Republican map violates the Voting Rights Act  
10 and fails to comply with the judge's order.

11       To me, the current map represents a  
12 study in misdirection, like the old crossbuck  
13 play in football that represented  
14 misdirection, to fool the other team. The  
15 quarterback would get the ball, turn around,  
16 fake it to one running back and give it to the  
17 other running back to fool the opposition. I  
18 think that's what's going on here today.

19       But in the case of the courts, as  
20 opposed to football, the referee is going to  
21 be Judge Jones. And I believe that justice  
22 will prevail in that order. I believe that  
23 either a master is going to draw it or Judge  
24 Jones is going to find something else, or  
25 certainly, in the end, whether it's the long

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1 game or the short game, I believe that our  
2 feeling about this map will prevail.  
3 People don't understand, I think, the  
4 depth of the feeling a lot of us have about  
5 voting and how touchy even our grandparents  
6 and our grandfathers and the struggles they  
7 had over the years to try to vote. It was a  
8 long, long, hard road. I remember the night  
9 Dr. King's house was bombed when I lived in  
10 Montgomery, Alabama.

11 The word went out that, hey, Dr. King's  
12 house was bombed, and we need to go see about  
13 this. So we took off running and ran from  
14 Trenum Court in the projects up to where Dr.  
15 King lived, and there was a crowd starting to  
16 gather around.

17 And as the crowd murmured and became  
18 angry and agitated, finally Dr. King came out  
19 and spoke to the crowd. Small man, small  
20 voice with a big impact. And he was saying, I  
21 want you all to go home. My family is not  
22 home, so I want you to maintain a peaceful  
23 posture and go home. We'll be all right.

24 But you know what? We won't have to  
25 wait long, and I ain't no ways tired. I ain't

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1 no ways tired. We ain't no ways tired.  
2 Violence will not stop me. And we must  
3 remember that, that this represent a struggle  
4 that's eternal.

5 You have to mend and take care of the  
6 things that you nurture and raise, like  
7 America, like your home, like your family.  
8 You occasionally need to correct it a little  
9 bit to make sure that it stays on the promises  
10 that it made, that those promises are kept.

11 We must make sure, and follow through,  
12 and make sure the right map is adopted for  
13 those underrepresented people in the district  
14 that Judge Jones alluded to. How long? Not  
15 long. I believe that in the end, justice will  
16 prevail.

17 Dr. King said, in the courts, we must  
18 work through the legislation. We must work  
19 through the ballots in order to make sure that  
20 we come out on top. Don't get tired and  
21 please don't reach out in anger, but reach out  
22 in love to the other people to say, look, what  
23 we're doing is right. Come aboard. Come  
24 aboard this love effort.

25 I want you to be first in moral



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1 excellence. I want you to be first in  
2 generosity. But most of all, I want you to be  
3 first in love. Love the map of justice. It's  
4 not this. Thank you, Mr. President. I yield  
5 the well.

6 LT. GOVERNOR JONES: Thank you,  
7 Senator. Senator has yielded the well. Chair  
8 recognizes Senator from the 10th.

9 SENATOR JONES: Thank you, Mr.  
10 President and colleagues. I had no intention  
11 of coming to the well today.

12 I simply started out this morning with  
13 the -- with just asking a few questions that I  
14 felt was important for this body, not just  
15 this body, but for all of Georgians to  
16 understand what this process was like, and  
17 what was involved, and how the majority party  
18 came to the conclusions to draw the map that  
19 they did.

20 That's how it started. And then, the  
21 chairperson of the committee, as I attempted  
22 to ask her a few questions, yielded. I then  
23 asked the lieutenant governor about the  
24 gravity of this moment and its severity and  
25 what's at stake here, that the questions that

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1 we have as Democrats deserve to be answered.  
2 We represent as many Georgians as those  
3 in the majority party do. And that's  
4 important that we have an open discussion here  
5 and not cloud our debate in secrecy. Any time  
6 we go through a redistricting and  
7 reapportionment process, it should be open and  
8 transparent, and I don't believe this process  
9 that we're going through today has been open  
10 and transparent.

11 So since the chairperson refused to  
12 answer the question, didn't give me an  
13 opportunity to ask her the questions that I  
14 had written down, and researched, and spent a  
15 lot of time considering, the only option I  
16 have is to stand before you today and ask  
17 those questions that I would have asked of  
18 her.

19 The first question I ask was, why were  
20 the district numbers changed in several of the  
21 existing -- for several of the existing  
22 incumbents? That's an important question  
23 because a lot of us have spent countless years  
24 working in our districts. People identify us  
25 with who we are and the number (inaudible).

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1       They know I'm the senator from the  
2 10th. I ride around with it every day on the  
3 back of my car. We know that. So I didn't  
4 think that was a trick question. It was a  
5 very simple question, in my opinion. Why were  
6 these numbers changed?

7       And I asked that question today, and if  
8 I had the answer, it would probably be to kind  
9 of obfuscate what seems obvious to or not so  
10 obvious to some of us, which means some of  
11 those districts that had numbers flipped were  
12 some of the districts that was referenced in  
13 the judge's order.

14       Some of those districts that were  
15 flipped were some of the districts that simply  
16 has now gone majority minority. And it's not  
17 me saying that. It's that 515-page order that  
18 I have on my desk that states the obvious. So  
19 I didn't get an answer to that one. So that's  
20 the only answer I can come up with.

21       The other question that I was going to  
22 ask is, why does the Republican proposal leave  
23 Senate District 16 and 34 unchanged when the  
24 court ruled that both districts that are drawn  
25 violate Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act?

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1 Folks, that's just a simple question.

2 I'm not trying to trick anyone with  
3 asking the question. I don't know the answer  
4 to that I can come up with why I think because  
5 I didn't draw this map. As a matter of fact,  
6 the Democratic Party had little to no  
7 influence on how these maps were drawn.

8 Yes, I live on the south side, some of  
9 the fastest growing areas that was impacted,  
10 that was mentioned in the judge's order. The  
11 10th district is one of those. It borders the  
12 17th.

13 As a matter of fact, back when the '21  
14 map was adopted, I said the exact same thing  
15 then that I'm saying today. Do you understand  
16 what's packed, stacking, and cracking is all  
17 about? I didn't get an answer during the '21  
18 maps, and I certainly didn't get an answer to  
19 that question today, so perhaps a special  
20 master can explain it to all of us.

21 Another question I simply had is, why  
22 does the Republican proposal make changes to  
23 districts that were not identified in the  
24 court's order? That's another question I had.  
25 Folks, those on the other side of the aisle,

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1 that's a legitimate question to ask. It's not  
2 trickery. It happened. They were changed.  
3 So please tell us why.

4 Another question I had, is will the  
5 Republican proposal lead to voter confusion  
6 whose voter district numbers have changed?  
7 And that's an obvious question, as well. It's  
8 not trickery. It was done. Majority party  
9 changed the numbers. Do you think that the  
10 voters will be confused about who they're  
11 voting for?

12 I've held this seat now for 19 years,  
13 the 10th district. If it was changed, I don't  
14 know what my voters would think. Did I move,  
15 did I relocate, was I assigned to another  
16 district? Voter confusion is real. That's  
17 something that we all should be sensitive  
18 about.

19 Another question I've had is what --  
20 why does the Republicans proposed map move  
21 Black voters in Douglas and Newton counties  
22 out of existing majority-Black districts into  
23 majority-White districts? There's nothing  
24 trick -- there's no trickery about that.  
25 Nothing at all.

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1       It's simply a question that need to be  
2 asked, and I believe the majority party need  
3 to answer the question. I was rather emphatic  
4 when I raised a point of personal privilege to  
5 our president of this great body demanding  
6 that we need these questions asked and  
7 answered.

8       Partially, we were told, well, this has  
9 gone through the process. It's gone through  
10 the committee, and the subcommittee, and the  
11 committee process, and all those other  
12 processes that we have here in our great  
13 state. But the public isn't watching those  
14 committee processes like they're watching  
15 today.

16       Folks, the 11 million Georgians have an  
17 opportunity to tune in to what we're doing  
18 together as a body. They deserve an answer.

19       Another question I had is, why are  
20 Black voters in the voter-dilution area  
21 identified by the court moved into majority-  
22 Black districts? That's a real question that  
23 needs an answer.

24       And I would tell you in advance that I  
25 will take any question that you have for me,

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1 but I hope someone on the majority party can  
2 at least provide some kind of sunshine or  
3 transparency on why some of these questions,  
4 though I didn't get an opportunity to ask, but  
5 at least provide some type of answer for some  
6 of these questions.

7       Lastly, the question that I had and  
8 something that I spent a lot of time thinking  
9 about last night is, how does the Republican-  
10 proposed map addresses the court rulings in  
11 south Metro Atlanta?

12       Folks, I lived in south Metro all of my  
13 life. I moved to Henry County some 31 years  
14 ago when it was a little backwards place, and  
15 I'm sure my friends from the 17th who's lived  
16 there as about as long as I have, maybe, if  
17 not longer, understands what the county was  
18 like.

19       But we've seen this county now grown to  
20 one of the fastest growing counties in the  
21 nation. In the last presidential election,  
22 Henry County had the largest increase in votes  
23 for the Democratic president than any other  
24 county in the nation. Number 2 was Rockdale  
25 County that borders Henry County.

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1        So you can see how much this region has  
2 grown and not just has it grown in terms of  
3 the demographics, but it has grown in the  
4 percent of Democratic votes. That's what you  
5 guys are looking at. And we know that.

6        So why pack, stack, and crack up these  
7 communities of interest? South Metro is my  
8 home. I know these citizens that live in  
9 there, and I'm not just asking these questions  
10 for myself.

11       I'm asking the questions for those that  
12 live in the south metropolitan part of this  
13 state, that this judge, with his 516-page  
14 ruling, said that the way the '21 maps were  
15 configured, violating the Voting Rights Act.

16       But I'm not just here posing questions.  
17 The final question I wanted to ask the  
18 committee chairperson was, have you considered  
19 or have you looked at the data and the  
20 demographics in the maps that we drew? If we  
21 are sitting here and I'm going to ask if  
22 someone can help me, if they will, kind of  
23 flip this map back over because I want to show  
24 you the map that we drew.

25       And one of the things that the senator



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1 from the 49th was adamant about was that her  
2 map, please, thank you, complied fully with  
3 the judge's order. Well, I want to show you a  
4 map that all of our experts agree with us,  
5 that, in fact, this map complies with the  
6 judge's order.

7 We did not pack. We didn't stack  
8 districts together. We didn't have to crack  
9 open any of those existing districts like we  
10 did for the senator from the 35th and the  
11 senator from the 42nd back there. We didn't  
12 have to do that on this map that we drew. We  
13 didn't.

14 This map that we've submitted fully  
15 complies, and I would challenge anyone -- and  
16 we'll give you the data -- that if you find  
17 anything that's wrong that does not comply  
18 with the judge's order in the maps that we  
19 drew, then I would agree that we made a  
20 mistake. That's all I was asking the senator  
21 from the 49th to do.

22 Folks, that's what our job is up here  
23 is to work deliberative in this body. And I  
24 don't think any one of us has an answer to all  
25 of the questions that need to be asked in this

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1 particular process.

2 And I certainly would have hoped that  
3 the majority party would have taken a lot more  
4 time and given us due consideration, to at  
5 least be respectful enough and respond to the  
6 questions that we had.

7 This is not where we're trying to trick  
8 anyone. You shouldn't hide from this judge  
9 because I don't think you can do that for a  
10 federal court judge anyway. They have the  
11 ability to pierce the work that we've already  
12 done, of which Judge Jones has already done,  
13 of which he has no relationship to me, by the  
14 way.

15 Think about this for a moment, please.  
16 We still have an opportunity to look at what  
17 we've done and how we've configured our  
18 districts and can compare it to what you all  
19 have done in the majority party. That's what  
20 we're asking for as Democrats in this body.  
21 Mr. President, thank you. And if there are  
22 any questions, I certainly hope there would  
23 be. But if it's not, then I'll yield.

24 LT. GOVERNOR JONES: There are -- oh,  
25 actually, the senator from the 23rd.

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1 SENATOR BURNS: Thank you, Mr.

2 President. Will the senator yield?

3 SENATOR BURNS: Absolutely.

4 SENATOR JONES: First of all. I'd like

5 to thank the senator for his intensity and

6 willingness to question --

7 SENATOR JONES: Thank you, Senator.

8 SENATOR BURNS: -- the activities that

9 we've done here. Today, I want you to help me

10 understand just two or three simple things.

11 It's really clarification of fact.

12 SENATOR JONES: Sure.

13 SENATOR BURNS: First question,

14 Senator, if you'll yield, are you on the

15 Reapportionment Committee, Redistricting?

16 SENATOR JONES: No, I am not.

17 SENATOR BURNS: You're not. I am not,

18 either. Senator, were you in the room during

19 the reapportionment hearings, Senator?

20 SENATOR JONES: I was watching --

21 SENATOR BURNS: Okay.

22 SENATOR JONES: -- online and in my

23 office.

24 SENATOR BURNS: Thank you. Can you

25 tell me, Senator, when were the Republican

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1 maps provided to the Senate?

2 SENATOR JONES: Provided to the Senate

3 SENATOR BURNS: Provided to the public,

4 really? Did it happen before the special

5 session or after?

6 SENATOR JONES: The first time that I

7 got wind of the special session was the day

8 before session started.

9 SENATOR BURNS: But I believe, if it's

10 correct, the Senate map that we're considering

11 today was provided to the public on Monday.

12 Is that correct, Senator?

13 SENATOR JONES: If you certainly so

14 state, I would agree with that.

15 SENATOR BURNS: The follow up question,

16 Senator, if you'll continue to yield, when

17 were the Democratic maps provided to the

18 Senate for consideration?

19 SENATOR JONES: Senator, our maps were

20 provided on Tuesday.

21 SENATOR BURNS: Tuesday.

22 SENATOR JONES: Yes.

23 SENATOR BURNS: I would suggest that

24 perhaps it was later than that. As we got

25 into the discussion, deliberation, especially

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1 on Wednesday at the public hearing, did every  
2 person who signed up get an opportunity to  
3 address the map that we're considering today?

4 SENATOR JONES: Senator, I think you  
5 would have to chairperson that committee. I  
6 would not -- I do not know the answer to that  
7 one.

8 SENATOR BURNS: I was in the room,  
9 Senator, and indeed, everyone who signed up  
10 was allowed to speak to the map that we're  
11 considering today. And one more question,  
12 Senator, if you'll continue to yield --

13 SENATOR JONES: Sure.

14 SENATOR BURNS: -- for one more  
15 question.

16 SENATOR JONES: I will yield as long as  
17 you like.

18 SENATOR BURNS: All right. On  
19 Thursday, when we had the follow-up hearing,  
20 when the minority party provided their map,  
21 there was an appeal to allow another public  
22 hearing, which the chair allowed. Is that not  
23 true, Senator?

24 SENATOR JONES: Senator certainly knows  
25 of which he speaks.

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1       SENATOR BURNS: Thank you. And in that  
2 case, as well, anyone who signed up on  
3 Thursday to address the Democratic map or the  
4 prior Republican map were allowed to speak.  
5 Is that not true, Senator?

6       SENATOR JONES: I believe the senator  
7 so stated.

8       SENATOR BURNS: Thank you. I yield.

9       SENATOR BURNS: You're more than  
10 welcome.

11       LT. GOVERNOR JONES: Senator from the  
12 27th, do you have a question?

13       SENATOR DOLEZAL: Thank you, Mr.  
14 Chairman. Senator, do you yield? A

15       SENATOR JONES: Absolutely.

16       SENATOR DOLEZAL: You used three terms.  
17 I'm wondering if you could help us understand  
18 what you meant when you used those. I believe  
19 it was pack, crack, and stack. Could you  
20 maybe unpack a little bit of what those terms  
21 mean to you?

22       SENATOR JONES: Senator, I'd be more  
23 than glad to. And we were talking about these  
24 terms as it relates to redistricting. And  
25 those are legal terms, by the way, of which

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1 I'm not an attorney.

2 But I would tell you, having gone  
3 through several redistricting, in the 19  
4 years that I've been here, that those terms  
5 relate to people of color in terms of packing,  
6 of which this was discussed already, people of  
7 color, Black people, African Americans in  
8 districts.

9 Cracking open is no different than  
10 taking people of color or people who can  
11 influence -- as the senator from the 35th so  
12 spoke this morning. I believe that's his  
13 district, the 33rd. I apologize --

14 Cracking open his district and taking  
15 people of color, African Americans that can  
16 influence who wins and that -- or who gains a  
17 seat in that particular district, moving them  
18 out so they no longer have the ability to  
19 influence who the winner of that particular  
20 seat is going to be.

21 Stacking is no different than what you  
22 see in Metro Atlanta. All of -- the majority  
23 of the African-American districts are all  
24 stacked into this metropolitan Atlanta market.  
25 When you look at a map of Georgia, you'll see

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1 where we are located.

2 And outside of the metro market,  
3 there's very few districts, with the exception  
4 of my friends from Columbus, Macon, and  
5 Savannah, where you find people of color that  
6 are represented by elected officials of your  
7 choice. Why is that? Because all of us have  
8 been stacked in the districts here in the  
9 metropolitan area.

10 SENATOR DOLEZAL: Thank you for that.  
11 Do you mind if I just ask one more question,  
12 just to clarify?

13 SENATOR JONES: I yield as long as you  
14 like.

15 SENATOR DOLEZAL: I just have one more.  
16 What percentages, then, of what you just  
17 described characterize either packing,  
18 cracking or stacking in your mind. Other  
19 words, how do you do it when you see it? What's  
20 the percentage of Black voters that are  
21 packed, cracked, or stacked that allows you to  
22 say definitively, this is one of those  
23 activities?

24 SENATOR JONES: What percent allows? I  
25 think what we've heard already from testimony



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1 is that there's a threshold for influence for  
2 people of color. That's 37 percent in a  
3 particular district.

4 If it goes below that, and my colleague  
5 from the 33rd spoke so eloquently about his  
6 particular district and what happened, how his  
7 district has been cracked open. So that is  
8 the threshold. Certainly anything above that,  
9 you definitely going to get a person of color  
10 who's going to have a much stronger  
11 opportunity to win that particular district.

12 But the judge talked about influence  
13 districts, and that 37 percent is our ability  
14 to influence who wins in a particular  
15 district. And anything above that will  
16 probably be uncertainty. It's much more than  
17 influence, but certainly we're going to win  
18 that particular district.

19 My district, the 10th, is 63 percent a  
20 Black district.

21 SENATOR DOLEZAL: Thank you Senator.

22 SENATOR JONES: You're more than  
23 welcome.

24 LT. GOVERNOR JONES: You have one more  
25 question, Senator. Senator from 14th.

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1 SENATOR MCLAURIN: Thank you, Mr.

2 President. Does the senator yield?

3 SENATOR JONES: Absolutely to my

4 colleague from the 14th.

5 SENATOR MCLAURIN: Thank you very much.

6 Isn't it true, Senator, that in response to

7 the previous senator's question, and just in

8 general today, there's a specific legal

9 framework that the Supreme Court has used to

10 address whether there is minority vote

11 dilution, isn't that true?

12 SENATOR JONES: You're absolutely

13 correct.

14 SENATOR MCLAURIN: Is it not true that

15 after the Civil Rights Act was passed, or

16 Voting Rights Act, excuse me, was passed in

17 1965, that there was an amendment to Section

18 2, which is the operative amendment here in

19 1982, and that there was a Supreme Court case

20 that governs all of this that was decided in

21 1986. Isn't that correct?

22 SENATOR JONES: You're absolutely

23 correct.

24 SENATOR MCLAURIN: And under that

25 Supreme Court case in 1986, isn't it true

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1 that -- the case was called Thornburgh v  
2 Gingles -- that the court laid out a series of  
3 three factors, primary preconditions, that  
4 have to be true or hold in order for the court  
5 to find that there is a minority vote  
6 dilution. Isn't that right?

7 SENATOR JONES: That is certainly  
8 correct, Senator.

9 SENATOR MCLAURIN: And isn't it true  
10 that the first factor is essentially that the  
11 minority population has to be sufficiently  
12 large and compact where it could be sort of  
13 the influencing vote bloc in a district on its  
14 own if you drew it that way, correct?

15 SENATOR JONES: That is correct.

16 SENATOR MCLAURIN: And is it not true  
17 the second factor is basically that the  
18 minority group has to vote together. It's not  
19 enough. The first factor is that there's  
20 enough compact voting block available. The  
21 second is that they sort of vote together for  
22 the same candidate, correct?

23 SENATOR JONES: That's correct.

24 SENATOR MCLAURIN: And isn't the third  
25 factor that the real issue and the threat

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1 under the Voting Rights Act that if you've got  
2 a majority race, you know, in terms of by the  
3 numbers, that can form a bloc and then votes  
4 as that bloc in a way that overpowers the  
5 minority vote, that's the real linchpin of the  
6 test, that third factor, correct?

7 SENATOR JONES: Yeah. Absolutely  
8 correct.

9 SENATOR MCLAURIN: Okay. So, you know,  
10 a great senator once said, do you yield for a  
11 series of questions, and I, you know,  
12 obviously have taken that spirit myself. A  
13 couple more.

14 Is it not true that when the judge  
15 issued the order defining the area where  
16 minority vote dilution was happening in the  
17 bottom areas of the metro, that that reflects  
18 a finding that all three of these Gingles  
19 factors are met in that area, correct?

20 SENATOR JONES: That's correct.

21 SENATOR MCLAURIN: And is it not true  
22 that in the areas where the new majority-Black  
23 districts have been formed by the majority,  
24 the two of them in the metro and Fulton and  
25 DeKalb, is it not true that not all of the

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1 Gingles factors are met in that area?

2 SENATOR JONES: That is absolutely  
3 correct, Senator.

4 SENATOR MCLAURIN: And is it not true  
5 that the third factor is the really big one,  
6 which is that there is not a voting bloc that  
7 is taking away the minority blocs-preferred  
8 candidate in those areas because they're  
9 already getting the candidate that they would  
10 have voted for, correct?

11 SENATOR MCLAURIN: That's correct.

12 SENATOR MCLAURIN: Okay. So is it not  
13 true that the legal argument and the reason  
14 why the court is going to reject these maps --  
15 yeah, sorry, I just I thought he could hear me  
16 better if I reflected it off the wall; okay --

17 That the reason that the court is going  
18 to reject these maps is because the Gingles  
19 factors require that when you draw the new  
20 Black districts, the majority-Black districts,  
21 that you do so in the bottom of the metro, the  
22 area that's affected and not create these  
23 bacon strips that connect these un-contiguous  
24 communities for purposes of saying, look,  
25 we've formed two majority-Black districts,

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1 isn't that enough?

2 Isn't it true that that will be the  
3 court's reasoning when the court strikes these  
4 maps down?

5 SENATOR JONES: I agree wholeheartedly,  
6 Senator.

7 SENATOR MCLAURIN: Thank you, Senator.  
8 I appreciate it.

9 SENATOR JONES: If there's has no  
10 further questions, Mr. President, I yield to  
11 the well.

12 LT. GOVERNOR JONES: You know, I thank  
13 the senator from the 14th was -- is correct in  
14 the fact that you are the only senator I've  
15 ever known to say, will you yield for a series  
16 of questions right now? You patented that.  
17 You patented that.

18 SENATOR JONES: I did. Thank you, Mr.  
19 President.

20 LT. GOVERNOR JONES: Yeah. There's no  
21 further question. Thank you, sir. I  
22 recognize the senator from the 30th.

23 SENATOR DUGAN: Thank you, Mr.  
24 President. I don't think it's A surprise to  
25 anybody in this chamber that I'm a no vote on

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1 this map today. But before you get all crazy  
2 about this, I want to make it clear it's not  
3 because I support the map that Democrats  
4 brought forward. I think it's terrible, but  
5 I, you know, I don't support the Republican  
6 one, either.

7 And I can't find the button on my desk  
8 that says Map C, the one that I would like to  
9 have. So we've done a lot of time talking  
10 back and forth up here. I don't like either  
11 one of them. And I can't vote green because a  
12 green vote means I agree with.

13 But when I vote red today and I'm  
14 looking at this kind of group back here and  
15 some back over here, don't think for a second  
16 that my red vote means I agree with because I  
17 vehemently oppose.

18 But I just figured I'd put that out  
19 there before everybody, the two people in the  
20 room that did not know I was a red vote today.  
21 Okay, there's four people, my bad. Before  
22 those four people did not didn't know that  
23 thought, dang, he's been in the snake pit down  
24 there too long because that's not the case.

25 I just don't agree with either one.

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1 Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the well.

2 LT. GOVERNOR JONES: Thank you,  
3 Senator. We appreciate your candor and your  
4 honesty here. So I recognize the senator from  
5 the 22nd, the good man from Augusta, Georgia.

6 SENATOR JONES: Thank you, Mr.  
7 President. I will be brief and actually  
8 promise to that. I actually will be.

9 I just want to talk -- touch on a  
10 couple of things about the mapping question  
11 today. And I actually agree that probably the  
12 best route would be to vote no and possibly  
13 come back and try to figure out which way to  
14 go, even though I would vote for the  
15 Democratic map.

16 But at least we would be starting off  
17 with something that I think would pass  
18 constitutional muster. And why is that? A  
19 comment was made about the judge wanted  
20 majority-Black districts to be drawn, and that  
21 is what we did. And so I guess the term is,  
22 under all the facts and circumstances, what  
23 does additional mean?

24 Does it just mean two more Black  
25 districts, wherever they come from, or does it



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1 mean an additional creation of two additional  
2 majority-Black districts, real Black  
3 districts, not just moving numbers and moving  
4 folks around from one place to the other.

5 And it is obvious when you look at the  
6 opinion, it's long, but it doesn't take long  
7 really to figure out what the judge is saying  
8 here because first of all, if he didn't mean  
9 it to be to actual, real additional Black  
10 districts and not just moving persons around,  
11 he wouldn't have made the comment on Page 509  
12 when he said,

13 "The remedy cannot be just taking  
14 districts from or Blacks from a minority-  
15 opportunity district and making them a  
16 majority-Black district, which actually, I  
17 think is what we actually did with Senate  
18 District 33, quite frankly.

19 But he specifically said the remedy  
20 can't be taken people from majority -- a  
21 majority-minority--opportunity district and  
22 making them a minority --majority district.  
23 So he was clear about that. If you could just  
24 take them from anywhere, he would have just  
25 said -- he wouldn't have been as specific as

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1 he was.

2 But that language is key because there  
3 are districts out there which are minority  
4 opportunity districts. And we can say he  
5 doesn't define them. But certainly I think  
6 that when we look at the 33rd, at 40 percent,  
7 that probably would be a minority-opportunity  
8 district. Certainly you could just make that  
9 a majority district and be done with it.

10 But even further than that is when you  
11 look at the fact of what they actually go  
12 through in this particular case, when you look  
13 at what Section 2 actually is saying, and all  
14 of the facts that they actually had to uncover  
15 to get to this particular point tells you what  
16 the judge is getting at is not just moving  
17 people around, but actual change as far as  
18 majority-Black district is concerned.

19 Because with Section 2, one of the  
20 things it says, which is very key, is that you  
21 look at the totality of the circumstances of  
22 local electoral process, standards, practice,  
23 or procedures being challenged as a result of  
24 denying a racial or language minority equal  
25 opportunity to participate in the political

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1 process.

2 Key to a Section 2 claim is that you  
3 look at the social-economic factors and also  
4 other factors as they intersect with the  
5 voting factors that we're talking about.

6 So what he's basically saying is -- not  
7 him, it's Section 2 -- is we want to look at  
8 the social-economic factors and we want to  
9 look and determine, have those social economic  
10 factors been influenced by the lack of  
11 opportunity to vote. And we want to look also  
12 and determine whether there has been a  
13 historical discrimination as far as voting is  
14 concerned.

15 When you're doing that kind of deep-  
16 dive analysis, that goes further than just  
17 saying, well, what I want you to do, not only  
18 in this case, but in the other case, is just  
19 move persons from one number to the other.

20 So let's kind of look at it from a --  
21 when we start talking about social-economic  
22 and the history of race in Georgia and in the  
23 United States, but even specifically Georgia.  
24 And I want to go all the way back because it  
25 becomes important to actually understand how

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1 deep it goes when we start talking about  
2 social-economic factors.  
3 See, when we look at history, Black  
4 history, which is American history, by the  
5 way, it's pretty basic. No matter how old you  
6 are. It pretty came up the same way. Slaves  
7 came, some of them were beaten. Then one day,  
8 a guy named Lincoln freed him. I'm sure now  
9 they talk about Juneteenth.

10 There was something called  
11 Reconstruction for a couple of years. There's  
12 a couple of Black governors that might have  
13 got elected. Then there was a person named  
14 Rosa Parks who refused to give up her seat.  
15 Then there was a young preacher named Martin  
16 Luther King, and then Jesse Jackson ran for  
17 president. And now, I'm sure they include  
18 Obama. And that's the end of your Black  
19 history.

20 But when you really understand the  
21 socio-economic facts, it becomes much  
22 different. Slaves came. But even here in  
23 Georgia, they spent over four generations.  
24 What does that mean? It means that it wasn't  
25 just the two pages that are in your history

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1 book. Slaves came, then Lincoln freed them.

2 It means you had a mother, father, husband,

3 wife, child slaves.

4 They lived at that time, 40, 50 years.

5 They had a child. That child had a -- that

6 child became a mother. That child became a

7 father. That child became a brother. That

8 child became somebody's sister. All of them

9 still in slavery. Another 40 years goes by,

10 longer.

11 They actually had children. Those

12 children were enslaved. They actually had

13 children. Those children were enslaved.

14 Think about looking at your child today and

15 daring somebody to even think about hitting

16 them. But you had no autonomy over your own

17 child. Not for the two pages that are in the

18 history book.

19 But as they were your child, as they

20 were somebody's grandchild, they could be

21 taken from you. That is what it was, wasn't

22 just slavery, and then Lincoln came and freed

23 them all. Everybody's happy. It was

24 generations. It's generations.

25 And we have foreign policy arguments,

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1 which is interesting, and we get all bent out  
2 of shape about the different foreign policy  
3 arguments. And things have taken place 40 or  
4 50 years. And we're like, we've got to do  
5 this. We got to do that. That time right  
6 there, that's just one generation of slavery.

7       It's just one generation of a mother  
8 and a father and a child and grandchildren.  
9 Just one. Or two seems like a lifetime. That  
10 was just four years of a slave. That is what  
11 we're talking about.

12       And then, when we talk about this thing  
13 called Reconstruction and then they had some  
14 Jim Crow laws, we see that was 100 years.  
15 Wasn't just a couple of pages in the book  
16 because normally that's what they do. They  
17 have the slavery, and then they say there's  
18 some Jim Crow stuff, and then Rosa Parks.

19       We see Jim Crow was 100 years, mother,  
20 child, son, daughter could have no autonomy  
21 over themselves, could not get loans from a  
22 bank, could not go to schools that they want  
23 to go to, could not vote. Not for 5 years,  
24 not for 10 years, not for 30. For over 100  
25 years, legally, this was in place. It was a

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1 legal institution.

2 Slavery was a legal institution  
3 supported by law, and how do we change our  
4 laws? Through voting. And we're going to see  
5 how that intersects in one second. But  
6 African Americans couldn't vote. We didn't  
7 have the opportunity to change our laws.

8 So slavery wasn't just something that  
9 some guy did for a few years that you see in  
10 the book. It was an institution of  
11 government. Jim Crow was an institution of  
12 government. For a hundred years, persons  
13 could not legally vote. It was an institution  
14 of government that existed.

15 For 100 years, persons could not own  
16 property. For 100 years, persons are going to  
17 be terrorized, formally or informally. That  
18 all took place for 100 years. Persons were  
19 lynched, beaten to death, and many times that  
20 was due because they wanted to exercise the  
21 right to vote.

22 No hospital care, if you were able to  
23 get into one. School care was going -- your  
24 schooling was certainly was going to be  
25 different, more marginalized. All of that was

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1 a system of government. It wasn't  
2 individuals. And it couldn't be changed  
3 because you didn't have the right to vote.  
4 It couldn't be changed because they didn't  
5 have the right to vote.

6 And even when there was glimmers of  
7 hope, such is the New Deal -- in the New Deal  
8 situation, which was a great program, but many  
9 southern Blacks couldn't participate in it  
10 because Southerners told Roosevelt, the only  
11 way we were going to pass this is you're going  
12 to have to make sure a lot of these programs  
13 go through the states.

14 And so when it went through the states,  
15 they would make sure that African Americans  
16 couldn't participate. GI Bill, for instance,  
17 great bill. But many once again, because  
18 Southerners would say, okay, you're guaranteed  
19 the loan, but you still got to be able to get  
20 the loan.

21 And so you have red-lining policies.  
22 You have policies by a bank that says, we're  
23 not going to give a loan to African Americans.  
24 So it didn't help them at all. All of this,  
25 though, was allowed by government.



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1       So think about this. You have a family  
2 who has been enslaved. Now, they've gone  
3 through Jim Crow, and they were never able to  
4 change their circumstances because they  
5 couldn't vote.

6       Now, of course, some might say, well,  
7 that doesn't change your circumstances.  
8 Voting don't change anything. Then why are  
9 you here? Why are those people in the  
10 hallway, citizens and others? Why are they  
11 here if voting doesn't change anything. Why  
12 are voting doesn't change anything is one of  
13 the principal institutions that we continue to  
14 fight over.

15       It's the one institution that persons  
16 want to continually try to make sure that  
17 persons can't exercise it. So please don't  
18 say that voting doesn't change a person's  
19 circumstances -- change these things. And  
20 then voting did come around.

21       And this is the intersection that  
22 Section 2 talks about. So you have the  
23 historical dynamic, which is more than the  
24 four pages that we all got in Black history,  
25 intersects now with the political, the voting

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1 dynamic. So the voting dynamic comes about.

2 And this is in the court case. So  
3 voting comes for African-Americans in Georgia.  
4 But what do they find? They find that Georgia  
5 resists the Voting Rights Act, one of the few  
6 states that actively resisted it.

7 Had the lowest state, when we had  
8 preclearance in the -- in -- after 1965, one  
9 of the lowest states to actually seek  
10 preclearance, was always trying to go around  
11 it, so to speak. That was Georgia.

12 Georgia was mentioned when they  
13 actually extended the Voting Rights Act in  
14 1982, I believe. Georgia was actually one of  
15 the states that was specifically mentioned  
16 about why the Voting Rights Act needed to be  
17 extended because of the practices that  
18 actually was occurring in Georgia.

19 Now, when we say, well, that's past  
20 stuff. Well, in the order, it says that there  
21 are five restrictions that we can look at,  
22 five restrictions that we can look at, if we  
23 want to know that a state is practicing some  
24 type of voter suppression: voter ID laws,  
25 proof of citizenship laws, voter purges, cuts

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1 in early voting, widespread poll closing.

2 Our state had all five. We were the

3 only state in the Union to have all five.

4 This is what this judge is looking at. And

5 what you're telling me is he said -- he really

6 just means just flip a couple of seats here.

7 When the Voting Rights Act, of course,

8 the preclearance is now gone, but while it was

9 still in existence, the Justice Department

10 actually rejected 200 changes that Georgia has

11 submitted for preclearance.

12 In the United States, it was one third

13 of all Department of Justice objections. This

14 state. So when we talk about whether that map

15 will pass, we have to ask ourselves if we know

16 what really has happened, which is basically

17 we just moved a few people -- that's the

18 reality of it --

19 And then we say, okay, what are we

20 looking at? We're looking at the social-

21 economic, and we're looking at our voting

22 history past. Is this really what the court

23 is talking about? To face that down.

24 Because you see, when you have infant

25 mortality rates, we love to talk about infant

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1 mortality rates, it's true, but we don't  
2 realize that it actually stretches all the way  
3 back, because the average baby during slavery  
4 for Black only lived a month. Their infant  
5 mortality rates was one half that of whites.

6       So you see where the infant mortality  
7 come from. And then when you start talking  
8 about from an educational standpoint, remember  
9 your defense expert actually stipulated all  
10 this. He said, the numbers are the numbers.  
11 The census numbers are the census numbers.

12       When they talked about the lack of  
13 education, the different education rates  
14 between Blacks and Whites, he said, the census  
15 numbers are the census numbers. Okay. So  
16 when you start talking about different  
17 education rates, you realize it traces all the  
18 way back to persons legally not being able to  
19 really get educated.

20       When you start talking about the wealth  
21 gap, when you start talking about income gaps,  
22 when you realize you're talking about persons  
23 who legally could not get a job, can't be a  
24 lawyer if you can't go to law school.

25       Can't be a lawyer if you can't legally

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1 go to a state college. Can't be -- can't  
2 probably be a doctor if you can't legally go  
3 to the state colleges or state universities.  
4 That's the connection.

5 And what we're saying is this. What  
6 we've produced here, well, I have not produced  
7 it, but what has been produced here is going  
8 to satisfy this judge when he's looking at all  
9 of this history, the socio-economic part,  
10 because it ain't the four pages you read in  
11 history and the voting part.

12 And he came back and said, you guys  
13 find a remedy for this because what I found is  
14 Georgia has a problem and it needs to be  
15 remedied and you need to find a remedy. And  
16 these are the places that you can find that  
17 remedy. These are the different district  
18 locations.

19 He didn't say replace anybody. He just  
20 said in that, these persons who have faced  
21 these socioeconomic problems, these persons  
22 who have faced these voting problems, all  
23 sponsored by the state. And the only way to  
24 change that is through voting. That's how we  
25 change it.

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1 And if we didn't believe it, then we  
2 wouldn't have these constant fights about  
3 voting. All of these things are sponsored by  
4 the state.

5 He says, okay, understanding that  
6 slavery, Jim Crow was state sponsored,  
7 understanding that when we start talking about  
8 the VRA, we start talking about Georgia's  
9 reticence to enforce it was state sponsored,  
10 you now find a remedy through these districts,  
11 such as I've given you, to show me how you're  
12 going to help these folks actually be part of  
13 the political process.

14 And we say, judge, well this number was  
15 Black, and so we put this person in that  
16 number and this person in that number. There  
17 you go. You got your two Black districts.  
18 Are you happy? It's not going to work. We  
19 all know it's not going to work.

20 And I would say this because it will be  
21 mentioned because it's been mentioned before,  
22 and I thought the judge was actually being  
23 nice, as I conclude, in this sense.

24 He talked about Georgia's come a long  
25 ways, and we've done a lot of good stuff. And

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1 I think he's really just being nice. I'm a  
2 citizen. My parents were citizens. My father  
3 fought in the Korean War. My grandfather  
4 fought in World War I. My mother was part of  
5 the WAC Corps.

6 Why in 2004 was I the first African  
7 American ever elected solicitor in Augusta?  
8 Why is that something to be proud of? Why  
9 should we be proud of that? My family is  
10 American as any other family out there, and  
11 I'm not talking about because it should --  
12 because it was me and my family. I'm saying  
13 they should have seen 30 or 40 African  
14 American solicitors.

15 Why in Augusta did we just elect our  
16 first African American district attorney?  
17 That should have been happened. That young  
18 man's family is a pastor, the person who won  
19 our district attorney's race. His family's  
20 been in the military; just as American as  
21 anyone else.

22 We're all citizens. Why are we still  
23 celebrating first? Talking about this is the  
24 first this and the first that. So I said he  
25 was actually being kind when he said, well,

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1    yeah, you're doing a lot of good things. And  
2    I guess it's better. But we're citizens.  
3        That shouldn't be taking place first,  
4    shouldn't be thought of, the fact that we got  
5    our first Black senator, that shouldn't even  
6    be thought of. That should have been  
7    happened. And if you understand our history,  
8    it's only because of race.

9        And it wasn't because of individual  
10   hatred. It's because of state sponsored  
11   discrimination. And to remedy state sponsored  
12   discrimination is through the remedies the  
13   judge pointed us to. And that's where we need  
14   to go. And that's why I'm opposed to this  
15   particular legislation.

16       And I will say this, also, persons are  
17   always fond of talking about southern  
18   Democrats back in the day. So let's be like  
19   Republicans in the 60s. So you want to be  
20   like the Republicans in the 60s? Reject this  
21   map. You want to be courageous, like the  
22   Republicans in the 60s who voted for the  
23   Voting Rights Act and voted for the Civil  
24   Rights Act, reject this map.

25       If those are the Republicans you



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1 admire, reject this map. I yield the well.

2 Thank you.

3 LT. GOVERNOR JONES: Thank you,  
4 Senator. Senator from the 27th wishes to  
5 speak.

6 SENATOR DOLEZAL: Thank you, Mr.  
7 President and colleagues. I've appreciated  
8 the robust debate and just wanted to respond  
9 to a couple of things that I heard, and then I  
10 will be on my way.

11 My friend, the senator from the 14th,  
12 walked through the Gingles test and talked  
13 about how we have created new bacon strips in  
14 south Metro Atlanta. The reality is, we have  
15 had bacon strips in south Metro Atlanta for  
16 decades.

17 The reason that we have the bacon  
18 strips, and the reason that we created new  
19 bacon strips in this map was specifically to  
20 avoid packing, specifically to avoid packing.  
21 So I appreciate the recap that he gave us on  
22 the Gingles test. But the only thing that  
23 really matters today is what did the judge  
24 tell us to do? Why are we here?

25 Much has been made of this 500-and-

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1 something page document. Nobody's referenced  
2 it. Nobody's read from it. I'd like to do  
3 that.

4 First and foremost, I would like to  
5 read from Page 220, where the judge states  
6 that Section 2 of the VRA does not require the  
7 court to find that the General Assembly passed  
8 the challenge maps to discriminate against  
9 Black voters, or that the General Assembly is  
10 racist in any way. Nothing in this order  
11 should be construed to indicate otherwise.

12 A lot has been done this morning and  
13 this afternoon to construe this order  
14 otherwise. So if we're going to talk about  
15 what Judge Jones said, let's talk about what  
16 he actually said. Nothing in this order  
17 should be construed to indicate otherwise.  
18 What is otherwise? That the General Assembly  
19 is racist in any way.

20 I want to talk about the rest of his  
21 order. He recognized an injury, and he  
22 recognized a remedy. The injury was the nine  
23 districts that he recognized and districts and  
24 areas that he recognized in his order. His  
25 remedy was simple. His remedy was to create

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1 two Black-majority districts.

2 He further went on to say that that  
3 cannot be done by removing any existing  
4 minority-opportunity districts. In the  
5 context of his order, minority-opportunity  
6 district means majority Black.

7 So let's talk about a couple of  
8 numbers. The 2021 maps have 14 Black-majority  
9 districts. The map that the chairwoman is  
10 presenting today has 16. We have created two  
11 new-Black majority districts. And regardless  
12 of how you define, if even if you disagree  
13 with the definition that I would say is  
14 implicit in the context of the order, that  
15 minority-opportunity district means Black-  
16 majority district.

17 No matter how you define minority  
18 opportunity district, this map does not change  
19 the number of minority-opportunity districts  
20 from the 2021 map. This map complies with the  
21 judge's order in every way, and it complies  
22 with the Voting Rights Act in every way,  
23 unless you believe that the Voting Rights Act  
24 is created to create Democrat districts.

25 And if we're being perfectly honest,

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1 the reason that the objections are being  
2 raised is because this map does not create new  
3 Democrat districts. I read the order. I read  
4 the remedy in the order, went through it. I  
5 don't see anything about creating new Democrat  
6 districts.

7 What did the map do? Well, the  
8 plaintiffs in the case stated that they didn't  
9 know a whole lot about the State of Georgia.  
10 They admitted that. The chairwoman outlined  
11 what she did. She focused on the  
12 redistricting principles. She kept precincts  
13 whole. She did not pair any incumbents.

14 We only have one additional county  
15 split from the previous map to this map. She  
16 didn't attempt to score political points. She  
17 didn't attempt to pick up any more Republican  
18 districts. The reality was the entire map was  
19 enjoined by the court. The entire map could  
20 have been readdressed.

21 She didn't do that. She focused on  
22 creating two more minority districts in south  
23 Metro Atlanta, the 28th, which is anchored in  
24 South Fulton, and the 17th, which is a compact  
25 district in South Metro. That's the test.

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1 The test isn't, did you create more Democrat  
2 districts? The test isn't, did you do  
3 something else that we imagine the judge said.

4 If the judge wanted us to redraw every  
5 single one of those nine districts, he would  
6 have told us to do so. That is not what he  
7 said to do. The remedy was to create two more  
8 Black-majority districts in South Metro. He  
9 identified the districts and areas of those  
10 nine, but did not instruct us to redraw all of  
11 the nine.

12 We spent a lot of time talking about a  
13 lot of questions today. There's only two  
14 questions, really. Does it comply with the  
15 order and does it comply with the VRA?  
16 Because it complies with the order, according  
17 to Judge Jones, this map complies with the  
18 Voting Rights Act. Thank you, Mr. President.  
19 I yield the well.

20 LT. GOVERNOR JONES: Senator has  
21 yielded. Senator from the 18th, you wish to  
22 rise.

23 SENATOR KENNEDY: Good afternoon,  
24 colleagues. Thank you, Mr. President. I  
25 wanted to make a few remarks as we sort of get

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1 near the end of the discussion process of  
2 this, but I want to begin with a correcting a  
3 couple of things that were, quite frankly,  
4 just misstatements of the record of how this  
5 process has gone.

6 The Democratic leadership made some  
7 comments at the top of the comments that were  
8 made that just don't reflect what occurred  
9 under the leadership of the chairman from the  
10 49th On how she has run this committee, the  
11 redistricting committee.

12 The first comment was that Democratic  
13 lawyers couldn't join the meeting, For the  
14 meetings with the redistricting chair. So the  
15 question is what happened there?

16 And the answer is, and what wasn't told  
17 to you to round out the story so you know is  
18 that the chair and the chair staff, as per  
19 normal and per protocol, had asked for the  
20 folks that were going to meet with the chair  
21 to identify who they were so that she could be  
22 prepared. And the list didn't include any  
23 lawyers.

24 And then, so the lawyer shows up for a  
25 meeting with the chair, and the chair didn't

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1 have counsel with her, and she's not a lawyer.

2 So fundamentally, how fair is that? Well it's

3 not; we all know that.

4 But it's even more than just not being

5 fair. It's the fact that there's active

6 litigation going on, which is, quite frankly,

7 what has brought us to a special session here

8 in late November and December of 2023. So

9 yes, that is exactly how it was managed, and

10 that's exactly how it should have been

11 managed.

12 Second, there was a statement that the

13 chair in the redistricting committee did not

14 allow or was not given invitation to receive

15 questions. That, too, is not the case. The

16 chair, who has worked diligently on this, and

17 knows this material, and has devoted a

18 substantial part of her life for the last few

19 weeks to this was prepared.

20 The presentation she made showed that,

21 and in fact, anyone who wanted to ask

22 questions could. That's our committee

23 process. And to somehow say that no questions

24 were allowed. That's not what happened.

25 That's not how this committee was run.

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1       And I think that's been -- the senator  
2 from the 23rd did an excellent job of pointing  
3 out some of these very same points from people  
4 that either weren't there and didn't know the  
5 better, or some that weren't -- that were  
6 there and apparently don't know the better.

7       The third comment that was made that  
8 again, is just again, factually wrong, and  
9 that was that somehow the public wasn't  
10 allowed to comment on this. Well, at our  
11 first committee meeting on Wednesday, the  
12 committee was invited.

13       And in fact, it was so important to the  
14 chair and the work of this committee that the  
15 chair pushed aside the questions or the  
16 involvement of the committee members first,  
17 and let the public be heard, so that we would  
18 all have the benefit of that input, so that  
19 the questions we would then have of each  
20 other, or of the chair, or the presentation of  
21 any alternate map, which did come the next  
22 day, would have the benefit of that public  
23 input.

24       And notwithstanding that that was the  
25 plan, the chair actually pivoted and allowed



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1 public comment on Thursday, yesterday, which  
2 was not part of what was planned. This has  
3 been a very open process. I'm very familiar  
4 with that process because I did it two years  
5 ago in 2021.

6 And I really appreciate and want to  
7 publicly thank, not on behalf of the  
8 Republicans, but on behalf of this body, I  
9 want to thank the chair for the hard work that  
10 the Senator from the 49th has done.  
11 Incredibly impressive work, especially being a  
12 freshman, if I may say that.

13 You know, it's not easy to manage. And  
14 she's done that along with a great aid and  
15 work of the senator from the 50th, the vice  
16 chair of this. They've done an excellent job  
17 of complying with the order and giving time  
18 for all senators who were impacted to come  
19 forward and talk, even under an accelerated  
20 time frame.

21 She afforded the same thing that was  
22 recommended to me two years ago and that I  
23 afforded to everyone in this body, which was a  
24 straight-up one-on-one personal meeting with  
25 me to tell me exactly whatever it was you

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1 wanted me as chair to factor into the process,  
2 and our current chair, the senator from the  
3 49th, did the same thing.

4 Judge Jones ordered that we so often  
5 have referred to, and I appreciate the senator  
6 from the 27th actually quoting from the order,  
7 because it would seem that a lot of people  
8 that have commented this morning have not read  
9 that order. The senator from the 27th  
10 actually pulled out some provisions of the  
11 order and got to the real heart of the matter.

12 You know, it is a comprehensive order  
13 and a review of the 2021 maps and the evidence  
14 that was presented by the parties over many  
15 days of litigation. His order is clear. It  
16 is thoughtful. It is clear as to what his  
17 findings are. And he is asking of this body  
18 that there be two new Black-majority districts  
19 drawn.

20 Reviewing all of this is a complicated  
21 process and complicated for any judge. The  
22 length of the order certainly tells that, but  
23 we appreciate the clear direction that the  
24 judge gave because it is absolutely  
25 straightforward and without question, a matter

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1 of, he said, two new majority-Black districts.

2 Now, we've heard all kind of fanciful  
3 arguments from folks who want to inject  
4 certain ideas and buzzwords into the public  
5 discourse surrounding these maps.

6 But the bottom line is that the word  
7 for the redistricting committee, the work of  
8 the redistricting committee, has produced a  
9 map that complies with the specific direction  
10 that Judge Jones gave us. Two new Black-  
11 majority Senate districts. Under the 2021  
12 maps, we have 14. This map unquestionably  
13 adds two. That equals 16, y'all. That's what  
14 the judge said do.

15 But more to the point, we actually  
16 took, with the drawing of this map, two White-  
17 majority districts and made them Black-  
18 majority districts. Once again, it's exactly  
19 what the judge told us to do.

20 Notwithstanding some of the obfuscation  
21 and other arguments that want to be made,  
22 that's what the judge said do. And it was  
23 done in a way that did not remove any current  
24 minority-opportunity districts.

25 What does that mean? That means we

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1 didn't play games. We didn't do things in a  
2 way that said, look here, but we'll do this  
3 there.

4 No, it was a straight-up compliance  
5 with what the judge's order was because as I  
6 heard the senator from the 49th say right  
7 after the order came out, we've got a lot of  
8 work to do. We've got to get to this and  
9 we're going to comply with that judge's order.

10 So Judge Jones' -- and these are my  
11 last comments -- his focus and his finding  
12 focused on a limited number of districts. And  
13 we've all talked about that, and you've heard  
14 all that, and you know what those numbers are.  
15 But I think this is not missed on you. All  
16 that the judge's order actually struck the  
17 entire map.

18 Well, what's the importance of that?  
19 Well, he struck the entire map, and then, he  
20 provided specific direction on how to comply.  
21 The Senate maps could reflect an entirely new  
22 Senate composition, totally disregarding the  
23 work that we did in 2021. Meaning what?  
24 Meaning we could have played games.

25 We could have paired Democrats up in

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1 the same district. We could have redrawn the  
2 entire map to comply with the judge's order  
3 but done things that, quite frankly, we didn't  
4 do in '21, and under the chairmanship of the  
5 Senator from the 49th, we didn't do this time  
6 either.

7 Because that's not the character of how  
8 this majority party is operated for the last  
9 20 years that we've been working on maps.  
10 Again, I thank the chair for the work that's  
11 been done. I appreciate the deliberative  
12 process and the thoughtful process that  
13 everyone has given this. And I urge you to  
14 vote for this map. Thank you, Mister  
15 President. I yield the well.

16 LT. GOVERNOR JONES: Thank you Senator.  
17 Okay, here's a posture we're in, just to give  
18 you all a frame of reference, the House took  
19 up their version of the maps about -- finished  
20 up about three hours, almost four hours now,  
21 and they debated it for two hours on the  
22 floor. And now we're going into, let's see,  
23 almost five hours here.

24 So I say all that to tell you, I think  
25 we've given everybody from both sides, the

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1 minority and the majority party, an  
2 opportunity to express themselves. We've got  
3 one more speaker from the majority party and  
4 the senator from the 46, and we've got one  
5 more speaker from the minority party, the  
6 senator from the 6th.

7       And then, I think we will be pretty  
8 well satisfied in debating this thing about as  
9 long as you can. The senator from the 9th and  
10 I, she was talking about wanting to make  
11 kickoff tomorrow. And I said, at this pace,  
12 we might not make it, Senator.

13       So -- but -- so anyways, I recognize  
14 Senator from the 46th.

15       SENATOR COWSERT: Thank you, Mr.  
16 President. Senators. I will try to keep  
17 these comments brief since we've been here for  
18 many hours, as the president has told us here.  
19 I'll try to butter him up a little bit before  
20 I get started.

21       And I was impressed with his comments  
22 on our opening day, on Wednesday, of what his  
23 parents taught him. Bill Jones and Martha  
24 Jones taught him the three As, if you'll  
25 remember, how to treat people, acknowledge

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1   them, accept them and appreciate them.

2           And that's been running through my mind  
3   a little bit, and I will touch on some of  
4   those issues as we proceed here to wrap this  
5   up.

6           I've been listening carefully to the  
7   debate, taking notes. I was secretary of the  
8   Redistricting Committee and was present in all  
9   the meetings when this took place. I will  
10   point out that those 2021 maps were after  
11   great public input.

12          We had meetings all over the state and  
13   let citizens from all over the state come tell  
14   us their concerns. The chairman, at the time,  
15   let every single senator that wanted to have  
16   input or comments on their maps come meet with  
17   him.

18          We had legal counsel that advised us  
19   that these maps were legal, that they complied  
20   with the Constitution, with the Voting Rights  
21   Act, and equally as important, they complied  
22   with our Senate guidelines for drafting plans,  
23   both the openness, the transparency, the  
24   delivery of these to the public in advance,  
25   and some other conditions or sort of factors

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1 that the Senate takes into account in  
2 redistricting.

3 And one reason we do that, you know, we  
4 talk about some of the history. The senator  
5 from the 26th mentioned how he got elected in  
6 1974, et cetera. You know, you want to hear a  
7 tidbit, in 1976, I was a senior at Macon  
8 Central High School in (Inaudible), and we  
9 had a guest speaker in my American politics  
10 class and his name, I can't say his name.

11 The senator from the 30th, I guess, or  
12 the 26th came and spoke to us. He was a very  
13 young, African-American representative that  
14 had been elected to the State House. So our  
15 paths cross in lives many times.

16 I have watched, you know, really the  
17 debate, so to speak, or just the issue, the  
18 broader issue of race relations in this  
19 country and in this state for my entire  
20 lifetime. And I have seen phenomenal changes  
21 in progress made.

22 I remember as a very young child in  
23 Macon, Georgia, going to Woolworth's  
24 department store in downtown Macon on Cherry  
25 Street, and there was two water fountains.



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1 And one said White, and the other said  
2 Colored. And I remember asking my mama,  
3 what's this mean?  
4 And that was true in movie theaters and  
5 waiting rooms in doctor's offices, et cetera.  
6 And my mother taught me, even at that tender  
7 age, God treats everybody equal, and he loves  
8 everyone. And the song, Jesus Loves Me, this  
9 I know, et cetera, loves all the children of  
10 the world, Red and Yellow, White and Black.  
11 You know, that's the way I grew up.  
12 And I lived through some of these  
13 things that the senator from the 22nd was  
14 talking about, that arc of history that we've  
15 gone through. And I think we need to  
16 acknowledge that that's where we come from.  
17 And that's why we have the Voting Rights Act.  
18 And I acknowledge that.  
19 I am moved by many of the comments that  
20 I hear my African-American colleagues mention  
21 of their personal experiences with  
22 discrimination and disenfranchisement. Now,  
23 all of us view the world from the lenses of  
24 our own experience. I can't put myself in  
25 your shoes and in your skin, but you have

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1 shared with us.

2 And just because my skin color is not  
3 the same as yourself does not mean that I  
4 don't understand it or strive to understand it  
5 and to remedy past wrongs. So I'm thankful  
6 somebody in their comments said, we don't  
7 judge you or hold it against you these past  
8 sins of our fathers -- the historical cultural  
9 issues that we have faced in the United States  
10 and particularly in the South.

11 Because I don't share those views and I  
12 don't think that was fair or appropriate. And  
13 I agree with Judge Jones' order that we have  
14 made remarkable progress in race relations and  
15 in fair treatment in our election system.

16 I think both parties agreed that  
17 Georgia had a problem up until 1990 or 92,  
18 whatever the number was, that when they  
19 renewed the Voting Rights Act at that time,  
20 they said, you guys are still going to have to  
21 get pre-clearance because you have not been  
22 good.

23 You have continued to try to  
24 discriminate, and we're going to check you.  
25 You're going to have to get pre-clearance by

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1 law so we can make sure you will treat African  
2 Americans fairly.

3 Now, yeah, somebody said that I'm going  
4 to mention that this was done by Democrats.  
5 Well, let's face that fact. Democratic party  
6 ran this state for 150 years. And up until  
7 the early 2000s, both bodies of the  
8 legislature and the governorship were  
9 Democrats that were doing this discrimination.

10 In fact, there was a time in Georgia  
11 where the Democratic Party would not even  
12 allow African Americans to vote in their  
13 primaries. So this is a statewide problem.  
14 It is not a partisan situation.

15 Our past we share, and I think we need  
16 a little pushback here that we are conflating  
17 racial politics with partisan politics because  
18 when we start looking at these maps, I'll  
19 point out a few of the sort of things that  
20 Judge Jones made clear to us.

21 We can't deny our history. We had  
22 slavery. We had Jim Crow. We had  
23 segregation. We had the favorite son of  
24 George and Martin Luther King, Jr. that had a  
25 dream. And he believed, as we were talking

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1 earlier today about this public safety  
2 training center, in peaceful, nonviolent  
3 protest. Love overcoming hatred. And he  
4 succeeded. We changed largely because of his  
5 leadership.

6 And in 1964, the Civil Rights Act was  
7 passed. The year after that, in 1965, the  
8 Voting Rights Act was passed, and as the  
9 senator from the 36 mentioned, that was a  
10 bipartisan bill in the United States Congress.  
11 82 percent of Republicans voted in favor of  
12 this law, the Voting Rights Act, and 78  
13 percent of Democrats voted for it.

14 Both had large majorities that agreed  
15 we needed to treat African-American people  
16 fairly at the ballot box, and we've been  
17 trying to do it. So a little history from me.  
18 I think I'm closing this because maybe I got  
19 the most white hair and been here the longest  
20 of any Republican member.

21 I wasn't here for the battle that the  
22 senator from the 40th mentioned back in 2001  
23 that got tossed out, special master came in,  
24 and immediately after the maps became fairer,  
25 Republicans took control. I'm not blaming any

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1 one side or the other, whether those are  
2 racially discriminatory or not, but we  
3 acknowledge from both sides that sometimes  
4 courts are going to review what we do, and we  
5 don't mind that; we know that's coming.

6 But a little pat on my own back, in  
7 2011, Senator Mitch Seabaugh was the chairman  
8 of our Redistricting Committee, and I was vice  
9 chair, and we were having a period of turmoil,  
10 let's just call it, in the State Senate where  
11 the lieutenant governor didn't have nearly the  
12 powers at that time that he has now.

13 And so that committee pretty much drew  
14 the maps with very little supervision from the  
15 pro temp and the majority leader. And it is a  
16 point of pride to me that we got pre-  
17 clearance.

18 You remember the law was extended in  
19 1992, all these many times you were told that  
20 Georgia was blocked from discriminatory laws.  
21 We were not blocked. We were checked. Y'all  
22 are good to go. These are fair maps.

23 And nobody at all challenged them in  
24 court. There was not a lawsuit that cycle,  
25 and that's a point of pride for me. And I

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1 think it should be for our body.

2 Well, one reason for that was because  
3 of that bloody battle back in 2001 where  
4 Republicans felt like they were treated so  
5 unfairly, that we went to court and had the  
6 maps overturned. Legislature couldn't do it  
7 on their own, and so a special master did draw  
8 those maps.

9 And so we adopted principles of  
10 redistricting that I referred to briefly to  
11 you that were to try to cut some of the mean,  
12 vicious personal partisan politics out of that  
13 process.

14 Probably the most important was that we  
15 would make every attempt to avoid the  
16 unnecessary pairing of incumbents where you  
17 would put two incumbents in the same district,  
18 so one of them was going to get the boot  
19 because that lets you personally go after  
20 people. And we didn't do that in 2011, and we  
21 didn't do that in 2021 either.

22 And we haven't done that in this new  
23 map. We are adhering to these principles.  
24 And by the way, these principles were adopted  
25 by the Redistricting Committee unanimously.

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1 Every Republican and every Democrat agreed  
2 that this is what we wanted to live by.  
3 Obviously, one man, one vote. We  
4 wanted these districts as close in size as  
5 possible so that everybody's vote counted. We  
6 specifically said all plans adopted by the  
7 committee will comply with Section 2 of the  
8 Voting Rights Act. That's what Judge Jones  
9 said we failed to do.

10 We wanted to keep all boundaries of  
11 counties and precincts intact where possible.  
12 We wanted compact districts. We wanted to  
13 honor the boundaries of previous districts  
14 without great change where possible, and we  
15 wanted to keep communities of interest  
16 together.

17 All of the Republicans in here and all  
18 the Democrats in here agreed with that. And  
19 the only complaint is, did we create enough  
20 majority-minority districts?

21 Judge Jones has interpreted the Voting  
22 Rights Act to say that if you can do it, if  
23 you can show on the maps and the demographic  
24 that there's enough concentration of African-  
25 American citizens, voters, that you should

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1 create a district. In fact, he says you must

2 create a district for them.

3 And in this map that we have now been

4 stricken down by the court and sent back to us

5 to redo, there were 14 African-American

6 districts.

7 Now, Judge Jones and his interpretation

8 is we are required to draw more of them, if

9 you can, found that after an eight-day trial

10 and tons of testimony from experts that it was

11 possible to create only two more African-

12 American majority districts.

13 If he thought it was possible to come

14 up with three new ones, or four districts, or

15 five more, he would have been ordering us to

16 do it. So his opinion is that the maximum

17 number of majority African-American districts

18 you can come up with is 16.

19 And he showed us on the map where he

20 thought those concentrations were and directed

21 us to take that into account as we redrew the

22 maps. And it was the south metro areas.

23 Now, I want to give you another little

24 historical tidbit because I was vice chair of

25 this committee in 2021. The Democratic plan



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1 that was presented, just like this time, there  
2 was the chairman's plan, and then there was a  
3 Democrat alternative plan provided for 15  
4 African-American seats. Why didn't that one  
5 have 16, if it's possible?

6 Even the minority party's plan didn't  
7 see that as a possibility or else thought it  
8 was a tactical advantage to sacrifice a  
9 potential African-American district, as,  
10 according to Judge Jones, is required by the  
11 Voting Rights Act, in exchange for greater  
12 partisan advantage.

13 Because that plan called for, if you  
14 looked at the voting histories, 30 Republicans  
15 and 26 Democrats. At that time, the breakdown  
16 was there were 34 Republicans and 22  
17 Democrats. Folks, that's just a few years  
18 ago. Y'all ought to remember this.

19 In this plan in 2021 that's being  
20 challenged, the Republican Party created 14  
21 African American seats and increased the  
22 Democratic representation from 22 to 23 and  
23 reduced the Republicans from 34 to 33.

24 So all these arguments that this is all  
25 for partisan advantage, et cetera are false

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1 arguments. The Republican Party reduced their  
2 own strength in an attempt to comply with the  
3 law. Only one seat different of African  
4 American from what the Democratic Party  
5 thought was the way to go.

6 Now this go round, Judge Jones has not  
7 said anything about partisan representation.  
8 How many Rs and how many Ds. It's just how  
9 many African-American seats.

10 Well, let me tell you a couple things  
11 about Judge Jones. I'm betting you he's  
12 there. Steve, hey, I hope you're watching us,  
13 and I hope you approve of the work we're  
14 doing. We're doing our best to comply with  
15 your order.

16 I have known Steve Jones for probably  
17 30 years. He is a friend of mine, and he is  
18 fair. He was a municipal court judge in  
19 Athens and has told me before, Bill, you  
20 always treated me as your equal when you  
21 appeared before my court.

22 And we helped him get a Superior Court  
23 judgeship, where he served for probably 15  
24 years in Athens, and you're not going to find  
25 a citizen in Athens that says he didn't treat

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1 people fairly based on their race, didn't show  
2 preference for one race or another, and had no  
3 bias or any ill treatment of anybody.

4 He treated people by the book. And he  
5 did get appointed by Obama, by a Democratic  
6 president. He is African American. But it is  
7 my opinion that he is doing his best  
8 interpretation of the law and the facts here.

9 I don't agree. I don't agree that you  
10 must create these districts, and I'm not so  
11 sure that's all good because the simple math  
12 is, for you to create these two majority-  
13 minority districts, you have to put more  
14 minorities in the boundaries of them to do it,  
15 and they got to come from somewhere. That's  
16 why we call it redistricting. You redrawing  
17 the lines.

18 So you had to move some African  
19 Americans into these two seats to create two  
20 new majority-minority seats. Well, we did it.  
21 And it was just to comply with the judge's  
22 order. And it's the same number that the  
23 minority party has come up with on their map.  
24 16 African American seats now. So we are now  
25 fully compliant with this map.

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1       Back to the three As. We accept Judge  
2 Jones's ruling, and we are complying with it.  
3 It is not wrong for us to continue to  
4 challenge his presumptions here, his  
5 interpretation, because there's no word in  
6 that Voting Rights Act that says you must  
7 create African-American-minority districts.  
8 You can't deprive somebody of a chance to  
9 elect a candidate of their choice.

10       So we've gotten to this point where we  
11 have such racial polarization in politics that  
12 it's easy to conflate partisanship with  
13 discrimination. We are trying to make sure  
14 that we don't discriminate based on race.

15       And I tell you, this map complies with  
16 the judge's order. It increases African-  
17 American representation at the cost of White  
18 majority districts. You now have two more  
19 African-American districts, the same as the  
20 plan that the Democrats have proposed and  
21 pretty much the same areas. They're all in  
22 the South metro area as directed.

23       The difference is the Democratic plan  
24 changes the Republican Democratic -- the  
25 partisan advantage to gain two additional

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1 Democratic seats. And that's why you're  
2 hearing all the wailing, and crying, and  
3 gnashing of teeth. It isn't because of any  
4 racial discrimination. It is for partisan  
5 reasons.

6 Their map give Democratic candidates  
7 greater opportunities to win. And just by  
8 looking at the numbers, past historical voting  
9 records, they know the histories of the people  
10 in these districts and their attempt is to  
11 increase not only two African-American seats,  
12 but two more Democratic seats.

13 So it would take it up from 22, I guess  
14 23 now, to 25 Democratic districts and reduced  
15 the Republican districts to 31. That's what  
16 this whole debate is about. And it is so  
17 irritating to allow this narrative, this  
18 hypocrisy to go on and try to blame this on  
19 racism.

20 I don't know if I should say it offends  
21 me, but it hurts my feelings. I get defensive  
22 about it because I do feel like I'm  
23 essentially being called a racist for  
24 supporting a map that is compliant on racial  
25 numbers with what the judge wants. I feel

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1 like my party is accused of being racist.  
2 We're accused of voter suppression when the  
3 facts do not support that.

4 This past election had the greatest  
5 African-American voter turnout ever. Where is  
6 the suppression? In this body itself. There  
7 are 18 minorities out of 56 people, over a  
8 third of our own colleagues are minorities.

9 I say we are doing what the law  
10 requires, and there is no racial animus  
11 whatsoever. That is a campaign tactic to  
12 generate Democratic voter turnout and to elect  
13 partisan folks that are in the Democratic  
14 Party.

15 And listen, the general public doesn't  
16 realize how well we all get along. You know,  
17 we don't -- we're not like Washington, D.C.,  
18 where they're just totally dysfunctional.

19 And part of that goes back to Peer  
20 Howard as a Democrat, he was gracious to the  
21 Republican minority. And Casey Cagle was a  
22 member of that Republican minority and  
23 remembered that he was given an opportunity to  
24 represent his district, to be heard, to serve  
25 on committees.

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1 And even today, we have honored that  
2 tradition that we learned from Democrats, to  
3 be fair to the minority because it might be  
4 you one day. And you will notice there are  
5 several members of the Democratic Party that  
6 are allowed to even chair committees. That  
7 doesn't happen in Washington, D.C., and we  
8 have personal friendships.

9 I'm looking out here, the senator from  
10 the 39th. I got the kindest, handwritten  
11 personal note from her when my mother in law  
12 passed, and we exchanged Thanksgiving texts  
13 this year, and I told her that I'm thankful  
14 for the chance to serve with her in this  
15 Senate.

16 Senator from 15th, he's my suitemate.  
17 He's African American. He is the real dean of  
18 the Senate. I had been in office for one  
19 year, maybe less. His wife passed, and we had  
20 a bus from the guard shack for any senators  
21 that wanted to go to that funeral. There were  
22 probably 30 senators that went, and I  
23 guarantee you 25 of them were Republicans.

24 Now, more might have shown up there  
25 that didn't ride the bus, but we showed our

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1 bipartisan love and respect for him. I have  
2 teased with the senator from the 22nd, my God,  
3 he's good. He is so eloquent and smart that  
4 I've said, man, I would love to try a case  
5 with you one day, but for God's sakes, I hope  
6 we're on the same side.

7 I hope we are co-counsel, not against  
8 each other. And I respect his point of view.  
9 And we had a little, you know, conversation in  
10 redistricting committee the other day, and he  
11 had one point of view and I had another, and  
12 we shared it with the respectfully with each  
13 other. And we came in here and you know what  
14 he asked me?

15 He said, I got one question for you,  
16 counselor. And I'm saying, oh, God, what did  
17 I say that was wrong, or that hurt his  
18 feelings, or was offensive? He said, are  
19 Bulldogs in going to win this game on  
20 Saturday? And that shows our camaraderie.

21 I could go on and on down the list for  
22 the senator from the 2nd when he was getting  
23 into that sermon here and talking about MLK  
24 and the Bible, I wanted to stand up and say,  
25 amen. I agree with many and many of the



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1 things that all of you have said.

2 What I will tell you is this map that  
3 we have before you is in compliance with the  
4 Voting Rights Act. It's in compliance with  
5 the judge's order. It does not discriminate.  
6 It does not give any partisan advantage to the  
7 Republican Party -- that has enough votes to  
8 pass it. It keeps the partisan divide just  
9 like it is today, 33/23.

10 So any arguments to the press that this  
11 is just a partisan gerrymander or whatever or  
12 that this is in any way racist are false  
13 arguments, and they are said for political  
14 advantage, for partisan advantage. We need to  
15 rise above that.

16 So let me get to my last A,  
17 appreciation for each other. I am -- the best  
18 way to say it is I am proud of where we have  
19 come as a state. And I think that when Judge  
20 Jones said he applauds us in that order for  
21 the progress that we have made, I think we  
22 need to accept that compliment and build on  
23 it.

24 My hope is that this great state can  
25 move beyond this racial-identity politics so

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1 that it doesn't matter. We will be in full  
2 compliance and going forward. Let's adopt  
3 what Dr. King said about judging people by the  
4 content of their character, rather than the  
5 color of their skin.

6 Some people made some pretty good,  
7 pointed compliments that do sting a little bit  
8 because they have a good message, is that the  
9 Republican Party can increase African-American  
10 voter participation and candidate recruitment  
11 by being more responsive, by paying more  
12 attention.

13 I look forward to that day that we can  
14 make our case to all minorities, African  
15 Americans, people of every nationality, people  
16 of every religious persuasion, that the  
17 principles espoused by us and the bills that  
18 we have passed have made this state one where  
19 there is great opportunity for everybody,  
20 regardless of their race, that we are treating  
21 all people equally before the law.

22 And I hope that they will help us enjoy  
23 this opportunity, this unprecedented  
24 prosperity that we have been so lucky to  
25 enjoy, the choices available to us, the public

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1 safety provided for us, the transportation  
2 system and infrastructure, and the sound  
3 fiscal guidance that we've had from our  
4 governor and our appropriations chairmen going  
5 forward so that we can get past it.

6 Let's move beyond. Let's get past, as  
7 we went through that continuum of history,  
8 from slavery to segregation to moving on to  
9 Jim Crow laws or whatever order all that  
10 happened, let's moving on to the next  
11 generation and let's prove them that we  
12 improved as a society, and we treated  
13 everybody fairly.

14 And let's put the partisanship aside  
15 and let's pass this bill. Thank you, Mr.  
16 President. I yield the well.

17 LT. GOVERNOR JONES: Thank you Senator.  
18 I just -- earlier as I told you, we have two  
19 more speakers. One from the majority, one  
20 from the minority. Senator from the 6th and  
21 I discussed offline here, and he wants to  
22 yield his time to you, Senator from the 44th,  
23 if you still like to speak.

24 Just so my friends in the media who are  
25 always so good to me know, earlier today, the

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1 minority leader and I got together and she  
2 gave me the 14, 15 names that she wanted to  
3 speak today. And I think we have satisfied --  
4 done exactly what we said we were going to do.  
5 And I appreciate her leadership on that.

6 So just so that nobody thinks that we  
7 have slighted anybody on any debate here  
8 today. So, Senator, the floor is yours.

9 SENATOR DAVENPORT: Thank you very  
10 much, Mr. President. Senators, I rise today  
11 to speak briefly about the proposed map. The  
12 Voting Rights Act of 1965 was enacted to  
13 remove race-based restrictions on voting. The  
14 15th Amendment protected free slaves and  
15 guaranteed the right to vote for all United  
16 States citizens, regardless of race, color, or  
17 previous servitude.

18 According to the judge's ruling, this  
19 map violates Section 2 of the Voting Rights  
20 Act and is specifically says it does so by not  
21 providing Black voters an equal opportunity to  
22 elect their candidate of choice, and it  
23 dilutes the Black vote.

24 We had an opportunity to rectify this  
25 mess that we created in 2021 by drawing two

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1 additional majority-Black districts in south  
2 Metro Atlanta. Instead, we have done the  
3 opposite. For example, the 44th District was  
4 already a majority-Black district. Why change  
5 that district and rename it the 17th? Just  
6 abide by the judge's ruling and create two  
7 more majority-Black districts in south Metro  
8 Atlanta.

9 I am disappointed because it seems this  
10 map that was voted out of committee simply  
11 changes numbers of districts. It is packing  
12 and gerrymandering and still dilutes the Black  
13 vote. It appears that Georgia is a southern  
14 state that simply wants to defy the federal  
15 court's order.

16 I understand in the State of Georgia,  
17 there are still persons who do not want Black  
18 people to vote nor elect the candidate of  
19 their choice.

20 That's why the history of the Voting  
21 Rights Act is important, and the 13th  
22 Amendment abolishing slavery is important, the  
23 14th Amendment, giving citizenship to all  
24 people born in the United States, the 15th  
25 Amendment in 1870, giving Black men the right

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1 to vote, and then the 19th Amendment in 1920,  
2 giving women the right to vote is important.

3 We are public servants here to serve  
4 the public. Whenever fair maps are provided,  
5 we will serve the people. The plaintiff in  
6 this case, the oldest Black fraternity of 100  
7 years, Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, has said  
8 this map still violates Section 2 of the  
9 Voting Rights Act.

10 So colleagues, I encourage you today to  
11 vote down this map and find a more equitable  
12 way to draw a fair map and comply with the  
13 judge's order. Thank you very much, Mr.  
14 President. I yield the well.

15 LT. GOVERNOR JONES: Thank you,  
16 Senator. Okay. We're in the posture now  
17 where the author of the bill has the  
18 opportunity to close or waive. Which one  
19 would you rather do? You want to close. Come  
20 on up then.

21 SENATOR ECHOLS: Thank you, Mr.  
22 President, and I promise I'll be brief. Wow.  
23 I wish all these map experts had reached out  
24 to me before today to let me know of their  
25 expertise. You know, it stinks sitting back

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1 there hearing people throw accusations about  
2 me and the work I've done.

3 So perhaps the best part of chairing  
4 this committee is that I get to speak last.  
5 So I'm going to set the record straight. I  
6 was accused of not allowing Democrat lawyers  
7 to attend the meeting. Well, that's accurate.  
8 That's a true statement.

9 But the back story before that is that  
10 when the invitations were extended to members,  
11 my administrative assistant asked who's going  
12 to be present in the meetings. The member  
13 will be present. And to all of our surprise,  
14 at the time of the meetings, a couple of  
15 lawyers came in the room, too.

16 Now, I'm not a lawyer, but I know a  
17 little about what happens when you're involved  
18 in litigation. I believe that for a lawyer to  
19 question the other party without their lawyer  
20 present could be considered unethical. So we  
21 just wanted to avoid that.

22 Now about the committee meetings, the  
23 minority leader declined to present her map on  
24 the same day I did. She asked me not to. She  
25 asked to go the following day. So after

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1 public comment closed on the second day,  
2 committee members were allowed to make  
3 comment. I asked, I believe, twice if anyone  
4 had any comments. Not one single person asked  
5 me a question.

6 If you don't believe me, the video's  
7 online, go watch it. You can see. I'm not  
8 sure why they didn't ask me questions, but  
9 they didn't. As a matter of fact, after we  
10 left, I expressed my shock to members that not  
11 a single question was asked.

12 And then, we keep hearing a lot about  
13 math and majority-Black districts, and we've  
14 just changed numbers, but we didn't add any  
15 districts. Well, math is math. Facts are  
16 facts. You go from 14 majority-Black  
17 districts to 16 majority-Black districts. We  
18 didn't take away any majority-Black districts;  
19 we added two. So that complies with the  
20 judge's order.

21 Members, I close debate on this bill  
22 and I ask for your favorable vote. Thank you,  
23 Mr. President, I yield.

24 LT. GOVERNOR JONES: Thank you,  
25 Chairlady. And I know you did work hard, very



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1 hard on that. And good job trying to be as  
2 fair as possible, I know.

3 All right. We're in the posture now of  
4 calling the previous question. If there's no  
5 objection to the previous question being  
6 called, and I'm going to give folks a little  
7 bit of time to get in here, and we'll vote  
8 on --

9 I appreciate everybody being patient.  
10 I know we've had a long day today, and I  
11 was -- we were trying to power through lunch  
12 and everything else and didn't. I don't even  
13 think we took an official break. But I was  
14 trying to trying to be mindful of everybody's  
15 time and -- anyways, but, I appreciate  
16 everybody being patient, and I appreciate the  
17 debate, so.

18 All right. Is there objection to  
19 agreeing to the report of the committee which  
20 is favorable to the passage of the bill?  
21 Chair hears none. The report of the committee  
22 is agreed to. Is there objection to the main  
23 question being ordered? Chair hears none.  
24 The main question is ordered. The question is  
25 on the passage of the bill. All those in

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1 favor of the bill will vote aye. Opposed,

2 nay. Secretary will unlock the machine.

3 On the passage of the bill, the ayes

4 are 32 and the nays are 23. This bill, having

5 received the requisite constitutional

6 majority, is therefore passed.

7 SENATOR KENNEDY: All right, we're

8 almost done here. Just a few more moments.

9 The secretary will read a message from the

10 House of Representatives.

11 MALE VOICE: Mr. President, the

12 following message was received from the House

13 through Mr. Riley, the clerk thereof. The

14 House has passed by the requisite

15 constitutional majority the following bill of

16 the House, House bill 1EX by Representative

17 Leverett of the 123rd --

18 A bill to be entitled, An Act to

19 Provide for the Composition and Number of

20 State House Districts, to provide for a short

21 title, to provide for the contingent nature of

22 this act, and the circumstances under which it

23 shall or shall not apply According to the

24 enforceability of prior provisions under the

25 federal law --

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1 to provide for continuation of present

2 members, to provide for short title, to

3 provide --

4 SENATOR KENNEDY: House Bill 1EX is

5 assigned to reapportionment and redistricting.

6 We have another message from the House.

7 MALE VOICE: Mr. President, the House

8 has adopted by the requisite constitutional

9 majority the following resolution of the

10 House. House resolution 3EX by Representative

11 Gamble of the 15th and others.

12 A resolution ratifying Governor Brian

13 Kemp's Executive Order Numbers 09.12.23.011,

14 Number 10 and for other purposes, Mr.

15 President. That completes the order.

16 SENATOR KENNEDY: Thank you. House

17 Resolution 3EX is assigned to finance. And

18 with that I will recognize the majority leader

19 for a motion.

20 MR. GOOCH: Thank you, Mr. President.

21 I move that the Senate stand adjourned until

22 2:00 p.m. on Monday, December the 4th, and go

23 Dogs.

24 SENATOR KENNEDY: The Secretary will

25 read the announcements.

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1 MALE VOICE: Mr. President, the Rules  
2 Committee has been canceled. The Finance  
3 Committee will meet upon the adjournment of  
4 the Senate in Room 450 of the Capitol. And  
5 the Reapportionment/Redistricting Committee of  
6 the Senate will meet upon the adjournment of  
7 the Finance Committee, also in room 450 of the  
8 Capitol.

9 Mr. President, that completes the  
10 order.

11 SENATOR KENNEDY: Thank you, sir. Are  
12 there any additional announcements? Seeing  
13 none and hearing none, the majority leader has  
14 moved that the Senate adjourned until  
15 Senate -- until -- the Senate stand adjourned  
16 until 2:00 p.m., Monday, December 4th, 2023.  
17 All those in favor of the motion will say aye.  
18 Those opposed will say no. On the motion for  
19 ayes?

20 MULTIPLE VOICES: Aye.

21 SENATOR KENNEDY: Those opposed.

22 MULTIPLE VOICES: No.

23 SENATOR KENNEDY: Oh my goodness. The  
24 ayes clearly have it. We stand adjourned.

25 (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

7

8

DATED this 15th day of December, 2023.

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WENDY SAWYER, CDLT

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