[BACKGROUND NOISE]

[00:32:20]

SEN. MILLIGAN: Members, we are ready to get started please. Welcome back. Thank you to our guest today for patience when we try to reset. So we're going to hear Senator Hewitt's bill, Senate bill number five. Senator Hewitt?

SEN. HEWITT: Thank you very much, Mr. Vice Chairman, and I appreciate the opportunity to present this bill to the committee. So this is a congressional map bill. And what I'd like to do first is, as we've done with the other bills, kind of set the stage a little bit in terms of what were the redistricting principles that were kind of the foundation for this bill. And then I'll talk through with Bill's help with the map in terms of what we were doing and what our thought process was in each of the six districts. So, of course, the first thing in redistricting is you have to consider all the federal and state laws. And so we are committed to complying with the Voting Rights Act and all the other federal and state laws. I recognize the importance of the Voting Rights Act and having minorities represented at all levels of government. And one

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1 point that I would like to make and we've talked
2 about that a little bit today. One of the things
3 that we heard in the roadshow was quite often
4 that we have one third of our population as
5 minority in the State of Louisiana. Therefore, we
6 should have one third of the congressional
7 membership should be minority. And so I just want
8 to kind of again point out and I made this point
9 earlier with Senator Luneau. Again, the Voting
10 Rights Act specifically says that that is not a
11 right. It says in Section B in the Voting Rights
12 Act. This is a quote, provided that nothing in
13 this section establishes a right to have members
14 of a protected class elected in numbers equal to
15 their proportion in the population. So it's not a
16 foregone conclusion or a right that you have two
17 out of six districts be minority districts. The
18 numbers is what matters and where people live.
19 And so you have to be able to draw a minority
20 district because there's sufficient population to
21 support it, is sufficiently compact and to give
22 the members of that community an equal
23 opportunity to elect a candidate of their choice.
24 [00:35:15]
25

The other redistricting principle that we considered, of course, is the requirement for the congressional districts in terms of the definition of equal population is different than all the other maps that we're considering. So with all the other maps, the legislative maps, the Public Service Commission, BESE those maps are required to be equal in population and that's defined as plus or minus 5%. With the congressional maps, the definition of equal population is really as close to zero deviation as is practicable. Okay, so I'm talking close to zero difference. So we know in the congressional maps the ideal population is 776,292. On this map, you will see that the deviation ranges, and that's in your package, in your bill, it ranges from minus 92 in district four to a plus 36 in district two. So they are double digits difference in all of the districts relative to zero. So your goal is to be as close to zero as possible. And I think you'll see with most of the other maps that that is not true, that they have significantly larger deviations. We also have a redistricting principle to respect the established boundaries of political subdivisions

and the natural geography of the state and to keep precincts whole. And what you'll see in this map is that we have kept, I think it's 49 of the 64 parishes whole, which is more than the current map, the way the districts exist today. So we worked to put together parishes and we have zero split precincts, which is very difficult to do in a congressional map where your goal is to be as close to zero as possible. That's usually where you're having to split precincts. We also acknowledge the principle of preserving the core of prior districts to ensure continuity representation. We've talked about continuity representation a lot in these hearings, and we heard again at the roadshow one of the kind of the talking points was elected officials should not choose their voters. Voters should choose their elected officials. And to that again, I would respond by saying I respect the voters in this state and know that they are in the best position to vote an elected official in or out of office based on their performance. And you don't want to take that away. The voters ability to do that by completely reconfiguring the districts. So starting with the core districts as they're

configured, I think is very important. And we also want to preserve communities of interest. And some of them I want to touch on that from a high level. Some of those communities of interest. We certainly know that Louisiana has a great agriculture heritage and continues to be respected by maintaining a primarily rural, agriculturally based district. And you'll see that in district five. This map preserves the connectivity of Louisiana's Kutiyana region. We've heard that a lot on the roadshow how many times Lake Charles, Lafayette area, they see themselves together. They want to be together as the Kutiyana region. The major cities and their surrounding communities are preserved and connected to the maximum extent possible in this map. This map ensures that the Louisiana's major military installations, Barksdale in Fort Polk, remain strong and in connection with their surrounding communities of support. And that kind of really has some additional significance. And I want to touch on this. I know Senator Reese probably knows all about this. You're familiar with BRAC, which is the process by which military installations are shut down. One of the things

that they look at is are they connected to their surrounding communities, the military installations and the importance that they place on that. And so we want to make sure, sure, sure that we have those communities established and part of our military installations and that they not be split between congressional districts. It maintains the connection within the communities of interest in Baton Rouge and the surrounding communities. As it does with the communities in the New Orleans region as it does with Street Port region.

[00:40:01]

And same for Alexandria and Monroe, and not all the maps do that. So here's how we applied the redistricting principles, and I guess let me start it if I can. Dr. Blair, with district four, it seems to make the most sense to me to start there. I'll kind of talk you through some of the thought process in each of these different districts. So congressional district four and the theme you've heard this theme in this committee already. We know that in North Louisiana is where we lost a significant population. District four is underrepresented by 47,946 people. So one of

the things, again, in terms of communities of interest that we were working to ensure in this district, again, is uniting rural and agricultural interest. So from St. Landry to North Caddo and Union, all across district four, they share many characteristics, including the things that rural districts are always concerned about, such as employment, rural broadband, rural water, and rural infrastructure needs and those are preserved here in district four. This bill allows us to remain a strong advocate for the agriculture industry, which is an $11 billion industry in the State of Louisiana. And it encompasses agriculture from poultry in Union Parish to rice and crawfish in the Southern part of the parish and countless crops in between. So it is clearly an agriculture district. Again, the military installations are very important in this district. It does keep Barksdale and Fort Polk in the same congressional district. This concentration allows Louisiana to compete for vital funding that's essential to our state's economy. Keeping these installations together, of course, always gives us ability to have more influence in Washington, DC. This goes back to

the continuity of representation. And as you know, the member of that district currently sits on the House Armed Services Committee, and we are ready, as a matter of fact, to secure about a billion dollars in funding, which includes more military construction dollars for the air force and army than anywhere else in the world. And so it's very important to us into the State of Louisiana to keep that together. So how do we do that? So again, when you look at the map, some of the things that you'll see that are different from the current map. We shifted this district east to pick up the rest of St. Landry so that it's no longer divided between three congressional districts. So we finally are putting Opelousas and Eunice back in the same district. This district is a part of Rapides from senate district five, and it picks up a few precincts around De Quincy and Calcasieu and Jeff Davis to the south to balance out the rest of the numbers from senate district three. So you can see that that's the little cut out there up in Calcasieu Parish and De Quincy area. Okay, moving over to the northeast part of the state in district five, this district is underpopulated by

37,048 people. So ballpark is both of these were in the 40,000-person range. This map keeps the delta region together, ensuring that their shared agriculture economies have a strong advocate in congress who can provide the focus and develop the expertise needed to effectively represent and advocate for the agricultural needs of our state. Nearly half of all the Louisiana's agriculture sales come from this district, and they have more diversified row crops than any other congressional district in the nation. It's a significant contribution. It also has the longest stretch of the Mississippi River in the country in this district. By adding Pointe Coupee and the rural parts of the Florida parishes into the fifth district, we're ensuring that Louisiana's ag industry is well represented. And as you know, our congresswoman sits on the ag committee in congress because of the importance of agriculture in our state. This is also a rural district.

[00:45:01]

Again, we are connecting the rural parts of our state through senate congressional district five. Things that are important in this district. We've talked about agriculture, broadband is

1 extremely important, access to health care and
2 education. The challenges in the rural areas and
3 the emphasis on the Louisiana agricultural
4 economy are very important. And these rural
5 communities should have the opportunity to
6 continue to serve as the backbone of the fifth
7 district. The fifth district also has a large
8 number of our universities, and education is very
9 important in this district. There are four public
10 universities and one private university, not to
11 mention three community colleges with campuses
12 scattered all across the region. And so those are
13 huge economic drivers. We know that poverty in
14 the rural areas is a challenge, and of course,
15 education is the secret to solving that. And so
16 it's important to have educational institutions
17 in a rural area to help address poverty. So how
18 do we solve these issues and maintain those
19 communities of interest? You'll see that we added
20 Pointe Coupee, East Feliciana, and St. Helena
21 from congressional district six. And then we
22 added some of Tangipahoa from congressional
23 district one. So those are the kind of the big
24 changes compared to the current map. And again,
25 we're able to keep those parishes together, which

I like Pointe Coupee, East Feliciana and St. Helena, and then picked up a little bit more of Tangipahoa from congressional district one. Okay, let's shift over to Southwest Louisiana in district three. This district is currently over by 9,532 people. So some of the things that were important to us, and again, we heard this a lot on the roadshow is keeping the I-10 Corridor from Lafayette through Lake Charles to the Texas border, all in one district for continuity of community and culture. By keeping these districts, the borders of the third district largely intact, as in the past. We are keeping the heartland of the Cajun country together. Unlike other plans that have been submitted, Lafayette and Lake Charles are not divided between multiple districts. Instead, they are whole and the residents and the community business leaders have advocated that and I've got to give a shout out to George Swift. I think he's got me pinned up on record three or four times as saying, yes, I hear you, George. We want Lafayette and Lake Charles to be together. So how did we do that? What are some of the things then that we did? Well, this district got out of St.

Landry to reunite it as we talked about earlier and gave up a few precincts in Calcasieu and the De Quincy area, we talked about that. We reunited the City of Elton, which is currently divided by moving this to district four. So we reunited Elton. I also want to point out that the communities in and around the Port of Morgan City are united under this plan. Communities such as Patterson, Bayou Vista, Burwick and Morgan City are all interconnected via businesses utilizing the Port of Morgan City as are the areas largely surrounding these communities. It would certainly be a disservice in my opinion, to divide any of those communities. In St. Martin Parish, while it's not contiguous, is culturally united and part of the larger Acadiana area, and I believe it would be unwise to split parts of this parish amongst multiple congressional districts. Let's move to district one, which is over in my neck of the woods. We are over by 36,293 people in that district. So we see our communities of interest are very well connected in district one. You see the connection between St. Tammany and Tangi to the fastest growing areas in the state along the I-12 corridor. And they're also, of course, very

1 important to the greater New Orleans Orange
2 region. Thousands of residents in these parishes
3 work and send their children to school in New
4 Orleans. It's important to keep these communities
5 connected to the greater New Orleans region.
6 [00:50:00]
7 You know, we have infrastructure in place
8 also that connects this district from the
9 causeway that connects the south to the north
10 shore of Lake Pontchartrain to the I-12 expansion
11 efforts that we've talked about, and Highway One
12 going down to the south part of the Bayou. These
13 are all connected, and it helps to keep our
14 parishes all together. Talk about the industry a
15 little bit. This district is home to the largest
16 maritime community in the country. Of all the
17 congressional districts in the country,
18 Louisiana's first congressional district has more
19 jobs in the maritime industry than any other, and
20 these jobs are not just in the Bayou region, as
21 you might think at first. They're also held by
22 people in Hammond, in Covington, in Slidell, in
23 Chalmette and Metairie. And yes, of course, in
24 Houma and Galliano as you would expect. The
25 companies that employ these individuals are based

all over the first district, and keeping these communities connected and together is really important for the economic health of South Louisiana. This district also has to deal with a lot of hurricanes, and so, as you would expect, that's the focus of our congressmen in this district, working with FEMA and the core of engineers on flood insurance and flood protection. Those are all very, very important issues in this district, and it's good to have them all together. So, what did we functionally do then? As I mentioned earlier, we gave up more of Tangipahoa to congressional district five, and we swapped a few precincts along the coast in Terrebonne with congressional district six. Okay, so let's talk about district six now. District six was over by 40,174 people. What this district focuses on is ensuring that the greater Baton Rouge area remains intact, and that the suburban parishes that are closest to the City of Baton Rouge, like West Baton Rouge, Ascension, Livingstone, continue to be located within the same congressional district. Thousands of residents from these suburban parishes work, send their children to school and attend church in

1 Baton Rouge, and it's important that we keep
2 these communities of interest connected. As with
3 district one, there's certainly a focus in this
4 district also on coastal restoration and flood
5 protection projects for our coastal communities.
6 So how did we accomplish this? We gave the rest
7 of East Feliciana and St. Helena to district
8 five, which were previously split. We gave all of
9 Pointe Coupee to district five, and then we
10 cleaned up a number of precincts along the river
11 with district two. Those were in Ascension, East
12 Baton Rouge, Iberville, St. Charles, St. John,
13 and West Baton Rouge. And as I mentioned at the
14 beginning, and some of you may have missed this,
15 but we have no split precincts in this map. So,
16 there were previously tons of split precincts
17 along the river between district six and two, and
18 so, we basically put those back together and put
19 them in one or the other district. Okay. District
20 two. Of all the districts, this is the one that
21 was closest to being the right size, although
22 everybody always gets affected, but this district
23 was underpopulated by a thousand people. So, it's
24 largely intact compared to how it currently sits.
25 This district, as you know, anchors the two

largest urban areas, New Orleans and Baton Rouge where issues such as having a vibrant tourism industry, affordable housing, safe neighborhoods and accessible healthcare are very important. This district along with CD6 champion reports along the Mississippi River, which is the gateway to commerce in over 30 states. So, we did functionally how we accomplished this was cleaning up the precincts along the river, as I mentioned earlier, with district six, and then most importantly, this is a majority-minority district that we know is in compliance with the Voting Rights Act and is performing as a majority minority district as evidenced by all the recent elections of the current congressman and his predecessors as well.

[00:55:00]

So, that's kind of just a flyover of the six districts. You know why they're configured the way they are. The work that we did to keep the parishes together, the communities of interest, eliminate all the split precincts and ensure that we are in compliance with the Voting Rights Act, and so, with that, Mr. Chairman, I will stop and

then take any questions that you all would like to ask.

SEN. MILLIGAN: Thank you, Senator Hewitt. And I appreciate your work on this and the thoroughness of the explanation. It seems from your presentation on the map that you worked very hard to check those federal guidelines, federal boxes to prepare a map for us today that meets those boxes. So, we appreciate that. Questions for Senator Hewitt. Senator Price.

SEN. PRICE: Thank you, Mr. Acting Chairman. I'm looking at senate district two right off the bat, West Baton Rouge was removed from senate district two? Trying to look at that map.

SEN. HEWITT: Yeah. I'll see if I can get my -- got some before and afters I think. Yeah, it is, and again, I think that was again in the spirit of kind of cleaning up some of the precincts.

SEN. PRICE: And I guess, so with West Baton Rouge gone, would have a population of -

SEN. HEWITT: Okay. Wait, hang on. West Baton Rouge is still in district two. It's got 12,776 people.

SEN. PRICE: Didn't look like it on the map.

SEN. HEWITT: It's hard to see. But I'm looking at the splits. If you look at, you see where the tables are in our bill with the splits?

SEN. PRICE: I found it right quick. Okay.

SEN. HEWITT: So, part of it, we have twelve in round numbers, and 14,000 in district six in West Baton Rouge.

SEN. PRICE: I see it on the split. Yeah. Okay. So, that is a split parish?

SHARON HEWITT: Split Parish. Yes, sir. It's tough, as you know, with the river. So, one of the redistricting principles is honoring the natural geography, and so, that does cause us to split some parishes along the river.

SENATOR PRICE: Okay. And I'll ask you to say, of course that I did with the President on his bill, with the increase in minority population and decreasing majority population, did you make any effort to look at an additional minority congressional seat?

SHARON HEWITT: I did, I did. Absolutely. Look at that, and what I concluded was that you cannot draw two minority districts that would be performing. So, the concern is by creating a second district, you reduce the voting age

population in the current minority district, and I think you put both of those with low enough minority voting age population numbers where you could potentially risk not having a minority elected to either one. And so, the language of the law, as you will know, is for a minority to have an equal opportunity to elect a candidate of their choice. When you're down at 51, 52, 53% of voting age population, I think you're at risk of not electing a minority, and we would be doing a great disservice to our state if we create a districts like that that ended up not electing minorities or giving them an opportunity to elect a candidate of their choice. As you know, minority districts are technically defined as 50% plus one. But I don't think that there's anybody in this building that believes that that would be giving if you created a district like that, and I'm not suggesting that you have or that you would, but if we did 50%plus one, you would not be giving the minority population an equal opportunity to elect a candidate of their choice. So, there's the deal. So, the voting age population in this bill and that district is the same as it currently is around 58%.

[01:00:01]

SHARON HEWITT: Because we know that is a functioning number.

SENATOR PRICE: And you derive that data from where?

SHARON HEWITT: You know, well, for one, from past elections, right? So, the congressman that currently has that seat was recently elected in this district that looks very much like its current district in the map as I've proposed it. So, we know that that district functions at that current percentage. Would it function at lower numbers? That's the topic of debate.

SENATOR PRICE: Right. And so, we don't know that a district with 54% voting age population or 53% voting age population that would not elect a minority in that district. We don't have that data.

SHARON HEWITT: Well, we are working on getting that data so that we could do a better job of assessing that. I have asked for that data at least twice publicly from organizations that have testified before this committee that they do have that data, but I haven't seen it yet.

1 SENATOR PRICE: Well, in this state, we
2 don't have it because we've only had one minority
3 district for a long, long time now. So, we seem
4 to have packed the minority in that one district
5 for -- I don't know how long for many years now,
6 and so, we don't have any data to see because
7 it's never been tried to where we could possibly
8 53% or 54% district elect a minority of their
9 choice.
10 SHARON HEWITT: Well, first of all, I
11 haven't seen any maps at 54. I think there may be
12 a map that's got one district, one of the two at
13 53. But most of the maps that I've seen are in
14 the 51, 52% range, and they don't do as good a
15 job on the deviation, right? So, they end up with
16 very, very large deviations. I would submit to
17 you that if you put all of those -- if you worked
18 to get the deviations down closer to zero, which
19 I think there's no specificity on what that
20 number needs to be. But I do think that if you're
21 in the neighborhood of double digits instead of
22 triple digits or 1000 plus, that you are very
23 closer to honoring the intent of the law which
24 says equal population. So, I think if you had a
25 map that created much less deviation, you would

have even lower black voting age population districts than are currently represented in some of these bills, and so, again, I think it would be a failure on the part of the legislature to create two minority districts of such low voting age population that you would be at risk of not allowing the minority to elect a candidate of their choice.

SENATOR PRICE: Okay. Let me ask you one, and you explain a lot in your details about the culture likes and things like that. But in your map, you have a district that runs down from the state line of Arkansas, Mississippi, all the way down to Washington Parish. It's L shape. We talked about a Z shape earlier, but this is definitely in L shapes. Then we bring one district. It's horizontal, the fourth congressional district all the way from the Texas line, all the way down to St. Landry Parish and you can devise that, yes, some things are light, but you're talking about North Louisiana, it's a lot different from people in St. Landry Parish, culturally. And if you talk about all the way down the Tangipahoa and Bogalusa from West Carol, East Carol, all of those parishes. Whereas if a

map that went void [INDISCERNIBLE] cross the state where they do have talk about hot water cornbread and stuff up there in the north and down in the south is about crawfish and sucking heads and stuff like that, so -

SHARON HEWITT: I think those go together, don't they? Crawfish and cornbread.

SENATOR PRICE: It may go together, but I never heard of hot water cornbread until I went to North Louisiana. Never. I know there are some differences here, and I think sometimes we look at things and we say we try to explain that, yes, we got some likeness, but in a lot of way there's a lot more differences than likeness in the way we are doing on some of these maps. And let me just say a couple of years, another ten years from now, if we keep these district cars on like this.

[01:05:04]

Baton Rouge will be in an awful way down the district. It's not going to matter, because it's steadily losing population. It's going to happen if we don't fix this somewhere down the road, and even now, because that population keep decreasing as it is, and my good Senator friend over here,

he know they lost 40,000 people up there, and it's continuing to happen because they're moving to Texas, they're going to Dallas from this report area. Those things are happening. So, to say that Baton Rouge is in the Southern part of the state. It's eventually going to be in the Northern portion of the state if the population keep decreasing, and there's a lot of factors for that. So, I think at some point we going to have to fix this, and hopefully we don't lose population, we gain population. But it seemed to all be happening in the Southern portion of the state, and at some point they're not going to have the population to suspend two additional district up there. We can run them horizontally all we want. It's just not going to happen.

SHARON HEWITT: Well, and I appreciate your points and I share your concerns. I would say to you that it's up to leaders like you and I and the other members of this committee to turn our state around. What we need is a thriving economy. What we learned in Louisiana over the last ten years was only 2.7%. The growth in the states surrounding us was more on the order of 7%. Nationally was 10%. We are not competing with our

neighbors, and much of that, I think elected leaders shoulder some of that responsibility because we need to put good policies in place that make this a state where people want to live and work, and so, let's not give up. I'm not ready to accept that we're going to continue to lose population over the next ten years as we have in the last 40 years, and you're right, if we don't do something about it and be more competitive with our other states, we could be back here in ten years talking about how are we going to manage having one less congressional district if the other states are growing. It's a zero sum game with congressional seats. If they're growing, we're losing, and we can't let that happen.

SENATOR PRICE: But thank you for your leadership. I look forward to working with you in the future to make that happen.

SHARON HEWITT: Yes, sir. I look forward to that, too.

JOHN STEFANSKI: Thanks, Senator Price. Senator Reese.

SENATOR REESE: Thank you, Ms. Vice Chair. Chairman Hewitt, I just wanted to talk a little

bit. I guess part of this is a statement. You definitely alluded to it in your opening comments, in your description of these districts. But in speaking to the communities of interest on my side of the state, I just want to reaffirm some of the things that you mentioned, and then the fourth congressional district, for instance, although it does stretch far from the north to the central part of the state. I'm very familiar with that area and I cannot over emphasize enough the importance of combining Barksdale Airforce Base in Fort Pope [PH 01:08:11] nearly three-billion dollars in annual economic impact to the State of Louisiana thousands of jobs, hundreds of millions of dollars and payroll. The joining of those two major national defense organizations within the same congressional district is what has allowed us to have representation on the household services committee where all these vital decisions are made about the future investments that occur at those installations about preventing downsizing that would decimate north and south, Central Louisiana and Southwest Louisiana and so that is vitally important and really is the bridge that connects the entire

district as a community of interest shifting down to the third district I also want to re-emphasize the issues that connect that region so the foundation, the elements of the economy, the support both Southwest Louisiana and the Katiana region are incredibly similar, their coastal issues that join the two of them together are incredibly similar and I think we heard that over and over again as we communicated and listened to the citizens in those two areas about that tenant and then shifting briefly to the majority-minority districts and the work you've done there to maintain the second district to be competitive, and to meet those standards. Would you say that we probably have some examples. We talked earlier about the senate map for instance, the Louisiana Senate map. We probably have some examples where we're lowering that percentage of voting age population to something in that 51, 52, 53% range would you say there are some examples where that may not have supported the minority-majority candidate of choice?

[01:10:04]

SHARON HEWITT: Well, that's right. We do have two interesting examples in Senate districts

here in our state. As you know, Senator Luno represents a Senate district in the central part of the state. It runs North South, it is demographically considered a majority minority district, and yet their candidate of choice was a white democrat. We also have a district in New Orleans currently represented by Senator Peterson that has much less black voting age population below 50%, and yet they have elected a minority candidate. And so we do have some different and interesting things and it is different around the state and it very much depends on voter turnout, and voter turnout in different parts of the state varies it varies between black voters and white voters and so all of that is kind of a factor. I would say just anecdotally in working with many of you on the senate maps. I think many senators would be uncomfortable with a voting age population in the 51%, 52% for their own districts. And so, again, it would make me uncomfortable also to feel confident that the minorities could elect a candidate of their choice if we had a congressional district with that low voting age population.

SENATOR REESE: I agree. Thank you for your testimony on that, and thank you for the tremendous amount of work you put into preventing the number of splits and precincts that had to occur to get the one man one vote principle met, which is so incredibly difficult in our congressional districts where we don't have the benefit of deviation the way we do in our House and Senate at the state level, so thank you for your work on that. And thank you, Mr. Vicechair.

SENATOR MIILLIGAN: Thanks Sen. Reese. Sen Foil.

SENATOR FOIL: Thank you, Mr. Vice Chair. Thank you, Chairwoman Hewitt for all of your hard work on this map. You had touched on this and I just want to follow up on this. One of the things I'm looking at on behalf of my constituents and what I heard at the roadshow is they would like to have the opportunity to elect at least one Congressperson from the Capital Region delegation. And your proposal has over half of East Baton Rouge -- the population over half of East Baton Rouge it would be over half the population almost of that district. And then when you had Livingston and Ascension Paris, you have

about 600,000 people, so it looks to me like this map would certainly give someone from the Capital Region delegation an opportunity to be competitive and have one of those seats that's really important to my constituents. I think you said that's something you're looking at.

SHARON HEWITT: Absolutely. Yeah. We did talk about Baton Rouge and the surrounding communities being in the same congressional district. So you said it may be a little bit more eloquently than I did, but that would definitely the numbers allow someone from that region to be elected.

SENATOR FOIL: Yeah. Thank you for your work. I appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. Vice chair.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you.

SENATOR MIILLIGAN: Thanks Sen. Foils. Sen. Womack.

SENATOR WOMACK: Thank you Mr. Vice-Chair. Just a statement Chairwoman Hewitt, I know we deal with a moving target here. We're losing the North part of the State and the South part of the state, but in your metrics and coming with these numbers to think of the commonality, the culture, the workforce, just to name a few education in my

1 district which is district five the agriculture
2 which is so important to our ports and our
3 agricultural community all along. Even though
4 it's L-shaped it represents the agriculture
5 community and that is a big thing for our state,
6 not to mention the logging industry, it is a
7 vital part of our state that reaches from line to
8 line Texas to Mississippi and is a growing
9 industry. Very important industry. The housing,
10 the numbers, the military as Senator Reese
11 mentioned that has been connected for years and
12 has kind of got traction now and moving forward
13 and even getting down to the no split precincts,
14 that is something we've heard on the roadshow, in
15 all of our shows. It's something that people have
16 voiced that they're very concerned about and they
17 want to connect to their congressman. So I think
18 in this particular plan I see a lot of attributes
19 that we could continue moving forward with the
20 tracks that we already have. So I just want to
21 make that statement and thank you for your hard
22 work on this and to get the numbers sold so close
23 that had to be a that had to be a challenge, so
24 thank you for your hard work.
25 [01:15:02]

SHARON HEWITT: You're welcome. And thank you for the comments. Our state is kind of L-shaped to begin with, so it would be nice if we were like Tennessee or something that was a little bit more square, but we don't have that so it does make configuring the district sometimes a little bit challenging.

SENATOR MIILLIGAN: Thanks Sen. Womack. Sen. Price.

SENATOR PRICE: Yes, Sen. Just a quick comment, because I attended all nine roadshows and it seemed like some of my colleagues, they ignoring the minority piece of what they heard on doing the roadshow as the minorities, I heard them say that they wanted a second minority district throughout the roadshow. So my colleague talks about everything else, but they're not listening to what those minority people say, and that upsets me.

SHARON HEWITT: Well, I hear you loud and clear, and we definitely did hear that message, but the numbers have to drive the process. And again, it matters where people live and so you can only draw maps to the extent that the numbers support that and if the numbers supported it, I

would be right there with you. But I don't think -- and again, I'm very concerned that we would be abdicating our responsibility if we drew two minority districts and neither one of them performed as a minority district, I think we take a great risk and risking our current minority district to do that. I hear you, and I know the residents and the citizens in that state in our state would like that, and so would I, but we have to be driven by the numbers.

SENATOR MIILLIGAN: Thanks Sen. Price. No other questions. Sen. Hewitt, I appreciate the presentation and fairness of it. Look, it's a tough task for all of us, not just in congressional map but also in all the maps that we have to look at. Meeting all the federal guidelines is the key and it is driven by the numbers and then at the backstop you have to look at continuity representation, communities of interest, maps that make sense, districts that maintain strength and have the ability to grow no craziness with what we saw I think in earlier Bill 16, a Z-shape where my signature -- my congressional leader from Shreveport we representing folks in Baton Rouge and things just

don't make sense with that so the whole goal here is to draw those maps that meet those guidelines, create opportunity for everybody, create opportunity for state, and frankly, I like the aspect of trying to draw these maps on every level that drives the state forward and on the congressional level, rather than the worry of possibly coming back and losing a district. If we move forward as a state, we may come back and add another district and that seems to be something that's not talked about. I want to see the state grow and obviously in this process it's a tedious one, it's a tough one. We're trying to take care of everybody, but that needs to be the goal. We have to hit the boxes, we have to take care of all those from the federal guidelines and at the same time try to grow this state. And I think it all has to come together and it comes together in this process so with that I'll stop. Sen. Hewitt, what's your pleasure with Senegal five?

SHARON HEWITT: What I would suggest that we do and I'd be happy to make a motion to do this is to defer this bill as we have the others. Let's hear the other congressional bills today

that are on our agenda and then we'll see what the will of the committee is and going forward.

SENATOR MIILLIGAN: Okay.

SHARON HEWITT: So I'll make a motion to defer so that we can continue the process.

SENATOR MIILLIGAN: So Hewitt makes the motion. Do you have any objection? No? So be it and I'll remind the public that we're going to go through this process today of listening these bills and then at the end of that public testimony will be taken. So your time at the table is coming so thank you, Sen. Hewitt I appreciate your work.

SHARON HEWITT: You're very welcome. Okay. Thank you to Vice Chair Milligan for managing the Chair and giving me an opportunity to present my bill. I would like to -- now Senator Smith has been waiting patiently. I'd like to hear his bill, which is Senate Bill 11. And then after hearing that bill, we will take a short recess for lunch.

[01:20:20]

SENATOR HEWITT: And then we will come back in here, Senator Fields, and then take public

1 testimony. Okay? All right. Senator Smith,
2 whenever you're ready.
3 SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Madam Chair.
4 Thank you, Members. Senate Bill 11 is another
5 congressional district map. A little different
6 take on it, trying to meet all the same things
7 that I don't want to go over. I'll be brief with
8 this because I know you've looked at them all and
9 you've heard the Chairwoman extensively, tell the
10 things that we're trying to accomplish and we're
11 trying to accomplish the same thing, these
12 communities of interest and regions of interest
13 together, but I took a little different take on
14 this and tried to make -- I didn't. But this map
15 takes the approach of really trying to make these
16 districts a little more compact and to not have
17 districts as much as possible to be Z's or use or
18 wrap around things. And so, you'll see, it's
19 really one of the most concise maps. Putting the
20 districts together and what it also does is takes
21 into account the thing that I think is most
22 beneficial to this map is it takes into account
23 putting the districts more in line with the
24 voting demographics and the registration numbers
25 of the state because when you look at it, right

now, we have 63% white voters, 31% African-American voters and almost 6% of others and when you look at the breakdown and demographics of the registrations, 40% Democrat, 33% Republican, and now 27% other. And so, if you looked at the breakdown of some of these districts, it does create two majority-minority districts, but what it really focuses on is the voter registration demographics in my opinion. Putting some more parity in there for the citizens of Louisiana to be represented or have their voice to be represented. So, with that, I will be happy to try and answer some questions.

SENATOR HEWITT: Well, thank you for being short and sweet as we're approaching the lunch hour. I know the members appreciate that very much. Okay. So visually, you can see some of the things that you did, you grew District 3 to the north, District 4 to the east. Looks like District 5 came down a little bit further by picking up St. Landry.

SENATOR SMITH: Correct. It made District 6 a little more concise instead of wrapping it around in that kind of you fashion that it does right now.

SENATOR HEWITT: That's right. Okay.

SENATOR SMITH: Spreads District 2 out a little bit more to the west but still maintains its characteristics.

SENATOR HEWITT: Okay. And then let's see some of the other statistics. Let me look at that. Okay. So, deviation, you end up with District 2 being minus 3,380 so they're short -- a pretty good bit on that minority district and the second minority district, is that District 5?

SENATOR SMITH: Correct.

SENATOR HEWITT: Yeah. 582, 24, 56 on District 6. So, some pretty big swings and deviation. Okay. And then your minority districts -- we were looking at voting age populations of like 51 and 52. Is that --

SENATOR SMITH: I believe that's right. I had to go back and look at it.

SENATOR HEWITT: I see. I think you pulled that up.

SENATOR SMITH: And that's one of the things I know we've talked -- you all have talked about a lot in here but I think it's incumbent on individuals to take the opportunity to get out and vote and that we can only draw the districts.

We have to draw the districts, which makes sense. But then at some point, we have to rely on the voters to actually get out and do their job.

SENATOR HEWITT: We do and there's certainly no excuse for not getting out and working hard in the field for sure, but again, I do think as a legislature it is our responsibility to set up the district so that they have an equal opportunity to do so. Okay. Any questions members? You can see high level some of the changes we have the split so that we can see how the parishes were split.

[01:25:00]

And how things are moved around -- there's sort of an infinite number of ways to draw the same map, aren't there?

SENATOR SMITH: Correct. There are.

SENATOR HEWITT: I appreciate your work on that.

SENATOR SMITH: I know you're going to take a public discussion later, and this will be included. So, if there's no question, I appreciate your most time.

SENATOR HEWITT: It will be. Hang on one second. I do have a question from Senator Reese.

SENATOR REESE: Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. Senator Smith, I just wanted to -- again, there's an infinite number of ways to draw these but in understanding the communities of interest on my side of the state, I just wanted to make sure I did note publicly for the record the significant division that does in our military assets in the state in this current drawing of it in this particular Bill, so just wanted to be on the record is objecting to the configuration that would split those strong communities of interest in Southwest Louisiana and Northwest Louisiana but again, I appreciate your work you're putting into this to try to make numbers work and make these things happen.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you. Yeah. We try to do the best we can. Of course, not everybody is going to be thrilled, but every community is going to stay together. But the bright side is they would have two United States Congress people fighting for us to keep that military asset.

SENATOR REESE: One of the installations nearly in half. So, you're right. Thank you, Senator Smith. I appreciate it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR HEWITT: All right, Senator, thank you. The Board is clear. I don't see any other questions at this point. Senator, thank you so much for presenting this Bill and bringing it before the committee. I guess, let me ask for a motion that would you all like to defer this Bill as we have done others and make a decision. Senator Price moves that we defer this Bill and we'll consider it at the end of the day in terms of what the will is of the committee after hearing public testimony.

SENATOR SMITH: All right. Thank you, Madam Chair, Members.

SENATOR HEWITT: All right. Thank you, sir. All right, members, I think this is a great place to stop and take a short lunch break. It's almost 12:30. If I could ask you to be back here and I really do ask you to be back here on time so that we can move on. Be back at 1:15. 1:15 that gives you 45 minutes and we will hear from Senator Fields at that time and then take public testimony. All right. We are at recess until 1:15.

[01:27:50]

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May 1, 2022