SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: House will come to order. Voter machines, members. Voter machines. Voter machines. Newell is here. Brown is here. Amy Freeman is here. Larry Freeman is here. You're through voting? Mary DuBuisson is here. Magee is here. You're through voting? All right, close them up. 98 members in a quorum. Today, members of the House will be open in prayer by Representative Geymann.

REPRESENTATIVE GEYMANN: Thank you, Mr. speaker. Good morning, everyone. If you would please join me in prayer. Father, we thank you for this day. We thank you for the wonderful opportunity that you've given each of us to be here for a time such as this. Father, we lift up our legislative family that may have members of their family that have need. We may have members in this body that have need for all their health issues. We ask that you place your hand on them and be with them in that time of comfort, peace, just be with them Father. Father, we lift up our leaders of our country. The President, Father, be with him, give him wisdom, give

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him health, give him safety. Father, surround him with people who will guide him and help him to lead us in a way that would glorify you. Father, we lift up our governor. We pray for peace and safety and health for him. We pray for wisdom. Father, we lift up Clay and Paige. Father, we thank you for them. We ask you to guide them as they lead us father, give them wisdom. And Father, again, we just thank you for each person in this body. We ask you to bless us today as we do our work, that we would do it in a way that glorifies you, and Father, we give you praise and glory. In your name we pray. Amen.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: Representative Larvadain, will lead us in the pledge.

REPRESENTATIVE LARVADAIN: Salute. Pledge. I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: Morning hour four.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE: The House was called to order by the Honorable Clay Schexnayder, speaker of the House of Representatives.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: Representative Romero moves with dispense reading of the journal without objection, so order. Romero.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE: Mr. speaker and members Reps. [INDISCERNIBLE 00:02:45] requested days leave for Representative Schlegel.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: Without objection. Regular order number six.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE: Mr. Speaker and members Reps. Stefanski moves to call out of his order Senate Bill 5 by Senator Hewitt.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: Without objection.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE: Senate Bill 5 by Senator Hewitt relative to congressional districts provide for redistricting of Louisiana's Congressional Districts provide with respect to positions and offices other than congressional which are based upon congressional districts.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: Chairman Stefanski.

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Members, we're going to debate Senate Bill 5 which is the congressional redistricting plan from Chairwoman Hewitt. So, members, Senate Bill 5, as many of you have seen, posted and went through committee a couple of days ago, redistricts the congressional lines in the State of Louisiana. It maintains one majority-minority district and largely keeps intact the current -

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: Representative Duplessis, why do you ask?

REPRESENTATIVE DUPLESSIS: Mr. Speaker, if you could just ask the body as Chairman Stefanski is discussing it.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: Absolutely. Members, let's give representative Stefanski your attention please.

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, members, Senate Bill 5 by Chairwoman Hewitt is the congressional redistricting plan for the State of Louisiana. It maintains one majority-minority district located in the Orleans area that comes up the river, and additionally it keeps

our current structure of the state from a geographic perspective largely intact, and Mr. Speaker, there is an amendment if it's the proper time for that.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: All right. Amendment.

[00:05:00]

CLERK OF THE HOUSE: Mr. Speaker and members, Chairman Stefanski offers up a three page seven amendments number 156.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: On the amendment.

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Members, amendment set 156 is really a compromise between the House plan that we passed by Speaker Schexnayder, and the Senate plan that was passed out of the Senate by Chairwoman Hewitt. In essence, probably the best way to describe it is that it merges the two plans largely South of Alexandria. It keeps the speaker's plan intact. North of Alexandria, it keeps Chairwoman Hewitt's plan intact. And I'm happy to answer any specific questions about that.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: All right. Representative Firment for question.

REPRESENTATIVE FIRMENT: Chairman Stefanski, looks like under this plan Grant Parish is split in half. Is that correct?

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: That is correct. As you know, with a congressional redistricting plan, one of the largest factors that differs from a lot of the other plans is that the population has to the nearest person as practicable as we like to say. In this case, we heard a lot of discussion about the splitting of Rapides and the ability to try to keep Rapides whole. This amendment does that, and the population difference between the two adjoining districts four and five is made up in Grant Parish.

REPRESENTATIVE FIRMENT: Okay. Last time I looked at the bill, the different scenarios involved Union Parish and Rapides Parish, and to my knowledge, at no point was Grant Parish involved in that discussion.

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: That's correct.

REPRESENTATIVE FIRMENT: Okay. And congresswoman let know was she consulted on that?

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: I didn't personally consult her on that. Yeah, that's the way I'm going to answer that. I didn't.

REPRESENTATIVE FIRMENT: How was the decision made to more or less sacrifice Grant Parish and divide up representation?

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Talking with members, we saw a strong community of interest in the Eastern and the Western part of Grant Parish with the Natchitoches region. We saw a community of interest in some of those adjacent municipalities and precincts, and that was what drove the decision.

REPRESENTATIVE FIRMENT: So, that decision was based on input from members, but not from the member who represents Grant Parish?

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Representative, I personally didn't come and talk to you. As you know, if I did, we would have had that conversation. I'm not the only one who was negotiating. It was a group effort between the House and Senate members, and this is the decision that was made.

REPRESENTATIVE FIRMENT: Yeah. Can you tell me specifically which members were consulted to make that decision?

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: The authors of the two bills, the Speaker and Chairwoman Hewitt, we had conversations with the President. We had conversations with the senators who represented those adjacent districts. Yep.

REPRESENTATIVE FIRMENT: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Yes, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE FIRMENT: All right.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: There are no more questions. Is there any objection to the adoption of the amendment? There is an objection. All right. You want to close on it?

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: The amendment? Members, like I said, we had two competing versions, a House version and a Senate version. This in my opinion, is a good compromise between the two. As you know, look, this is again an authority that is vested in the legislature, and we have to make policy decisions on what we believe is best for the state and best for the

geography, best for the communities of interest and best for the public. And so, in my opinion, we've struck a good balance here and I'd ask that we adopt this amendment.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: All right. You want to come to the floor on the amendment? All right. He's already closed, so he won't be able to follow up on it. Yeah. You can come up on it on the final bill once we do that. All right. There is an objection on it. Representative Firment objected on it. All those in favor of the amendment, vote yes. All those opposed to the amendment, vote nay. Click will open the machines. Members, vote your machines. Vote your machines, members. Oh yay, yes. All right. Close them up. 81 yay, six nays, and amendment is adopted. Back on the bill. To the floor on the bill, Representative Firment.

[00:10:06]

REPRESENTATIVE FIRMENT: Members when we went to bed last night, the Senate proposed Senate map and did not involve any changes to Grant Parish. The amendments that I saw involved Union Parish and Rapides Parish and

1 we thought all along that those were the
2 compromises being considered. At no point did
3 anyone talked with me about Grant Parish
4 being split or how that would impact the
5 citizens of Grant Parish. You know all along,
6 we've heard about continuity of
7 representation and communities of interest,
8 but those two factors do not seem to have
9 been considered in this amendment. Grant
10 Parish relates with the fifth congressional
11 district a parish that relies heavily on
12 agriculture and timber and it's just a good
13 fit with fifth district. Not that I've got
14 anything against Congressman Johnson. I have
15 worked closely with him since he is the
16 representative for some other parishes. But I
17 just feel like this was done in the dark of
18 night. How in the world did we make this
19 decision without consulting the
20 representative from Grant Parish?
21 So, look, it gets stinks to high heaven
22 if you ask me and I don't know how the
23 decision was made but I can tell you that
24 I've talked with the sheriff. I've previously
25 Mayor Steve Gunn, who served in this body in

the nineties, told me that when Grant Parish was part of the fourth district, we just weren't properly represented. Of course, that was before Congressman Johnson but I just would ask that you would join with me in opposition and stand with the people of Grant Parish against this. Thank you.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: All right. To the floor on the bill Representative Ahmedi.

REPRESENTATIVE AHMEDI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members, I just wanted to rise and explain my vote on the amendment and how I vote on the bill. I came here to represent the people that sent me and the people that sent me have contacted me. The people of St. Mary, the leadership of St. Mary, the parish president, the mayor of Morgan City have contacted me, letting me know that they are not in favor of having the parish or the city divided between two congressional districts. So, my vote is simply doing what I came here to do which is represent the people who sent me. I ask you to also vote your district. Thank you.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: All right. Back on the bill. Question on the bill Representative Jenkins.

REPRESENTATIVE JENKINS: All right. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Chairman, once again, I want to commend you all of the hard work you've done on the house side. I know a lot of work was done on the Senate side and we have now a compromise. My question is, as you all looked at the compromise, was there any effort made to add a second minority congressional seat to the map?

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: I think all options were considered as we continue to consider. I'll tell you that the primary goal of what led us to this amendment and the compromise of the posture that this bill is, was the merger of the two maps that were, that had passed either body. And so, but speaking with members that have been involved in this process, I think every option was considered on how to best draw our state from a population geography, community of interest and public participation standpoint.

REPRESENTATIVE JENKINS: So, specifically with the compromise that we're voting on today, you're saying to us that another effort was made to look at a second minority seat. And for some reason that could not be done?

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: No, what I was explaining what -- if I can clarify, Representative Jenkins. What I was saying that is specifically in what led us to this amendment in the version of this bill, it was a primary focus was placed on how to accommodate what the Senate was proposing versus what the house was proposing on a majority of the bills. But if we're looking at an overall standpoint, I know that every option was considered on how to best draw this state.

REPRESENTATIVE JENKINS: So, can we take that statement that you've given us to say that, as far as this compromise was concerned, we did not revisit that issue?

[00:15:03]

I know it was talked about quite a bit in committee and I know it was talked about from

what I saw on the Senate side, but we did not revisit the issue of creating a second minority district when we did this compromise.

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: I believe every option was considered. However, when considering this amendment, I believe the primary focus was a merger of the two bills but every option was considered. We've looked at every opportunity on how to best draw our state to accomplish our redistricting goals.

REPRESENTATIVE JENKINS: Thank you for answering my questions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Thank you, Mr. Jenkins, Representative Jenkins, I'm sorry.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: Thank you. Question on a bill Representative Miges.

REPRESENTATIVE MIGES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Chairman Stefanski. I see the amendment y'all made some changes. You call it a compromise to the overall map, where any changes made to the third congressional district?

1 CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Yes, specifically in
2 the Calcasieu Jeff Davis area. There were
3 under Chairwoman Hewitt's original bill. They
4 were splitting both those parishes. Those
5 parishes are no longer split under this
6 version.
7 REPRESENTATIVE MIGES: I apologize. I
8 should have a phrase my question in reference
9 to the bill that the house version of the
10 bill. What's the difference? Is there any
11 changes made? Were there any consideration, I
12 guess that you just would ask is any
13 consideration given to St. Barton and St.
14 Mary Parish and those parishes that were
15 divided?
16 CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Yes, there was
17 giving consideration given.
18 REPRESENTATIVE MIGES: What are the
19 thoughts from the locals there? Do they
20 support what you're doing here with the
21 amendment, not changing and putting these two
22 parishes whole?
23 CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: I personally haven't
24 called anyone in that region personally. I
25 know several other members who've had been

1 involved in this process the entire time have
2 spoken with locals, I believe, but me
3 personally. I was asked to how this process
4 works, the bill author picks somebody and
5 says, would you carry it? And I'm the lucky
6 soul and then I'm also the lucky one that
7 gets to carry the amendment. So - -
8 REPRESENTATIVE MIGES: I'll try mine.
9 CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: No, honestly, I'm
10 just being honest.
11 REPRESENTATIVE MIGES: You did hear some
12 of the debates that speaker pro tem McGee and
13 I had the last go round.
14 CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: I did, yeah.
15 REPRESENTATIVE MIGES: About the input
16 from local mayors and how important that is.
17 CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Yeah, no, I know you
18 you've paid special attention to the mayor
19 from Morgan City, I believe it was.
20 REPRESENTATIVE MIGES: Yeah, and also,
21 those that live in lower St. Martin Parish
22 and St. Mary Parish, I guess I'll ask this
23 question. The God that this affects
24 Congressman Clay Higgins. Do you have any
25 idea what his thoughts on this?

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Yeah, I've had conversation with Congressman Higgins. He was generally happy with both versions of the bill.

REPRESENTATIVE MIGES: Do you think he supports cutting out St. Mary and St. Martin Parish?

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: I am not going to speak for Congressman Higgins. We've had conversations. I've spoken with him and we've had broad conversations about a number of different things but you'd have to ask Congressman Higgins what he feels about this specific region.

REPRESENTATIVE MIGES: I would be at if I know, I think Congressman Higgins have some issues with this change in his district from the original map.

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: And you may have had a different conversation with them then I'll have, but I did speak with him relatively.

REPRESENTATIVE MIGES: I know St. Mary Parish and St. Martin are very close to his heart and a lot of the locals there did, you know they spoke up, I know you didn't get a

1 chance to speak to them. And they had issues
2 with these changes and they were really
3 hoping, they did support the original version
4 of the Hewitt bill, which this has been
5 amended and changed. And I think they had
6 their hopes on that. They would get some
7 better compromise for the third
8 congressional. Did you know it seems like
9 there's been compromises on the other parts
10 of the state but there haven't been
11 compromises in the third congressional where
12 you and I live.
13 CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Well, what I will
14 tell you is that, specifically, if we're
15 going to -- Congressman Higgins had strong
16 feelings about Jeff Davis and Calcasieu as
17 well, and some very important parts of two
18 parishes in the third congressional district
19 that kind of makeup that ITIN corridor that
20 has been talking a lot about the core of that
21 district. So, I think there have been some
22 compromises dealing with that. It's just
23 maybe not in specifically in the region that
24 you're discussing.
25

REPRESENTATIVE MIGES: Yeah, I just, I wish there would have been more consideration in that region. It makes it very tough on me, John --

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: I understand that.

REPRESENTATIVE MIGES: I made my comments earlier in the last debate and I was hoping things would change and it didn't seem like they did. So that's just part of this process, but I appreciate your answering the questions.

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Absolutely. Yeah, as you know, members, it's just it's we've got to get buy in from the majority of the members to pass something and it involves compromise and the constitution is vested this power with us and we have to find a way to push through.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: All right, question on the bill Representative Wilford Carter.

REPRESENTATIVE WILFORD CARTER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Chairman, now this bill as it sits now with the amendment, it's just a compromise between the house and the Senate. So, the Senate passed a bill, the house

passed a bill, all the efforts in the past 24 hours or so had been toward reaching a compromise and this bill, as I sit now is the compromise.

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: In this legislator's opinion, yes.

REPRESENTATIVE WILFORD CARTER: Okay, now basing the compromise to me seemed to be that the Senate got its weight with the northern part of the state and how got it's weight with the southern part of state.

[00:20:01]

And so, we have this bill basically the House has the southern part of the state, put it much like the speak a bill was and the city has the northern part of state pretty much like the Senate Bill.

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: I think that would be a fair statement.

REPRESENTATIVE WILFORD CARTER: So, in your negotiation, that was the driving force, okay? But I want to go to because you can only speak about the House Bill that we got out of here because as chairman of committee, you and the speaker work hard to come up with

a bill that you thought would adequately represent the state, I will take it.

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE WILFORD CARTER: And I know you work hard on it, I know you had lot of meetings, a lot of people about this bill. But do you recall last session when we came up with a bill that would set the criteria for how we're going to reapportion districts?

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Yes, I do.

REPRESENTATIVE WILFORD CARTER: And in that bill, there were several things. One was the communitive interest consideration, one was not splitting, parish precincts. One was compliance with all federal law including the Second Amendment to the Voters Right Act. So, I mean the Section 2 of the Voter's Right Act and that was something that we all agree we were going to do. Did you vote for that bill?

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: I did, I actually I carried that bill.

REPRESENTATIVE WILFORD CARTER: There you have it. And so, you among all people should know what criteria you have to use to write this map. Now, you did make the statement

1 that when was asked, did you take into
2 consideration treating another district which
3 is directly to the Section 2 of the Voters
4 Rights Act, okay? And you said yes,
5 everything was considered. So, what I'm
6 trying to find out exactly how did, what
7 specific did you do in order to comply with
8 Section 2, did you draw a map and find that
9 map didn't work or did you create a drawing
10 of proposed district and couldn't get enough
11 numbers in there because you had to comply
12 with the population requirements
13 Congressional Act, what specifically did you
14 do or the speaker, or the author of the bill
15 do to try to comply with Section 2?
16 CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Well, specifically,
17 we're discussing a Senate instrument that I'm
18 not the author of, I've just been asked to
19 carry. So, there's not a lot - I mean,
20 specifically on this instrument and you know
21 my efforts are minimal because it's not mine.
22 REPRESENTATIVE WILFORD CARTER: But my
23 point is, we just said, it is a compromise
24 between the two?
25 CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Yeah.

REPRESENTATIVE WILFORD CARTER: You did the other face of the bill. The other half and I'm very interested in the southern part of the states, that's where I'm from, okay? So, I thank you for having keeping Calcasieu together whole in the compromise but that second half of the state is really the speaker's bill?

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE WILFORD CARTER: Okay, and as to the speaker bill you handled -

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: In essence.

REPRESENTATIVE WILFORD CARTER: You handled that bill for the speaker.

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Well, Representative McGee was actually the one who handled that.

REPRESENTATIVE WILFORD CARTER: Well, you did the -- is you're committed and responsible.

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Yes, it was. That's correct.

REPRESENTATIVE WILFORD CARTER: You have to put the hours in to get the bill in a form that it could be presented to this body is what I'm saying. Now, I just want to know

what you did to comply with Section 2. Did you draw a district, attempt to draw a second minority district and couldn't do it because of numbers or because you hit the damage too many communities of interest or because there was not enough population in the south or in the north, what specific kept you from being able to create a second minority district is all I'm saying?

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: I have probably drawn more maps than I ever want to draw on the rest of my life. There were a number of different versions in multiple different bills that were made. I took our population, I took the geography of the state, I took our communities of interest, I took the will of the public, the will of the legislature, and I balanced all of that with the law and came up with something that the speaker and I believe was best for Louisiana.

REPRESENTATIVE WILFORD CARTER: Which one of those things you just mentioned prevented a second minority-majority district? Which one of those things-

1 CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: It is not a simple
2 answer. As you know as well, it is a
3 complicated process that involves a holistic
4 view of all the elements to try to decide
5 what works best for the State of Louisiana.
6 It is not a one-word answer that I can give
7 you on that. It's everything you look at all
8 these factors and you weigh them and you
9 balance them with the law and then you make a
10 policy decision on which you believe in your
11 attempt is best for Louisiana.
12 REPRESENTATIVE WILFORD CARTER: Okay.
13 I've heard people say in this body that the
14 reason why they couldn't create a second
15 minority district was because if they have to
16 damage too many community of interest, okay.
17 And that apparent was not the problem you had
18 in your work with this bill.
19 CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: I think it's a
20 factor. I think in order to decide, in order
21 to re-district, you have to look at all of
22 these elements and you have to balance all of
23 these and come up with an instrument that not
24 only you believe is what's best for
25

1 Louisiana, but that also can meet the
2 legislative process.
3 [00:25:03]
4 As you know, this is a power that is
5 vested in the legislature. The constitution
6 says the legislature shall do this. Well, you
7 have been around this body for long time, you
8 understand what it takes for a bill to become
9 a law so that's an element that you balance
10 as well. It's all of those interests that you
11 have to balance to come up with something.
12 REPRESENTATIVE WILFORD CARTER: Okay.
13 Let's do it like this. Starting from the
14 enabling legislation that we say we want to
15 use, which one of those requirements in that
16 enabling legislation take precedence over the
17 other? That the community of interest not
18 splitting in a precinct, not fitting
19 parishes, compliance in Section 2 Voters
20 Right Act, which one is more important than
21 the other?
22 CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: I'm not going to
23 rank them. I think they're all important.
24 REPRESENTATIVE WILFORD CARTER: All
25 right, you'll have equal importance.

1 CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: I didn't say equal.
2 REPRESENTATIVE WILFORD CARTER: Okay.
3 CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: I said they're all
4 important. You said equal.
5 REPRESENTATIVE WILFORD CARTER: Which one
6 you think is the most important?
7 CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: I think it's a
8 holistic view. I've continued to say that.
9 REPRESENTATIVE WILFORD CARTER: Well, let
10 me tell you what the courts have said. And
11 actually, tell me if you believe in me. Any
12 piece of legislation where there is
13 sufficient minority population of a protected
14 class should endeavor to try to provide a
15 district for that particular class. If that
16 particular class is compact enough, then they
17 ought to have a district. Now, if that is not
18 done, there has to be a good reason for it.
19 So, if you don't have a good reason, you
20 didn't comply with Section 2, you didn't
21 attempt to create a district and didn't sit
22 down why you couldn't do it in playing this,
23 you know, this is why we couldn't do it, we
24 had too many split districts or couldn't get
25 the population. The population wasn't compact

1 enough. None of those things has been
2 enumerated from that podium as a problem of
3 the compliant with Section 2. So, you don't
4 you don't violate Section 2 by not
5 necessarily creating a district. You violate
6 Section 2 by not trying to allow or protected
7 class if they have sufficient numbers,
8 sufficient compactness in order to elect a
9 person of their choice to represent them and
10 that's all it's required. So, you can show,
11 you went through steps to try to create that
12 district, to try to comply, but you couldn't
13 and give reason why you couldn't, then you
14 would meet the test and it would be a legal
15 of district. As this bill stands now, I can
16 find from the committee on here in both bills
17 of the committee or give an opportunity for
18 the office, and the speakers, and those
19 against it and forward to speak, I have heard
20 not one reason why you cannot create a second
21 minority district. So, if you don't have a
22 reason, you haven't complied. If you don't
23 attempt, then you are in violation of Section
24 2. And I think, when you look through those
25 criterias, I think the most important things

you have in those criterias we passed is Section 2 and the federal law. You got to have, you got to have pretty close as equals of number districts you can possibly have, that's a requirement. You're not going anywhere unless you have that. And you got to have an attempt to create another district under Section 2, that was not done. You might have thought about it, you might have passed your mind, you might have heard somebody else talk about it, but you haven't given a reasons one, two, three, four.

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Representative Carter, is there a question?

REPRESENTATIVE WILFORD CARTER: Do you really think this particular bill as it stands now is constitutional, is legal?

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Yeah, I do believe it's legal.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: All right. For question on the bill, Representative Phelps. Representative Carter why do you ask?

REPRESENTATIVE ROBBY CARTER: Mr. Speaker, I was looking procedurally the Senate is taken up your bill right now and

we're taking up their bill right now. What is the procedure if they both pass, do they go to - where do we stand if they both pass?

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: They both pass they would both go to the governor. They have to concur on them then they would both go to the governor.

REPRESENTATIVE ROBBY CARTER: All right, so we would have two instruments which is I understand Chairman Stefanski, they're identical? Would go to the governor and he would make a choice of stand if he wants to decide one or both or neither?

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Yes, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE ROBBY CARTER: All right, I was just wondering because I hadn't seen this done too many times when there's an agreement but there's still two separate bills.

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Yes, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE ROBBY CARTER: Thank you.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: For question, Representative Phelps.

REPRESENTATIVE PHELPS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Chairman, I think you've heard

that there have been many questions asked directly was there an attempt to create a new majority-minority district on all of the maps, would that be true?

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Have I heard that question?

REPRESENTATIVE PHELPS: Asked several times for an answer if there was an attempt to create such a majority-minority district on our -

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Sure, if you say so.

[00:30:00]

REPRESENTATIVE PHELPS: Have you heard that question several times throughout this process with this session on every map?

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Have I heard -

REPRESENTATIVE PHELPS: The question asked to you, did you attempt to create a majority-minority district in all of the maps that have been presented?

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: I think that phrasing has been used before.

REPRESENTATIVE PHELPS: Do you agree that you have been asked that question many times?

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Yeah. I think that phrasing has been used before in the form of a question.

REPRESENTATIVE PHELPS: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for answering that. Today was just by Rep. Jenkins and again by Rep. Carter.

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Sure.

REPRESENTATIVE PHELPS: Thank you. Okay. So, with that being said, with that question coming from constituents across Louisiana, they shouldn't matter, may I ask you what is the answer that we should give the community, the constituents of Louisiana that has not been done?

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: What is the question?

REPRESENTATIVE PHELPS: What is your answer to the constituents of Louisiana that have asked throughout the trade shows? I'm sorry, the road shows, and as the representative in this building. When they ask the question, why were those minority districts not created or an attempt to be

1 created? What would your answer be for us to
2 tell them?
3 CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Redistricting is an
4 extremely complicated process that involves a
5 combination of balancing the population, the
6 communities of interest, the geography of the
7 state, the public input, the legislated will
8 of the body as well as our legal obligations.
9 And when you take a holistic view of all
10 those, you have to come up with what you
11 think is best for what a legislator and an
12 author thinks is best for Louisiana in an
13 order to accomplish our constitutional duty.
14 REPRESENTATIVE PHELPS: Okay. And with
15 that rehearsed answer, you're saying that,
16 with you being the legislature that -
17 CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Rehearse? It wasn't
18 rehearsed. That's the reality of
19 redistricting.
20 REPRESENTATIVE PHELPS: Well, I say
21 rehearsed because you said that that's when
22 you're continuing -
23 CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Yeah, because it's
24 an answer.
25

REPRESENTATIVE PHELPS: With that rehearsed answer -

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Because I believe it. That's the answer.

REPRESENTATIVE PHEPLS: With your rehearsed answer, if you've been the legislature that thought whatever would be okay for the state. That's your opinion, because when you mentioned that this was a will of the legislature, you've heard several legislators ask for a district that had not been created. Without an answer of why there was no attempt.

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: When I say the will of the legislature, that's what I mean, because an instrument in order to move forward in the process requires votes and requires a majority, sometimes a super majority of votes. And so, when I say will of the legislature, what I mean is that it is. The only way we pass legislative instruments in this body and send them to the executive branch in order to see if they become law, is that the majority or super majority of members have to vote on them. So, when I say

will of the legislature, it is that. It is the majority of this body and our counterparts in the Senate.

REPRESENTATIVE PHELPS: Thank you for explaining that again, which we do know. But maybe I should say when I think of the will of the legislature is the conversations that we had before the map was drawn. This is part of the conversations that I think we've had that I was not aware that there would be only one map presented because if there was much communication with the legislators then it seems as though there would have been more than one map presented on the will of the people of the state.

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: There were several maps filed.

REPRESENATIVE PHELPS: Your map. The speaker's map of each body was only one map each. Yes, there were others filed because those were other constituents outside this legislature body who thought that they should be included. So, we're not talking - I'm not speaking of those.

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Every single bill that got filed in my committee got a hearing if the author wanted one, and we went through that. Again, I'll repeat. I didn't make the house rules. I didn't make that it takes a majority vote. I didn't make all of these elements, and what takes for a legislative instrument to move forward in the process. That's just the way this body works and the way that we've established our rules.

REPRESENTATIVE PHELPS: I understand the rules, Chairman. I'm not speaking of those maps that were filed by other members other than the speaker's maps. I'm only speaking of the one option that we had that came from the leadership body and would I be correct and those were only one maps per governmental entity? The PSA, the congressional, the house map. We only had one choice that was presented to us by the speaker. Correct?

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: By the speaker or I mean, I don't control how many bills the speaker files.

REPRESENTATIVE PHELPS: I didn't ask you to. I just said we only have one option with those maps.

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: The speaker I believe. The speaker filed the house map which I co-authored. He filed a congressional map which I co-authored. I filed a PSC map. Representative Thomas and Gadberry filed a Bessie map, and several members filed a supreme court map. But I did not personally file one.

REPRESENTATIVE PHELPS: Again, so, not talking about the Bessie map still was the speaker's map. Unless we all do. Maybe I missed something.

[00:35:00]

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: The speaker didn't co-author it nor did he file a Bessie map.

REPRESENTATIVE PHELPS: So, with the opportunity that Rep. Thomas and Gadberry were given. Did we have an option to file our own and have it approved by you all to present to this body?

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Oh, yeah. You're a member of this body. You could have filed any of the maps.

REPRESENTATIVE PHELPS: Oh, okay, okay. And maybe we didn't know that they will be approved. So, I apologize for not knowing that.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: Representative Phelps, your five minutes for questioning is up.

REPRESENTATIVE PHELPS: Okay.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: Thank you. All right. There are no more questions on the bill. To the floor on the bill Representative Duplessis.

REPRESENTATIVE DUPLESSIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members, we have, I believe, in this legislative process through a session at least, come to the proverbial end of the road as it relates to this congressional map. It's been a lot of discussion, been a lot of debating, been a lot of efforts by members of this state to be heard. When we started out on our first roadshow, the overwhelming testimony at that meeting in Monroe,

1 Louisiana, all the way to the last roadshow
2 to Tibeto, Louisiana was consistently that
3 the next map that we adopt should have a
4 second majority-minority district. This map,
5 just like the map that's proposed by the
6 speaker, does not have that. Several
7 alternative maps that provided pathways, that
8 provided opportunities, clear ways in which
9 we can do this were presented. But these
10 weren't just flagrant attempts. These were
11 real attempts. Maps that were more compact,
12 maps that split fewer parishes. Rep. Furman.
13 I brought an amendment in committee that kept
14 Grant Parish whole. Maps that had a lower
15 deviation in terms of up or down population
16 which was supposed to be a goal that we were
17 achieving. And this whole thing about
18 compromise between Senate Bill 5 and House
19 Bill 1, it would have been nice not only for
20 Grant Parish to have been consulted or St.
21 Martin Parish, and I'm sorry, St. Mary Parish
22 have been consulted in the conversation. But
23 it would have been nice to have some
24 compromise around this issue of 33% of this
25 state being African American and having fair

1 representation in the congressional
2 delegation. That would have been a nice part
3 of the compromise, too. We weren't included
4 in those conversations, and I'm not saying
5 that to point fingers at anybody. I'm just
6 stating the facts. The fact is that this map
7 does not comply with the Voting Rights Act,
8 and I'm going to tell you why. Section 2 of
9 the Voting Rights Act - this is not my
10 opinion. This is law. It imposes an
11 affirmative obligation on states to ensure
12 that a racial minority of voters have an
13 equal opportunity to participate in the
14 political process and elect candidates of
15 their choice. When certain circumstances are
16 present, this obligation require states to
17 draw majority-minority districts to provide
18 minority voters with an effective opportunity
19 to elect their preferred candidates. Those
20 opportunities were clearly present in many of
21 the amendments that were proposed before this
22 body, many of the bills that were proposed
23 before this body, but those bills never saw
24 the light of day. This bill falls short for
25 so many reasons, not just under the law, but

it falls short from the lens of fairness. I'm going to say something that one of our senate colleagues said in his testimony, and because this is a senate bill, I believe it's my obligation to share that perspective because the senator can't say this on the floor. One of our senators is actually one of the five African Americans who has been elected to congress since reconstruction. Senator Cleo Fields, since reconstruction, this state has only elected five African Americans to serve in congress. Five, and of that five, only four have actually served in congress. So, I will just quote Senator Fields by saying that since reconstruction, this state elects more white people to congress in a year, in a year than we elect black people in a lifetime.

[00:40:05]

And black people make up a third of this state. It is unacceptable and I cannot support it, and I ask that you don't support it either. Thank you.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: You have a question. Representative Duplessis, would you like to take the question? All right. He

waives. Back on the bill to close Representative Stefanski.

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Members, I think we debated congressional maps at length, both from the committee level and the floor level, and so, I'd ask for your favorable passage.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: All right. Representative Stefanski moves. Representative Jenkins, why do you ask?

REPRESENTATIVE JENKINS: Lockout.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: Lockout. Will 20 members join Representative Jenkins in the lockout. Lockout is obvious. All right. Quorum call members. Vote your machine for quorum call. Clerk will open the machine. Vote your machines, members. Vote your machines. Newell? Cox? Villio? Two voting members. All right. Close them up. 94 members in the quorum. All right, members, Representative Stefanski moves final passage of the bill. All those in favor, vote yay. Those opposed, vote nay. All right. All right, members. Those in favor, vote yay. Those opposed, vote nay. The clerk will open the machines. Members vote your machines.

Vote your machines members. Villio, no. Newell, no. Cox, no. Two voting. All right. Close them up. 64 yays, 31 nays, and the bill is finally passed. Representive Stefanski moves to adopt the title, moves to reconsider the vote for which the bill was finally passed. Laid that motion on the table without objections, so ordered. All right. All right. Right low at a four.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE: First bill in this order, house bill is amended by the Senate to be concurred in House Bill 2 by Representative Stefanski relative to redistricting, provides for election districts for the public service commission, provides for election of commissioners, provide for effectiveness. There were Senate floor amendments available on your computer.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: Representative Stefanski.

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Members, House Bill 2 is the reapportionment of the public service commission. There was a competing Senate bill that they were extremely similar. I mean, very, very few changes, and so,

Senator Reese and I sat down, discussed some areas where he thought were important or I thought were important, and we merged those to in an amendment that was proposed on the Senate and adopted.

[00:45:02]

It's very close to what this body passed with no no votes. It's a couple minor changes, and I'd ask that we concur in the Senate amendments.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: All right. There are no questions. Representative Stefanski moves to concur with the Senate amendments. All those in favor, vote yay. Those opposed, vote nay. The clerk will open the machine. Members, vote your machines. Vote your machines, members. Landry, yes. Brown, yes. Cox, yes. Butler,yes. Wright, yes. You through voting members? All right. Close them up. 98 yay. Zero nays, and the amendments are concurred in. Next one.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE: Next bill in this order is House Bill 3 by Representative Thomas to enact title 17. Repeal a provision title 17 relative to redistricting, provides

1 for election districts for the State Board of
2 Elementary and Secondary Education, provides
3 for election of members, and members there
4 were Senate committee amendments as well as
5 Senate floor amendments to this bill.
6 SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: All right,
7 Representative Thomas.
8 REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS: Thank you, Mr.
9 speaker. Ladies and gentlemen, this bill,
10 even though it was amended by the Senate has
11 been returned to very similar to what we have
12 already passed in this body with 73 votes.
13 The differences actually make this bill
14 better. There are, as you know, 64 parishes,
15 61 of those parishes, the school systems are
16 organized by parish. We were able to actually
17 put some minor amendments, so that only 51 -
18 I mean, so that 51 parishes are the same.
19 They are whole. That's a really big
20 improvement. Another improvement is that the
21 Zachary School District was actually able to
22 be put together. So, they are now in one
23 Bessie district instead of two Bessie
24 districts, and then district one was more
25 evenly distributed between the South Shore

and the North Shore. I ask your concurrence in this House Bill 3.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: All right. There are no questions. Representative Thomas moves to concur with the Senate amendments. All those in favor, vote yay. Those opposed, vote nay. The clerk will open the machine. Members, vote your machines. Gamon, yes. Landry, no. Butler, yes. Wright, yes. Cox, no. Brown, no. Muscarello, yes. You through voting? All right. Close them up. 71 yays, 28 nays, and the amendments are concurred in. All right. Members are going to stand at ease for a minute. Wait on a few things from the Senate and then we'll get back started.

[00:50:00]

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

[00:55:00]

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

[01:00:00]

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

[01:05:00]

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: The House will come to order. House Will come to order. Regular order six.

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

CLERK OF THE HOUSE: Senate bills on final passage. Senate Bill 1 by Senator President Cortez provides for legislative redistricting, provides for election districts for the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana, provides for effective dates.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: Representative Stefanski.

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Thank you, members. Senate Bill 1 is the reapportionment of the Senate. Of course, it contains 39 senate districts. The approximate the ideal population for a senate district after the census was 119,429 people. The highlights of this plan are that a district was moved from Shreveport down to the north shore in order to accommodate the population shifts of Louisiana and the 11 majority-minority districts were maintained. Happy to answer any questions about this.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: All right, there are no questions.

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Move final passage.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: We do have a set of amendments. Representative Glover, do you wish to -- he waives on the amendments. He withdraws to the floor and the bill, Representative Miguez.

REPRESENTATIVE MIGUEZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Chairman Stefanski. I want to first start off by thanking Senator Hewitt and Senator Cortez for all their hard work on the bill. I know it's been a very long process. They put a lot of work with the best interests of Louisiana at mind.

[01:10:01]

I'm here down -- I'm down here at the well today talk about Senate District 22. As you know, this is one of the most controversial senate districts throughout the entire process. I want to thank some of the representatives in the room, Representative Boye, Representative Bryant and Representative Huval for joining me along with Senator Mills on the roadshow to talk

about the importance of Senate District 22. And the singular thing there was we're joined by many in our community about keeping Senate District 22, which is mainly been an Iberian, St. Martin seat for over 50 years intact. We recognize it had the perfect number of people to have its own senate district at around 100,000 to 125,000 people. Recognize, we had similar interests in industry, agriculture, and being a large part of that. We also recognize that we had the appropriate diversity in the district. And we had the Bayou Teche that connected both of us. We all gave some very passionate speeches, and the singular theme was keeping Senate District 22 together. So I want to talk to you about the changes that this map makes the Senate District 22. Previously, it was 91%, Iberia and St. Martin Parish. Now, under the current map, it's 75% Iberian, St. Martin Parish with the remaining portion, move into Lafayette Parish, 9714 votes out of Iberia, 7156 votes out of St. Martin, 7310 votes out of St. Landry which a total of 24,180 votes which has moved to Lafayette Parish out of St.

1 Martin and Iberia. I can tell you that the
2 folks in Iberia and St. Martin, they're not
3 going to be happy about this. But I could
4 also tell you that it could have been much
5 worse. And I want to personally thank Senator
6 Fred Mills. I thank you from all the folks in
7 District 22 for his tireless work behind the
8 scenes in mitigating the damage to District
9 22. Now, go through some of the house
10 districts and tell you where does these
11 changes were made. Representative Huval, the
12 folks at St. Martin Parish, Arnaudville and
13 everything around Cecilia is no longer in
14 Senate District 22. In my district, Lydia
15 Grandmary, Iberia Parish no longer in
16 District 22. And the hardest hit,
17 Representative Boye, Morbihan, the Willow
18 Wood area, Loreauville, no longer sit in
19 District 22. In fact, the line gets so close
20 to your house that if the Bayou test road
21 arise and your house was the float north
22 across the cane field. You being different in
23 senate district and you would have to go over
24 the Morgan City and Houma to get help in your
25 district. Represented Boye's Corvis district

has been taken out of the Senate District. 22. The recent controversy has been around Precinct 94. This is the folks that live on Vida Shaw by Bayou du Bayou, Northside Road, the Cajun Sugar Mill where the Stables is located. This breaks up the village of Loreauville. Now, I bring up the Stables. It's an event center where all the folks in Iberia Parish get together and we enjoy, we get together for events and we have the pride of just being folks from Iberia. We recently recognized one of our most distinguished citizens. Representative Bo Boye as our King of Iberia. Representative Boye had us all down and we enjoyed the event who are sitting there listening to Mardi Gras music, the festivities and I looked down, I thought for a moment. And it kind of became personal to me Bo. We were there celebrating the King of Iberia but we were in Precinct 94 and next year, you could be the King of Morgan City. Because it was no longer in the district. Now we talked about the King of Morgan City -- Representative McGee I don't know where you are, but we're not going to talk about the

1 King of Morgan City anymore today. The mayor
2 of Morgan City, we're going to talk about the
3 mayor of Loreauville. I don't expect
4 Representative McGee to know who the mayor of
5 Loreauville is. His name is Brad Clifton. He
6 doesn't have the wealthiest individual
7 cellphone and a cellphone program and he
8 didn't talk to him on a regular basis. He
9 doesn't work with that individual to move
10 people from Earth to Mars. He's not even
11 particularly wealthy, but he's the richest
12 man in Louisiana. You know, why? Because he
13 has a heart of gold. He wakes up every
14 morning with the interest, the best interest
15 of the people at Loreauville at a heart.
16 During this process, when we started the
17 special session, his heart's been hurting.
18 His heart's been hurting for the people of
19 Loreauville. His heart's been hurting
20 personally. He lost his father just two weeks
21 ago. God bless his soul and may he rest in
22 peace. But you know where he was the next
23 Monday morning? He was in the Senate, having
24 -- or watching this bill get heard with his
25 councilman and a school board member

1 advocating for the best interest of
2 Loreauville. Now, you may ask yourself. Why
3 is this important to you Blake? This is in
4 Representative Boye's district.
5 [01:15:00]
6 And I told Represents Stefanski at the
7 roadshow. This is personal to me. Why?
8 Because I'm from the Village of Loreauville.
9 My life mentors from the Village of
10 Loreauville that taught me how to be a man.
11 Lance loves coming up here and giving stories
12 about things he's learned along the way. My
13 grandfather was a farmer, cane cutter, was a
14 police officer, was a car salesman and later
15 a successful shipbuilder. He lived his entire
16 life in Loreauville, worked there his entire
17 life, spent his life hunting. His golden
18 years of retirement, hunting and fishing in
19 the lakes, the ponds, the Bayou Teche, and
20 the cane fields around Loreauville. He's
21 buried behind the Catholic Church there, with
22 his bride of 71 years. Now I bring that up
23 because I want to tell you a story. I used to
24 visit my grandparents regularly on a regular
25 basis. And my grandparents sat right side

1 right next to each other in rocking chairs
2 and we sit there in the couch. And buddy,
3 you're going to like this one. My grandfather
4 told me first lesson about life and I was a
5 teenager at the time. He said, when you shake
6 a man's hand, always shake it with a firm
7 handshake. And my grandfather was the man to
8 man, but my grandmother quickly elbowed him.
9 71 years, Melinda, she didn't pull any
10 punches. She was a Cajun lady. My grandfather
11 said, and Blake, when you're shaking that
12 person's hand, you look them in the eye. Your
13 grandmother wanted to tell you, look to their
14 eyes and speak to their heart. She said Jo
15 and, and he said, your grandmother also wants
16 me to tell you a lesson about life is follow
17 your dreams, work hard and always do what's
18 right. Then my grandfather stood up. He
19 looked down at me and said, boy, if you
20 remember one thing from this conversation,
21 never forget where you came from. And I
22 haven't forgotten where I came from. I came
23 from the Village of Loreauville. These are
24 just district lines on paper, political math.
25 In Baton Rouge, it's a political lines on

paper. But let's not forget behind these lines are real people back home. Real people. These lines mean nothing. The community of Loreauville was together before this process and they'll be together after this process. Because one thing's for certain and this is a message to them, as long as I'm an elected office I'll speak for the individuals in Loreauville. The individuals in Iberia Parish, the individuals in St. Martin Parish, they won't forget. about what happened in this process today although we respect the process. They haven't been forgotten by me and you shouldn't forget them either. Grandfather, I hope you're proud and I haven't forgotten where I came from and that's why I'm voting no on this bill today. Mr. Speaker, members, thank you so much for your time today and I appreciate it.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: We have some questions, would you like to take them?

REPRESENTATIVE MIGUEZ: I'm waiving.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: All right. He waves. To close.

CHAIRMAN STEFANSKI: Again, members, I drew the lucky straw presenting, you know, a map that, you know, this is the senate instrument, they've supported it. And so, I'd ask for your favorable passage.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: All right. Representative Stefanski, Representative Jenkins, lockout. With 20 members joined, Representative Jenkins in a lockout. Lockout is obvious. All right, members quorum call, quorum call. Voting machines. Yeah, open it up. Representative Green, Nelson, you two voting members? All right. Lock it up. All right, 96 members in a quorum. All right members, all those in favor vote yay, all those oppose vote nay. The clerk will open the machines. Members vote your machines. Vote you machines members. Green, no. Nelson, yes. You two voting members? Do voting, all right. Close them up. 65 yays, 31 nays, and the bill is finally passed. Representative Stefanski moves to adopt the title, moves to reconsider the vote by which the bill was finally passed lately that motion on the

table without objection. So ordered. All right, next bill.

[01:20:00]

CLERK OF THE HOUSE: Next bill is Senate Bill 14 By Senator Cortez relative to redistricting election districts for the State Board of Elementary Secondary Education, election of members and I understand Representative Thomas is returning that bill to the calendar.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: Without objection.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE: Next bill in this order is Senate Bill 15 by Senator Hewitt provide as relative to the Supreme Court, Redistricting Supreme Court Justice Districts. And I understand that Representative Stefanski moves to return this bill to the calendar.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: Without objection.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE: Next bill in this order Senate Bill 19 by Senator Reese relative to redistricting election districts for the Public Service Commission, election of commissioners. Representative Stefanski moves to return this bill to the calendar.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: Without objection.

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: Representative Glover, would you like personal privilege? All right.

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

REPRESENTATIVE GLOVER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members, since we have a break here at this point, waiting for legislation to come back from the Senate, I wanted to take a moment and some of the members from my area may want to consider joining me once you hear why I'm taking this point of personal privilege. As we were starting this special session, I got a message from Pam Atchison with the Freeport Regional Arts Council asking if I have an opportunity to be able to take a moment to do a video message regarding something that is very exciting that's happening up in our area. For those of you who have Googled and seen images for Shreveport, one of the ones that most often comes up is an image of Shreveport, usually taken at night, illustrating the neon bridge that used to connect our communities. It was

1 kind of the version of the St. Louis ark or
2 any of the other types of iconic images that
3 you see of our community. The origin of that
4 particular neon bridge, which was put on the
5 Long Island Bridge way back almost 30 years
6 ago in 1993 as a result of a percentage for
7 the arts from a general obligation, a bond
8 project that added a streetscape installation
9 to our downtown. And it was something that
10 was iconic for a very long time. And
11 unfortunately, neon is a very fragile medium
12 and over the years, what had been very
13 brightly lit, a wonderful sight to see
14 something that was, I said, almost iconic
15 begin to dim and diminish and we eventually
16 turned the lights out. But there was a
17 gentleman in town who happened to be my
18 optometrist and maybe for some of the members
19 of the delegation as well. Great guy by the
20 name of Dr. George Bakowski, who's actually a
21 graduate of the University of Louisiana
22 Lafayette. He's from this region and his
23 wife, Sandra Bakowski. They offered to put
24 upwards of a million dollars into relighting
25 the bridge, but they couldn't do that until

1 we fixed the bridge. And so a partnership of
2 the State of Louisiana, which came in several
3 years ago, repaired, upgraded, repainted and
4 resealed the bridge, opened up the
5 opportunity for this million-dollar donation
6 to be able to go forward and not replace it
7 with neon, but with cutting edge LED lighting
8 technology that will not only allow it to end
9 up having the appearance that it has for
10 almost 30 years. But we will make it possible
11 for it to be lit up with various colors that
12 can be Mardi Gras, Christmas theme, Easter
13 and what have you.
14 [01:25:06]
15 And so I want to take an opportunity on
16 behalf of the entirety of Northwest
17 Louisiana, Shreveport and Bossier and the
18 surrounding area to give a great, great
19 thanks and appreciation to Dr. George
20 Bakowski, his wonderful wife Sandra, the team
21 at the Shreveport Regional Arts Council, the
22 City of Shreveport, the City of Bossier, the
23 Red River Waterway Commission, the Port of
24 Caddo-Bossier and all of there, and the
25 Louisiana Department of Transportation and

Development, all the folks who are a part of the effort to help us once again have that iconic bridge be lit and have it join our communities and be an illustration of the bright things that are going on up in Shreveport Bossier in Northwest Louisiana. So join me in giving the Bakowski's a round of applause and expression of thanks for their investment in our community. Thank you so much. Thank you all for joining us. Thank you. I appreciate it. Just so everyone knows, the lights will go on officially on a very memorable day, the 22nd of this month. So 2nd, 22nd, 2022, the lights will be relit. And just as it happened in 1993 when they were lit for the first time, the bridge is being blocked off and couples who are intending to marry are being encouraged to have their nuptials performed. So there will be dozens of weddings that will be performed that night on the bridge and have their anniversary date to be the 22 of February in 2022. In fact, there also will be the children of a couple that was married or the child of a couple that was married back in

1993 that will be having her wedding on that bridge next week as well. So thank you so much and thank you all for joining us in that recognition.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: Personal privilege, Representative Echols.

REPRESENTATIVE ECHOLS: Thank you. Mr. Speaker. I want to thank my good friend Representative Villio for providing some nice birthday cakes today for a couple of members. One of those member's birthday is tomorrow and she could not be here due to a temporary setback. So if you'd all join me in wishing and singing Happy Birthday for Representative Schlegel who is watching on TV today. Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday Rep. Schlegel. Happy birthday to you.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: Personal privilege, Rep. Thomas.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, two things I would like to share with you. First of all, thank you very much for voting for House Bill 4 and if you would like to be a co-author, see Ron. And the

second thing is I'd like to congratulate the Brother Martin Crusaders Wrestling Team. They are State Champions. Let's give them a hand.

REPRESENTATIVE PIERRE: Members, we left out an individual --

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: Personal privilege Representative Pierre.

REPRESENTATIVE PIERRE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members, we did leave out a very important person to the Democratic Party and the work that he's done in this whole redistricting process. Representative Sam Jenkins is going to be celebrating his birthday on tomorrow. So we need to also sing happy birthday to him also. Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday, dear Sam. Happy birthday to you.

SPEAKER SCHEXNAYDER: All right, members while we're waiting on a few things, we're going to go ahead and recess to 12:30 and then come back and finish up.

[BACKGROUND NOISE]

[01:30:42]

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I, Anders Nelson, hereby certify that the document "2022-02-18 House Full Floor Debate 1" is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, a true and accurate transcription from English to English.

Anders Nelson

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Anders Nelson
Project Manager

May 1, 2022