REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: We call the Committee on House and Governmental Affairs to order. Today is Wednesday, February, the 9th. I would ask anyone who wishes to give testimony today, please fill out a card: Green in support, red in opposition, white for information only. We have two items. I'd also ask you, please silence your cellphones, if you did bring your cellphone in here today so that it doesn't disturb anyone giving testimony. We have two items on the agenda today. The first up is going to be House Bill 14 that we will discuss. But, before I do that, I'm going to put Representative Jenkins on for personal privilege.

REPRESENTATIVE MIKE JOHNSON: [INDISCERNIBLE 00:00:40]

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: You should be. Oh sorry, I hit the wrong one. The glare does get to you.

REPRESENTATIVE SAM JENKINS: All right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to take an opportunity to welcome to our committee today, Mr. Chairman and members. Some citizens who came down. They are part of people's promise and vote and black votes matter. Just want to welcome them to House and Governmental

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Affairs. Thank you for coming down a bit of part of the political process. Thank you, Mr. Chairman

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: Yes, sir. Thank you. With that said, we are going to ask Ms. Summers back to go ahead and call the roll.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Chairman Stefanski?

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: Present.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Present Vice Chairman?

REPRESENTATIVE ROYCE DUPLESSIS: Present.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Present Representative Beaullieu?

REPRESENTATIVE GERALD BEAULLIEU: Present.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Present Representative Wilford Carter?

REPRESENTATIVE WILFORD CARTER: Present.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Representative Deshotel?

REPRESENTATIVE DARYL DESHOTEL: Present.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Present Representative Farnum?

REPRESENTATIVE LES FARNUM: Here.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Present Representative Gadberry?

REPRESENTATIVE FOY BRYAN GADBERRY: Here.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Present Representative Hodges? Representative Horton?

REPRESENTATIVE DODIE HORTON: Here.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Present Representative Ivey? Representative Jenkins?

REPRESENTATIVE SAM JENKINS: Present.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Present Representative Mike Johnson?

REPRESENTATIVE MIKE JOHNSON: Here.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Present Representative LaCombe?

REPRESENTATIVE JEREMY LACOMBE: Here.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Present Representative Lyons? Representative Magee?

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Present.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Present Representative Newell?

REPRESENTATIVE CANDACE NEWELL: Present.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Present Representative Thomas?

REPRESENTATIVE POLLY THOMAS: Here.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Present Representative White?

REPRESENTATIVE MALINDA WHITE: Present.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Present. Fourteen members in the quorum.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: Fourteen members in the quorum. We will go ahead and start with House Bill 14 by Speaker Schexnayder. Pro tem in the chair.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: All right. Mr. Chair, before I do that, I wanted the public know that there is - Committee Room 3 is available for overflow. If anybody wants to go into Committee 3 and watch the hearings from there, that that room is available to you. With that said, Chairman Stefanski on House Bill 14.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: Yes. So, members, as we've been discussing for the past couple days on this Bill. I've wanted to give the public an opportunity to digest some of the conversations with the amendments. And so, now we're back on the third day. I have one more amendment that I'm going to ask this Committee to adopt and it is a - and we'll go ahead and bring that up. It's Amendment No. 83?

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Yes. Here we have it. It's No. 83 in your packet. We'll bring up the amendment right now.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: So members, this is a one precinct swap between two districts. District 62 and 29. It is a district precinct going from 62 to 29. It is speaking with one of the

members. This was a piece of his district that's very important to him. That it has historically been in his district. And so, I'm going to accommodate him by swapping that one over. I'm happy to answer any questions about that.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: There are no questions. The chairman moves to adopt the amendments said, is there any objection to the amendments said? Seeing no objection, the amendments are adopted. Representative Stefanski, on your Bill?

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: Yeah. And so, members we've discussed it at nauseam. You know, this this Bill, we - I think I spent two hours a couple days ago discussing it. I don't necessarily want to get into all the conversations again. I think if the pro team so desires, we can to the cards and go that way. But, I mean, if there's a couple of new points, anyone would like to touch on, I'm obviously happy to answer the questions, but I just ask maybe we don't redo everything that we've done before Mr. Pro tem, but that's your prerogative, you're in the chair.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Yes, and this is what I'm going to do. I'm going to allow one question on the substance of the Bill to Representative Duplessis because he is the Vice Chairman of the

Committee and I deference to him and his work. But after that, I'm going to asked that we move on to public testimony because we have debated the Bill a lot. But I don't want to look like I'm not allowing the Vice Chairman's Committee to testify or ask questions.

REPRESENTATIVE ROYCE DUPLESSIS: Thank you Mr. Pro tem, and my question is to the substance of the Bill, but it also encompasses the procedure of how we go forward with respect to the substance of the Bill and we just incorporated another amendment and if we were to take action on this legislation today after hearing from the public, there's still certain steps involved. We'll have to hear on the floor -

[00:05:08]

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: Absolutely.

REPRESENTATIVE ROYCE DUPLESSIS: Do you envision this as being a final product?

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: I don't, I think I'm - I think everyone in this body knows that my door is open. I've lived on the 7th floor for the past three months. I've continued to live there the past week and two weeks.

REPRESENTATIVE ROYCE DUPLESSIS: Right.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: Anybody can come see me. My door is open. I'm willing to have conversations about everything in this Bill and I mean that. Everything. To see how we can make it better and to see if there is a way to where we can get more buy-in from membership. Because my goal at the end of the day is a Bill that is best for the citizens of Louisiana, that it accomplishes our redistricting criteria and that is legal. And so, and that includes buy-in from the membership of this body. And so, there's a way, Representative Duplessis, we can get more buy-in and get more people involved. You know, I'm going to work with you and work with any other member to do that.

REPRESENTATIVE ROYCE DUPLESSIS: No. Thank you for the work that you have put in at work that you continue to put in to try to get us there. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: Yes, sir.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Yes and I would also add a think that the amendment we just adopted this morning was to benefit a member from the opposing party. So, I think he's that's just - I mean, I'll always say - let's say he's still willing to cooperate and work to achieve everybody's goals. All right. With that said, we're going to be on to

the cards. It's a red card day. So, we're going to start with Patricia Hill. Is Ms. Hill present?

MALE 1: She doesn't want to speak.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Oh. I'm sorry, she doesn't want to speak because she's an opposition. I misread the card. She doesn't want to speak, all right. I'm going to read the card, it says she's with the ACLU. It's Rachel Eibar, maybe? I know - the handwriting is a little tough for me to read, so I apologize if I got it wrong. Is Ms. Eibar, Ms. Rachel with ANCP/BUM/ACLU present? All right, moving on. Mr. Wilfred Johnson, who's present would like to speak?

REV WILFRED JOHNSON: Yes, sir. Good evening Chairperson.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: You got to complete the sentence for him. That's okay. Please identify yourself for the record too and then get into the heart of which you want with speech.

REV WILFRED JOHNSON: Good afternoon. I'm Reverend Wilfred Johnson from New Iberia, Louisiana. Good evening, well, good afternoon to all of you and we're here in representation of ANCP a new chapter push along with BBM and the ACLU. We are here in opposition of this particular bill simply because of it not being finished, there is - I don't think

enough information that we have to kind of give us clear understanding of that which we're demanding. We're here today because we're demanding fair mapping and we're also demanding that we as African-Americans, at the least have another Black Congressional District, so we can be fairly represented. We do understand that there are six that's going to Washington DC. and only one is representing the African-American Community. So, we are in opposition of this and we just want to say that, you know, there's more that can be given to this and we appreciate it. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Representative Duplessis, let me light your microphone up.

REPRESENTATIVE ROYCE DUPLESSIS: I'll wait. I'll wait for now. Let's just let the people speak.

[OVERLAY]

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: And members, let me take Royce's. The bill we're on today is not the congressional map. That bill is scheduled for the House Floor to be clear. So, the bill we're here that's scheduled for the agenda today we discussed is the speakers' state house bill. So, the one to do this legislature. I just want to be clear. And so, if you want to testify on that, that's what we're

gathering testimony on. Very happy to hear a testimony from everybody wants to talk about that issue. But if your testimony is on the Congressional map that bill is on the House Floor today. And I just want to give you all some - I know it's - you all came in and we really want to hear from you. I don't want you to think that we don't want to hear from you. I just want you to know what's with the agenda item is that were discussing today. All right, that said, we have Ms. Shawn Bernard present and would like to speak. Shawon. I'm sorry if I mispronounced it out the gate.

[00:10:00]

SHAWON BERNARD: And I don't want to take off my mask just briefly. Good morning. I am Shawon Bernard. I'm a resident of New Orleans, where I live in Congressional District 2, Senate District 4 and House of Representatives District 100. As a former high school math teacher, I really enjoy and understand numbers. As a practicing attorney, I appreciate the law such that the United States Supreme Court has held that the population of the Congressional Districts in the same state must nearly be equal in proportion. Additionally, the United States Constitution Amendments 14 and 15 in the Voting

1 Rights Act still provides protections for the concept
2 of one person, one vote as an avenue to address
3 discriminatory and unconstitutional actions. What a
4 shift in population from the northern parishes to the
5 southern parishes of the state, it necessitates that
6 the current congressional map must change to make
7 numbers work with the district's equal in population.
8 And today, I will speak on the House Bill that's on
9 the Floor and I would like to speak to that in terms
10 of facts, truths and outcomes. Where facts are
11 permanent and proven truths and truths are accepted
12 outcomes of reasoning and outcomes are consequences.
13 So, the fact is the 2020 consensus provides that a
14 population in Louisiana increased nearly 3 percent
15 across the state. The truth is that that shift in
16 number shows that the rural population areas of the
17 state decreased, while the urban and suburban areas
18 increased in population. The outcome of this body
19 should be that the mapping districts must change to
20 match the reapportionment of where the residents now
21 live. The fact is, in New Orleans, the population
22 increased by 40,000. The truth is the increase in
23 population creates a greater number of House of
24 Representative seats in the city limits of New
25 Orleans itself. The outcome should be that a total of

nine House of Representative are redistrict from within the city limits based upon the city's population. The fact is that nearly one out of three residents of people of color. The truth is the electoral mapping should create districts that represent the minority population and reflects the demographics of this state. The outcome should be the creation of proportional districts that provide an opportunity to elect minority Representatives across the state. And in closing, the fact is this process of redistricting this about numbers. The truth is to put politics blur. The process of creating equal mapping and providing opportunities to minority populations. To have the majority voting demographics for one-third of elected offices in this state. The outcome should be that this body makes an earnest effort to create fair maps where the interest of minority communities is not trampled by the self-interest of those who themselves are the map makers. And enclosing with my math skills, 105 House of Representatives at one-third means that you all should be creating districts of minority where 35 of those seats are held by minority of members. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Great testimony. Next, we'll have Emerson Slain? If present would like to speak.

EMERSON SLAIN: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chairman, members. I would just like to say - I would like to echo what the gentlelady said that just level and that was actually my pull on that we needed 35 seats. For that reason, I stand in opposition to both 14 and 15. Thank you

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Thank you. Next, we have Kingson Willis. Kingson Willis, I'm sorry if I - if I murder anybody's name, it's not my intention. Please correct it for me.

KINGSON WILLIS: Oh, we're all sharing our time.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Sure. If everybody could just identify themselves, please.

RYAN WILKINSON: I'm Ryan Wilkinson from Shreveport, Lousiana.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: I'm sorry.

KINGSON WILLIS: Kingson.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Who's the first one?

RYAN WILKINSON: Ryan Wilkinson.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Wilkinson.

KINGSON WILLIS: Kingson Willis.

SABRINA HYUNH: Sabrina Hyunh, Shreveport, Louisiana.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Thank you all.

KINGSON WILLIS: Adrian Perkins, the Shreveport mayor, came to Caddo Magnet High School and asked an entire auditorium of students, "raise your hand if you plan on staying in Louisiana after graduation."

[00:15:02]

Out of the full auditorium, not a single hand was raised. Now, legislators, I want to ask you a question. What do you see for the future of Louisiana? If you ask the youth, the answer would be, "We don't know". And frankly, we don't care. Because the Youth of Louisiana won't be here to see it. Unless you give us a reason to stay. We are the People's Promise Youth Division from Shreveport, Louisiana. We came to speak about why we are here and why redistricting is important to the youth and future of Louisiana.

SABRINA HYUNH: In the past decade, Louisiana has faced an extreme shortage of laborers such as plumbers, electricians and carpenters. These are the backbone of our state. Decades of voter suppression drove these people away, and you can't blame them. HB 14 creates an unresponsive government for the workers

of Louisiana. Gerrymandering ensures that the same politicians that create these problems are not being held accountable. Less laborers creates a labor shortage which makes an already slow economy worse.

RYAN WILKINSON: HB 14 is going to lose you a lot of money. Big business does not want to come to Louisiana. We're losing potentially billions of dollars in taxpayer revenue and economic growth because businesses are scared to come here. It sounds far-fetched but we all know it could happen. Remember that MLB All-star game that didn't happen in Atlanta. In a petition signed by the biggest companies in the United States, saying they oppose any legislation that infringes on people's right to vote. Apple, Amazon, Facebook; all of those supported that petition. By voting for HB 14, you're doing exactly the opposite of what those companies want you to do. You're driving away billions of dollars in potential jobs like automobile industries, tourism and food. The future of Louisiana is in your hands. Our future is in your hands. We ask that you oppose HB 14, because I know some of the greatest minds in Louisiana, world changers, potential attorneys, engineers, doctors give us a reason to stay.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Thank you all.

RYAN WILKINSON: Okay.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: I'm sorry. You all can stay, Representative Stefanski has a question for you all.

RYAN WILKINSON: Sure.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Who's the first one?

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: Yes, Ma'am. What did you say your name was again?

SABRINA HYUNH: Me?

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: Yes, Ma'am.

SABRINA HYUNH: Sabrina Hyunh.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: Ms. Hyunh, you brought up the term "gerrymandering". Could you identify what district in the map you believe is gerrymandered?

RYAN WILKINSON: District 23.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: You believe District 23 is gerrymandered?

RYAN WILKINSON: Yes.

SABRINA HAN: Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: Okay. Do you know – what region of the state is that district located in?

RYAN WILKINSON: Northwest Louisiana, New Natchitoches.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: Under my map, it's not located there.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: Oh yeah because you gerrymandered it, you moved it.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: What is your definition of gerrymandering?

RYAN WILKINSON: Gerrymandering is changing the map in order to have a political favor.

[OVERLAY]

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: So, you've identified a district that has been moved, and so your definition is by moving that district, that is your definition of the gerrymander?

RYAN WILKINSON: Change you get for a political favor.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: Change you get for a political favor.

RYAN WILKINSON: If - change you get from a democrat. Representative Kenny Cox right there to a district in South Louisiana.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: Have you -

RYAN WILKINSON: 23 represents sorts of rural areas, counties that are severely underrepresented in

the map by HB 14, it completely wipes out the districts and changes the lines there.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: Have you looked at the demographics of HB 23?

RYAN WILKINSON: Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: What do you – tell me about these demographics. Look, I'm not – I don't want to question you like you're supposed to be an expert on all these numbers. I'm not trying to do that. I was just trying to get your definition.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Look, this is not choir practice. We have – the audience is not going to make comments from the artists. When they testify, they ask questions. That's the way it's going to be. If it's going to be disruptive, we will ask members to leave and then if you keep being disruptive, you will be forced to leave. I don't want to get there. So, we're not going to turn it into – this isn't a council meeting. This isn't a school board meeting. I just want to be very clear with the rules and parameters are. We want – we have everybody an opportunity to speak and talk, but we are not going to have a gallery of chanting and everything else that's going on. So, please be respectful to the

process and then we will your turn to speak. All right? Thank you.

[00:20:07]

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: Yup and look, I'll - let me finish my line of questioning. I think it's going to solve this. I understand. I said that Sam. I said that.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Sam, hold on. Only Representative Stefanski is recognized to speak. We will have order in this meeting, period. By everybody.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: Look, I asked you -

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Wait, wait. I will recognize the speakers and they will speak. Anybody whose disruptive will leave. That's going to be across the board. But everybody's going to have an opportunity to speak and I will recognize you. But we're going to have anything going on off mic besides what's being recorded. That's by my decision. Now, Representative Stefanski, it is your turn to speak.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: I asked you for your definition of gerrymandering, you gave it to me. I'm satisfied. Thank you all for you coming to the Capitol today.

RYAN WILKINSON: Thank you for letting us speak.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Thank you. Next, we're going to have Tammy Savoie. Thank you Ms. Savoie. Can you please state your name for the record?

DR. TAMMY SAVOIE: Yes, my name is Dr. Tammy Savoie and I am a resident of New Orleans. I am also a retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel. And I'd really want to thank you all for all of the work that you've put in to all of these bills. But, my question to you is to what end was this work for? The maps that - the map that is currently being presented does not reflect the population changes in Louisiana and does not represent a minority population in proportion to what our current population is. So, I'm really after being here for the last week and a half, watching the deliberations, it is clear to me that the primary purpose of this map and the maps that have been proposed is to maintain incumbency. It's really all about self-preservation and not really about representing the constituencies of Louisiana. So, I would hope that you would consider - and that goes for House Bill 15 as well. And I know that that the Democrats are operating in a very constrained situation because we can't get any maps on the floor

that are going to really reflect increased minority population, that's going to really be considered seriously. So, the only thing we can do is configure around what the other side will let us basically. So, I really think that the deliberations that have gone on - really, the self-interest in the deliberations. Confirm to me that we really need an independent commission to help us with drawing these maps so that we can get fair maps and we can get minority representation the way it should be. Because right now the maps do not adequately reflect the proportion of minority population that we currently have in Louisiana. So, we might have to for the next 10 years, go with another set of maps that are not reflective of our population, but eventually we will get to where we will have a proportionate representation. That might be a while, but we're going to do it and we're going to continue to fight this battle. So, thank you very much for letting me speak today. I really appreciate it.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Thank you Ms. Savoie. Next, we have Rachel Bell. Present and would like to speak. Moving on. Are you Ms. Bell? I'm sorry, did I get your name wrong?

RACHEL BELL: I would like to decline in speaking.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Sure, no problem. Next, we have I think Ma'kaylah Turner and maybe Breka Peoples, do you want to come up together? Please state your name and identify yourselves.

MA'KAYLAH TURNER: My name is Ma'kaylah Turner from the People's Promise at East Division.

BREKA PEOPLES: The founder of the People's Promise.

MA'KAYLAH TURNER: So, District 23 is one of the few majority-minority districts that we have left. By cutting it, you're showing your racism and your lack of compassion for those fighting to have their voices heard. And I know we're going to say that it wasn't gerrymandered. But it was. It was a political choice to cut District 23. If you plan to look me in my eyes and tell me that every beautiful black individual in this room doesn't deserve to have their voice heard. And if you plan to keep pushing your racist ideologies, then please be prepared to be removed. Because one thing my group and my partner's know how to do is to organize, mobilize and to agitate across the state, and our youth is not afraid to do so.

[00:25:21]

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Thank you.

BREKA PEOPLES: My name is Breka Peoples. I'm the founder of the People's Promise. As a state activist that travels throughout the rural areas in Louisiana, I see firsthand how this map chop up rural voting blocked and strew the people of epic [INDISCERNIBLE 00:25:38] of representation. You are a raced district 23. You are race a district that's represent not only his community, but the state and also, he also represents the country. This map is unconstitutional and we will not be silenced with this map and I have 162 teams within my youth division, 96 adults in my youth division. One thing I'm teaching them how to organize, mobilize across the state as you just stated. If these maps are not there, we will organize and mobilize across this state to replace you either if it is one of my youth divisions and I meant opposition of HB 14.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Thank you. Next, we have Chris Williams. I apologize, but I just was filled out in the court as how I address you. If you would like to be referred to as anything else, please put it forward. But again, please watch the comments from the gallery. Mr. -- Dr. Williams please.

1 DR. WILLIAMS: Good morning. Thank you for
2 recognizing me and allowing me to have the floor. So,
3 this morning, we had a press conference on the steps
4 of the capitol and the reason that we had the press
5 conference was to set a black voters' matter. We have
6 people from all over the state, students from LSU and
7 Southern University. I basically told the story that
8 my grandfather Freddy Williams, who was a carpenter
9 in Lafayette, Louisiana in the early 1900s fought to
10 have the right to vote. My father who served 25 years
11 in the Lafayette Parish School System educating young
12 people had to fight for the right to vote and have
13 fair representation. I've been doing this work for
14 the last 45 years and I've had to fight to have
15 representation. My son, who attends college here in
16 Baton Rouge is on the steps of the Capitol in
17 February of 2022 to fight for fair representation.
18 What you have here is a historical failure to act by
19 all. It is embedded in deep racist ideologies, your
20 inability to understand the population of one-third
21 of the State of Louisiana is unconscionable to
22 everyone. It's not like we don't see what you're
23 doing and for you to sit up here and continue to
24 exercise this white privilege is unconscionable. We
25 call upon the legislative Black Caucus to not

compromise, to not be cordial, to make good trouble because we are in the same place. Representative Stefanski from Crowley, Louisiana is from the kid in the area, and is an embarrassment to our region, particularly for black and brown people who don't believe that he is representing the flavor of our area which has had a long history of working together and moving forward progressively. The maps that have been put forward by you, your Speaker Schexnayder, Senator Hewitt is an insult to us. And so we are here today to follow your rules, but don't mistake us following your rules in being cordial in this committee as compliance because the days of compliance are over. Your bigotry, your inability to recognize a third of the state's population and to do it with the arrogance that you provide to the citizens of Louisiana is unconscionable.

[00:30:05]

So we're here today for you to see us. We realized that you're going to do what you just did and that is put us in our place when you feel we are doing some cultural activities of call and response. We understand that. So we'll follow your rules today, but understand that we recognize what it is that you are doing. We're here for you to see our face, to see

how our church, to see how our organizations and I guess in closing, I would suggest that although you may numerically and quantitatively win this battle, the state of Louisiana will lose in the long run as being projected as the backward and racist state that it is. So you may win this battle as you receive your per diems every day and go in and address the redistricting issues, but we just wanted you to know that we are here from throughout this State of Louisiana and the same way Mr. Acting Chair as you indicated we have rules and this is not going to be what it's going to be. We are going to tell you, it's going to be what we want it to be. We will continue to fight. We will continue to fight in the courts. We will continue to support 35 seats in the House of Representatives and we support what Reverend Johnson stated earlier and that is having nothing but two seats on our congressional seats and at the end of the day, this isn't the last you're going to hear from us. So, on behalf of United Ballot PAC, we tell you good morning and we tell you that we will be back. We are watching you and we support our young people, particularly and we encourage them to do what they need to do to have a better life. Because this generation ought not be living in a state where it's

leaders doesn't give - about their future. And you don't, you don't, so don't profess to do peace.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Thank you Dr. Williams. Dr. Williams, Representative Ivey had a question for you, do you want to take the question or are you?

REPRESENTATIVE BARRY IVEY: Thank you Dr. Williams.

DR. WILLIAMS: Representative Ivey.

REPRESENTATIVE BARRY IVEY: Yes sir. So first of all, I appreciate your passion, I appreciate your leadership for the calls that you believe in and I do generally appreciate that. You'll get no disagreement from me with regard to the historical failure of Louisiana to act. I'm keenly aware of the history of, you know, racism and the voting process going back from the beginning, and so I will say that having worked with this body and I know it's hard to know where things really start to change in the process genuinely and regardless of your opinion on the map and where it is right now, I can tell you that the chairman who's worked diligently with each of these members across the state has done so with integrity, with no bigotry in mind and with no or heart and with no intent to draw the districts to prevent any

opportunity from minorities being fairly represented. And so, I can sincerely say that and leave that with all my heart that that's the case. Now, the chairman's map that he worked on only has 29 majority-minority seats. I will agree with you that there is opportunity and should be opportunity to increase that number. Obviously, the population is reflective of more seats than that and I've already stated that the house map being the smallest districts that you can make provide the most opportunity for increasing majority-minority representation in the state. And I think efforts are being made even right now in this process to try to do that. I will also would like to point out and I don't know to the extent that you're aware of some of the other maps, but even the maps brought by other minority representatives on this committee did not increase minority representation in the state by one. And so the issue really becomes and look, you've identified some of it and look, let's be honest, politics is here. Okay.

[00:35:00]

And it's not just racial politics, it's incumbent politics, it's and again, there's a degree of it where you do have intact communities of interest in

1 place and members who are incumbents and know their
2 communities really would like to see those
3 communities of interest remain intact. I'll example
4 in Shreveport, right? There's three minority
5 representatives. They know their communities well. In
6 order to increase a minority seat in that area which
7 I believed the population of minorities makes that
8 possible. You'll have to completely disrupt and
9 segment the current communities of interest within
10 those three minority members of districts in order to
11 achieve it. Now, I don't know what the pallet is
12 there. Obviously, you know, one of my colleagues who
13 brought the map, he intended, Representative Jenkins
14 intended to try to maintain those communities of
15 interest and so, there is a challenge in trying to
16 balance all of these things in order to achieve that.
17 And so to the extent that this committee has not been
18 forwarded a legitimate opportunity with being
19 presented with a map that's been drawn by anybody.
20 There's any member here can offer an amendment.
21 Anyone in the community and many and there's members,
22 there's individuals here and organizations here who
23 have offered maps and different things. I welcome
24 amendments that that makes sense. So trying to
25 maintain those communities of interest intact as much

as possible, but also allow for some opportunity to increase a minority representation where it just makes sense. And so again, the process and I think sometimes it's easy to get lost in the course with a national, scene and everything else, but the process from my experience, it's very difficult. You can ask Representative Jenkins. When you start trying to do the maps, it gets very difficult very quickly, but I do believe there's great opportunity with the house districts. We have to put in more work to achieve that. I'm committing to you that I'm going to continue putting in that work to see what we can do, but some of your comments and understand where they're coming from, you've put in a lot of years on this issue and you've seen a lot of change. And unfortunately, the change that you've seen has been necessitated by your actions and those in your communities who've had to fight for so long. So, I understand where you're coming from and I will commit to continue work toward achieving fair districts that represent the communities they served.

DR. WILLIAMS: Thank you so much and I will just briefly state that the public comes here to address our elected leaders. At the beginning of this hearing, one of our speakers, Reverend Johnson came

1 up to talk about one of the areas that we are
2 concerned about, not necessarily what was under
3 agenda here today, but spoke to the acting chair
4 about the two -
5 REPRESENTATIVE BARRY IVEY: Congressional.
6 DR. WILLIAMS: Congressional districts. So, I
7 guess my point is that and then correct me if I'm
8 wrong, I don't think your body made your maps public
9 prior to the legislative session beginning.
10 REPRESENTATIVE BARRY IVEY: They were. Whenever
11 the bills were filed is when they become public.
12 That's just normal.
13 DR. WILLIAMS: And was that before or after the
14 session?
15 REPRESENTATIVE BARRY IVEY: It was on the first
16 day of session. Yes, sir.
17 DR. WILLIAMS: So, we went to public hearing,
18 this body that's here today went to all of these
19 public hearings. I was at the one in Lafayette at the
20 University of Louisiana. And my point is that,
21 whether it's Reverend Johnson, myself coming up to
22 talk about the issues of the day. We understand the
23 fact that you guys have the staff, the attorneys, the
24 experts, the institutional knowledge to affect what
25 is happening. We are not necessarily here to debate

that or the necessarily order in which the agenda is presented. What we here to talk to you about today is whether or not in the year 2022, this state has the institutional 42 through his leaderships to do the right thing and all we're at the 30,000-foot level to say, Representative Ivey, is that we know that I would - our house districts should be somewhere around 35 seats. We know that our congressional representation should be two out of six and if we can't get somewhere close to that point, then, the commentary that you're hearing today is the frustration from trying to -- trying to convince a body that's supposedly representative of our citizens that one-third of the population should have fair seats. It just seems like such a waste of energy and time in the year 2022.

[00:40:01]

And yes, they're all rule divides and urban divides and business and industry divides, but I will tell you as someone's been doing this for 45 years. I believe that the biggest criteria in redistricting is based upon the matrix of race and I know that we have some other variables involved. I just don't think our state is -- is a post-racial society, and for your colleagues to tell us through the media since you've

1 come to this place, State Capitpl, that you should be
2 happy with what you have and that it's probably
3 impossible for you to elect another black if it's
4 only 54 or 55 percent African-American. What we're
5 saying and what United Ballot PAC is saying is create
6 the districts and let us worry about that.
7 REPRESENTATIVE BARRY IVEY: Give me a chance, I
8 don't know.
9 DR. WILLIAMS: I already have a white person in a
10 seat who has 52 percent African-American population
11 as opposed to not having the opportunity to have a
12 black seat at all or have an 80 percent black
13 district or like 80 percent white district. And then
14 we get to what we have now in this state and country.
15 So what we ask and in closing, I guess I would just
16 say that the -- the logistics of how the chairman is
17 running this committee or how you operate. We may
18 have some -- some -- we may not synergize here and
19 there but the bottom line is that all the people
20 that's going to come for you today. We are watching
21 you from throughout the state. We're looking at it
22 every day. We are watching you on the internet and
23 what we're saying is that these guys are doing the
24 same thing that we've been doing for decades in this
25 country. The Black Caucus is fighting the same

1 battles and you're not listening to them. And it's
2 just frustrating that in the year 2022, we have to
3 get to a point where politics is in place and I will
4 suggest and I want back down, racism is in place. You
5 know, I mean, in -- in its racism however you define
6 it, but it's is racism in the context of a person's
7 inability to understand the need in a political
8 context of fair representation. So the fact that
9 people around this country have made it a strategic
10 move whether it's in Tennessee and Nashville to do
11 away with that black district are the district in
12 Alabama that the Supreme Court just ruled about all
13 would be doing here in Louisiana. We don't believe
14 it's by mistake that this is happening throughout the
15 country. We don't believe that Louisiana is any
16 different and the leadership of Louisiana is any
17 different. We don't believe that Speaker Schexnayder
18 is not following any other agenda than what they
19 prescribed to follow prior to coming to this session.
20 And for us, that is very, very frustrating in the
21 year 2022. And when our young people come to testify
22 that we're going to have brain drain because of it. I
23 would be concerned regardless of what side of the
24 aisle you're on.
25

REPRESENTATIVE BARRY IVEY: Sure. Well, I'm not on any side of the aisle. I kind of march to the beat of my own drum, kind of try to operate out of my own conviction. So, if I were to try to draw some maps and this is where it does get difficult, I'm from the East Baton Rouge Parish area. I know, you know, the area I serve in and, the surrounding area is reasonably well. Once you get outside of that area, I don't know, Shreveport. I went on redistricting roadshow and so the communities of interest population like I just don't know the area. Any really, really anywhere else in the state. I'm not so well traveled, but I'm going to take it my own attempt to try to see what I can do with increasing majority-minority representation on the house map. Now, if -- if I'm able to achieve that on -- again, there's maybe a thousand ways or maybe even more than that to statistically, with all the different precincts in play in a specific, couple parishes like, Bossier Caddo to -- to come up with different maps, but I can only, I can only file one and I take my best, guess at it. And what happens if the representation even may be possibly minority representation that area doesn't like it and won't support it. You don't think so, what if I can

actually come up with an additional seat in that district in that area that's majority-minority, but the current incumbents won't have anything to do with it. What would you say? So, would that be racism then or would that be just kind of cut, you know, politics as usual?

[00:44:58]

DR. WILLIAMS: That'd be politics, right and I think the answer is very obvious. That would be political in nature. And I guess the nuance of -- of creating those districts is just what it is. I mean at the end of the day, well how you will be judged and how this session will be judged is what's going to be the final outcome. Someone mentioned earlier that you're going to be having amendments and so forth and suspect us to continue to keep up with the amendments in the maps that you're going to be drawing. It's not going to be the case because we won't be here every day.

REPRESENTATIVE BARRY IVEY: Sure.

DR. WILLIAMS: But we have Amer Hussein who's with Black Voters Matters. We have the ACLU. We have the legal defense fund, who is here every day. Keturah who's here every day.

REPRESENTATIVE BARRY IVEY: Sure and we work with them.

DR. WILLIAMS: To address those nuances of what's happening.

REPRESENTATIVE BARRY IVEY: And I'm sorry to interrupt, but I'm being tapped for time. I do want, just want to point one last thing out. Just that, and this is only to demonstrate the actual technical challenge to drawing some of these maps, 75.28 percent of the black population in Louisiana lives in 16 parishes and 24.72 percent live in 48 parishes. And so, you can see just based on that right there, the geography of the demographics also play a role in the challenge. Not that it's not, insurmountable but it does create some significant technical challenges in doing that. We have 16 parishes in Louisiana where there are less than 5,000 black people living in that parish. We have 18 parishes where there's between 5 to 10,000 black people living in them. We've got 11 parishes where 10 to 15,000 black people live in those parishes. And so, without going to the other -- you kind of get a sense of those parishes and when you're talking about house districts that are 40, little over 40,000 people when you've got an entire parish and again, these are rural parishes and so

they're, you know, usually generally sparsely populated anyway, but again, it becomes difficult to do. Now, again, the real opportunities obviously in the urban areas, where we've seen increased population growth and that's where I'm going to try to focus my attention, but it isn't a simple division problem in any regard, unfortunately, but.

DR. WILLIAMS: And this in ten seconds, we -- we understand that you have quantitative challenges, but we would hope that those quantitative challenges would be superseded by the concept that equal justice and fair maps for all. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: All right. Thank you Dr. Williams. Moving on to Autumn Sommers and Zoha Ibrahim. Again, I apologize if I don't get a name right, please correct me. Renaye Harris.

RENAYE HARRIS: I believe that I put down that there's option that I would speak, I request to refuse.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Yeah, I'm sorry, but they were grouped together a card of people who said they want to speak together, I apologize.

AUTUMN SOMMERS: It's pronounced Autumn Sommers. Just put this on.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Autumn Sommers.

ZOHA IBRAHIM: And Zoha Ibrahim. Also we're both from Shreveport, Louisiana.

AUTUMN SOMMERS: And we're both representing the People's Promise Youth Division.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Thank you all for being here.

AUTUMN SOMMERS: Thank you.

SOHA IBRAHIM: All government originates with the people and is founded on their will alone. That's the promise that's enshrined into Louisiana constitution, right. So the people are here today because we believe that our will has been denied for far too long. We are the People's Promise Youth Division and across the state, we've enacted a legislation to get thousands of high school students registered to vote and in just a few years, your seats will be in their hands. Today, they're watching and waiting to see if you will advocate for them and for their future. Maps like the ones proposed by HB14 are pushing people out of the state. People know that they're not being represented fairly and so they've decided to leave to go to places where they know they'll get better representation. These people are just faceless strangers, they're the very same constituents that

1 put you in office in the first place. Your failure to
2 represent them faithfully, accurately and equitably
3 has left them no choice but to leave the state they
4 once called home.
5 AUTUMN SOMMERS: And we aren't here to tell you
6 that gerrymandering and then House Bill 14 is racist
7 because you know that and it's odd that none of you
8 care. But what you should know is that when I talk to
9 all of my friends who want to be doctors, lawyers,
10 politicians, technicians, they all tell me the exact
11 same thing, that they don't want to stay in Louisiana
12 anymore because they hate it here. It is sad that to
13 be successful, you have to leave Louisiana and that's
14 what all of the young people think because you are
15 not representing us. We know that you hear our voices
16 and we know that you are not listening.
17 [00:50:04]
18 And a decision has to be made and maybe you have
19 already made your decision on what map you want to
20 vote for, but you need to make a decision if you want
21 to be the reason why your kids don't stay in
22 Louisiana. Do you want to be the reason why your kids
23 get tops in Louisiana and then leave as soon as they
24 graduate or they leave to go to college outside of
25 Louisiana? In the Louisiana constitution, it is

supposed to protect the right of the people and the will of the people alone. You can kick everyone out of this room and we will kick you out of office. All of the young people who are watching, we are getting thousands of high school that's registered to vote. We are influencing people who have never been heard before because you don't care about their voices. I am 17 years old and I know what a fair map looks like. I don't see Mr. Clay Schexnayder here but I know he knows what a fair map looks like. If a 17-year-old can pick apart a map and understand that it is racist, and that it is wrong, you should be able to as well Mr. Clay Schexnayder. I urge you all to oppose this bill. And if don't we will remove you from office. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Thank you. Representative -- yeah. Representative Stefanski?

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: I just want to say, so, I'd like to humanize things sometimes. Okay. I'm a human like a lot of you all. I get geared up for this. This is a high stress high tip situation. I spent the last year of my life doing this. Its -- I get in the mindset sometimes of defense, defense, defense, or point, point, point. I just want to say, look, I appreciate every single person who comes here

today and I apologize if for the earlier people, I want to say I apologize if I came off as a little aggressive. For you two, I want to say that thank you for coming here today and we may not agree on this and I don't want to get into a debate on that but I just wanted to say I'm human like everybody else. Sometimes we get high strong, sometimes we get in a tense situation. I do want to say though that I'm here to listen. I already admitted. Hey look, if there's changes I can make to this map as we go forward, I'm going to listen, I'm going to listen to my colleagues about doing that. And so, again, I just want to put on there, thank you for coming today. I heard what you said and I'm going to discuss with my colleagues going forward about how we can make this better.

AUTUMNS SOMMERS: Yeah. Thank you Representative Stefanski and please stop deflecting the questions and trying to interrogate 17-year-olds.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: All right. Thank you. Moving on, we're going to Omari Ho-Sang. Omari Ho-Sang who's present and would like to speak. Please state your name for the record.

OMARI HO-SANG: Good morning, my name is Omari Ho-sang and I'm the State Organizing Manager for the Black Voters Matter Fund. How's everyone doing today?

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Great.

OMARI HO-SANG: My question as I testify is do we want peace or do we want power? Here's what I mean, 45 percent of people in Louisiana are poor. That's a total of two billion residents. This includes 57 percent of our babies, that's 630,000 people, 51 percent of women, that's a million people, and 66 percent of black people who only represent 33 percent of the state. The numbers that I'm sharing, they don't just impact black people but they impact everyone in this room. When folks find reasons to keep us out, to squash our voices, we disenfranchise over 108,000 people. So, based on these numbers, it's clear that what has happened over these past decades has not worked. In the wise words of somebody, doing the same thing over and over again is the definition of insanity, or maybe the percentages that I shared, is something that's intentional. And yes, we are Black Voters Matter but let me be clear in saying --

[00:55:00]

-- even if there is someone who looks like me, who is protecting in incumbency, we will move against

that. A young lady, Ms. Sevoie who came before us stated that it looks like for the next 10 years, we will walk away with the same old map. So, in the next 10 years, there will be an organized response that will be local, that will be state-wide and it will be national. We will make sure that we built the capacity of these grassroots organizations like the People's Promise and the People's Promise youth division, a new chapter push. The United Ballet Pack and other organizations from across the state so make sure that they can continue to do this very important work because the young people behind choose this work not because it's fun or because it's something nice to put on their resume but because decisions have been chronically made by members of this body and this body as a whole that mandate teenagers as young as 14 years old to miss school to participate in a process that we can't seem to trust with those who are charged to do it. Would you want your children to miss school, to come up and be watchdogs for something that should be simple and based on map? To have to push back against a lack of representation, so pervasive that it hurts. Yes, you all spent the last year working on redistricting but the misrepresentation that has impacted our state has a

trauma that is 100 years old. There are lifelines impacted by what's happened so I'll go back to my original question. Do we want peace or do we want power, or could we have both? As representative I restate it, this is not an insurmountable process. I can imagine, I wouldn't want to be in your seats but what I do know is that 70 percent in those 48 parishes matter. Each and every individual from poverty to felony disenfranchisement to poor quality schools, these are issues that we have to walk right back into when we leave these chambers. So I ask you, please let the spirits of those who have come before us who died without representation -- adequate representation be here as you make these decisions. But also, don't let these young people walk away from these chambers with pretty words because that's not working anymore. As you can see, they are very sharp and these next 10 years will not be peaceful. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Thank you. All right. I want to go through the cards and make sure that we got it correctly. We have Chris Kaiser with the ACLU who's present but would not like to speak. I have Azaria Williams with Black Votes Matter who's also present but would not like to speak. I have

Shirley Mason with Black Votes Matters who is present but does not wish to speak and all in opposition. We have McKaya Davis, she is present but would not like to speak. We have Jamila Seckmit with Vote who is present and would not like to speak. We have Yolanda Crump who's present and would not like to speak. We have Rico Rice with Vote who's present and would also not like to speak. Got another one. For a Frankie Robertson who is present with Metamorphosis but would not like to speak. I have David Wooly who's present and provided information requested and we go to the green card, we have -- Mike Bayham and he's here and he's present and he would like to speak in support.

MICHAEL BAYHAM: Thank you, Mr. Pro tem. My name is Michael Bayham and I served as a Councilman at St. Bernard parish from 2001 to 2004. During my tenure as a councilman, I managed the parish government's reapportionment plan so I have a great deal of sympathy for the work performed by this committee. Your colleagues on the senate on the senate and particularly Chairman John Stefanski who have shouldered and share the burden of this decennial legislative duty. I would like to also add that the two legislative committees --

[01:00:00]

1 charged with the task of reapportionment went
2 above and beyond the minimum to travel across this
3 state to hear the voices of wage earners who cannot
4 either take off-work to be here or the expense of
5 coming to Baton Rouge. This is to the credit of every
6 member of these legislative committees, Democrat and
7 Republican and I do appreciate it. As everyone here
8 is aware, the work of reapportionment is very
9 complicated and due to the realities of not just
10 population in general, but population distribution,
11 what seems to be very basic is in fact very
12 complicated and there are limits to what can be done
13 with redrawing lines particularly when it comes to
14 contiguity. We simply cannot create islands scattered
15 across legislative districts. The precincts weaved
16 together to create legislative districts must not
17 just be connected but also be drawn in a reasonable
18 manner. In my opinion, House Bill 14 chose this goal
19 and I'd like to express my gratitude to the authors
20 of this legislation that kept St. Bernard Parish
21 intact as a unit within the House of Representatives
22 District 103 in lieu of drawing quarter-enlisted
23 benefit of other legislators. Sixteen years ago, St.
24 Bernard Parish suffered a series of hardships. The
25 first was when hurricane Katrina devastated our

1 community sending the waters of Lake Borgne and the
2 Gulf of Mexico into the living rooms and bedrooms of
3 practically every residential structure in St.
4 Bernard including my own where I had 11 feet of
5 water, a foot of water on my second story. While the
6 people of St. Bernard Parish worked diligently to
7 rebuild our community before the first FEMA official
8 set foot in our community, our population was
9 scattered across Louisiana and Mississippi with many
10 not returning to our parish. On August 29, 2005, our
11 community had two state representative seats and we
12 anchored a state senate seat. After reapportionment
13 in 2011, we lost one state representative seat in its
14 entirety and then a then sitting state representative
15 had our communities lone remaining voice deluded with
16 the unnecessary addition of precincts from two
17 neighboring parishes to his political benefit in the
18 event he sought another term. On the senate side, our
19 parish for the first time was split between two
20 districts anchored in other parishes. This was done
21 essentially to guarantee a re-election of the then
22 incumbent senator. Though St. Bernard parish has not
23 been reconstituted as a community a whole and a
24 single senate seat, we have at least -- and due to
25 what happened in Katrina we understand that reality.

I would like to express my thanks to the legislators in this committee and Speaker Schexsnayder and Representative Stefanski for righting the wrong that was done to our community in 2011 by putting St. Bernard Parish into a single house of representative seat. I encourage you the members of this committee to ensure that once all the amendments were considered with the final version of this bill that his remains. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Thank you. You have -- you do have a question or comment from Representative Lyons. Representative Lyons?

REPRESENTATIVE RODNEY LYONS: No, nothing.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Oh, I'm sorry. But would you like to go --

REPRESENTATIVE RODNEY LYONS: Personal privilege.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Personal privilege? I recognize Representative Lyons for personal privilege.

REPRESENTATIVE RODNEY LYONS: Thank you Mr. Pro tem. I don't have a lot of question for you, sir.

MICHAEL BAYHAM: Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE RODNEY LYONS: Thank you Mr. Pro tem. It's refreshing today to see the young people come out and express their concern and their

1 participation in the process but at this moment I
2 want to recognize a group after spending a whole day
3 listening to defense of my parish, and how excited I
4 am to meet you guys, I want you to stand up as a
5 group, from West Jefferson High School. Come on guys,
6 let me see that buck. Let's go. Let's go, Buccaneers.
7 From Harvey Louisiana, West Jefferson High School,
8 it's in my district. I want to thank you guys for
9 being here and coming out and enjoy this process,
10 this democratic process, how it works. It really
11 works well. It gets tense sometimes because of the
12 passion that we all have and we should have and we do
13 that. And I want to thank you all for being here and
14 I don't know if any of you guys have a question --
15 now I got to get my photo. But immediately over to
16 your right, standing, have you ever heard the name
17 Clay Schexnayder, Speaker Schexnayder, that's him
18 over there by the wall standing up in the blue suit.
19 I want -- recognize who he is but thank you all for
20 being here. You guys -- there's 25 of you guys. Some
21 of you guys are with student council, some of you
22 with the glee club but thank you for coming here and
23 Ms. Jackie Jones with the Jeremiah Group for bringing
24 the students here. Thank you all for being here and I
25 look forward to seeing you guys when we get back

home. Thank you very much. Today, as have -- I'll see you when we get back. I'm coming to see you at school when we get back home. Thank you, guys, very much. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Pro tem.

[01:05:02]

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: You're welcome. I have two more cards that have popped up. Katrine Robertson who is present but would not like to speak in opposition. Frankie Robertson this time representing Nolan Maternal Child Health who is present and does not wish to speak in opposition. And one second. All right. We have Representative Phelps for personal privilege.

REPRESENTATIVE TAMMY PHELPS: Thank you Mr. Pro tem. I didn't want this to be so difficult. Though I'm not a member of the committee, I wanted to say to the young people and the groups that are here today, thank you for coming because you are the reason why I am here. When I heard you speak, I guess just my passion in my -- I'm kind of just elated right now so forgive me for my of my voice because I didn't expect the powerful words and I heard your passion and I felt it. You were so right, Sommer and Zoha if I said that correctly. You could not have said it more perfectly. You represent an area where we all live is

Louisiana and I think we all love Louisiana that's why we're here. But young people have been leaving for years now. Your words to the committee, I don't know if they heard you, I hope they did. And I hope it makes a difference. We're not always sure that it does and I'm speaking from the experience of what we deal here. You see that every day. Unfortunately, you do have to come and speak and again, you all have sent us here to be your voice. But unfortunately, sometimes we'd need you to be here so we all can hear your voices. Thank you again. When I pulled up today, I saw a bus outside, it reflected -- I wasn't here in 1960 with everyone we had this civil right movement. Civil rights is just opportunity to ask can we all as citizens of the United States of America be treated fairly and equally and inequitably but thank you for taking the time out your parents that are here, that it allowed you to come. Thank you to the organizers Omari and Breka. Thank you all for coming. And the schools, I live for student leaders, student council members, you are our future and I thank you all so much for being here today.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Thank you Representative Phelps. You can come up here Kenny and then I'm going to get Representative Duplessis and

then I'm going to go to you. Representative Duplessis?

REPRESENTATIVE ROYCE DUPLESSIS: Thank you Mr. Pro tem. I just wanted to take a moment just to speak to the comments that we share today I think is important because I know we're not going to do a whole lot of substance of debating on the merits of the bill. We did that yesterday but I need to speak to the comments that have been shared today. First, I just want to start by saying thank you. I want to thank the People's Promise for coming today. I want to thank these dedicated young people for your commitment to this process. This is I think my second time being able to hear at least one of the speakers, one of the young people who spoke today -- when we heard him the first time, we were on a roadshow and on the roadshow, I felt like it was some of the most powerful testimony that I had ever heard. And today, in this committee I feel like this has been some of the most powerful testimony that I've ever heard. The brilliance that these young people have exhibited, the honesty, and the raw truth that you all spoke is so needed no matter how uncomfortable it makes anybody up here. And you all could be at so many other places right now because when I was 17 years

old, I can tell you I was not doing what you all are doing so I commend you and I salute you and I encourage you to keep going because while some of -- not everybody up here may have not agreed with what you said and you may have not changed every mind up here, rest assured that I see you, I hear you, and I appreciate you so don't stop. One of the biggest things that I learned on this roadshow about population shifts and why Louisiana continues to rank where we rank nationally, is because we continue to do the same thing over and over and over and over and over.

[01:10:10]

For some people, that's okay but for me, it's not. I want to speak to the process and my chairman and I think it's important for me to point out the amount of work that he has put into this. The amount of dedication that he's given to this process. And I think it was pretty clear when I said at the beginning of the meeting that this is -- we don't see this as being the final step. And I think I've been pretty clear with the chairman that I don't believe this current bill is adequate. In fact, I know it's not adequate. I know we can do better and the testimony shared today only reaffirm that to me so I

1 look forward to working with the chairman to do what
2 we can do to improve upon House Bill 14 because we
3 have to if we care about the future of this state
4 because that's what you all represent. That's what
5 you all represent. I've also talked about how flawed
6 this process is and no matter how well we all try to
7 do individually to serve our districts, and to serve
8 the State of Louisiana, the fact that we draw our own
9 district lines, is an inherently flawed process and
10 that is simply a fact. It's just a fact. So I'm going
11 to do my best to work with my colleagues to get the
12 best outcome possible for the State of Louisiana but
13 I encourage you, young people to keep going and keep
14 pushing us and keep forcing the difficult
15 conversations because if not, we're going to continue
16 to go on a wrong path. Thank you all so much.
17 REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Thank you for your
18 comments, Representative Duplessis. All right.
19 Representative Kenny Cox, he's present and would like
20 to speak in opposition. Before we do that, a little
21 housekeeping Kenny, I'm just going to reiterate these
22 cards. We got some more cards. Lauree Akinola-
23 Massaquoi, present and does not want to speak in
24 opposition. Sherrida Harris, although present but
25 does not want to speak in opposition. Kenny Harris

present in opposition, he doesn't want to speak. Towana Hamilton present but do not want to speak. Treshela Moran is present in opposition but does not wish to speak. All right. Representative Cox, now.

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: Thank you, Mr. Pro tem or Acting Speaker. I first want to say that I know that his process is an arduous process, I mean it's -- and it's difficult. Now, of course, for me it's greatly painful and I've spoke before and I'm going to get into the details on but my district is near and dear and it should be to everyone that your district should be. I know my people in my district and so it's a painful process. But these young people that you see back here, The People Promise and these other young kids, they're the future of the state. They are the ones that will come after you and they will make this place but many of them are leaving. We, we need to do something that will make them want to be here. One-third of African-Americans are in Louisiana and once again, the pandemic, the virus caused this and this -- I maybe the only person that's saying this but African-Americans did not come out for the census because of it and I've said it before. They were afraid, 70 percent in my era-- 60 percent to70 percent of era were passing and dying so

the numbers don't really reflect what they really should. But these young kids and young people come down here to tell you they're giving a message because in 10 years, most of us won't be here. I'll be a little older.

[01:15:01]

But as I said before and I tell you, I came in the state. Man, I grew up in poor. I mean, I wasn't poor. I was PO, P-O. We didn't have anything, and we worked. And I live in the rural area, in which was really tough. So, we go from slavery to freedom to Jim Crow to the Civil Rights movement so we can actually vote. And now, we're being channeled out. And in my district and I just say this, my district is -- I mean, it's been -- and as I said before, it's like you're threw a landmine in there and it went off in different directions and my people are dispersed, you know. I just ask did you go back and you look at it and say, "Hey." When you make these decisions, is that what I would do to myself? Will I treat me like that? You know, I'm a soldier and most of the stuff the way I approached things is through a military aspect. And these kids are looking at us and we must tow the line. We must do what is right because they are going to be -- this is a new generation now. And

when these kids say, "Well, most of these kids back here has -- I'd be willing to bet, 31s, 33s, 34s on the ACT test. They are super smart kids, and they are -- and I thank them for coming because they want to let us know that we're in a difficult time. America is in a difficult time. We're coming out of a pandemic. I pray to God that we're coming out of a pandemic. But what has happened in my district and, of course, there has to be -- there are casualties in every battle. But I want us to think about the things that we've gone through. And as I said before, you know, I can't do the times where I couldn't even on the sidewalk with my white camouflage. I had to stand up and we couldn't look and my great grandma is telling don't look them in the eyes because the clan will drive and ride on us, burn your house down or kill you. I pray to God that those days never return and that doesn't ever happen again. And I don't want anybody to ever have to endure that. Of course, I didn't let it stop me being PO, and I had a great, great grandmother who had a Ph.D. in whipping and she beat us regularly. And I thank her for it because I could have been a criminal and that would've been awful. That's why I tell you all discipline, we need to take that away from the state and give it back to

the families. I mean, we need to really do that because our children are growing up and they're seeing this wild, wild world. But these kids out here, they're the future and we have to plant the right seed for them. I don't know what's going to happen with my district, but I do think that there can be some better things done. I love to see my district back because it's a historic district and you're all -- if you haven't been to Natchitoches, you need to come. So great place to be and we had to call them the City of Lights. And I know you all have sympathy with me, but you can't feel what I feel. That's when my mother -- I'll tell you my mother tell me was I was at my brother's funeral. He was a young man, and he just had a massive heart attack and died. And at the funeral I came in from the military and I walked in and I talked to her, she was crying and care when I said, "Mama, I know how you feel." She stopped crying and told me, "I prayed to God, boy, that you don't ever go through this," and I pray to God and none of you all have to go through what I'm going through now. But I want to thank you for letting me have the opportunity, and I want to thank the kids for coming and you need to stay the course.

[01:20:00]

You need to fight for what is right because wrong hurts everyday. But right ain't never hurt nobody. Right has never hurt anybody, and we must, we must as a group of people. I was in the military, man. Many times, you go into battle and you do things, but one of the worst things happen is when you see kids in battle. I'm telling you it's a horrible fight. But having said all of that, I want to thank you guys for what you do. I know what you do. I ain't liking what you're doing to me. But I respect everybody and I never disrespect anybody. I don't think -- maybe I -- maybe sea ball one time. I had those sea balls under the bridge. So, I thank you all for listening to me and may God bless you as -- what all we do because this - and God bless you kids. You all have my heart and you all have -- and my hat, if I had one, it'd be off to you because you come and stated some thing and you're stating what you see, not what we see. You get too close to the battle, you can't see the bigger picture sometimes because it looks like it's done but that little pot over there can cause the whole thing to be fragmented. Thank you and God bless you all.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Representative Cox, hold on. You got some comments. And also, I want to publicly, I mean, privately, I've told you before how

much I respect you. You know, you're not just a good representative, you're a good Louisianian. You're a good American. You served this country in multiple capacities. And do you know that none of this has been a reflection on you? We had this conversation privately and publicly, and the world needs more Kenny Cox and that's for sure. And I will say that I do have some more comments though from Representative Newelton, Newell. Oh my God, I'm sorry. I know it's interrupting. I just want to be --

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: Let me get off of that seat.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: I'm not going to recognize her now. I'll go to somebody else. Ms. Newell, I'm sorry.

REPRESENTATIVE CANDACE NEWELL: Newelton, that's a new one. I don't have many questions, but I want to first make my first comment is to Representative Cox. I pray that I become the representative that you are. When I met you as an intern with the black caucus, you were then just as you are now, a true representative for your area. It didn't matter what was going on, you always asked how does this affect the people? What is this going to do to the people?

It was never a me or I, mine. It was always 'my people'. That's the only 'my' you use.

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: Yeah, my people.

REPRESENTATIVE CANDACE NEWELL: Your people in your district, and I truly appreciate you for doing that. And as I said, I hope that I could live up to -- oh, okay. We're setting the mood up there. I wish --

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: Speaking of the devil.

REPRESENTATIVE CANDACE NEWELL: And I hope I can live up to the capacity of a representative that you are now. To the young people in the audience, thank you. Thank you all for coming up here. The parents, the chaperones, the organizers, thank you all for coming up here and bringing these young people. As I say all the time when I'm in my district, you voted me to be your representative, but don't put me in leadership and leave me because I cannot be the only voice. Just as my colleagues on this committee and in the house, we cannot be the only voice. We need you to come up here and express what it is that's warranted because when we say it is fine, but when you come in and you support and echo what we're saying it weighs heavily, it weighs more, and that is evident in what's happening right now. My chairman of

this committee, John Stefanski, he did not force us to vote on this bill the first time it came out because not only did he listen to his colleagues on this committee, he listened to the people that came and sat in the chairs that you are occupying now.

[01:25:00]

And he did not present this bill and think it was superior and think it was the end all to be all. He knew by listening to us everyone wasn't comfortable. Now, in a room of 105 people, everyone is not going to be a 100 percent satisfied, but he has made concessions to listen to each one of us and just like today with this amendment swap out a precinct if is going to help your numbers. If it's going to get you, some folks that you have been representing to the utmost of your capacity, he has listened. And I want to thank him publicly for that because I have said that in our side private conversations, thank you and I want to thank him again. Are we all satisfied with the way that some of the residents in District 23, Representative Cox's Districts have been disbursed? No, we are not. But we are satisfied with the fact that we are given the opportunity to continue to have these discussions to try to make it better, to try to let the voters that we have now, and these voters

that we will have next election cycle to make sure that they know that they are heard. They are seen and that they matter. Not only you matter, your vote matters, your voice matters and it does not only matter when we are trying to be elected and want your vote, it matters once we're in these seats and that's what we all need to own. That's what we all need to absorb into us, into our minds that you matter after the election is over. And going back to what I said, that is how Representative Cox has always represented the members of District, the citizens of District 23. And I pray to God that I am a reflection of what he showed me when I was just an intern here in these walking the halls of this capitol, and I thank you again for being here today.

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: Thank you very much.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Thank you very Representative Newell. For question, Representative Deshotel.

REPRESENTATIVE JOE DESHOTEL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Representative Newell for that. I think you did a fabulous job. Again, thank you my friend. You know, we had this conversation yesterday, and I just want to comment. You made it --

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: We made him a millionaire, by the way. By a [INDISCERNIBLE 01:27:23].

REPRESENTATIVE JOE DESHOTEL: I just, you know, I want to comment you said something, and I want to make sure that for the record you understand when you said, you know, you all doing this to me. I'm not doing anything to you, my friend. I hope you understand that and appreciate that, you know, I have the most up respect for you, in your district and what you've done and, you know, even through this whole proceeding, how you've handled yourself is with the utmost respect. And, obviously, you know, I'm proud of you and I think your citizens are proud of you. I know that your residents and everyone in this room is, and I think everyone in this table can take something from what you've done, I know I have. I've learned a lot by listening to you, and I just want to appreciate everyone else that's come here and spoke. You know, I think a lot of times, you know, we have our mindsets and we think we understand what it is we want to do. But then, when you start listening to different people and different opinions and different ideas, it's healthy. It's healthy. It's healthy for this body. It's healthy for me, and I do appreciate

everybody coming out. And again, Rep Cox, we appreciate you. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: Let me say when I say 'me', that is the people. I am the people. I am of the people, and I represent -- and that's what I mean when I say that because, you know, when I go home, you know, my wife will say, "Well done," and pat me on the head and say go in the back, back there. But the reality is, is that all my -- you know, I don't want to leave this and where it said that I didn't try. I saw something on a statute somewhere that said, "If you remember me, remember that I tried. I gave it my best." and that's where I am, and I know you have and I definitely respect you.

REPRESENTATIVE JOE DESHOTEL: And I appreciate it.

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: And I appreciate what you're saying and you're absolutely right. I mean, I don't want anybody to think that it ain't about me because I want -- let's make it perfectly clear. Next two years from now, I won't be here.

[01:30:02]

And you all might not let me back in the building, but I'll be okay. But the point is is that I everyone has to fight for what's theirs and that is

their right. When we got ready to go to do something for this country, it was about the United States, about how I wanted to be respected and the way, you know, and you want to come home and saying, "Job well done." That's I appreciate.

REPRESENTATIVE JOE DESHOTEL: Again, thank you and thanks for Red River Parish in Coushatta, Louisiana.

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: Yeah, you ought to thank us because you got a big pocket. Praise the Lord.

REPRESENTATIVE JOE DESHOTEL: Yes, sir. The Lord has been good.

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: He's been good.

REPRESENTATIVE JOE DESHOTEL: Yes, sir. God is good.

REPRESENTATIVE CLAY SCHEXNAYDER: Thank you, Representative Doshetel for your question. Vice Chair Duplessis.

REPRESENTATIVE ROYCE DUPLESSIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The last comment that was made kind of went to a point that I want to make to you, Lieutenant Colonel and how much respect I have for you, but much as I love you. As I evaluate this, this is less about you and more about the people in District 23.

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: Yeah, absolutely.

REPRESENTATIVE ROYCE DUPLESSIS: Okay. I just want to be clear about that.

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE ROYCE DUPLESSIS: Because these seats don't belong to us.

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: Absolutely.

REPRESENTATIVE ROYCE DUPLESSIS: They belong to the people who put us here, and we're just were just passing through in many ways and we want to do the best job we can while we're here. So, bringing it back to the people because you've used the term historic, can you state or tell us how long the folks in Red River, your folks that has been a black community? Just can you give us a little history there how long?

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: Well, my district.

REPRESENTATIVE ROYCE DUPLESSIS: They're in the Red River area.

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: Red River has been a minority community. They've been African-American for hundreds of years.

REPRESENTATIVE ROYCE DUPLESSIS: Hundreds of years.

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: But the point is, was now my brother is the mayor of the town and he decided to be the mayor because, you know, when he worked with me, I ran and so, we've set a new term. Anybody who's willing to work, the town itself is small, but the city has, I think it's not predominantly black, not the city is predominantly black, but the parish was I think is about 40 percent African-American.

REPRESENTATIVE ROYCE DUPLESSIS: But that group of African-Americans who've been there, you're saying they've been there for hundreds of years.

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: Yeah, absolutely.

REPRESENTATIVE ROYCE DUPLESSIS: All right. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: But let me say other thing. In Natchitoches, Maria Concoin who was a slave was free giving some land and she learned how to raise land in which we became Cane River, that's over 300 some years. This district is 307 years and it finally has a minority representative and it's being plowed away from.

REPRESENTATIVE ROYCE DUPLESSIS: And you're the first?

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: I'm the first that I know of. I mean, come in the history somewhere. I don't know.

REPRESENTATIVE ROYCE DUPLESSIS: Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: But based on my history, I am the first.

REPRESENTATIVE ROYCE DUPLESSIS: Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE CLAY SCHEXNAYDER: Thank you, Mr. Vice Chair. For your question, Representative Lacombe.

REPRESENTATIVE JEREMY LACOMBE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Colonel.

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: He used to be my seatmate and he left. He left me.

REPRESENTATIVE JEREMY LACOMBE: You kicked me out.

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: Oh, get out of here.

REPRESENTATIVE JEREMY LACOMBE: So, I do, look, I deeply, deeply appreciate all you've done for me personally. When I got here in our special election, they put me next to you. I didn't know who you were, but you certainly helped me up here the first six months, and we share a common bond for Northwest Louisiana even though I represented -- born and

raised and represented a district in South Louisiana. I went to college in Northwestern in Natchitoches. You know, I'm still involved on the alumni foundation. I'm active. My niece is in school there now.

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: Oh, really?

REPRESENTATIVE JEREMY LACOMBE: So, I've always since the day I stepped foot in this building and met you, we had that commonality between yourself and Northwestern and, you know, I deeply appreciated everything you've ever done for Natchitoches, Mansfield, your District. I know it all. I've worked there.

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: Yeah, you did.

REPRESENTATIVE JEREMY LACOMBE: Numerous times.

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE JEREMY LACOMBE: Up in that area. I used to work -- my first job out of law school was in Shreveport. I lived in a Broadmoor community. I still sort of have affiliations with a charity in a non-profit there that I like to support. I think it's one of the most amazing charities that I've ever seen and then convert. I got the personally tour it during the freeze event when we went up there and brought water and supplies from Shreveport. The Common Ground

group there, I think is just the most amazing charity serving the needs of Shreveport. One of my absolutely best friends on the planet is on their board and it turned me on to it.

[01:35:03]

And I think that anything that we can do to help and assist those folks do the job that they do in the Shreveport Community is amazing. You know, it's a tough deal as we sit here, and I know that to the young people, I guess my only message is don't let your passion for what you're bringing here today dissuade you whether you win or lose in the fight that you have. Whether you think you walk out of this building and the vote doesn't go the way you think it should, that doesn't mean you lost. I think you actually have won the admiration and support of everyone on this panel by coming down here and doing what you doing today by being a voice. I think many of us realize that Louisiana is better and I'm sort of an eternal optimist. I think the Louisiana is better for you having your voice here committed, talking, bringing about the passion that you bring. Whether some people agree with the message or not, I think is respectable and commendable. I know that Vice Chairman Deplussis said earlier that at 17, he

1 wasn't doing this. I like to consider myself a
2 political junkie. My family's been in politics for a
3 long time and I know that I would not have had the
4 courage to step up to that microphone at 17 years old
5 and to address a panel of folks that you don't know
6 in a public setting. I think that Louisiana is better
7 served by having your voices here. I encourage all of
8 you, no matter what you do to stay here. When I
9 myself planned on going to college out of state, I
10 worked up here in this building. When I was a
11 sophomore in college I worked in Washington DC. And
12 my state senator that I worked for him when I was
13 back in law school here told me, "Yeah, it would be
14 easy for you to leave to go to Washington DC, but is
15 that really what's the best interest of your home? Is
16 it best that you leave and get away from here and
17 just stay gone?" I moved back here and made a choice
18 to come back here to raise my family and raise my
19 kids here, and I think that I encourage all of you to
20 do the same. I'm not saying you shouldn't go out of
21 state and broaden your horizons and go to college and
22 get educated or do whatever it is that the world
23 brings you to do, but I think that you all will see
24 that later when you're 30, 35 and you have kids that
25 you want to come home and help the community that

1 shaped you, that's my encouragement to you. I don't
2 doubt that Mayor Perkins had that conversation and I
3 don't doubt that most everybody in that building
4 probably didn't raise their hand. But I can only say
5 that what discourages me the most would be that at 30
6 you feel hopeless and don't want to come back. I
7 think that then we would know that we have failed the
8 next generation. I encourage all of you to take the
9 passion that you brought here and bring it to your
10 community in some shape or form. It's the thing that
11 brings us all together and that spirit of optimism
12 that tomorrow was better than yesterday. And I think
13 that if we lost the children and we lost your voice
14 and you go -- went somewhere else that our state has
15 lost. I think that ultimately, whatever vote goes
16 down today, Harvard, maybe whatever we were at, it is
17 a work in progress. This is a democratic process. I
18 will defend Speaker Schexnayder and Chair, Mr.
19 Stefanski. I represent a very rural area. Folks can
20 look at map sometimes and start putting data points
21 and lose sight of the fact that communities of
22 interest exist. They heard my voice and my passion
23 when I started defending getting back an entire town
24 that was taken from me because the community of
25 interest of those people were served better by being

in my district than being in my neighbor's district. And while the map may look ugly, at the end of the day they heard the message from the people who live there. They're some of the poorest and most challenged district town in the state, but they're five minutes from my office and the district that they were put in was 1 hour and 15 minutes away from that office. And the Speaker Pro-tem and all the people heard that message, and they righted the wrong. They're not in a situation where they're not human. They are. We're all human in this building. I know we might have started off a little contentious earlier, but I think that now as it we're all talking through and seeing that this is just not an easy or not complicated situation. I think that this has been in the most amazing dialogue between folks here. Even when your message was passionate, the folks up here heard it.

[01:40:00]

Whether or not they vote one particular way today doesn't mean that this dialogue cannot be continued moving forward. Thank you again my friend. I appreciate everything you've done for the area you've lived in. I thank you for everything that you've done for our university that we share for and I know

1 certainly from all the folks that I know in the
2 Mansfield and Natchitoches area, they were proud and
3 happy to have you as their representative. I don't
4 know how this shakes out from here, where the process
5 ends at, but I know that everyone here is truly,
6 truly indebted to your friendship and certainly your
7 constituents are proud to have you sitting at that
8 table fighting for them. Thank you.
9 REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: Thank you. And let me
10 say this, I agree that I don't want young people not
11 to come back. I mean I was in Washington, D.C. and I
12 wrote the classified budget for the President, two or
13 three Presidents, two Presidents, maybe three, I
14 don't know, anyway. And I came home, I had no
15 intention of coming home. But when you come home,
16 that's the time that you realize that you really --
17 you think you -- I'm telling this to the young kid.
18 You think you don't miss home. But when I came back,
19 I felt like I'm home again because there aint't no
20 place like home and I've been in places when we come
21 back, I used to wonder why people kiss the ground.
22 When I got off the plane, I kissed the ground because
23 I was glad to be home. And I want to say something
24 else, we argue and we fight and we carry on here. But
25 I was having a problem with the vaccine shot and all

that and it did me some bad. And then I asked somebody if anybody could help me. Ms. Hodges said, "I'll send you something" and they sent me a box of vitamins and things like that, and I want to personally thank you because I was in the fog and now I'm out and I want to personally thank you in front of all of these folks. And I asked who I write the check to. You said, "You don't owe me nothing." Now, we're going argue about everything, we don't vote on the same things, but that's what we call commonality, when we all get along and you have to be here to understand that. But it doesn't make it right that my district is leaving and so I just want to make sure that young kids don't leave and get your education and come in and you make your change. You stand the toe and make the change, become these people here. Maybe you might -- you know, I'm just -- and I got some brothers man. They're after change compared to me. So that's why I was upset that you all put him in a corner over there and they can't do anything. So, anybody else got anything?

REPRESENTATIVE JEREMY LACOMBE: We got one more representative to tell you how much we love you Representative Kenny.

REPRESENTATIVE BARRY IVEY: I get the best for last, maybe, I don't know. No, I pressed my button because I would have felt guilty of being the only person not telling you something really awesome about you. You know how great you are. So, no, my question is are you going anywhere? Are you leaving the institute? I mean all this, I was just curious. Well, I thought this was like a farewell kind of moment.

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: I mean, basically--

REPRESENTATIVE BARRY IVEY: It's what it feels like. Am I wrong?

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: I mean basically, people are saying, "Hey, man you know", I'll be here for two years.

REPRESENTATIVE BARRY IVEY: Okay. I just wanted to make sure. I miss the "hooah" at the end of the pledge.

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: Yeah, that's right and let me tell you all what y'all what "hooah" means. "Hooah" is a term that when my soldiers were down, we've been in conflict and they couldn't do anymore. I would troop the line, just call it, I'd go down and I'll say, "hooah" and they will come. They will rally to the battle. They almost dead and they're ready to

fix bayonet and charge. That's the thing about that. That's what that means.

REPRESENTATIVE BARRY IVEY: Well, if you look behind you, I think you've rallied the troops. Okay. I think you've done that and you know I want to turn my attention to the young people here. Your cries, your pleas have not gone unheard. The only reason that I'm still here is because of you. I still have hope that we can change our state, that we can save it from its abysmal slide. The fact that the conversation is at this point to a place where hope seems lost is only a reflection of the historic failure of this institution to give our children a hope for a brighter tomorrow.

[01:45:03]

But we've allowed historically and it's not just -- you know, we all come in trying to figure it out. I mean like there's no school, there's no courses, there's no prerequisites to get here. It's get elected. You get elected, you show up. You don't know where staff is. There's too many floors. It takes a while. It takes years to really get your feet firmly underneath you. And by that time, especially now, you got term limits and then your time is over when you feel like you just getting going. And so, there's

many reasons why. You know, we've got obviously the older historical legacy of racism in our state has been a plague and the slow response to root out some of the fundamental underlying things that I didn't even know existed until people brought legislation, the unanimous jury issue that we were able to fix -- didn't even know it was an issue. And so as we continue to improve and make the necessary changes, but you know, is it too little too late? I don't know. But the only reason I'm still a legislator because look it's not my pain and suffering to try to do this job and serve the people. It's pain and suffering and sacrifice. You have to give up opportunity to earn your own income to be with your family and raise -- I got four children, but I'm here still fighting because of you and I ask that you still stay in the fight. There are people who have endured much, who've come before all of us to give us all the opportunity today and they suffered greatly and they endured. I asked that look we still stay in the fight. I still believe that Louisiana, we can turn things around, but it's going to take the constant engagement from folks like you all to remind us not to lose sight of what's most important and that is the future for our kids. It is the future for

our children. It's not about business tomorrow and how a big business is going to do tomorrow. It's about the future that our children are going to have and the legacy that's been left to us. You know, we're trying to stop a sinking ship. That's how I feel. I may be wrong. Maybe I've got it all wrong and things are much brighter out there than I feel, but I tend to be a realist and I'm optimistic, but the reality is pretty bleak, but it ain't over. Please stay engaged. I appreciate all of you all. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE KENNY COX: Thank you for your comments. To the young kids, I say one thing, hooah, because you're in the battle and you will make Louisiana better. Our children make Louisiana better. Stay with us.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Thank you Representative Cox. We move from the Representative Cox farewell tour to the -- we may need to get Representative Ivey on some Prozac or something. But we're now going to a little bit of housekeeping. We've got a lot of cards for HB 15. Representative Jenkins decided not hear that bill today and I think I'm not going to speak on it but I'm just letting the audience know that when we do hear that bill, those cards will be read in at that time. And we also have

a card from Katrina Robertson who's present and wishes not to speak in support. I think she may have actually wanted to [INDISCERNIBLE 01:48:27] the card for 15 but if she'd not, I'll let her clarify that issue. Otherwise, we go into records in support of 14. With that said, Representative Jenkins.

REPRESENTATIVE SAM JENKINS: All right. Thank you, Mr. Pro Tem. I do want to take an opportunity to express my appreciation to many of you who came down. I know the agenda showed House Bill 15 would be taken up today, we had to defer it. We are working on some amendments and it's just a part of the process and thank you for taking the time to come down and show some support in turning in the green card. Thank you for your advocacy that you brought here today too. It's very important that you remain a part of the process that we hear the things that you have to say and we know it's not easy. I drive from Shreveport to Baton Rouge every week to come down here. So, I know it takes some organizing. It takes some time to come down. So, thank you so much for being here and as the Pro Tem said, don't think that your support will not be seen as a part of the hearing that we will ultimately have on House Bill 15. So I just want to clarify the status of that. Thank you so much.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Yes, and just to be clear, this is like the third time we've had testament on House Bill 14 and so it's part of this process. It's not unique to Representative Jenkin's bill. It's just as we hear testimony and as we move forward and we hear concerns from people, we try to make changes to make it as best we possibly can. That said, I think we're done with all the housekeeping measures. We will now move to Representative Speaker Schexnayder on House Bill 14 to close.

[01:50:05]

One second. Representative, on your bill.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: Yeah. So members, look, like I've talked with you over through this entire process. I don't claim to present you with a perfect document. I've never asserted that. I've never asserted that I have all the answers. I'm a representative who was elected from my area who's been given this task and I'm trying to manage all of the interests and everything that comes into this to come up with something that works for the state and comes up with something that that you can support because at the end of the day, we may not like the process but the Louisiana Constitution vests this authority with us and until we change it, until

there's an amendment to do that, this is our duty to do it. And I'm one person, I'm one human, I'm one rep like all of you all who has been tasked, who has been given this and say go figure it out. And the speaker and I've worked together on this. I've worked with all of you. There is not a person in this body who has not had a conversation with me about what their district looks like with what this map looks like and what the makeup of this state is. We've all talked. We've all had these conversations for a year and you know, part of this process is also -- you know, it's not only coming up with something that works. It's coming up with something and then fielding everything from all angles in an effort to improve on that and continue these discussions and just like I told the vice chair when we started today. I'm not sitting here closing the door on anything. Let's continue to talk. Let's continue to talk about everything. I've heard the comments behind me the same way you all heard them and they're extremely powerful. They have influenced my mindset immediately when they happened immediately and I am still processing that right now. Okay, but at the end of the day, I'm one person like you all. I'm a REPRESENTATIVE Many -- if somebody sitting in this room 10 years from now may have my

job and you're in -- and good luck. Alright, because it is unbelievably more difficult than I had ever imagined when I was given this. And so what I'm presenting before you today is again, we said this a lot. It's my best attempt to try to come up with something that works for this state that's legal, that meets our geography, that meets our communities of interest and we all have a different opinion of how to do that. And I'll welcome anybody else's suggestions and options to do that. But for today's purposes, I'm trying to find something that works for us. I'm going to continue to work on that as we go to the floor and go through this process and let's -- look again, let's all work together to try to find something that works for this state and you have my promise that I'm not going to be closed-minded about anything and I'll say it again, you know, I wish we had public participation like this on everything because I think it would open the eyes of a lot of representatives and it would change the way that we do business here on a daily basis if we had this kind of input and this kind of passion on everything. So, I've heard it and with that said, I'll turn it over to the speaker.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Before you do that, Representative Duplessis asked to relax one of our rules to make a brief comment to you at the table and I'm going to do that.

REPRESENTATIVE ROYCE DUPLESSIS: Thank you. Mr. Pro Tem. As the vice chairman, I've had an opportunity to work closely with you throughout this process and I know how personal this has been to you, and I know how much time you have put into this. And I couldn't take -- I couldn't miss the opportunity to not publicly address you directly especially as it relates to a lot of the testimony that was shared today. Started all very passionate and understandably I think you got a little defensive but I know how much time you put into this. So I think that was a reflection of that and I'm glad you addressed that in talking to the young people and explaining that. So as your colleague, I want to say that I know how much time you've put into this. And as much as we try not to take stuff personal, sometimes that's just how it is when we've committed so much to that. Your door has been open.

[01:55:00]

You have made compromises and worked with people in ways that the public may never know, the public,

1 but I know, okay. And I know you have continued to do
2 that up until late last night, up until this morning
3 and we're going to continue to do that to try to
4 improve what we have. So I want to say that even
5 though we may not be in full agreement, I think
6 you've lead this process in an admirable way and I
7 think the people that you represent even though Dr.
8 Williams, even with his powerful, powerful testimony,
9 I'm not from Crowley. I don't know, but I think some
10 things may have been said that may have been a little
11 hurtful and I just want you to know that as your
12 colleague, I respect you and I think you're doing the
13 best job you can to represent the people who sent you
14 to be here. So just know that and even though you and
15 I don't agree on everything, I'm going to continue to
16 challenge you just like you challenge me and I think
17 that's what we were sent here to do and that's why
18 our job is difficult especially in this hyper divided
19 climate that we're trying to do it in. So, I take my
20 hat off to you and just know that we're going to
21 continue to hold each other accountable because just
22 like you have people to represent, the frustration
23 that you heard today from the people's promise,
24 that's the frustration that I represent. That's what
25 I'm here to represent. So, you know that because I've

been up front with you from day one, but I just want you to know that the respect is high and I just want to let you know that.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: And I appreciate that. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Thank you Representative Duplessis, and I do want to share with members a private conversation that Representative Stefanski and I had. We talked on the phone. You were here, I was not. You were frustrated I think it's a fair way of calling it because you had so many competing interests coming at you. I remember I told you I said, "John, just do the right thing." Whatever you think is the right thing, do that and that's what you did. This I think reflects what you believe is in your heart the right thing to do and I think people should know that you didn't follow the other paths that were preceded to you. You did what John Stefanski thinks is the right thing to do and you did your best job and I think people should know that. That said, I'm going to turn over to Representative -- Speaker Schexnayder, I'm messing up all the names today for his comments.

REPRESENTATIVE CLAY SCHEXNAYDER: Thank you. Thank you committee. And look, I'm going to echo

1 what everybody has said about the young people behind
2 us coming in. Look, I say it all the time when I
3 travel my schools and I meet with young kids in
4 schools, the only way you can help the state move
5 forward is be a part, be involved, get engaged. There
6 are right ways to do it and the right ways to do it
7 is what you see today. You see these young people
8 here being engaged and doing the right thing. I will
9 say this that Chairman Stefanski has done a great
10 job. I can tell you that when we started this
11 process, him and I and Vice-Chairman Duplessis met
12 with former people, members of the legislature who
13 have done this job and they've done a great job, but
14 I can tell you I don't think any of them and I think
15 everybody in this room would agree with that, I don't
16 think any of them has put the time in that not only
17 the Chairman has put into this, but each and every
18 one of you all on this committee traveling to those
19 road shows, being a part, hearing those people at
20 those road shows not just being their hearing them.
21 That is huge and then I'm going to go one step
22 further and I think everybody in here will agree. We
23 come here and we do a lot and we get a lot of things
24 done and sometimes we go home we look really good,
25 right? We got things done. None of that happened

without the staff that we have on this committee. None. Our staff I will put up against anybody any day, anyhow, and I think everybody in here would agree with me on that. Thank you, staff. Thank you. But with that said, we do have a job to do and today is just the first step. No doors are closed. We will definitely keep working forward to try to make things better and make our state better. And with that, I ask for your favorable passage.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Alright, we have House Bill 14 by Speaker Schexnayder before his members. Do I entertain any motions?

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: I move favorable.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: I have a motion by Chairman Stefanski to move as amended. Is there any objection? Seeing objection from Representative Jenkins. Madam Secretary, please call the roll.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Chairman Stefanski.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN STEFANSKI: Yes.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Yes. Vice Chairmen Duplessis.

REPRESENTATIVE ROYCE DUPLESSIS: No.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: No. Representative Beaullieu.

REPRESENTATIVE GERALD BEAULLIEU: Yes.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Yes. Representative Wilford Carter. Representative Deshotel.

REPRESENTATIVE DARYL ANDREW DESHOTEL: Yes.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Yes. Representative Farnum.

REPRESENTATIVE LES FARNUM: Yes.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Yes. Representative Gadberry.

REPRESENTATIVE FOY BRYAN GADBERRY: Yes.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Yes. Representative Hodges.

REPRESENTATIVE VALARIE HODGES: Yes.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Yes. Representative Horton.

REPRESENTATIVE DODIE HORTON: Yes.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Yes. Representative Ivey.

REPRESENTATIVE BARRY IVEY: Yes.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Yes. Representative Jenkins.

REPRESENTATIVE SAM JENKINS: No.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: No. Representative Mike Johnson.

REPRESENTATIVE MIKE JOHNSON: Yes.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Yes. Representative LaCombe.

REPRESENTATIVE JEREMY LACOMBE: Yes.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Yes. Representative Lyons.

REPRESENTATIVE RODNEY LYONS: No.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: No. Representative Magee.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Yes.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Yes. Representative Newell.

REPRESENTATIVE CANDACE NEWELL: No.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: No. Representative Thomas.

REPRESENTATIVE POLLY THOMAS: Yes.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Yes. Representative White.

REPRESENTATIVE MALINDA WHITE: Yes.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: Yes. Thirteen, yays, four nays.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: And House Bill 14 reported as amended. Alright, that concludes our agenda items for today.

ROSALIE AMMERSBACH: [INDISCERNIBLE 02:00:45] Jenkins.

REPRESENTATIVE TANNER MAGEE: Oh yeah, Representative Jenkins moves to defer House Bill 15 until tomorrow. Is there any objection to deferring to tomorrow? Seeing no objection, it is deferred tomorrow. Can I entertain a motion to adjourn? Seeing a motion from Representative Deshotel. Is there any objections? Seeing no objection, so ordered.

[BACKGROUND CONVERSATION]

[02:02:50]

TRANSPERFECT

I, Anders Nelson, hereby certify that the document "F886455-louisiana-redistricting" 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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