SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: All right members if you would take your seats. I think we're ready to get started. All right, this is 7th Governmental Affairs Committee Hearing. The date is 2/2/22. How cool is that? Welcome to everyone that is here with us today. I apologize for the delay and for keeping you waiting in the lobby area. We were working on some technology issues so that we can try to make sure that the public can see everything that we see in terms of maps and changes and so it's kind of a new world with all the technology. And so we're working very hard again to continue to make this very public and transparent process. There are cards available to you. As you know on the agenda, we are considering two senate bills today. So, green cards if you are in support of a particular bill, red cards if you are against a particular bill and you can check whether you would like to speak or you just want to sort of register your support or opposition to that bill so you do not have to speak but we will acknowledge your position on that. I would ask you based on the number of cards that I see. We will limit comments to three minutes. Okay, so think about that, please. Make your points, get your points on record. If you feel like maybe your points have already been said or been

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heard then you might consider just waving and choosing not to speak. We're working very hard to make sure that everyone that has come here today has an opportunity to be heard. We also, of course, want to give lots time to our members to be able to ask questions of our bill authors and for us to understand the bills that are before us. So with that, I would like to start first, Madam Secretary, if you would please call the roll.

MADAM SECRETARY: Senator Hewitt?

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Present.

MADAM SECRETARY: Present. Senator Milligan?

SENATOR BARRY MILLIGAN: Present.

MADAM SECRETARY: Present. Senator Allen?

SENATOR R.L. BRET ALLAIN: Here.

MADAM SECRETARY: Present. Senator Foil?

SENATOR FRANKLIN FOIL: Here.

MADAM SECRETARY: Present. Senator Tarver?

SENATOR GREGORY TARVER: Here.

MADAM SECRETARY: Present. Senator Womack.

SENATOR GLEN WOMACK: Present.

MADAM SECRETARY: Present. Senator Reese?

SENATOR MIKE REESE: Here.

MADAM SECRETARY: Present. Senator Harris?

SENATOR HARRIS: Here.

MADAM SECRETARY: Present. And Senator Price?

SENATOR EDWARD PRICE: Here.

MADAM SECRETARY: That is nine in the courtroom.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Terrific, thank you. Members in your folders you have Minutes from June 9th of 2021 which apparently technically is the last time we met as a committee. It seems like that we've met quite a few times since then. But those are our last Minutes. Any changes or corrections to those Minutes?

SENATOR EDWARD PRICE: Move to adopt.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Move to adopt from Senator Price. Any objection? All right, those Minutes are adopted. All right, the next item on our agenda will be to consider legislation of course on the senate bills. So just to kind of set the stage in terms of how we got here and what we have done to date, today we are really embarking on the next step in a very historic opportunity and responsibility for the legislature to reconfigure the districts for congress for the legislature for the public service commission for the board developmentary and secondary education and for the supreme court. And as you know,

we have been on a 10-stop road show we called it where we went to all the major cities in our state, nearly a thousand people attended those hearings, 350 people or so offered either verbal or written testimony. And so we have gotten lots of great input along the way. We also received 27 proposed maps that was as of January 20th and authors of those maps were given an opportunity on that date to answer questions from members about their proposed -- a little about their maps. Those that were submitted in the block equivalency file that we require. So today, now we take the next step in that journey and we will begin hearing for legislators who have considered all of that input from the public and from other stakeholders to propose very specific legislation. We're going to hear the bills in groups beginning with the senate bills today. We will hear congressional bills tomorrow and so forth as we proceed over these coming weeks. So, again with that, I would like to remind you again, we want your input to be very focused on the two bills before us today because there will be other opportunities during the week for you to be able to make comments on other bills that you have an interest in. Okay.

[00:05:00]

Okay, so with that, let's start with Senate Bill 1 offered by President Cortez. And before you start Mr. President, thank you. Excuse me, I was reminded to silent your cellphones please so that we don't have any interruptions and we will work again with Dr. Blaire to pull up the maps and things so that you all can see the maps as we're talking about different parts of the proposal. So, thank you with that. Welcome, Mr. President to the committee.

PRESIDENT CORTEZ: Thank you Madam Chair and thank you to the members. Before we start this very serious matter redistricting, I wanted to may be have a little liberty here and tell you that I received a text just the other day from someone who had gone through this process in the previous legislature and said, "Good luck. It's the ultimate exercise in the herding of cats but it's the only time that all the cats care." So, I do believe that's apropos because up until this morning and late last night I was still getting people offering amendments on this particular bill and we hadn't even gotten to the congressional bill yet. So, it's with a lot of hard work, a lot of time that I bring to you senate bill one which does the redistricting. So every 10 years the decennial census tells us what our population did relative to

the United State population and relative to our own areas of our State. So some of the things you heard and you all did a lot of roadshow meetings and you head the same principles over and over but I'm going to repeat them for the public record and talk about how did this map come to be filed and what would the tenants or the principles use to establish this map. Well, the first one is because of the one man, one vote doctrine, you cannot dilute a voter by not allowing them to be equal districts with regards to the senate districts, house districts, congressional districts. There's a higher level or more scrutiny on the congressional than there are in the legislative maps. So we have what we call the ideal population. The ideal population is roughly 119,000 people. What we're going to call the deviation and I'm going to talk about the absolute deviation which is the exact number, you're either short of ideal in a district or above ideal in a district is what I'm going to be referencing. So the first tenet or the first principle is they have to be all equal or close to equal in nature, a plus or minus 5%. The second tenet or principle that I incorporated into this map was, we bear the responsibility to ensure that our plan complies with the law including the voting rights

act. If we don't, the new risk an invalidated plan so we have to get it right. So the second tenant is that I had to provide in this map that the current majority, minority districts have an equal opportunity for that minority community to elect its candidate of choice. So in respecting that, you have to move populations but you have to move them in a direction that they don't affect that second tenet. The third tenet or principle was as best possible to maintain the continuity of representation. What do I mean by that? It means that if your district elected you and you've done a good job, they also have a right to reelect you. Conversely, you don't get to choose who your population is, they choose you. If you didn't do a good job, they have the right to unelect you. And the people who people who know your job the best for those who were in your district. So to go grab a separate population from another district just screams to the public that you are looking for a better group of people to keep you in office. So that is a principle we tried to adhere to. Again, it has to work with these other principles. So, the next principle that I tried to adhere to was with something you all heard on the roadshow many times called compactness. So, as best as possible

make sure the districts are compact. When we don't hear compact, well in other word we generally hear is gerrymandered. If they look like a spider they're gerrymandered traditionally speaking. If they looked like a box or a circle, they are tend to be more compact. Why do we do that? Because it takes the principle of communities of interest into context and says okay the closer you are the closer you live to each other, the more likely you are to be a homogenous population and you can select the best candidate of your choice.

00:10:11

Okay. So those are some of the principles and we may go into some others later, but I want to start moving into the challenges we had. So, we have challenges in every map. But specifically, the Senate I'm going to talk about these population shifts will apply to every map going forward. So, if you took Districts 28 through 39 and on the map, if Dr. Blaire, if you can bring the map up. So if you see on the west, by the [INDISCERNIBLE 00:10:43], the light blue district, as you move to the east, there's an olive-green district. If you took those two districts as the southern part at every district north of that, if you just took those districts,

which are Districts 28 through 39, collectively, they had a combined absolute deviation of negative 108,633 from the ideal population of 119,429. Effectively, collectively, 91% of an ideal district was lost from there north. If you look at the darker blue one that runs north to south, that one is a majority-minority district. Can you point on it? That one right in there. It moves from Rapides Parish up to Lincoln Parish. If you look to the east, the one that's in a -- I'm going to call it a mauve or a pink. Mauve is a furniture fabric color. So that is the majority-minority district. And if you go to the Northwest in Caddo that is a majority-minority district as well. Those two on the east and the west are constrained by state lines. So, the one on the east could not go into Mississippi to pick up population nor in Arkansas. And the one on the west could not go into Texas nor into Arkansas to pick up population. All of them were short population. They had a lower than ideal population on actual deviation. Now we are going to go south and I'm going to talk a little bit about the districts on the north shore. So, districts 1, which starts in east boundaries but then it wraps around to Hammond Area. 11 which is on the North Shore. 12, 13 and 19 which is the Ascension, 13

is a Livingston and 19 is Ascension. If you combine those districts, they had a combined absolute deviation of a positive 85,403 growth. So, if you took each district and said, where would they be ideally? They all, if you add them up, had 85,000 more than what would have been ideal. And then if you take Senate District 2, which is on the river, 19, which is St. Charles area. 20, which is on the coast. 21, which is also a coastal district that moves up and Acadiana. And then 22, which is due north and is also a coastal district. If you took those districts, they all lost from ideal 27,454. Their constraint is the Gulf of Mexico. They cannot go into the Gulf of Mexico to pick up population. So, they have to travel north to grab population. 34 up in the northeast has to travel west or south. 39 in the northwest corner has to travel east or south to pick up population. Then, the last part I'll talk about is in the southwest corner of the state Calcasieu Parish. You had two districts there. I'm sorry I don't have it. I think it's 26. 25 and 27. Those two combined had an increase above ideal absolute of somewhere around 20,000 combined. And if you go to Lafayette 23, that district is very compact, that one had an absolute deviation of

1 positive 20. So, what did the population do? It, grew
2 effectively in southwest Louisiana, in the Lake
3 Charles region. It grew in Lafayette. It grew on
4 the North Shore and Ascension and Livingston. And
5 while I haven't not spoken about New Orleans
6 Jefferson, there was some shifting there.
7 [00:15:02]
8 But it was a little growth but it wasn't a ton of
9 growth when you add it all up on the Jefferson
10 Plaquemine. St. Bernard, Orleans, there was some
11 growth. Specifically in Orleans there was some
12 growth. A lot of the growth came some 35 or 40
13 thousand. Thirty thousand of those growing were
14 white persons in the growth category there. So, how
15 do you fix the number one principle of equal
16 population distribution? So, the first thing you'll
17 notice is what take place in Senate Bill 1 was the
18 migration of a North Louisiana District to the North
19 Shore. So, effectively a district that was, if you
20 can bring that up, this District 37, and if you can
21 circle around it, this is effectively a new district.
22 The district just to the east of it, in the sort of
23 aqua green was over by 32,000 people and it had to
24 reduces the district to the east of that one, Senate
25 District 1, Madam Chair, you can help me. I think it

was 12,000 over. So, the combination of those two, put 40,000 were 40,000 over to the north in the olive green up there. That one was over --

SENATOR HEWITT: I think it's like 23 or 32.

PRESIDENT CORTEZ: Roughly, that's District 12.

SENATOR HEWITT: 11.

PRESIDENT CORTEZ: District 11 was 32000. District 12 with the one we currently held by Senator Mizell is 12. Yeah, that one was 2000 over and then Senator, the one that's currently held by Senator Pope just District 13 was over by 10,000 and then 18, which is the Ascension Parish. I erroneously called it 19 earlier. It's 18 which is held by Senator Lambert currently was over by roughly 19,000 people. So, if you take the combination of all those districts, that's where you come up with the 89 or so 85,000 overage. Okay. So, the first part of the map that I explained was the migration of a Senate District from Northwest Louisiana to the North Shore. The Orleans Parish, I want to talk a little bit about Orleans.

SENATOR HEWITT: And if I could just interrupt, you know, these are all maps' members and to the public that are part of the bill. So as the bill was filed, the Florida Parishes were on page 30 of the

1 bill. And now we're going to Orleans which I think
2 is Page 29 of the bill, Senate Bill 1 so you can pull
3 that up on your iPad or your phone, members, you have
4 your computers. So, thank you for that Mr.
5 President.
6 PRESIDENT CORTEZ: So, the biggest challenge in
7 the Orleans area was as we talked about through
8 gentrification that the return of population that
9 we're talking now. Post-Katrina now 17 years ago,
10 there's been a return of population to Orleans that
11 over the last two decades. So, the district I'm going
12 to talk about District 4 and well, let's talk about
13 Jefferson Parish first. The white district and the, I
14 don't know is that a kind of orangish district right
15 there, those two in this particular plan have very
16 little changes to them. That's Jefferson Parish and
17 then nine comes into what is effectively, uptown New
18 Orleans. Very little change. It was like that
19 before. It's been like that I think through the last
20 two redistricting and the Kenner area, I'm going to
21 say that Skinner River Ridge, Elmwood area, the white
22 district, very little change. Then, if you go east,
23 the light blue district was in Orleans and it's 100%
24 Orleans District. It goes from the Lakeview to New
25 Orleans East. That one had some changes but not

1 dramatically in the sense of parishes. It didn't
2 change parishes. It basically, maintain the similar
3 population. Now, District 3 is the purple district.
4 This is the one that was last term re-district and
5 it's, by the way, the 4 and 3 are majority-minority
6 districts.
7 [00:20:11]
8 In order for it to pick up enough minority
9 population, it went to the West Bank and circled
10 around the river and went, I guess all, the way. I
11 can't see the little locations. It was not quite -- I
12 don't think to was it Avondale? Did it go all the way
13 to Avondale? It went closed Moreira, so it ended up
14 in Moreira. So, Dr. Bouie's district because of the
15 influx of people in East Bank using the compactness
16 test, he had some St. Bernard and Orleans and West
17 Bank of Jefferson Parish. Now it's more compact with
18 this map. District five did not come across the river
19 to the West Bank, but now does. The reason is for it
20 is because through the gentrification, the Uptown New
21 Orleans area basically took that district. And from a
22 voter-age population, after the census, it was only
23 43% voter-age population black. So that was
24 problematic. So in working with the delegation to try
25 to remedy that, it came across to the West Bank.

1 District seven, the green one was on the West Bank
2 and went over to the East Bank and picked up some of
3 the Orleans. The purple Southern part of West Jeff
4 had some changes, but mostly it went a little bit
5 more into Gretna, but other than that, it's basically
6 stayed static as to what it was prior from the
7 previous map. So if we go down to the Coast, Senate
8 District 26. So along the Coast here's where we had
9 some problems with losing population. So Senate
10 District, let's go to the St. Charles 19. District 19
11 and traditionally has always been a river parishes
12 district. It's the one that's St. Charles Centric. It
13 does have some St. John and one time had some St.
14 James. It has had to go into Kenner near the airport
15 to pick up population last. And it also went into
16 Lafourche Parish towards the coast to pick up some
17 population there. Lafourche Parish has 19, but it
18 also has 20. And a part of 21 actually picks up part
19 of Lafourche. So that District 19 lost 10,500 people.
20 It had to pick up population. The one neighboring it
21 to the West. And the other river district, which is
22 number two, is a majority minority district. That one
23 lost 6,500. It had to pick up population, but
24 specifically, it had to pick up population and
25 maintain the opportunity for the minority candidate

to be collected. So there was some challenges there. The problem with number 20 was it was sharp and it could not go anywhere but north because it had to go effectively North, East or West, but it couldn't go South. So to its west was District 21 to its East or Northeast was 19. And then you had Senate District six, which is the Jefferson Parish, West Jefferson Parish District that went around because Grand Isle is in Jefferson Parish and that was in the previous district it could go into there. But the problem with that was that district had a high population and couldn't really take any St. Charles Parish could take them because it was low. But when you did that, the population shifts by community of interest, there was an argument to be made that the St. John and St. Charles area was not a similar community of interest with the Southern Lafourche residence.

[00:25:07]

So to as much as possible, we attempted to keep that in Northern Lafourche Parish, and I think we were able to do that. Senate District 20 needed to pick up it was short 8500. So it needed to pick up some population and did so in District 21. And here's where it created a little bit of a problem District 21 is really a Acadiana, but it also goes down the

1 Bayou. So it's a St. Mary Assumption, Terrebonne
2 Iberia Parish District. And so that was where the
3 commonality was because of the Terrebonne Parish
4 dominance. So 20 was able to pick up some precincts
5 in Terrebonne Parish. 21 then was able to pick up
6 some in Assumption and Iberia. Now the Iberia Parish
7 population starts to affect the Acadiana area. So
8 what happened in Acadiana is District 23 in Lafayette
9 was 20,000 over. So this district had 350, 000 people
10 in Lafayette but remember, I talked about the
11 Southwest problem they had 20,000 over. So the one
12 that was stretching out further to the East was 25 is
13 the one currently held by Senator Abraham. He was
14 10,600 people over. So what we did was we pulled that
15 district closer to the communities of interest in
16 Calcasieu Parish and Jeff Davis. They're more like
17 parishes and have always been together. So that
18 released some of the population in Acadia, which is
19 due North of Vermillion. So we took that and brought
20 Vermillion and Acadia together as best we could. And
21 the population growth in Lafayette was split between
22 22 and 26, is that correct? I can't see the district.
23 So now we had the populations right. The 24, which is
24 North Lafayette and South St. Landry, is a majority
25 minority district. The population growth in Lafayette

1 Parish was in the, Southern part of the Parish, and
2 could not be put in there for two reasons. One, it
3 would have taken down the voter-age population of the
4 black population and combined with it was already at
5 its maximum number on the deviation. So it couldn't
6 take more numbers and it wouldn't have helped anyway.
7 So 24, 23, 22 and 26, those four Districts are just
8 about at the highest absolute deviation. It was a
9 growth area, but it's probably going to have to be
10 shed some voters 10 years from now because it's
11 packed right now. When I say packed, it's at the
12 absolute optimum number that each one of those
13 districts can take without being above the 5%. So I
14 think we're going to work North from there, and I'm
15 going to get back to sort of the Central Louisiana
16 Districts. And so, I've saved this for last because
17 this is where the first thing that I mentioned was
18 the migration of Senate District 37 to the Northshore
19 required every one of these districts that I talked
20 about earlier to somehow grow North because they had
21 to take up the population that was that deviation
22 that negative deviation there were still people up
23 there. So District number 38, which had De Soto
24 Parish in it moved North into Caddo and released some
25 of it. The 39, which was under populated was a

majority minority district had to move into the Caddo area to maintain its majority minority status. So District 36 was a Bossier Webster Parish.

[00:30:05]

It picked up some of that population and had to relieve some of its population in Webster Parish which required a Northeast Centric District to come more West to pick up that population. District 31 was a [PH 00:30:25] Rapids NACA [PH 00:30:25] Dish Centric District in Red River. It had to pick up the vacated Desoto Parish as well as go up into Bienville and take up some Bienville and little bit of Webster Parish to be able to bring some of that population North. District 29 didn't change a ton, you know, it maintained its majority, minority status. I think it nibbled on the edges. So, it's continuity of representation is maintained. As you go to the North, I'm going to see to the East of the District 29, the Ouachita Parish Centric districts maintained pretty much their status. Again, the problem we had here was is it 34 which is currently held by Senator Jackson. That was a majority, minority district. It couldn't go East into Mississippi and it had to pick up some populations. We also did some compaction with or we will be doing that, hopefully in an amendment, we

want to take up later that would actually take Concordia Parish out of her district. [PH 00:31:52] Catahoula, excuse me. And put that holy situated in 32 which is held by Senator Womack. And again, communities of interest being the driving factor and compactness, while respecting the opportunity for the minority voters to elect the candidate of their choice. I think that's about it. So, Senator, the District that's held by Senator Morris is for the most part unchanged. There may be a couple of precincts, like I said, that's the pink one. And Senator Womack's District needed to pick up some population. The last thing I'll talk about is I guess, is it 19 or 17, West Baton Rouge. So, and we need to go to Evangeline Parish. So, the Evangeline [INDISCERNABLE 00:32:42], the olive green one. So, the biggest change in the -- I'm going to call it Acadiana [INDISCERNABLE 00:32:59] Evangeline, St. Landry, Pointe Coupee. The biggest change came there and it was precipitated by a lot of the things I've already talked about. The lack of population on the coast force districts to move North, which forced District 17 to move North. It was always an interval West Baton Rouge Pointe Coupee District. It went West along 192 to pick up St. Landry. As you recall in the

1 roadshow, one of the things St. Landry was discussing
2 was, we want to have less Senators. We want to not
3 have four and five Senators. We want to have one or
4 two while we think we've accomplished that goal. It
5 goes up into East Feliciana and St. Helena, that was
6 a byproduct of it. It already represented some of
7 East Baton Rouge and East Feliciana and the St.
8 Helena. It had to pick up a precinct up there simply
9 because of population to fit the first principle of
10 one man, one vote doctrine. I think that covers the
11 state. I went around and tried to give you the
12 reasoning why each district stayed or changed with
13 respect to those principles. So, at this time, madam
14 chair, I hope I've given a good enough explanation,
15 the bill as it sets.
16 SENATOR HEWITT: I appreciate that Mr. President,
17 that was quite the presentation and I think it should
18 be pretty evident from everyone and certainly the
19 members know that as well. How much time you've spent
20 in, you know, again working through all of those
21 issues and trying to balance all the principles, the
22 redistricting principles that we were trying to
23 accomplish and to get all the districts where they
24 again, we're representing equal population plus or
25 minus 5% of the ideal number. So, that's quite an

1 undertaking. So first of all, thank you for all of
2 your efforts. It's a tremendous amount of work. Okay,
3 let's start beginning now with some questions from
4 members. I'll start with Senator Tarver.
5 SENATOR TARVER: Mr. President, I know you've
6 talked to each and every one of us at least 10 to 15
7 time each and putting a map together is very, very
8 difficult, and to please everybody, it's impossible.
9 You know, that just like trying to put, please your
10 wife all the time, that's impossible.
11 MALE 1: Oh no, I do that. No matter what it
12 costs me to give.
13 SENATOR TARVER: What do you do it? What I'm
14 concerned about, I see that North Louisiana have lost
15 population and we want to over 100,000 in that area.
16 And I know in my district alone, I lost about 16 to
17 18,000 people and I had to pick up all those from
18 other areas. I have to even properly go into Bossier
19 City, the pickup areas. I know I had a large
20 population of minorities. I know it dropped to 61 and
21 62 percent. So, we can have diversity all over, not
22 only in my district but in all the other set of
23 districts across the state because I think they need
24 to have diversity in these districts. So, the
25 individual who represent the people, she ought to be

able to go to both sides; the White community, the Black community, Spanish community and all of it, do all they can to help. Did you map in computing this? Did you increase minority participation, senators and area in your map? Or do we have the same amount of--

MALE 1: No, what we did was we maintained.

SENATOR TARVER: You maintained but you did not increase minorities. Is it a possibility that we can increase minorities and so everybody would be represented in Louisiana?

MALE 1: There's always a possibility to do just about anything with these maps. What you border on I think is the question of continuity of representation, first and foremost. When you start to gerrymander it, that's the first thing you do. The second thing is you have the Voting Rights Act. And I won't sit here until you, that if you give me a set number of voting age population from a particular minority group that, that guarantees that the minorities if the Black vote would have the opportunity to elect the candidate their choice, what I would tell you is that there are some statistical analyses out there that could tell you voter turnout in certain areas by different ethnic groups or lower or higher. So, I'm going to give you a by example. By

1 example, in Orleans Parish, in a particular election,
2 you may find a high voter turnout in the minority
3 groups. In the rule majority-minority districts, you
4 might find a lower turnout. That's an example. What
5 you have to ask yourself and from a purpose of the
6 Voting Rights Act is consistently. Can you get that
7 minority group the opportunity to elect their
8 candidate, their choice? And the answer is, you can
9 dilute it to the point where you lose minority seats
10 because you've diluted it. So, what is 50.50% plus
11 one gives you a majority of the minority if that's
12 the population you looking at, but if they only turn
13 out at a 30% or 35% rate, and the other population
14 turns out at 45 or 50% for an election, the minority
15 group is going to, i'm going to try to be clear. The
16 minority is going to have a higher number of voting
17 age population, but they won't vote and they won't
18 elect the candidate of their choice. And that's a
19 violation of the Voting Rights Act. It flies in the
20 face of whatever, given that opportunity. You're
21 taking it away by diluting it.
22 SENATOR TARVER: Well, at the same time, it's
23 also, it's up to the candidate to go out there and
24 make sure whatever you can do, whatever she can do.
25 They work very, very hard to, if the narrative

1 running to get them out to vote. And they can't hold
2 other people responsible for that for example, and I
3 tell it that story all the time.
4 [00:40:02]
5 I ran in a district of 50.1% minorities when I
6 first got here in 84. I've been here a couple of
7 days, and I received, minority came out heavy. So,
8 the majority came out heavy, but I received about 20%
9 of the majority vote at that time and only 99% of the
10 minority vote, I don't know what happened to that
11 other 1% by the way.
12 SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Were those voters alive
13 or dead, Senator Tarver?
14 SENATOR TARVER: When I'm undertaker some of them
15 might have voted, I don't know.
16 SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Being that you have the
17 funeral home, you have a lot on dead voters.
18 SENATOR TARVER: That's true.
19 SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Okay.
20 SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: But, you're a very
21 likable person, too.
22 SENATOR TARVER: Okay. Very likable, but tell me
23 that your map actually, in putting it together, you
24 did not put any additional minorities what we have.
25 SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: I did.

1 SENATOR TARVER: Okay.
2 SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: And I'll tell you
3 the why behind that. I think it would have violated
4 the principles that I mentioned earlier. Okay so, it
5 would have violated the continuity of representation.
6 So, you would have been specifically trying to grab a
7 group of constituents to elect a different person.
8 Well, that's directly conflicting with what the
9 principle is that the second thing is you would have
10 had to violate the compactness clause. You would have
11 had to effectively gerrymander districts to get them
12 to be able to pick up the populations that you
13 suggest mission, and then you would have violated the
14 principle of communities of interest because they
15 would have been strung out. I could show you on the
16 map other than your district in the Orleans area, the
17 one that Senator Price represents, Senate District 2,
18 it travels along the river. If you look at Senator
19 Jackson's, it travels quite a ways. If you look at
20 Senator Luneau's district and I apologize, the
21 district held by Senator Luneau, he doesn't own it,
22 he simply represents it. His travels from Rapides
23 Parish to Lincoln Parish for that sole purpose to
24 pick up enough minority population so as not to
25 violate the ability of the minority to black vote and

1 elect a candidate of their choice. So, in maintaining
2 those, in attempting to maintain those if I'd have
3 done anything else, I would have violated that
4 because Senator Price's district, the Senate District
5 2 could go elsewhere, but then it would violate his
6 communities of interest because his district could go
7 all the way to St. John. He may want it to go all the
8 way to St. John, but by doing that, it disrupted the
9 community of interests of St. Charles and St. John
10 Parish that Senator Smith who has represented it for
11 10 years would argue that they have common interests
12 because they're both River parishes. So, those
13 examples were tried and we looked at them, but I just
14 think that I would have violated the Voting Rights
15 Act, if I would have dropped them down to, in his
16 case, down to 50% or 50 plus one or so forth, I
17 think, it would have done? Yes, it can be done. There
18 could it be added? Yes, I'm pretty sure Senator Price
19 going to tell you how it could be done a little bit,
20 but I think it's going to potentially violate the
21 Voting Rights Act.
22 SENATOR TARVER: Thank you very much.
23 SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: Thank you.
24 SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, Senator.
25 Senator Price.

SENATOR PRICE: Thank you, Mr. President, and I think you worked very hard to create a map you work with us, but I'm going to follow up with Senator Tarver on creating minority district in Section 2. The State of Louisiana population did increase by a little bit one point some percent, but white population decrease in the State of Louisiana and minority population increased in the State of Louisiana and you just said that you did some things, but I guess the question becomes if minority population is increasing and the majority population is decreasing, then why shouldn't we look at the possibility of another minority district.

SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: It's a good question.

SENATOR PRICE: No.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Hold your applause, please.

SENATOR PRICE: No clapping, please.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: This is a public hearing. Thank you.

SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: I guess the only answer I can give you is because I think it violates the principles of redistricting. One, being the contiguous nature of precincts.

[00:45:00]

SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: The continuity of representation. You would be literally grabbing people to elect different people. That in by nature is you're dictating who the constituents are going to be. The constituents ought to dictate who the elected official would be. So, I think it violates those principles. And then, the gerrymandering one is the biggest one, because in order to do that, you're going to have to move these precincts. They have to be contiguous, as you know. So, you're going to have to travel along ways and then you violate the communities of interest.

SENATOR PRICE: And violating the community of interest, but under Section 2 of the 1965 Voting Right Act, it specifically talks about the fact of giving people opportunity and opportunity, I think, it's all that we can ask for, and you say, well, you may not be able to elect, but [INDISCERNIBLE 00:45:58]@@ said, it's up to the person in the district to get out there and make sure that it's constituent comes out and vote and at least give themselves that opportunity. If we do not increase the minority district, we'll never have that opportunity. If we just stay status quo as the map is

1 right now without even considering increase, then the
2 opportunity goes away, I think, on the Section 2, it
3 clearly states that we must be given an opportunity
4 to elect a person of our choice, and by not providing
5 that opportunity, I think, it violates Section 2 of
6 the Civil Rights Act.
7 SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: I think we agree
8 100%. I think that the map that I've drawn gives that
9 opportunity and what the opportunity is, I think, is
10 where you and I may have that difference of opinion.
11 Dropping that percentage down without knowing the
12 statistical analysis behind it. I think you could
13 have an argument that you have done exactly the
14 opposite of what you're intending to do, because I
15 could draw the map with a bunch of 50.1s, there would
16 be a bunch of 50.1, they would go all over, they
17 would look like spiders, and the reality of it is
18 that, that map would not pass muster. It would
19 violate every other principle of communities of
20 interest. It would violate the principle. So, the
21 Voting Rights Act, I agree, is about opportunity,
22 that's what this did, and I didn't, in fact, I
23 mentioned it as the second principle that I was going
24 to follow, not that they were ranked in any
25 particular order, but population is one, you got to

have the population one man, one vote. Second, was to provide the current majority minority districts that would have an equal opportunity for the minority community to let this candidate of choice. Now, you're right Senator Tarver mentioned it earlier. I met with every single Senator in this building, because you know your district better than anybody, you know who the people are in your district. The map that I established, many of those districts were agreed upon and were discussed with these elements in mind as what the district would do how it would best allow for a minority candidate to be elected and so that's why this map was put together. I know you have an alternate map, but no one talked to me about it. I haven't been briefed on an alternative map from anybody in the Senate. There are a couple of amendments that people want, but as far as for wholesale changes no one has talked to me about that.

SENATOR PRICE: And I certainly agree that you work very hard and you got advice from -- I'm sure every Senator that's here in the Senate, but at the same time, I'm still seeing the opportunity and I think that's something that we should consider and I do have a map that's going to be presented next with compactness. There's no gerrymandering I was thinking

it would meet Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. So, thank you for your hard work.

SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: Thank you, Senator Price.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Than you, Senator Price. So, Senator Cortez, I mean, this seems to be sort of the crux of it and so just ask you again the issue of opportunity to elect a candidate of your choice. So, we know that federal law defines a minority district as 50% plus one as a minority district but yet the opportunity for minorities to have an equal opportunity to elect a candidate of their choice there is some number beyond that depending on voter turnout and other things by which they would be able to do that, and so we need some kind of basis of evidence, don't we, to be able to establish like what is the number? Is it 51? Is it 52? Is it 58? I mean, it could be different things in different parts of the state depending on past elections, don't you think?

[00:50:07]

SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: Yeah, that was what I alluded to earlier. So there are statistical analysis done in the rural minority districts. They have a different turnout than the urban minority

1 districts traditionally. And so I don't know what the
2 reasons behind that are. I wouldn't even venture a
3 guess. But their facts are the facts. Historical
4 turnout, the past performance in elections is
5 generally indicative of future performance. So if you
6 get to a point where you say that it's an
7 opportunity, but it's not really an opportunity. It's
8 only an opportunity on face value that I got you to
9 50.1%. But we know historically they're not going to
10 turnout. So you're not going to get what you think
11 you're getting, and that's where I think, again, we
12 have the ability to agree to disagree on what's
13 opportunity. My opportunity is more of a slam dunk,
14 as Soto speak than the possibility rather than an
15 opportunity.
16 SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: All right. Thank you for
17 that additional clarification. Okay. I don't see any
18 other questions on the Board. I do believe staff has
19 technical amendments for your bill, isn't that right?
20 Staff, we have some technical amendments we need to
21 adopt. Okay. Staff is distributing that set. So as
22 you can imagine, we want to make sure we end up with
23 maps without any holes. We don't want to leave any
24 voters out. And so staff does a great job of going
25 through that and making sure that we have kind of

picked up any of the giblets or the pieces so that everything is perfect. Okay, so members, this is Amendment Set 42. It's got three amendments. Again, those are technical in nature. Any questions or concerns about those? Senator Milligan moves we adopt that set of amendments and objections. Okay seeing none, we have adopted Amendment Set 42. All right, Mr. President, do you have any other amendments?

SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: I do believe staff has prepared some amendments of -- if they want to hand them out, I can start discussing.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: All right, let's do that. Let's distribute the next amendment set. Okay so members, you know what you have before you looks very similar to the format of the bill, the original bill. So it will list by amendment changes, precinct changes. It looks like they did a wholesale swap, right. So in some cases, rather than just describing this precinct is in and it's out or whatever, they're re-describing particular districts. So they're deleting the entire district description and adding in the new district description with all the precincts to make it easier for us to read. You also have all the splits. So the demographics in the districts as they would be reconfigured with the

amended set as well as maps. So if you're more of a picture person and less of a word person, you can look at the color pictures. All right. Mr. President, would you like to talk us through those kinds of at a high level?

SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: Yeah, I guess I'll start with the northwest changes. So in Northwest Louisiana, Senate District 38 in the current configuration would add from Senate District 39, precincts 136A and 136B which are cattle precincts up there to the north of the district.

[00:55:00]

SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: In turn, it would Senate District 39 would pick-up 122, and Senate District 31 is going to - Senate District.

[OVERLAY]

SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: So, District 31 picks up precincts 72, 113, 102 and 108 out of District 38. So I'm going to call this a three-way swap in that, 39 picks up a precinct from 38, 38 picks up two precincts from 39, and 31 picks up four precincts from 38. And of course, this was the area where you had the migrated district. So a lot of these precincts were in a previous district that has been migrated to the North Shore. So that's the first

1 set. Madam Chair, would you like me to move to the
2 other parts of the state? Do you?
3 SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Yeah, there's a lot here,
4 and members are all trying to digest it. It looks
5 like it's clearly precinct swaps from one district to
6 another. So would you like for the President to
7 continue to walk through all of those, or would you
8 just like the opportunity, I guess what I'm
9 considering is maybe a suggestion that we consider
10 adopting the amendments. We'll give everyone time to
11 digest them, to think about them and perhaps not take
12 action on them today. I would be open to allowing us
13 to again work on those this afternoon and understand
14 them, and give the public an opportunity to
15 understand them as well and see them. They're seeing
16 them for the first time and then consider taking
17 action on this first thing in the morning when we
18 begin our next round of hearings. Would that be
19 easier for you all? It's an awful lot to digest at
20 one time. Senator Tarver?
21 SENATOR TARVER: Are you saying that it's
22 basically an even swap, correct? All of these
23 precincts basically?
24 SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: Yeah.
25

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: I cannot answer that all. I prefer you should, President.

SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: Population wise.

SENATOR TARVER: Population wise.

SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: Yes.

SENATOR TARVER: Okay. All of them are basically even. Okay.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: So the swaps, the in and out swaps, then end up leaving the districts very close in population to what they were as the bill was originally filed. I believe that's the question.

SENATOR TARVER: Yeah. They don't violate one man, one vote rule, does it?

SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: No. It keeps everything within the plus or minus range of the 5% so that we don't violate that. We really aren't violating the communities of interest because they're all in the compact area of Caddo and in Bossier. It doesn't affect Bossier. It's really Shreveport.

SENATOR TARVER: It don't affect Section 2 at all?

SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: No.

SENATOR TARVER: Okay. Ms. Chairman, are you saying adoptees in global or not?

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: My suggestion, if the committee would be open to that is to adopt these in global and we will defer the bill then until tomorrow. All right. And so we'll take it back up tomorrow after everyone's had more of an opportunity to digest the amendments. By adopting them, we'll be able to --.

SENATOR TARVER: Don't move. Let's adopt them in global.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Okay. All right. Senator Tarver has moved that we adopt Amendment Set 44. Is there any opposition to doing that? Okay, time out. Let me ask a question by Senator Harris.

SENATOR HARRIS: Yes, Mr. President, I just wanted to make sure I had an opportunity to kind of look through some of the stuff just for clarification with these swaps. These are swaps that our colleagues have decided that they wanted to do amongst themselves.

SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: These were all brought to me. And my understanding, I've talked to everyone who has a precinct from the original Senate Bill 1 that is affected, has said I'm okay with this change. So there's no one, to my knowledge that has not been informed and agreed that these swaps are all

okay. But I would like to go around and explain for clarity what these will do.

[01:00:00]

SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: I do respect that after they're adopted that we would defer the bill come back tomorrow and create a new map with the changes in it so that you can see it in holistically, but I can go through the other changes. There's a few areas of the State that I haven't mentioned. I just mentioned the Northwest.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Okay. If you would like to do that, I would certainly be happy to do that.

SENATOR JIMMY HARRIS: Yeah, I'm fine. I just wanted to make sure that we put on a record that these are conversations that you had with each of these Senators, as involved with this amendment that there is something that they already know about, and they agreed to.

SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: Correct. And it's my understanding that there are other amendments that are being requested. But, as you know, when you learn amendment on top of an amendment, you could change a population that now has an overage that you didn't weren't aware because this amendment wasn't in conjunction. So the reason these were all done in [PH

01:01:05] globo was because of exactly what you just said. Everyone has agreed to all of these that have their district under the current Senate Bill 1. If they were affected, they all had to agree and staff had to look at it from my instructions to be ensured that the Voting Rights Act was not affected. And that the populations one man, one vote was not affected that nobody was over or under after these changes would be made. So the bill, the map, after the adoption of these amendments will still be imbalance if you will on all of those principal criteria that I had laid out earlier.

SENATOR JIMMY HARRIS: All right. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: In some cases, if I'm not mistaken, I mean, some of the things and I know you'll touch on these when you go through the different parts of the State, you know, we have maybe split of a community where we needed to put them back together and the members who are closest to those communities knew that and knew that we needed to put some precincts back together. So, if you would like to just kind of high-level walk through those again, Mr. President, that'd be great.

SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: I'll go through the Lake Charles portion of it. Senate District 27 represents Sulphur. And if you look Precincts 468 and 469 and 466W were added to that district. That's the area of Carlos which is a community of interest like Sulphur. And it was always included in that district before. So, this was simply putting it back in the district that it had been in. From a numbers' perspective, it required Senate District 25 to pick up some precincts, three precincts to the east of Senate District 27, and I don't have enough light to read these. I can't, 860N, 860S and 61W. Those three precincts were on the eastern part of the 27. They now would go into 25, which of course, you know, goes east. So it's got more commonality with Jeff Davis. It borders Jeff Davis Parish, which is wholly included in Senate District 27. So that's the Southwest area changes.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Okay.

SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: In Morehouse Parish, we had one issue of Senate District 34, which is currently held by Senator Jackson was under populated. It did not reach the threshold of the plus or minus. So it needed to pick up population and so Precinct 37 was moved from 33 into 34 simply to fill

the population get it above the minimum, and they've all agreed to that. The Catahoula, I mentioned this earlier. We were going to attempt to move Catahoula wholly into Senate District 32 and that's what this amendment does. It moves Catahoula out of Senate District 34 and into 32. Again, using the principle that the parish is -- if you split up a parish, you have two Senators representing the parish, but the parish doesn't get to have its influence as like-minded. So that's what that one does. That's part of the Northeast one.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Okay.

SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: Then in the Lafourche Terrebonne map, what happened here was -- on an original map, there were three precincts down near Grand Isle --

[01:05:00]

SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: --that were Lafourche Parish precincts that had been moved into Senate District 8, which was the West Jefferson Parish District and Grand Isle is part of Jefferson Parish. Those have been moved back again to keep Lafourche Parish whole and wholly in Senate District 20. As I mentioned earlier, Senate District 20 initially was short and had to pick up population.

1 Well, in Senate Bill 1, it had all the population
2 that could take so by putting 33 in this amendment
3 back in, it had to relieve some population. Well,
4 Senate District 19 picked up Precinct 41, which is in
5 the Matthews area and that was in Senate District 19
6 before. And so, that district represented by Senator
7 Smith, he already represented them. And so, the ones
8 in staff Lafourche were already represented for the
9 previous 10 years by the senator from 20, the 19. So
10 that was an easy swap. But in order to fix that
11 population-wise, we had to go to Thibodaux and Senate
12 District 21 was took two Lafourche Parish precincts.
13 One, effectively -- I can't see the name, but it's
14 effectively the Nicholls University 214, and then
15 what we call, the Lafourche Crossing Precinct is 52.
16 Those two were moved into Senate District 21, and
17 that was solely to allow for the balance of
18 population. So that Senate District 20 didn't exceed
19 its plus 5%. Those were the affected parties. I think
20 that's included in this global amendment. I don't
21 have the map now. No, there is one more and I may not
22 have the map but it's--
23 SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: I think there's a Baton
24 Rouge map.
25

1 SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: Yeah. It was titled
2 Lake Charles as wise, like Lake Charles. Okay. So, in
3 Baton Rouge, there are two districts that were in
4 Senate District 6 that previously in the previous
5 current law, they were in 16 and those two have been
6 moved back into 16, where they originally were. And
7 then in the Northern area, I'm going to say near
8 Zachary, Senate District 6 picks up 226, 228 and 221.
9 Three precincts in Zachary. That effectively made
10 District 17 shy a few. So Senate District 17 picked
11 up a precinct in West Baton Rouge to be I believe 7A,
12 excuse me, 7A, which is in West Baton Rouge Parish
13 picked up a precinct there, and then I don't know the
14 number in -- in St. Martin Parish north of the
15 interstate in Henderson 28. And as you recall, that
16 is the district that goes and picks up all of St.
17 Landry and the town of Arnaudville in St. Martin
18 Parish, which is kind of split. So it picked up the
19 northern north of the interstate of Henderson. It's
20 just a little rural precinct, that's contiguous. And
21 that was for the purpose of making the population
22 work for that district. District 17. And that's all
23 of the changes to these global amendments. So, I
24 mean, I could go around and tell you more about those
25 movements, but basically, to Senator Harris' point,

everyone agreed to all of these to make the map balance to make it work right so that it didn't violate Voting Rights Act and that it kept the Communities of Interest together.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: All right. Terrific. Okay. Well, thank you for that additional explanation. I appreciate that. All right. So, Senator Tarver moved that we adopt these amendments. Any objection to that? All right. So, Senate Amendment Set 44 are adopted. All right. Are there any other amendments to take up at this time?

SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: I don't think so. I'm sure that there are some that have contacted me that want to have amendments that I've requested that that Madam Chair, you know I've requested that we defer this bill today, allow the public to look over these changes and give an opportunity tomorrow for the members of the committee to look at a different map with these changes incorporated. And then, of course, there'll be other amendments possibly tomorrow and committee. I don't know.

[01:10:00]

SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: No one said definitively they're bringing one. And of course, we

have the Senate Chamber where we can get floor amendments if a member wants to bring them.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Okay. All right. So, members, you all understand this is quite a complex task. So if there are any additional amendments that you're working on, I would ask that you get those to staff by 05:00 today. As you know, they were working here late-late last night. They'll be here late again tonight, I have no doubt, but give them every opportunity. This is tedious work. This is not again writing paragraphs. This is counting precincts and making sure that at the end of the day, we don't violate any of the contiguous principles and that everything else there aren't any voters left out, are double dipped in any way. So it's very tedious work. Again, members of the committee, any other senators, I'm asking that you get any additional amendments to staff by 05:00 today at your request. Mr. President will defer this bill until tomorrow, and we will again deal with any additional amendments that we have at that time and then take a vote on the bill to decide kind of how we move forward on that.

SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: And Madam Chair, I know there are plenty of people from the public that have come here. I think that understanding that it

has changed. If they're here to comment, I would welcome the comments from the public on this instrument today as well as tomorrow, although it has changed in the original bill that was filed, with the amendments would make some subtle change in different areas of the state.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: All right. I appreciate that.

SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: It is the pleasure of the committee.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you. Thank you, sir. All right, so we do have some cards of individuals that would like to speak given again how we kind of called an audible here, and we are not taking action on this bill until tomorrow, but many of you have traveled here, and I still want to give you an opportunity to speak if you would like to, so we'll move into that phase. All right. I have a number of you who have come, who have said that you were present and opposed, but you do not wish to speak. Okay. So this is quite a list. I'm going to try to run through these as quickly as I can. Again, excuse me in advance if I mispronounce your name, and then we will call some individuals to the table. And again, I will give you three minutes to speak. And

again, try to keep your points as succinct as possible so that we can give everyone the same opportunity. So present in opposition, but does not wish to speak, Darnell Tobias, Josie Ward, Janet Tobias, [PH 01:12:57] Kinesia Dougas, Dougs maybe, Ben Zucker, [PH 01:13:04] Angel Bradford, maybe Angel, Annie Early, Doris Curry, Michael [PH 01:13:14] Sneed, Janice Sneed, Ella Perkins, Joseph Cook, Ricky [INDISCERNIBLE 01:13:25], I apologize Caleb Homes, Giselle [PH 01:13:33] Hennelson, Linda [PH 01:13:37] Payzant, Almo Reno, Wendy Callahan, Cassandra [INDISCERNIBLE 01:13:45], Laura Bowman, Kenneth Franklin, Mila Thomas, Trinity Alexander, Gina Walmack, Will Walker, oh goodness, Carolyn Hernandez, AR Smith, Jaron Barnes, [PH 01:14:13] Takeia Caldwell, Jacob Bush, Farron Jackson, Christina [PH 01:14:19] Desondorf, Jewel Brown, Elizabeth Irvin, Julie Hoffman, Mary Tomas, Mary Harris, Peter Robbins Brown, Maxwell [PH 01:14:35], sorry, Harold John, Taylor Hodge, Aura Hart, Edgar Cage, Kennedy Carter, Cynthia Young, Tessica Johnson, Amari [PH 01:14:55] Ho Sang, Chanel White, Sydney [PH 01:14:58] Cammings.

[01:15:00]

Noah Armstrong, Kayla McIntyre, Kimberly Jones, Naomi Bashans, Jaden Hartley, Katina Robertson, Reggie [PH 01:15:14] Rork, Brianne [PH 01:15:18] Helaine, Nia Johnson, Charice Henry, Kirsten Blackman, Jolly [PH 01:15:26] Heinecker, Janey Jameson, Javon Finley, [PH 01:15:36] Darrenesena Crawford, Doreen Gaffney, Will Walker, Demetrius Norman, Frankie Robertson, Josanna [PH 01:15:51] Ridelspringer, [PH 01:15:54] Callia Sibley, Caitlin [PH 01:16:02] Blairen, Lisa [PH 01:16:02] Tomkeys, Charles Jean Jr., Sophie Holdorf, RG Johnson, Barbara Smith, Ivory John, [PH 01:16:21] Ziezal, goodness you have to write bigger for me next time, Jahobuf, Jozanna Marie [PH 01:16:29] Kittlespringer, [PH 01:16:32] Kotua Butler Reid. I'm sorry. I know I mispronounced an awful lot of those. All right. President would like to speak. Okay. All right. Now, those of you again that have asked to speak, I'm going to call you up two at a time. The first is Caitlin Joshua and [PH 01:16:54] Quentin Anderson. If you are still interested in speaking. And part of what we don't know is some of these could be coming from the overflow room. Okay. I guess I'm going to offer for those folks to start making their way down. And I'm going to go to two others while they're

moving and we'll come back to them. Okay. Chris Kaiser and Kenny Gordon, if you all are here, please come to the table.

CHRIS KAISER: Thank you, Madam Chair. And we just heard that Caitlin Joshua apparently waived, just so you know.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: I'm sorry.

CHRIS KAISER: The other witness that you mentioned, Caitlyn Joshua apparently waived. She just let us know.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Great. Okay. I appreciate that. Okay, so at the table, Chris Kaiser, if you would just say your name again for the record and we'll give you three minutes.

CHRIS KAISER: Sure. Thank you, Madam Chair and members, my name is Chris Kaiser. I'm the advocacy director with the ACLU of Louisiana. Thank you so much for your time and care and you've put into this work you've heard at length from the ACLU and other organizations on this. I will be brief. As you know, black voters in the state and people of color in general are significantly underrepresented in the State Senate. And we believe that Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act very likely requires significant increase in the number of majority black districts in

the Senate configuration. Because Senate Bill I basically preserves the status quo, we believe that it really doesn't represent the increase in black representation that we need and would likely violate Section II if it were enacted as it stands. I also want to mention that we do clearly know that it's possible to increase minority representation because you've seen at least two maps that do that not only the illustrative map the ACLU of Louisiana is put in during the roadshow, but also now Senate Bill 17 by Senator Price. Because it came up in the discussion earlier, I also wanted to note that at least with regard to the alternative illustrative map that we had submitted, we accomplished that greater minority representation while at the same time improving upon the current map and some measures of compactness and the number of parish and precinct splits. So I would just like to say our strong recommendation would be not to advance Senate Bill I but instead to give yourselves the best foundation for Section II compliance to advance one of the alternatives perhaps Senate Bill 17. Thank you.

SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: All right, Mr. Kaiser. Thank you, Mr. Anderson.

KENNY GORDON: Gordon.

SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: Excuse me?

KENNY GORDON: I thought you said Gordon.

SENATOR PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ: Sorry, I got my cards mixed up. Excuse me, Mr. Gordon, if you would introduce yourself for the record and have three minutes.

KENNY GORDON: Okay, well, my name is Kenny Gordon and I'm from Shreveport, Louisiana. I'm a member of the Eden Gardens Association and I want to say that I concur everything this gentleman is saying in reference to Senate Bill I.

[01:20:07]

KENNY GORDON: One thing I want to add is in Shreveport, there's a lot of red tape that is incurred in trying to start a business, and I know this because I'm trying to start a business as well. And I've been working on it for the last eight months, and I still haven't opened my doors yet because of all the red tape that exist. I think that a lot of people, young people and I've talked to them that leave the state because there are no businesses here to give them the opportunity to stay. And I've talked with people that they go and they get a degree, and they leave, and they head for Texas because Texas is a very free and opportunist place

for people to start businesses, but there's a lot of red tape here. So, I believe you changed the rules, get rid of the red tape and allow businesses to come here, then Louisiana will flourish. If you keep it like it is, then you're going to see an exit of more people, and then you're going to have to change the boundaries again. So, if you want people to stay here, change the rules and I guarantee you, and I can't guarantee anything of debt and taxes, but I can say that I believe people will stay and more people will come to this state because there'll be opportunities here. Right now, there not. Thank you for the opportunity.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, Mr. Gordon. All right, our next two speakers, Marissa Pittman and Matthew Schwartzman. If you would, as you begin Ms. Pittman, introduce yourself again for the record.

MARISSA PITTMAN: Of course. Good afternoon, Madam Chair and other members of the committee. My name is Marissa Pittman and I am a native Memphian. However, I am a resident and importantly, a voter in Orleans Parish. I attend the illustrious Dillard University as a sophomore public policy and mass communication scholar. In my time in New Orleans, I have become an active member of the community, both

on campus, as chief of staff for the 86th Administration of the Student Government Association, and off-campus, partnering with organizations such as the Power Coalition for Equity and Justice, and the Delores Taylor Arthur School for Young Men. Through these experiences, I have witnessed the power of community members, businesses and local organizations, whom we are advocating for today. I would like to draw your attention to the pressing issue of redistricting fair and equitable maps, and Senate Bill I's effect on Dillard University students who attend the oldest historically black college and university in Louisiana. New maps, such as those proposed by the Power Coalition for Equity and Justice, the ACLU, and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund will provide more representation of the issues directly affecting students unlike Senate Bill I. The maps that you and your colleagues choose will have lasting impacts on my peers and me as we begin to start our families and embark on our careers. As President Cortez mentioned, Senate Bill I does not increase minority representation despite, per the census, the minority population increasing. Without adding more minority-majority districts, as Senators Price and Tarver mentioned, this map is fundamentally

denying opportunities for voters to elect their candidate of choice and predict their futures. As currently drawn, this map and Senate Bill I will not empower minority communities. Therefore, I strongly urge you to oppose this bill and consider others. Thank you for your time.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, Ms. Pittman. Yes, sir. I'll let you pronounce your name. I'd probably butchered it.

MATTHEW SCHWARZMAN: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for letting me speak. My name is Matthew Schwarzman. I testified at the roadshow hearing in New Orleans, where I live. I've lived there for the last 20 years. I expect to live the rest of my life in Louisiana.

[01:25:01]

When I spoke at the roadshow, I talked about games and how Louisianans are good at games, and that voting is a game, but it's the single most important game that we play. And I want to mention here about one particular kind of game that you are involved in now, which is a puzzle, a jigsaw puzzle. And anyone who does jigsaw puzzles knows that where you start is where you determines where you finish. And if you start, you want to do is you want to start with the

most important, the clearest section of the puzzle first and then work around that. That does not seem to be what was done with Senate Bill 1. Instead, what seems to have been done is that you talked to all the puzzle pieces and you ask them what shape they would like to be, and then you mathematically kind of took the average of all of those puzzle pieces' answers to you, and then when you did that, you found, suddenly, that most important area that you should have started with first wasn't possible anymore. So, I'm saying, start from the beginning, start from the most important value, the most important puzzle piece, which is providing minority-majority districts. The Voting Rights Act says clearly that if it's possible, it must be done, not would be nice, it must be done, and you're setting yourselves and us up for a very bitter long court fight and I don't want you all to be wasting your time on that to be very honest. We have much more urgent businesses to attend to. So, please start with the most important puzzle piece first. Thank you.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, sir. All right, our next to [PH 01:26:56] Astiel McLain and Spencer Jones. If you would like to go ahead and introduce yourself and you can begin.

SPENCER JONES: Sure, yeah. So first, my name is Spencer Jones. And members of the senate and governmental affairs committee, I bring you humble greetings and salutations, and I thank you for the opportunity for me to speak before you today. My name is Spencer Jones and I'm a third-year urban studies and public policy major at Dillard University in New Orleans. Although I'm originally from Arkansas, I've grown to have a true and genuine love for the State of Louisiana. And while having a love for the State of Louisiana, I'm more importantly grown to be a very civically engaged person here. First and foremost, like me and my colleagues, I'm an active voter here in the state. I've interned and work with the Urban League of Louisiana and the bipartisan voting rights efforts, and I currently work with the Louisiana NAACP Youth and College division, and I also represent my university, Dillard University as a White House HBCU Competitiveness Scholar, an honor given by the White House and the U.S. Department of Education. As a young passionate civically engaged student in Louisiana, I urge you today, to draw fair and equitable district lines across our state as these decisions will impact me, my colleagues and friends for the next 10 years. Quite frankly, I have

plans to build roots in the State of Louisiana because of the rich potential that the state exudes. However, that rich potential cannot be attained with unfair and unequal district maps. For instance, as Senator Price alluded to before, with an increasing minority population in this state, there is no reason as to why these communities should not be fairly represented in district maps. Louisiana has a very interesting diversity of races. The percentage of African-Americans and blacks in this state is the second highest in the nation, only trailing behind Mississippi. There are also a significant number of Hispanics in the state, including the third largest Honduran-American community located in Metro New Orleans. These communities have to be fairly represented. Now, why of us college students shown in great numbers today? It's because our voices are necessary during the redistricting process as this will impact us well into our adulthood. In that spirit of risk potential that I spoke of before, you have the potential to let Louisiana be the example of other states of what it truly looks like to have fair and equitable maps. So, I ask you, what will be your priority? Will you prioritize the future of young people by drawing fair and equal maps, and will you

prioritize the future of the State of Louisiana? Thank you so much.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, sir. Yes, sir.

ASTIEL MCLAIN: Madam Chairman, greetings to [INDISCERNIBLE 01:30:01].

[01:30:02]

ASTIEL MCLAIN: I'm Reverend Astiel McLain, Associate Minister of Fellowship in Baptist Church, Freeport. I'm also here along two of my colleagues in Ministry. Pastor Jackson and Pastor Smith represent the Baptist Ministers Fellowship of Freeport and Vicinity and we also represent of a constituency of about 10,000 to 15,000 people. I'm here to voice my concern of a fairness. I think the numbers speak for themselves. I sometime hear a certain politics talk about alternative facts and fake news. Numbers add up. You cannot change the numbers. If the numbers say that the state has an increased minority population, then that should be reflected in representation. We as people of color, a third of the state and I think that we should be heard. I close with saying these two things. The Prophet Amos says "Let justice runs down like waters and rights like mighty extreme, but it is up to you all the custodians of our democracy in this state." The previous representatives to not

1 damn up that flow of justice and mercy by trickery,
2 by chicanery, by backroom deals to be fair and
3 equitable. When justice flows like it should, two
4 things happen. One, it has a cleansing element and
5 two, water renews us. Now, I love the state very
6 much, proud Louisiana, had a chance to represent our
7 state and House of Congress with the prayer and House
8 Representatives. But I looked at my state and I would
9 say this in love, we are shaped like a boot proudly.
10 We call ourselves the boot. But statistically, we're
11 at the bottom of the shoe. It's time for us to come
12 together and just be fair to everybody. Again, the
13 number speak of increased minority in this state;
14 therefore, it should reflect it in the master drone
15 on all levels congressional enslaved and so forth.
16 So, thank you very much the opportunity and God bless
17 you. It's my prayer. Thank you, ma'am.
18 SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, sir. Thank you
19 both. Previously, I had called Quentin Anderson. I
20 think they were in the other group. Were you in the
21 room yet? They were in the overflow room. All right.
22 Okay. Our next to [PH 01:32:59] Kathryn Crothers and
23 [PH 01:33:01] Tyler Finley. Are you all in the room?
24 KATHRYN CROTHERS: One second, please. Good
25 evening. I'm Kathryn Crothers, and I'm from Memphis,

Tennessee. I attend Dillard University as a nursing major in Orleans Parish and I'm here to testify and speak on some concerns I have about redistricting in the State of Louisiana. My first issue is opportunity. If you have the opportunity to create a minority-majority district, you should, regardless of voter turnout. There is a law to stop the dilution of votes, not to maintain turnout, so that should not be the concern. Secondly, if the population have changed, I feel is it only natural that representation may change. If the population is mostly black creating a new minority-majority district wouldn't be an issue of community interest because there's new community. He also mentioned that if the maps is spread out and it resembles a spider, then there's gerrymandering occurring. I don't know if you guys remember what the New Orleans Jefferson Region looks like, but it looks pretty spider like to me. This now becomes an issue of compactness in my opinion. So my question to you all is if it is truly your duty and concern to provide fair equal representation of all Louisiana residents, why not take advantage of the newly grown black population to create more equitable maps to represent us? Thank you.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you. Our job is not to answer the questions. Our job is just to listen in this part of the hearing, so thank you. All right. Mr. Finley.

TYLER FINLEY: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair and members, my name is Tyler Finley and I'm a second-year biology scholar at the Illustrious Dealer University.

[01:35:13]

TYLER FINLEY: Though I am a Tennessee native living in Louisiana, the last two years has shown me the beauty of a diverse culture. I engage in this culture by serving as Senate Pro Temp in our university's student government association and as a board member of the New Orleans Children and Youth Planning Board. In these roles, I directly see the problems that affect the New Orleans Parish. From one of the highest crime rates in the State, child poverty rates 10% above the state average and a childhood mal treatment rate of 10.2 per 1000 children. I say that to say those statistics do not reflect the amazing culture that brewing this beloved state. Louisiana has the beauty of instilling a diverse culture that has no boundary or selection of race, gender, or economic status. I call on you to

make the right choice to for this great state, yet that cannot be done until we adequately address and provide proper representation for each community. Mend the scales by creating another minority-majority district. Do not turn your eyes from further innovating our communities, which will ultimately aid the State of Louisiana. Thank you for your time.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, Mr. Finley. All right. Thank you both. Our next speakers, Joshua Miguel Benitez and Betty Wart Cooper. Yes, sir.

JOSHUA MIGUEL BENITEZ: Thank you, Madam Chair and good afternoon to the Governmental Affairs Committee. We appreciate you all for having us here today.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: You're very welcome.

JOSHUA MIGUEL BENITEZ: As stated, my name is Joshua Miguel Benitez. I'm a proud intersectional justice activist, a lifelong jazz musician and I currently work in a coastal restoration and I oppose Senate Bill No.1. I'm from New Orleans, you all and I have family down in Chalmette and I have family way up in the corner of Shreveport, Louisiana. This year, I marched from the superdome all the way across the Gulf South. Yes, I walked and I spoke to communities along the entire way. Like I said, I currently work

in coastal restoration. I planted 450 Cypress trees last week and I have heard the voices from people across all walks of life, republican restaurant owners, independent [PH 01:37:51] nutrioret hunters, and democratic legal rights advocates and they all want a fair and equitable state. LA has grown more diverse over the past decade, but this map does not do enough to capture that diversity. In a state that is roughly 33% black, racial proportionality would dictate that we have 13 majority minority seats out of the 39 total senate seats. This map only has 10. We need to make sure that everyone and every community is fairly represented and this map does not accomplish that. It is not a coincidence that Black History Month coincides with these decades long opportunity to create an equitable and representative state and I'd like to ask the senate to embody their values set forth by the legacy of civil rights leaders. Thank you.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, sir. Yes, ma'am, Ms. Wart Cooper, welcome.

BETTY WART COOPER: Good afternoon to all of you dear senators. Thank you for your service. I know that we are all created for a purpose in life and we want to be about that purpose and I feel that that's

why you're our leaders. You are elected to serve us and we're thankful for that. I am Betty Wart Cooper from Monroe, Louisiana, Washington Parish and I'm thankful for this moment to participate in this democracy. We have this democratic form of government. A democracy requires participation from its citizens and I feel in my heart you all want that participation from us. I've read things that you've said about you're doing the redistricting road shows and meetings like this, so that you can be accountable and transparent.

[01:40:04]

BETTY WART COOPER: And I really appreciate those words and you want stakeholders input. I try to live by that myself. I'm an elected official and serve on the Monroe City School Board and I try to encourage others to participate and I can participate by my presence here and my vote and we encourage others to do the same, so I'm here. I'm Louisianan. The state of my birth, the lifelong resident and I have deep roots and my connection is strong and I believe in this democracy. I believe in my voice being heard and the voice of others being heard and they need to be shown in these maps too. And so, my major concern

because of these two minutes or three minutes you gave us, I'll just speak about --

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: One minute.

BETTY WART COOPER: One minute, okay. Got to really speed it up, huh? Our maps must comply with federal law. We deserve maps that are compact and contiguous. Those are your own words. Those are the words of the law and they must give black voters an opportunity to elect the candidate of their choice. There are six congressional districts in the state which includes one minority district. Now, 100 divided by 6 that's about 16.67% or 17% representation, but we have 37% black population in the State of Louisiana, so you can see how that just don't add up. There are some voices that's not being heard and there will be some votes not being able to be counted. And so, there should be another minority district and I just want to enclosing here. You know, when we look at the fifth congressional district, if you look at that map configuration running from the Borders of Northeast, Louisiana all the way near New Orleans, near Baton Rouge, that configuration is off and not accurate.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: About time.

BETTY WART COOPER: Not what it needs to be, so I must again, thank you for your work and I'm praying that you will make the right decision and I know it's going to take courage. It will take courage to make the right decision. If you have to stand alone, but we're going to stand with you for doing what's right. Thank you.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you. Thank you for being here today.

JOSHUA MIGUEL BENITEZ: Thank you.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: All right. Our next speaker, Francine Brown and Xavier Kent.

FRANCINE BROWN: Good afternoon, Sharon Hewitt.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Good afternoon.

FRANCINE BROWN: and all of the other [INDISCERNIBLE 01:43:22] who are adjoined. My name is Francine Brown. I am a native of Shreveport, Louisiana. I'm a proud graduate and scholar of Southern University right here in Baton Rouge. I had the privilege of being a state manager for the United States Census in the Shreveport Office. There were many things that affected the context of our enumeration, everything from keeping employees to actually getting people to open their doors to get the correct count. It definitely affected the numbers

in Shreveport. Now, while the minority voter turnout is low entry port, we still have to give minority voters an opportunity to vote for the officials or the elected officials of their choice. I think we don't have that as we said here today. We definitely would ask and request for another minority district because of the almost 4% growth. I thank you so much today for your time.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Yes, ma'am. Thank you for being here. Mr. Kent?

XAVIER KENT: Yes. Greetings, Madam Chair and the rest of senators of the committee. My name is Xavier Kent and I do attend the Louisiana State University right here in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where I'm a junior major in a public relations and I also have the great opportunity as serving as the president for Louisiana's NAACP Youth and College Division. I am originally from the West Bank, actually, in Jefferson Parish [INDISCERNIBLE 01:44:58] Louisiana.

[01:45:00]

XAVIER KENT: And I can honestly say that I've had the great opportunity to be involved in both communities from the West Bank and in Baton Rouge. In my involvement, what I see are great people, right? Who take much pride and who represent their

communities really well. All hard-working people, and when they represent their community, do it with just such great attitude and just such a great service and with great hearts. So it's only fair that these people, these tremendous people, major minority communities, have fair representation and have fair equitable maps are drawn for them. As my time at LSU comes to a close, I often wonder if I want to stay here in Louisiana and build my family and a lot of that is going to be based upon the mess that are going to be released soon, so I beg you all. This is why we oppose the Senate Bill No.1, you all. We really, really need these maps to be fair and equitable and the ones that are in Senate Bill No.1 do not represent that. So, we're begging you all to listen to us and to do what's best and support the minority-majority districts that we need you all in here. We've heard all these college students come. I'm from Louisiana. We had a lot from [INDISCERNIBLE 01:46:08] and also we have some elders come with us as well. This is a very serious issue we want you all take it very seriously also, with us as well. So, please take to account the maps that the power coalition NAACP Legal Defense Fund and the ACLU have brought to us today. Thank you so much.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, Mr. Kent. Thank you both.

FRANCINE BROWN: Thank you.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: All right. Our next speaker is Cody Jones and Justin Hartley. I'm not really College Democrats of Louisiana. I apologize. I can't read the first name very well.

CODY JONES: His name is Justin.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Justin. It looks just like Justin now that you say that. Thank you. All right Ms. Jones will start with you.

CODY JONES: Hello. Good morning Madam Chair and the committee. My name is Cody Jones. I'm 21 years old. I representing the Second Congressional District of Louisiana. I currently attend Louisiana State University, where I serve as Black Student Union President and Vice-President of College Democrats of Louisiana. I'm actually from the West Bank of Louisiana like Xavier as well, but I also grew up in the Great City of Grand Isle, Louisiana. Grand in the West Bank and its entirety is a diverse place much like a pot of Gumbo. What the pot of Gumbo there are many different ingredients. You need to make the perfect pot. If you do not add enough or if you add too many ingredients, it's an unfair proportion and

the whole pot can be ruined. I used a scenario to draw to the issues of redistricting and fair and equitable maps. These maps will be voted on today must represent all of the West Bank and Jefferson Parish diversity equitably. I have several concerns about my community. Equitably public school funding not just for our charter schools. Community recreational funding spread equally across the district and specifically communities of color. And last but not the least, electing public officials who will bridge a communal gap between Jefferson Parish Police Department and the black community. We need to draw these maps properly to reflect the West Bank's growing diverse population. We need to make sure the 16% of our residents in poverty's voices are heard and provide more economic opportunities for all of our residents fairly. Drawing maps and include a majority congressional district and give our communities a second minority-majority give us a fair chance to elect candidates of our choice. I'm urging you all to transparently share the criteria used to draw maps and give the public ample [INDISCERNIBLE 01:48:22] to provide feedback for final decisions that are made. If the state fails to draw maps equitably, I will probably consider leaving the

state, although I really do have a great love for it. Me and my peers really do cannot like -- we really can't take this unfair practices any longer because we really do love Louisiana, but if you do not have fair equitable maps, it's going to make hard for many people of color to vote properly. So, thank you for your time and please consider voting no against SB1.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you very much, Ms. Jones. Mr. Hartley. I apologize for mispronouncing your first name.

JUSTIN HARTLEY: No, you're all good. Hello everyone. Thank you for having me. My name is Justin Hartley. I use they/them pronouns and I am a third-year student at Tulane University. I'm 21 and I'm also the current president of the College Democrats of Louisiana. Cody is my vice president. I along with my board represent the bold progressive voice of college students all around our state. I live, work and study in New Orleans, Louisiana. Logically, I should vote in the second congressional district and majority-minority district representing a vast majority of New Orleans. However, I and thousands of others are strategically gerrymandered into the first congressional district. Intentionally, diluting the power of our student votes and voices. This is what

we must undo, this legislative session. The extensive gerrymandering that riddles our state. We must make sure each and every voice is given the opportunity to vote in a district at the congressional and local levels that represent them.

[01:50:00]

JUSTIN HARTLEY: Hundreds of college students and I support the creation of a fair maps that include at least two majority-minority congressional districts, revise school board maps, revise senatorial and representative maps. You all have the chance to do something in this process that will make the next generation, my generation proud. Please be aware that you decisions will impact communities spanning every parish, township and city from the most rural to the most urban and as always, the young people are watching and we vote. My organization and young people everywhere are asking you to oppose the Senate Bill 1, thank you.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you very much. Thank you both. And just kind of on a side note, I want to say, I do really -- and then I know many of you have left. I do really appreciate seeing so many young people involved in this process. So, kudos to you all and thank you for being here. All right,

1 Tanya Neiman and [PH 01:51:01] Kereana Rogers. You
2 may start.
3 TANYA NEIMAN: Good afternoon. My name is Tanya
4 Neiman. I lived in Baton Rouge. Thanks so much for
5 allowing me this opportunity. I'm only going to
6 comment on specifically the Baton Rouge area and my
7 concern with the way in which the precincts are
8 divided there or the districts that are divided there
9 has to do with the way in which each senate district
10 seems to be hyper-packed. The percentage of the
11 racial groups are unnecessarily high. I can point to
12 my district in particular, I think it's 16, but if
13 you look at it, the lines aren't. The district is not
14 compact and it gerrymanders the line in a way that
15 gets it up to 72% white voting age population. We
16 don't need that high of a concentration in that
17 district. And my concern for that has to do with the
18 fact that I think it does two things. One, it very
19 well may prohibit the likelihood of creating another
20 majority black district in East Baton Rouge Parish.
21 Secondly, it certainly creates more hyperpartisan
22 candidates or elected officials. And so, I would
23 certainly like to see that district be more
24 competitive. In that way, the East Baton Rouge
25 delegation could hopefully have a better relationship

as well at the end of the day. I understand that the Senate Bill 17 does increase the number of majority black districts which is certainly ideal, but the fact is East Baton Rouge Parish has -- and now, I'm a little out of date. I don't remember if it's the largest city in Louisiana or the second largest since East Baton Rouge and New Orleans has been going back and forth. But certainly, it is one of the largest cities in Louisiana and it is also one of the largest black communities in Louisiana. And for that reason, it certainly deserves to be one of the areas that garners and additional majority black district. Thank you.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Yes, ma'am, thank you.

KEREANA ROGERS: Good evening. My name is Kereana Rogers. I currently served as Dillard University Senate Chief of Staff and I am a native of Texas, but my lineage began in Louisiana. And to come back and go to college out here is kind of sad to see there's no growth. I come here often even before I became a college student and it's like I feel like New Orleans has been in the same place for a while and I would love to see a change, but I feel like without the proper representation, we won't have a change and it will stay in its pivotal state that is in right now.

So, I urge you guys who sit on this board to take into consideration what we are saying when we say that we want you guys to reconsider the maps. They don't fairly represent us and quite frankly, they don't represent the generations to come. It's a lot of college students who come from all over the world to go to college in this gray state and I would hate to see us all leave and leave with our families. I want to eventually start a family in Louisiana, but the only way I can do that is if you guys properly represent us in these lines. So, I think you guys take into consideration what we're saying, take into consideration the maps that they've shown you guys and take into consideration the people that we brought here with us because it's clearly a problem. This court house was filled earlier. You all had to bring us upstairs to the overflow room and I feel like that right there says a lot.

[01:55:01]

KEREANA ROGERS: So, I thank you guys for the opportunity to let me speak and I ask that you revisit these maps and they probably represent the minority and their votes because we do matter. Thank you.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you. Thank you very much for being here. All right, our next speakers, Keturah Butler-Reed and Omega Taylor. Omega Taylor and Keturah Butler-Reed.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: You can't speak, but you'll need to fill out another card. I'd be happy to allow you to do that. Yes, sir. Ms. Taylor?

KETURAH BUTLER-REED: Butler-Reed

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Butler-Reed, excuse me. Okay, if you would like to begin, please.

KETURAH BUTLER-REED: Okay. Sorry, I'm a little nervous, okay. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Keturah Butler-Reed. The Louisiana Regional Organizer for the Black Voters Matter Fund. As a resident of Baton Rouge, organizer, recurrent voter and most importantly, black woman, I have a vested interest and an equitable distribution of resources into black communities as well as maps that do not cripple the voices and political power of black and brown people. So, the other night, I was watching the majors, you know the original one and it got me to thinking about choices, red pill or blue pill. And this morning, I thought, our sinisters do have a choice, a choice to vote on a map that barely changes anything and they go home having made a decision that will affect the

lives of everyone in this state for the next 10 years or they can choose to make a decision that will change our lives for a better reality in the years to come. Instead of pills, you all have to choose between maps. You have a map that only proposes one additional majority-minority district or you can choose a map with at least 13 majority-minority districts. Beware that the second, reflects the results of black people counting in the census. I challenge you to push for more majority-minority districts because more means more resources poured into black schools and more of a significant voice in black people choosing elected officials because that is reflective of the numbers of the people. And many of us in the audience today are against SB1 because there are more rural communities like Jefferson's or your New Iberia Parishes that do not have the opportunity to testify because the roadshow didn't come to their areas. Ironically, SB1 would directly impact the voting power of people in areas like Jefferson Parish. Instead of pulling apart those numbers, they and other majority black and brown communities deserve to not only be recognized for their numbers but to be represented. We need more spaces and districts for black government officials

because they are aware of our issues, are able to advocate for us and most importantly, propose legislation to work with us in ensuring our unalienable rights. Thank you.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: All right, thank you. Ms. Butler-Reed.

KETURAH BUTLER-REED: Butler-Reed.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Butler-Reed, okay. All right, Mr. Taylor.

CHIPS TAYLOR: Thank you so much. I appreciate this opportunity to come before you. As was stated earlier, it is very important that our voices be heard. I am Pastor Chips Taylor with the NAACP Religious Affairs Division. I have been in NAACP for over 35 years. They say I bleed in NAACP and NAACP stands for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People that's all people that's yellow, white, black, red. I've worked on the get-out to vote campaign for many, many years in Louisiana. Our power is in our vote. It is very important that all individuals have an opportunity to vote. When you set up the maps as they are being set up, it must include all. It must give everyone that equal opportunity. A lot of times, you know, politics get into it and people want to do this and want to do

that which is best for the political party, their political party. It's not about their political party, it's about what is right. You know, as was stated by President Obama, it's not about black, it's not about red, it's not about blue, it's about all people.

[02:00:02]

CHIPS TAYLOR: We all are Americans. I'm a veteran. I fought for this country. I love our country. However, I want my children to have the same equal rights as your children do. The only way that can come about if they have the opportunity to vote. I am so impressed my wife is the one -- she is in charge of the Youth and College Division of the NAACP and I'm so proud to see these young people how they have come out to represent, to let their voice be heard. Because if we sit and say, "Well, I'm middle-aged and you have more behind you", then you have in front of you, you're no longer middle-aged. It's our young people who are leading our country. They must be given the same opportunities that we have. So please, when you look at the maps, when you look at the redistricting, please consider everyone. We are American citizens. Like I said, it's not about Democrats, it's not about Republican, it's about

being an American. And if you are American, you should have the God-given right to vote. You should have the God-given right to live where you want to live and be representative by those who look like you. We need more. As you look at the numbers in Louisiana, they are not equal when it comes to how many representatives' blacks have, how many minorities have, so we need to make the field equal. I know my time is well spent. I thank you for the opportunity to speak and I simply pray that you do the right thing.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you. Thank you very much for being here and thank you for your service.

CHIPS TAYLOR: Thank you.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Alright, DeAndre Bell II and Carlos Pollard, Jr. All right. Mr. Pollard, would like to begin?

DEANDRE BELL II: DeAndre Bell.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Excuse me.

OMEGA TAYLOR: Omega Taylor.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: All right. Please begin.

DEANDRE BELL II: Madam Chair to friends and foes of the bill, to the members of the committee, I greet you all by saying good afternoon. I'd like to start by pointing out how unfortunate it is that the full

1 committee is not present. It's unfortunate they
2 either had to run off and do something else so they
3 could not be here to witness this. It's also
4 unfortunate that the author of the bill who asked for
5 comments and testimonies has either been having side
6 conversations or been on his phone, but I am DeAndre
7 Kenny Bell II of Junior Urban Studies Public Policy
8 Pre-Law Scholar at Dillard University in New Orleans
9 Parish. Though not born in the state, much of who I
10 am is built off the myriad of lessons and family ties
11 I have here. I spent much of my childhood playing in
12 the streets of Houma, riding down the Bayou with my
13 papa horse or my cousin Lucky. So, suffice it to say,
14 Louisiana runs through my veins. Now, hearing the
15 words and grievances of my colleagues, the very
16 apparent question before this assembly is why not?
17 And I know of course, I know your decorum, you're not
18 answering any questions, but I want you to think
19 about this. This isn't a dispute of political
20 morality on either side of the aisle, so the question
21 you have to ask yourselves is what exactly do you
22 have to lose? Are you trying to secure your seat and
23 ensure re-election? Are you trying to legitimize your
24 leadership or your legacy? If either of the answer to
25 those questions is yes, then of course you need to

ask yourself, what is the state have to gain by redrawing these maps? Because I can assure you that if you choose the people, the people will choose you. As a 20-year-old black man in the state of Louisiana, it feels as though the drawing of fair and equitable district lines across our state will cultivate a culture across Louisiana that you most definitely will not regret. To young people who I advise you listen to are beginning to buy into this idea of redistricting and understanding the ramifications of maps presented by people such as the author of the bill. And so, with that members of the assembly, I'm asking you to think. We need you to think about this. I know each of you can discern what is right and what is wrong. You can discern what is fair and unfair. And so, to deprive one-third of the state's population of the ability to elect their preferred candidate keeps Louisiana at the bottom of nearly every statistic in this country.

[02:05:03]

DEANDRE BELL II: Redistricting provides us with a glimpse into our future by reminding us of our past. It shows us the iniquities of times before and the priorities of legislators and communities moving forward. Priority such as the author of the bill who

ran out. So, I'll ask again, why not redraw fair and equitable maps that represent the demographic and population changes across this country? Across The state of Louisiana? These are the things that I ask that you consider before you move this bill or Senator Price's Bill to the senate floor.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, Mr. Bell. And just for your information and I know it's very difficult for members of the public to understand this, but committee members, this committee has worked extremely hard. They have been here since 9:30 this morning. We have another bill to hear. We will have a meeting at 2:30 to interview ethics candidates for appointment and we'll be on the floor at 5:00. So, members of this committee have some personal things that they need to take care of and are of course working on other legislation as well. And so, quite often some of the multitasking, you don't always necessarily see, but I can promise you they're completely engaged in the people's work. And so, they may be in an anteroom actually watching all of this on the monitor as well. So, it doesn't always appear that way to the public, but I want you to know that we're very committed and this committee is very engaged to this process.

DEANDRE BELL II: Well, I do appreciate that Madam Chairman.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you. All right. Ms. Pollard.

OMEGA TAYLOR: No, Omega Taylor.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: How did I--

OMEGA TAYLOR: On my understanding, I was called.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: You were called. I think it just shuffled my cards too much. Thank you very much. Please proceed.

OMEGA TAYLOR: Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Omega Taylor. I am the Youth and College State Advisor for the NAACP. I represent all of Louisiana Youth and College. I come here to say, if we do not do this like this time, you're going to have a lot of young people that's going to leave the state. I cannot testify to that because I was one of them. Years ago, I left the state for better jobs, better schools and then I came back and I have been working in the trenches ever since. Do be fair with us. That's all we're asking. Just to draw the lines straight, so that everybody can have the opportunity. The rich, the poor, the white, the black, the brown, any color, we want it all. We just want a fair and representation of everybody, so we can get all the

votes. We want to vote for all of you. We want you all to do what is right. And when you do what is right, you will get the votes, whether you're black or white, we will vote. So I just ask, draw the lines fairly. Thank you.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Alright, thank you very much Ms. Taylor. Appreciate that. All right. I'm down to my last few cards, so apologize. I keep reshuffling. Mr. Carlos Pollard, Jr. did you have an opportunity to speak? All right, and we'd call this a couple of times, Quentin Anderson. I think the overflow room is clear, so these folks may have changed their mind about speaking. And then the last card, I do not wish to speak present in operation Maria Herom. All right, I think that's all of the cards. Are there any other individuals here wishing to speak? All right. Did you fill out a card?

MADISON HICKS: Yes ma'am.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Okay. Why don't you come forward then? Have you filled out a card?

DEMETRIUS NORMAN: Yeah, I may have insert in the wrong box, so Demetrius Norman.

MADISON HICKS: [PH 02:09:15] Madison Hicks.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Okay. You all can come and sit and I'll ask you to introduce yourselves. Okay, I'll start with the lady first, please.

MADISON HICKS: Yes, good afternoon. My name is Madison Hicks. I am a freshman at Dillard University in New Orleans. But first and foremost, I'm a native from Shreveport, Louisiana. And a few concerns that I have dealing with the fact of redistricting is that Caddo Parish well, is new to my knowledge, is that Caddo Parish is one of the parishes who's lost the most population.

[02:10:01]

MADISON HICKS: And I feel like we lost population in those, but we have a growing minority population. And in order to represent them adequately or correctly, we also need to provide them with the knowledge and tools to go about filling out the census and knowing their value and their worth and their voice. Knowing that these redistricting do not only affect your voter rights, but they also affect your jobs, wages, criminal justice reformed. It goes a lot into it and I feel like they lack the education and the understanding of how important it is to fill out and to be a part of this process and because that we risk losing our representation that I feel like we

already don't have. Also, with being a college student, I am a growing black person in America and I'm becoming more aware of the issues that are really going on and my role in them. And so, I feel like it's now or never. And now is the time where you have a chance to help and you have a chance to be that voice for some people who are scared to speak or speaker for those who don't really know that they have their voice to use. And when with redistricting and with drawing these lines, you need to adequately use your power correctly and ensure that these people are being represented and just take them -- I'm sorry I'm a little nervous. Excuse me.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: That's okay, but time to wrap it up.

MADISON HICKS: Okay, yeah. Just be sure that you're ensuring their vote and you're making sure that they know that their vote and their power in the census matter and they have this power without that knowledge that is why the voter turnout in my city is as low as it is because they don't know. Thank you.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: You're very welcome. And again, did you fill out a card?

MADISON HICKS: Yes, ma'am. I filled on a green card.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: A green card?

MADISON HICKS: Yes ma'am.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: So, you're in support of Senate Bill 1?

MADISON HICKS: No, it was Senate Bill 17 I was in support of.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Okay. We haven't heard Senate Bill 17 yet, so that's why we can't find your card.

MADISON HICKS: I'm sorry. He told me that he gave it to me.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: No, you did. We're hearing cards on Senate Bill 1 right now and then when Senate Bill 17 is presented, we'll hear cards on Senate Bill 17.

MADISON HICKS: Okay.

DEMETRIUS NORMAN: We apologize.

MADISON HICKS: Okay, well, I did oppose one as well, but I will stand. I did fill up the green card.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Okay, so your card is in a different stack for a different, but you don't need to speak again. We appreciate you being here. If you do choose to speak again, we'll call you in a little bit.

MADISON HICKS: Okay.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: All right. Yes sir, Mr. Norman.

DEMETRIUS NORMAN: Yeah, I'm Demetrius Norman president of the Northwest Louisiana Makerspace, founding president. Our only Makerspace organization in that part of Louisiana. So, we've been doing a lot of work since about 2015, 2016 since we got together to increase the number of individuals going into lucrative careers and opportunities and stem or steam science technology, engineering and math. And so, our target is typically those underrepresented groups, individuals, a lot of people working it, convenience stores and gas stations that have the talent and the capability, but not the resources and kind of miss that opportunity for that type of education in our K-12 school system. I've been an advocate for years for stem and steam in our cattle schools in Shreveport, Louisiana. So, you now have run after school programs before working with stem. It's quite a bit of work. I'm pretty sure you all familiar with all the gaps that we have and the technology world with the new jobs and the new business opportunities. They're increasingly stem centered. They require a lot of technical knowledge even if you're just going to be like a clerical person, you have to have a lot more

technical capability than the jobs of yesterday. So, when we look at disparities like things that are going on with our economy, I think most of the job growth that we have had, if I'm not mistaken and every major city in Louisiana has been some sort of technology company, that's company in each city, Monroe, Shreveport, Baton Rouge. There's a crisis that goes with it, the digital divide. There's been sort of a gerrymandering of resources with technology, the type of things that we provide for citizens in Caddo Parish.

[02:15:00]

DEMETRIUS NORMAN: It parallels red lining in the housing market and of course, all these things correlate to gerrymandering their votes and our census. So, we do step up in the area of civic engagement as well to make sure that we advocate for those groups that were serving. We partner with power coalition, a cell you, black voters' matter. We spend a lot of money and time and resources last year. Well, in 2020, actually with the census effort, we work with the US Census Department to make sure we got out maximize our turnout and are accurate count with our census in the Caddo area. I don't have to tell you all. It's a very tough thing for a citizen

to organize and to do. I personally, we feel like we need to start organizing these types of things may be at least two or three years ahead of time, so that we're not having such a difficult conversation at the last minute. But the reason we were so passionate about the effort was because of this redistricting process that is taking place now. And so, we're here to ask you guys to make sure that we uphold the spirit of the Voting Rights Act and Section 2 that prohibits any type of action that dilutes the voting power of our constituents that we serve.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you very much. I appreciate it. And as the committee knows I'm a huge stem advocate. I've been up in your area and visited many, many times and appreciate the work that you're doing up there.

DEMETRIUS NORMAN: Absolutely. You stop by Huntington High School in Greenock, so those are two of our stem programs we just started.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Great, great opportunities for jobs, for our people, so thank you for doing that. All right. Okay. I think those are all of our cards on Senate Bill 1. The committee previously, as you recall, chose to defer this Bill until tomorrow, so that we can consider any

1 additional amendments before we hear the bill again
2 tomorrow morning. So, thank you Mr. President for
3 your time and your commitment and your work on this
4 bill. All right. Our next Bill is Senate Bill 17.
5 Here's Senate Bill 17 with Senator Price.
6 [OVERLAY 02:17:20-02:18:13]
7 SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: All right. Welcome
8 Senator Price, got the crowd all warmed up for you.
9 SENATOR EDWARD PRICE: Very good. Good afternoon,
10 Madam Chairman and members of the committee. I bring
11 to you today Senate Bill 17 redistricting of the
12 Louisiana Senate Districts. I thank you
13 [INDISCERNIBLE 02:18:35] explaining earlier all the
14 criteria's and everything which I had made some
15 notes, so I won't go through that again. But I do
16 offer you an alternative to Senate Bill 1 at this
17 time, which would increase the minority participation
18 in this process. As you know, I'm talking with the
19 question that the Senate President, I mentioned that
20 the population in the State of Louisiana increased a
21 little bit, but what it has done was increasing
22 minority population. Whereas, the majority population
23 has decreased. So, I thought that it was a good time
24 that we look at the maps that we are drawing and the
25 district that we have. In this bill, we would

increase the minority participation of district at this time from 11 to 13. Right now, we have minority to district 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 14, 15, 24, 29, 34 and 39. And in my bill, we would go increase two districts, 17 and 27. Do you want to put the map up?

[02:20:00]

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Is that 37, you mean?

SENATOR EDWARD PRICE: 17 and 37, yes. As you know Senate District 17 is saying the southern portion of the state and Senate District 37 is in the northern portion of the state. That give you some statistics here and we talked about population wise. Senate District 2, it would be 59% of black and the voting age population would be at 56.6%. District 3 is 59.34 total population, black at 57.36 voting age population. District 4, 59% total population, 56.61% voting age population. District 5, 54.48% total, 51.718% voting age population. District 7, 55.23 total population, 52.952 voting age population. District 14, 58.547 total and 56.647 voting age population. District 15, 63.9 total and 61.282 voting age population. District 17 which would be a new one 54.81 and 53.039 total. District 24, 57.95 and voting age population 55.514. District 29, 59.754 and 58.872 voting age. District 34, which is 67.7 and 64.05.

1 District 37, 57.99 and voting age, it would be 54% of
2 black and District 39, 57.8 and voting age population
3 will be 55. So, this is a great indication that this
4 can be done by increasing the state with two minority
5 senate district. If you want to look at the map
6 District 37, if you call that. District 37, that's
7 the North Louisiana in the Caddo Bossier area and it
8 still was a district that was up there already, but
9 it would go to be a majority black district, so it
10 covers some of Bossier and Caddo. We were able to
11 really draw that district. It does comply with
12 Section 2 of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. As a matter
13 of fact, this entire map that we've drawn with the
14 district definitely complies with the Voting Rights
15 Act. So, District 17, it was the other one that's
16 created and it starts in West Baton Rouge Parish.
17 Pointe Coupee, West Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge and
18 voters of interest compactness, everything is there
19 as required by Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act.
20 So, we have done this, we've made this possible and
21 like I said, it definitely complies and we think that
22 we can increase the minority seats in the senate by
23 at least two not just a 50.1 as required as you see,
24 but all these districts of 52, 53% voting age
25 population and most of them are even higher, but it

1 provides an opportunity for another black to be
2 elected. Two more blacks to be elected to the state
3 senate, which with the increased population, I'm sure
4 that's where we need to be going. If we going to --
5 the minority population is increasing then I think we
6 need to comply with Section 2 of the 1965 Voting
7 Rights Act. I think I'll take any question if you all
8 have any.
9 SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Maybe, review the map in
10 the other district that the change District 17, did
11 you review that yet?
12 SENATOR EDWARD PRICE: Yes, what happened in
13 District 17, in West Baton Rouge has affected
14 District 2, which is my own senate district. And so,
15 it also affected Senate District 19 because by moving
16 West Baton Rouge out of my district, I had to move
17 down -- my district move down more in the St. John
18 Parish and so that affected District 19 and we had to
19 shift more south into Lafourche Parish with that
20 district.
21 SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: And have you visited with
22 the senators in that area about the shifts and the
23 proposed changes?
24 SENATOR EDWARD PRICE: Yes. I did it with Senator
25 Smith. I have not. Senator [PH 02:26:34] Ward's

district that is now. He hasn't been here, so we do need to talk to him, but yes.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Okay. I'm trying to catch up here. It's a lot to digest between the maps and the numbers.

SENATOR EDWARD PRICE: Right. And I know we've talked about just like we deposed that bill at some point, so that people could see this map and now that is online and everything and continue discussion tomorrow. So, I have no problem with that.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Okay, yeah. I appreciate that. It does give members, like you said, little bit more time than it was relatively late filed yesterday as we were on the floor. We kind of got to see it for the first time, so that would give us a little more time to ask questions and for members to get to visit with you about how their districts would be changed under this this proposal. Are there any questions from the committee at this point? All right. Looks like everybody's worn down a little bit senator.

SENATOR EDWARD PRICE: It's always good when you're going like this and everybody else is tired.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Yeah, that's right. Tired and hungry.

SENATOR EDWARD PRICE: We do have an amendment that we need to.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Yes. Let's do that. Is that a technical amendment?

SENATOR EDWARD PRICE: Yes, it is. On page 1 at the beginning of line 8, just delete the letter A.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: All right, staff if you all would distribute the technical amendments.

SENATOR EDWARD PRICE: That's real technical.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you. Because our staff does such a great job. They can catch things like this. All right. So, members, you should have amendments at 40. A technical amendment any objections to adopting that amendment? Okay, then that amendment stands adopted. All right. Any other questions for the senator, I guess, I'll ask one question. You know, we've talked a lot about sort of, what does it take in terms of voting age population for a district to be considered a minority district to give them an opportunity elect a candidate of their choice, so the definition is around what is the opportunity and what would that number need to be? And I think the law says something more like an equal opportunity to elect a candidate of their choice. So, you wanted to be something where there's reasonable

expectations that they would be able to do that. And so, did you have any data or any evidence that you use as a basis for determining what that would be in drawing these new districts or in drawing your map in general?

SENATOR EDWARD PRICE: Well, in drawing the map, I've looked that and Senator Tarver mentioned earlier that he ran into district that was little over 50% and was able to get elected. When I ran for the senate, I ran in the district that was around 53%, 54% and was able to get elected in my district. And I'm like him, if you get out there and work hard and you do the thing you need to do and people respect that, there's an opportunity and I certainly feel I don't have the data to say whether somebody got to run in the 54%, 55% district.

[02:30:09]

SENATOR EDWARD PRICE: I just know that when you work hard, you do the thing that you need to do, people will go out and support you. If you do the right thing, they will support you. So, I'm comfortable with it. I think other members that I've talked to is comfortable with these numbers and they're willing to have that opportunity to get out there and give it a shot.

1 SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: And I appreciate that.
2 And of course, we're glad that you and Senator Tarver
3 have worked so hard to get elected. But the law does
4 require us -- again, if we made districts that were
5 50% plus 1 -- just again, I'm trying to give kind of
6 more of an extreme case. If we create districts that
7 were 50% plus 1 and said, "You all just get out there
8 and work hard." I don't know that that would stand up
9 to a legal challenge. I think in those cases, a legal
10 challenge would say this legislature failed to give -
11 - according to the Voting Rights Act, you know the
12 minorities in those districts, the opportunity to
13 elect a candidate of their choice because it's not a
14 real opportunity at 50% plus 1. And you're right, it
15 does matter, you know where you live and what the
16 voter turnout is and the voting histories, election
17 histories in those areas. And so, what we're all
18 looking for here and we're all wanting to accomplish
19 the same thing is to follow federal law and the
20 Voting Rights Act. So, what is the number and how
21 does it change in different districts would be
22 something that would be very valuable information.
23 And so, I didn't know if you had access to any of
24 that that would give us evidence in a particular
25 district, such as maybe the examples that you cited.

1 You have an election where a minority candidate ran
2 and got elected with X percent voting age population,
3 so it's one piece of evidence that that could happen
4 in that district. Of course, there're other districts
5 where that may not hold out because the voters in
6 those areas are different in terms of their voter
7 turnout and their propensity to vote. So, I guess my
8 question is -- sorry, I was kind of a rambling thing,
9 but my question is, do you have any numbers or any
10 study or any evidence? Did you all do any work to get
11 to the numbers as they are or as you proposed in your
12 bill?
13 SENATOR EDWARD PRICE: I do not have the data at
14 this time and I'm not quite sure how much data is out
15 there on these patterns. I do know that when you have
16 pattern of voting and we do look at some things like
17 that, what the turnout is and what black
18 participation is as compared to white. Yes, it's out
19 there. But, you know, my philosophy about this, if we
20 don't provide this opportunity, we never will know if
21 we have a district that's 54%, 53% that people will
22 turn out. I absolutely believe that we will. It's in
23 my gut that people will go out and vote when they
24 know they have that opportunity and you just got to
25 work hard to achieve it and I'm a hard worker and I

hope anybody that runs would be a hard worker and get out there and turn the vote out and have a platform that they are interested in that they will go out and vote for someone of color, so that's where we got to go with this. We just can't sit back now and say, "Are they're not going to go vote." We don't know that. But we do know if we give an opportunity, then we can say we tried.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Sure. And you are a hard worker. I want to acknowledge that and I know that. So, did you have any kind of -- again, a number or rule of thumb that you were seeking to keep all of your districts above or below in crafting your bill?

SENATOR EDWARD PRICE: Note, when we looked at the bill, this is where we came out. I think all these districts of at least 53% voting age population, which I felt very comfortable with. So, it wasn't like, "We're going to do a 50.1 or we're going to do -- got to do a 60%." No, it's just that when we were able to increase it by 2, the numbers fell around 53% voting age population in most of these districts.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Okay. All right, that's helpful. Thank you. All right, Senator Tarver.

SENATOR GREGORY TARVER: Well, Madam Chair, there is no guarantee that anyone may be black or white to get elected and I don't think the law mandate that you elect a certain one. They give you the opportunity and I'm going to say to you, the only thing that is guaranteed, I'm in that business.

[02:35:11]

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: And we heard that earlier, debt and taxes. We know a little bit about both of those, don't we? All right, senator, thank you. All right, any other questions from the committee? All right, I don't see any other questions, senator, on the board. Let me go to the cards now, if that's alright and we'll hear some comments from the public. Excuse me. One second. Hang on, staff is saying what?

FEMALE 1: Did we adopt the amendment yet?

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: I think we did adopt the technical amendment.

SENATOR EDWARD PRICE: We did. I offered it.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: We did. We adopted the technical amendment. Are there any other amendments, senator, at this time?

SENATOR EDWARD PRICE: No.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Okay. All right. I've got a number of cards here. Bear with me. A number of cards here. I do not wish to speak on present and in support. Okay. So, we have green cards and I will read these through as I did with the last group. [PH 02:36:16] Candace Batiste, [PH 02:36:21] Caitlin Joshua, Kimberly Jones, Jaden Hartley, Carlos Pollard, Jr., Darren Nisha Crawford, [PH 02:36:31] Doreen Gaffney, [PH 02:36:34] Kolea Sibley, Channel White, [PH 02:36:38] Charisse Henry, [PH 02:36:40] Jabrian Hilaire, Nia Johnson, Kirsten Blackman, Rosie Robert, [PH 02:36:48] Jolly Henninger, Cody Jones, [PH 02:36:54] Katuar Robertson, Noah Armstrong, Caleb McIntyre, Cynthia Young, [PH 02:37:02] Amare Hooseng, Sophia Holdorf, Frankie Robertson, Will Walker, Taylor Hodge, Edgar Cage, Michael Sneed, [PH 02:37:24] Orla Lahart, Ben Zucker, [PH 02:37:27] Kenesha Dags, Doris Carrie, [PH 02:37:32] Anjou Bradford, Ricky Limos, Joe Look, Ella Perkins, Janice Sneed, Giselle Harrelson, Caleb Homes, Wendy Callahan, Laura Bowman, Kenneth Franklin, Gina Womack, Will Walker. Might've been two Will Walkers there. Joshua Miguel Benitez, A.R. Smith, Elizabeth [PH 02:38:03] Thurin, Holly Julie Hoffman, Maxwell [PH 02:38:08] Sardullah, Peter Robins Brown, Manny

Tames, Christina [PH 02:38:18] Diesendorf, DeAndre Bell II, Jacob Bush, Maurice Pittman and Tyler Finley. Okay. And we have several individuals here who are present and would like to speak and I will begin with Chris Kaiser and the Reverend Astiel Mclain. So, these folks I know were here earlier and spoke on the other bill. Mr. Mclain, Reverend Mclain. Okay, I think he's already left. Okay. Mr. Kaiser.

CHRIS KAISER: Hi, Madam Chair, members. Again, thank you for having me back up here. I'm Chris Kaiser, advocacy director with the ACLU of Louisiana. We're in support of this bill. I won't belabor what we've already talked about. We think that the additional majority black districts in the Senate Bill 17 plan likely would comply with section 2. I want to say a quick word about the likely performance of districts because that has come up in the discussion. Clearly, we haven't had an opportunity to do that kind of analysis on Senate Bill 17 because we've just seen it. However, on the illustrative plan that we put in during the roadshow, we did perform that really rigorous racially polarized voting analysis on those districts. And I will just remark even though -- I don't think it's apples to apples because we don't have a pre-sync level comparison

between our illustrative map and what Senator Price put in, our configuration did affect the same district, Senate District 17 and 37. And based on our analysis and what we did with those districts and those surrounding them, we came to a pretty satisfactory confidence that those would perform to support black preferred candidates in those areas.

[02:40:09]

CHRIS KAISER: So, I would just say without benefit of having done that analysis in Senate Bill 17, I think that we can say pretty fairly that this bill would provide a strong foundation to comply with Section 2 and if we were to advance this out of this committee, we'd be happy to work with Senator Price and the committee on a more rigorous analysis to make sure that things are where they need to be.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: And I did ask in one of the previous committee hearings, you know, to have access to that racially polarized voting analysis that would be helpful and I've not heard back on that. So, that's something that you all would like to share. That would be very helpful.

CHRIS KAISER: I'd be happy to get back with you on that. If I recall on the 20th you spoke with Representative [INDISCERNIBLE 02:40:52] about the

1 congressional map, so let me check on our side and
2 see what we can provide you.
3 SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Okay. All right, thank
4 you. All right, I think that's it. Mr. Kaiser, thank
5 you.
6 CHRIS KAISER: Thank you.
7 SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: All right, Kereana Rogers
8 and Madison Hicks.
9 MALE 1: She already spoke.
10 SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: All right, excuse me. All
11 right, Demetrius Norman, no he was here earlier.
12 Janea Jamison.
13 JANEA JAMISON: Good afternoon.
14 SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Good afternoon.
15 JANEA JAMISON: Madam Chairwoman, members of the
16 committee, I know most of you are familiar with my
17 face by now. My name is Janea Jamison, Director of
18 Programs with the Power Coalition for Equity and
19 Justice. As a representative of that organization,
20 I'm also speaking too as an individual today. I'm
21 advocating for a fair redistricting process because
22 I'm a lifelong resident of Louisiana and everything I
23 love is within this state. I currently reside in New
24 Orleans, but you know, I come from a very diverse
25 background. My heart is within the Bayou region. I'm

a daughter of a mother who worked 33 years in a public school system and a father who was an engineer at [INDISCERNIBLE 02:42:17] Oil and Company. My favorite dance is the [INDISCERNIBLE 02:42:20]. I lived for [INDISCERNIBLE 02:42:22] season and I'm an devout catholic, attending catholic school from pre-k through high school. And I'm saying this to say that although I appear to fit in one box, no person, race or group is monolithic. However, a distinct culture resonates within specific regions of our state. Many community members and elected officials have expressed the importance of keeping communities of interest together. I agree. It's one of the basic principles to keep in mind when drawing fair districts. However, it can sometimes be subjective and controversial. For that very reason, we must keep in mind other redistricting criteria, like compactness and adhere to federal rules of the constitution and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 when redrawing district lines. Section 2 of the VRA requires the redistricting body to ensure that black voters have an equal opportunity to participate within the political process and elect candidates of their choice. To be clear, allowing all Louisianians an equal opportunity is fair, necessary and logical.

1 People of Louisiana don't live singled issued lives.
2 The decision you make as leaders impact every aspect
3 of life in Louisiana, including access to education,
4 economic opportunity, housing, healthcare and
5 criminal justice. And as a lifelong resident who has
6 lived in various communities, the inequities within
7 these issues disproportionately impact the black
8 communities who compromise nearly one-third of the
9 state's residents. It's necessary to create
10 additional majority-minority districts. Previous maps
11 have been submitted in roadshows to highlight 14
12 majority-minority opportunity districts, adding 4 new
13 districts. While no plan today reflects that, Senate
14 Bill 17 proposes a total of 13 majority-minority
15 districts, which creates additional opportunity and
16 voice that was not previously reflected in the
17 previous map, which is why I'm in strong support of
18 this bill. It maximizes representation more than any
19 other plans submitted today. It is clear that the
20 districts should be drawn according to
21 populationships and increases. There must be a fair
22 representation of Louisiana's black community in
23 order to finally address this state's pervasive and
24 ongoing record of inequality, of opportunity across
25 various aspects of life. Thank you.

[02:45:05]

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you. Thank you very much. All right, next speakers, Jovan Finley and Omega Taylor. Kimberly Jones and Deandre Bell. I think they were all speaking in the first group. Okay, and then we have one person that is present and would like to speak in opposition and it's Tanya Neiman.

TANYA NEIMAN: Hi. One of the few people to speak against both bills I guess. The name is Tanya Neiman and I'm from Baton Rouge and I do want to acknowledge that Senator Price, the Senate Bill 17 does increase the number of majority-minority districts, but I just want to reiterate my concerns for East Baton Rouge Parish and the way in which the districts are divided there. I do believe that the percentage of the racial makeup in each of those senate districts is unnecessarily high. And Clearly, in my senate district, Senator Foil's district, it is gerrymandered in order to maintain 72.5% total voting age population of white majority and I am concerned that the tendency to try to pack those districts and also not here to making sure that they're compact not only creates more partisan elected officials and then undermines the delegation's ability to work together,

but that it also may prohibit the possibility of adding a majority-minority district to East Baton Rouge Parish area. Again, East Baton Rouge Parish is -- I wish I should have asked somebody while I was sitting down, is it the largest city in Louisiana now or the second largest.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: I think it's the second.

TANYA NEIMAN: Second largest city. I note Katrina had it bumped up to the top for a while, but either way, it is one of the largest cities in Louisiana and it has one of the largest African-American populations and for that reason, it deserves to have more representation in this body that can advocate on its needs. So, that's it. Thank you very much. I do not think Senator Foil needs 72% white people in his district in order to get elected.

SENATOR FRANKLIN FOIL: East Baton Rouge Parish is the largest parish.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: East Baton Rouge Parish is the largest parish, okay, but the city is second I believe. All right. Okay, I believe those are all the cards. Is there anyone else here that wanted to speak on Senate bill 17? All right. Senator, we spoke earlier. You spoke at the table about your willingness to defer this bill until tomorrow to give

again the public and the members more time to digest the bill that you've proposed. And so, Senator Price has moved that we do that and we will do that. So, just to refresh the committee, we will adjourn in a few minutes. We will reconvene at 2:30. We have an agenda to look at, ethics candidates that we are reporting to the Ethics Board and then, we will be putting out an agenda tomorrow that will start at 9:30 back in the same room. We will pick up with these two senate bills and take action on those and hear congressional bills which are numerous. So, pack a lunch and plan to stay a good bit of a day tomorrow. All right, any other business before this committee. Senator Milligan moves to adjourn. See you at 2:30.

[02:48:59]

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I, Anders Nelson, hereby certify that the document "F895001-louisiana-redistricting_0202_22_SG-1" is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, a true and accurate transcription from English to English.

Anders Nelson
Project Manager

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