[BACKGROUND CONVERSATION]

SENATOR HEWITT: All right. Welcome back. We'll get started again with Senate Governmental Affairs. Thank you all for indulging us and giving us a chance to take a little bit of a lunch break. Our next bill is Senate Bill 2 by Senator Fields. Senator Fields, whenever you're ready.

SENATOR FIELDS: Thank you, Chairwoman Hewitt. Approximately 30 years ago, at the right age of 28, I sat in your shoes as Chairman of this committee. So I sincerely want to thank the members of this committee for all of the work that they've done. Traveling all across the state, taking testimony from the public. As I pondered and reflected last night on my days in congress, I thought about my freshman orientation within speaker Tom Foley, who said how much it was a privilege to be a member of the House of Representatives. In fact, the then speaker then said it was more of a privilege to be a member of the House than a member of the U.S. Senate and he gave the analogy of one could be appointed to the U.S. Senate, but there was only one way you could be a member of this body, meaning the House. And

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that was through the ballot. No governor could appoint you, no committee could anoint you. That is was only one way you could serve in his body according to the speaker and that was through an election of the people, and then speaker Foley stood up, and for those of you who knew him, he was a big man. And he said to us freshman, this is the people's House. I didn't reflect that day on all of the challenges that I had endured and perhaps the challenges that I would endure both legally as the newest and certainly the youngest member of the 103rd Congress. Realizing all of the efforts and the pain that was put into making this district happen. I had a great desire to learn on whom shoulders I stood. I found myself some days sitting in the library of congress yearning for knowledge of the history of the Louisiana Congressional Delegations. It was there I learned that the first black man ever elected to congress in the history of this country was from Louisiana. His name was John Willis Menard. He was elected November 3, 1868 and the second congressional district based in New Orleans. Congressman Menard won by 64% of the vote. However, he was challenged by his opponent, Caleb

Hunt. He was also the first black man to address the U.S. Congress. He addressed the congress on February 27, 1869. Menard addressed the congress and when he addressed the congress, he said, "let me be heard on the merits of my case, not my race." Hunt was never made a request to address to congress, nor did he speak, and then a gentleman from Ohio when he was trying to address to congress, because in order to be seated, you have to be qualified.

[00:05:00]

A gentleman from Ohio named Mr. Garfield was recognized by the speaker and he made a motion not to seek the gentleman from Louisiana, saying and I quote, "it is too early to admit a negro to the U.S. Congress and that seat should be declared vacant and the salary of $5,000.00 should be saved." Though John Menard was elected as the first African-American from Louisiana he was never seated. The House voted 130 to 157 and Mr. Menard never took his rightful seat in the United States Congress. Now the gentleman from Ohio who made the motion was named James A. Garfield, who in 1881 became the 20th President of the United States of America. The second black

1 elected to congress from Louisiana was Charles
2 Nash. He served in the 44th Congress. He was
3 elected to the House in 1874 with a district
4 based in Baton Rouge. They ran to Opelousas
5 Louisiana. After Nash, Louisiana went 114 years
6 without a single African-American representing
7 the great state in the U.S. Congress. Although
8 Louisiana has always had a sizable African-
9 American population. It wasn't until 1991 when
10 Congressman William Jefferson was elected from
11 the Second Congressional District, and then I was
12 elected in the 103rd Congress, and then in 2011,
13 Congressman Cedric Richmond was elected to serve
14 in the 112th Congress. Then in 2021, Congressman
15 Troy Carter was elected to serve in the 117th
16 Congress. Louisiana has elected 172 people to
17 represent the state in the U.S. Congress. Only
18 five have been seated. Only five have been black.
19 If you would include the members of the senate,
20 which is 55 since its inception, that would be a
21 total of 227 people from Louisiana which have
22 represented the State of Louisiana in both the
23 U.S. House and Senate, but still only five black.
24 In short, Louisiana elects more white congressmen
25 in one year than they have elected black

congressmen in a lifetime. So I tender you today several plans that produce a second minority district. According to the 2020 census, Louisiana's black population has grown 3.78%, while white population has decreased by 6.3%. To my right are two individuals from the Legal Defense Fund who will assist me in offering all three plans.

MICHAEL BERNICK: Thank you Senator, very much for the opportunity to sit up here with you today and present these plans. I will provide some data and a high-level overview of some of the sort of analysis, and we'll start, of course, with SB 2. Then I'll turn it over to my colleague Jared Evans, Policy Counsel with LDF who will describe some of the configurations in the plans.

SENATOR HEWITT: If you would begin by introducing yourself. I know we've heard from you many times, but for the record.

[00:10:00]

MICHAEL PERNICK: I appreciate that Senator Hewitt and I apologize. My name is Michael Pernick, I'm a Redistricting Counsel with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund.

SENATOR HEWITT: Thank you.

1 MICHAEL PERNICK: So the goal in all of the
2 plans that we had proposed and the three that
3 Senator Fields introduced today are very similar.
4 Not identical, but very similar to the plans that
5 we and a coalition of non-profit civil and human
6 rights organization submitted. The goal of all of
7 these plans was to present this committee with
8 options that we know comply with Section 2 of the
9 Voting Rights Act. SB 2 is one of those plans.
10 The map has two majority black districts. One
11 district based -- the core of the population
12 based in Orleans Parish. The other district, the
13 core of the population based in East Baton Rouge.
14 I can provide for the committee from your own
15 staff's data. Some of the population statistics
16 that are relevant to those two majority black
17 districts. District 2, which is based in Orleans
18 Parish, has a black population of 54.5% and a
19 black voting age population of 52.3%. District 5,
20 the other majority black district has a black
21 population of 54.2% and a black voting age
22 population of 51.7%. It's also worth looking at
23 the white population in these districts. The
24 total white population in District 2 is just 34%.
25 That means the district is 66% non-white. The

1 white voting age population is just slightly
2 higher, 37%. That means it's 63% non-white.
3 District 5 is 40% white. That means it's 60% non-
4 white. In District 5, the white voting age
5 population is 43%. That means District 5 has a
6 57% non-white voting age population. This data is
7 only one piece of the analysis. Courts are
8 consistent that when evaluating whether a
9 district performs, you don't look at a racial
10 benchmark, but you look at actual election
11 results. Actual election results that are
12 reconstituted and analyzed in the configurations
13 of those districts. We have done that analysis
14 for these plans and provided a summary of that
15 analysis to the committee back in December and we
16 are comfortable and confident that these two
17 majority black districts would perform. District
18 2 in particular, would perform by overwhelming
19 margins based on the elections that we analyzed,
20 the district would generally perform by 30,
21 sometimes more than 30 points for the candidate
22 preferred by black voters. It's also important to
23 be cognizant of how this work is done to identify
24 the candidate preferred by black voters. It's
25 done through a methodology. Generally, it's

1 referred to as an ecological inference, where you
2 look at the population data and the racial
3 breakdowns of population and you look at the
4 election results and using those two data sets,
5 you can determine with an extremely high degree
6 of accuracy which candidates are the candidates
7 preferred by black voters. So you do that
8 analysis first. Then, once you know who those
9 candidates are, you can assess, you can assess
10 how they would have performed in the new
11 districts and predict whether black voters would
12 have an opportunity, not a guarantee, an
13 opportunity to elect candidates of their choice
14 and this is one of the plans where we are
15 confident that there would be two districts where
16 black voters would have an opportunity to elect
17 candidates of their choice. Before I turn it to
18 my colleague, one last point worth elevating that
19 this plan makes significant efforts to also
20 respect other traditional districting principles
21 that have been laid out by courts and by this
22 committee. In particular, this plan is compact
23 certainly more compact than the current plan on
24 all three measures of compactness that are
25 generally accepted by social scientists, by

1 demographers referred to among other things,
2 Reock, Polsby-Popper, Convex Hull. This plan
3 scores better on those objective measures of
4 compactness than the current plan. It also scores
5 better on all three measures of compactness. Then
6 I believe it's SB 5, the plan that was presented
7 by Senator Hewitt earlier today. So this plan is
8 more compact on those objective measures that are
9 generally accepted, and with that, I'll turn it
10 to my colleague, Jared.
11 JARED EVANS: Thanks, Mike. Good afternoon,
12 Madam Chairman and members of the committee. I'm
13 Jared Evans at Policy Counsel with the NAACP
14 Legal Defense Fund.
15 [00:15:00]
16 With respect specifically to SB 2, some of
17 the goals that Senator Hewitt mentioned earlier
18 about her map. Senator Fields map achieves many
19 of those same goals. For example, in District 3,
20 Lake Charles and the majority of Lafayette are
21 maintained in the same district. District 3 also
22 includes the parishes that are hit hardest by
23 hurricanes that strike the Central Gulf Coast.
24 Like Hurricanes Laura and Rita. In District 4, in
25 the northwest corner of the state is kept intact.

As a native of Nakadish, I can tell you that the minority of Dallas Cowboy Fans in Louisiana are also maintained in District 4. With respect to universities, ULM, LSUA, and Southern University, along with many community colleges are included in District 5, as well as the Delta parishes along the Mississippi River. Just as in Senator Hewitt's plan, St. Landry Parish is made whole. At the road show stops at Monroe and Alexandria, where I testified at both hearings. The joint committees heard over and over from the public and that acts to be placed in a district where they had an opportunity to let minority candidate of their choice. In District 1 and Senator Fields map, it keeps the district as a coastal district. These parishes are the first sign of defense when hurricanes hit the southeast corner of the state. Maritime is also a major industry that the parishes in this district have in common. Coastal restoration and flood protection are also extremely important to all these parishes. Finally, where Senator Fields map differs from Senator Hewitt's maps is that instead of packing black voters in New Orleans and Baton Rouge into one district, District 2 goes West and includes

1 communities in the River Parish in Bayou Region.
2 Areas that again have many industries and
3 commonalities such as fishing and they also share
4 some of the same concerns and challenges such as
5 flooding and hurricanes. The communities in
6 District 2 are also united by a large
7 petrochemical industry. Lastly, we fully
8 appreciate Senator Hewitt's concerns about
9 performance. The Law requires that a district be
10 drawn to give minorities the opportunity to elect
11 the candidate of their choice. We are very
12 confident that both of the majority minority
13 districts, District 2 and District 5 would
14 perform for the minority choice candidate. In
15 each of Senator Fields and maps, the minority
16 community is sufficiently large and
17 geographically compact to have the candidate of
18 choice of minority voters be successful. With
19 respect to Senator Luneau's district, that was
20 referenced earlier, I can tell you from personal
21 experience that Senator Luneau is a candidate of
22 choice for minority voters and that his district
23 has performed. I used to be the legislative
24 assistant for that district when it was
25 represented by Senator Gallo. In his first race,

1 Senator Luneau ran against minority candidate and
2 he was still the overwhelming choice of the
3 majority of minority voters in that district.
4 Just because a minority is not elected from a
5 majority minority district, does not mean that
6 the district does not perform. Representative
7 Francis Thompson, a white man has been elected
8 from majority minority districts in the state for
9 decades. Former Representative Jeff Arnold from
10 the New Orleans Region, another white man, was
11 elected from a majority minority district at
12 three terms and each of these examples, the
13 candidate of choice of minority voters has been
14 and is successful. Performance does not mean
15 guarantee, it means opportunity. In each of
16 Senator Fields maps, the District 2 and District
17 5 give minority voters the opportunity to elect a
18 candidate of their choice. Thank you.
19 MALE 1: We take questions.
20 SENATOR HEWITT: Is that it? Okay. Well,
21 super. Well, thank you for that overview and for
22 all of your comments. So I'll start out by asking
23 just a few questions. As you know, the federal
24 law requires us to be on the congressional maps
25 as close to zero as practicable, and so deviation

is one of those statistical numbers that we look at and can compare maps by looking at that. Not that that would be the sole reason to make any decisions. But the deviation I think on this map ranges from minus 537 to plus 749. So that's the outliers, the districts that are outliers in terms of how close are they to zero which is significantly greater than the deviation in the map that I proposed. It's my understanding that when we did our maps ten years ago and they went through pre clearance that rule of thumb was to be below 100.

[00:20:00]

So I guess I would like your sort comment on that and why you all didn't work to get those deviations a little bit closer to zero than what you have in this particular plan.

SENATOR FIELDS: Well, I was told by the senate staff that when I initially introduced a map, the map had split precincts, and there is a joint rule that we were not to have split precincts. But on Senate Bill 9, I have an amendment to put the plan back in its original status. But the deviation is minor just to answer your question. This is a minor deviation and it

still creates the second minority district and I don't think that that's a problem with the other Gingle factor so to speak.

SENATOR HEWITT: Yeah, I don't know, I mean, who gets to decide what's minor and what's not minor, I'm not sure.

SENATOR FIELDS: You're talking about 700 people in a congressional district that holds over 700,000.

SENATOR HEWITT: No, I understand. I'm just reflecting the law. The law says as close to zero as practicable, and so is 700 practicable, is it a thousand, is it double digits? I mean, what is the number so just kind of an observation. So then in this map, do you split any precincts?

SENATOR FIELDS: No, we do not.

SENATOR HEWITT: Okay and any idea how many parishes you split?

SENATOR FIELDS: Yes. Can go through the analysis on the split precincts if you turn the page, well, I don't think its number, but in District 1, there's 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 parishes that are split and there is 1, 2, 3, 3 parishes that are whole. In District 2, there is 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 parishes that are split and there is 1,

2, 3, 3 parishes that are whole. In District 3, there is 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 parishes that are split and 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 parishes that are whole. In District 4, there is 1 parish that's split, and all -- 2 parishes that are split, Ouachita and Vernon and 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15,16,17 parishes that are whole. In District 5 there is 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 parishes that are split and 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 parishes that are whole and District 6, there is 1, 2, 3, 4 parishes that are split and there a total of 2 parishes that are whole and the long and short of it is this plan is more compact than the present congressional district plan.

SENATOR HEWITT: And you're measuring compactness based on what?

SENATOR FIELDS: On the parish, splitting the parishes. It has more whole parishes under the precinct than the precinct congressional plan.

SENATOR HEWITT: Is there like a certain measurement that you all were using on compactness to evaluate which is more or less compact than others?

SENATOR FIELDS: Yes, Senator. As we discussed earlier, there are a number of widely accepted statistical measures of compactness that look at the geography, --

[00:25:02]

SENATOR FIELDS: Reock, Polsby-Popper, Convex Hull are three of those widely accepted measures of compactness and when we measured the compactness on this proposal on SB 2, it was more compact than the current plan on all three of those measures.

SENATOR HEWITT: Okay. On the Voting Rights Act, you heard some of the discussion on the last bill earlier about the section in Section B that says, "provided that nothing in this section establishes a right to have members of a protected class elected in numbers equal to their proportion in the population," and I've made the statement that is, again, sort of my response when members of the public say a third of our population is black so therefore, two of our six districts should be minority districts. But I believe that with that section of the law says is that it's not guaranteed, it's not a right, that

it should be in proportion. Do you agree with that?

SENATOR FIELDS: Okay. I'm sorry. I was doing two things at one time. I think I understood the question. But let me first, and I was confused and I apologize to the staff because I did tell them -- I requested them to put the bill back in its original state and I thought it was going to be SB 9 but it is SB 2 is the bill that we are debating now. So, that bill will have a zero deviation. It's going to be just like the way I initially filed it. But I think your question was what, Madame Chair? I'm sorry.

SENATOR HEWITT: Sure, Senator. So, it gets said quite often in the public. We heard this in our road shows that a third of our State's population is African-American therefore, two out of our six congressional districts should be represented by a minority.

SENATOR FIELDS: Right. I understand the question.

SENATOR HEWITT: So the section of the Voting Rights Act says you do not have a right to have representative based on a proportionality of the population. I'm not saying that there's no

other reasons to do it and of course, we've been talking about that, but it's not a right, and it's explicitly stated as such in the Voting Rights Act. Would you agree with that?

SENATOR FIELDS: Well, if you can reasonably draw a plan and the populations are reasonably compact and we show you that it is in this plan and several other plans that we're about to present to you, then you should. But the Voting Rights Act does not say because your population is X, then you have to have X number of representatives. We simply show that the minority population in the state is 33% and the minority population is compact enough to draw two minority districts and we have presented that to you today.

SENATOR HEWITT: That's kind of that takes me to my next question. So yes, you do have to have a population that can be drawn in a district that's a sufficient population, sufficiently compact to give the minority an equal opportunity to elect a candidate of their choice. I'm always kind of curious you're very strong and using the word confident, we're confident that both of these districts would perform. So, I guess I'm

1 sort of curious about what the evidence of that
2 is, especially when you're reconfiguring two
3 districts that you can be confident and so,
4 again, I'm curious about whether you have
5 racially polarized voting data and whether that
6 includes voter turnout and all of those factors,
7 because I know there are some analysis that don't
8 include that.
9 SENATOR FIELDS: Well, I can assure you and
10 yield it to my, but I can assure you that a
11 minority will have a far greater chance than
12 being elected in a 54% or 51% majority black
13 district than he would have in a 70% white
14 district and I think everybody realized that. So,
15 it does give the minority an opportunity to elect
16 a candidate of his or her choice and that's all
17 the Voting Rights Act can allow a person. It
18 doesn't guarantee anything and with that said, I
19 yield to my colleague.
20 MICHAEL PERNICK: Thank you very much,
21 Senator. Senator Hewitt, it's an important
22 question. I would refer you back to the letter
23 that we submitted on December 14, where we
24 provided an overview and explanation of the
25 methodology that's used to conduct racially

1 polarized voting analysis and the performance
2 analysis that we used to confirm that these
3 districts would perform.
4 [00:30:15]
5 As we explained in that letter, the racially
6 polarized voting analysis, you take the vote
7 shares from a selection of recent elections.
8 Courts have said that racially contested
9 elections have more probative value. You
10 generally want to look at elections from at least
11 three different election cycles to account for
12 variations in turnout over time, to account for
13 whatever political dynamics to ensure that there
14 aren't any outliers and using that selection of
15 elections, you measure how those candidates would
16 have performed in the districts that are under
17 consideration. We did that analysis for all of
18 the maps that we had presented to this committee
19 back in October, and the results of that analysis
20 were stark and clear. In District 2 in
21 particular, which I understand was the area of
22 most concern, the rest of that District 2 may no
23 longer perform. The vote shares for minority
24 preferred candidates were generally in the range
25 of 30 points above the vote shares for the

1 candidates not performed by black voters. So, it
2 was very significant margin. This is not a close
3 call RPV analysis like some other states. This is
4 a very clear result of that analysis and we
5 provided an example of the data. In particular,
6 we looked at the 2018 Secretary of State Race,
7 which was a statewide race on the ballot, it was
8 racially contested. The minority preferred
9 candidate in that election on the seven different
10 maps that were proposed would have received
11 between 64% and 71% of the vote. So, these were
12 not close outcomes, these were significant
13 margins and, of course, if you look at some of
14 the other elections that may not have been
15 racially contested, for example, the
16 gubernatorial or some other elections, the
17 performance of the minority preferred candidate
18 in those races would have been even higher. So,
19 this was a robust analysis. What I would frankly
20 encourage the committee to do is what many other
21 states have done and retain an expert who does
22 racially polarized voting analysis and runs
23 performance. So you can do that on all of the
24 maps that you're considering and not just on the
25 maps that we as an advocacy community, decide

with our limited resources to do that review on. So, I would urge you to consider retaining someone with that expertise. If you're interested, we have names that we could refer to you. People who have done this work for state and local governments in other parts of the country to actually confirm the extent of racially polarized voting and confirm the performance in all of the maps as one of the measures that you use to evaluate Section 2 compliance.

SENATOR HEWITT: We've talked about this a little bit in the past then if you all have done that work, are you willing to share that so that we can see the study and analysis that you have already done.

MICHAEL PERNICK: Well, again, Senator, we have not done that work for all of the maps that are being introduced and my recommendation would be to have the same analysis done for all of those maps. Our recommendation would be for you to retain someone to do that work for you. If this is something that you're focused on that's a best practice to do the RPV analysis especially in a state like Louisiana which we know has extremely high levels of racially polarized

voting. So that is a best practice to have someone working for you at your direction who does that analysis on all of your maps rather than the analysis on some of the maps that we've done. We have provided the summary of our methodology, we provided some of that data and we're working on another submission to you all that will try and get into you within the next day or two that provides our evaluation of some of the plans that have been introduced so far where we were able to get the block equivalency data early on. It takes a few days to do it so we're doing the best we can and we will have a submission to you with our assessment of some of those plans as soon as we can.

SENATOR HEWITT: All right. Any other questions from the committee members? All right, Senator, I guess what I would --

SENATOR FIELDS: We have an amendment to this bill to Senate Bill 2. It would put it in a form on that it would be a zero deviation and if somebody on the committee would offer the amendment.

SENATOR HEWITT: Yes, Senator Foil will offer that amendment if we'll have the staff passed that out.

[00:35:01]

[BACKGROUND CONVERSATION]

SENATOR HEWITT: Well, there's enough numbers on these pages to make your eyes rolling to the back of your head. All right. So, Senator, see if you can talk us through this explain to us what this does when you get the zero deviation. Obviously, you're having to move some boundary lines around.

SENATOR FIELDS: That amendment basically will put -- you all had this on the road show. On the road show, this would put it in the exact form it was when the presentation was made on the road show, and that would put it at a zero deviation and let me also say, I have --

SENATOR HEWITT: We had a lot on the road show. So, I'll see --

SENATOR FIELDS: Yeah. Let me also say, I've been working with the Legal Defense Fund for 30 years, so I've developed quite a relationship with them over the years. So this would put it back at zero deviation to be zero deviation.

MICHAEL PERNICK: That's exactly right, Senator. So, this is one of the maps that was introduced in our October 18 letter to the committee, and each of the districts are either precisely to the voter at the ideal population size or off by one either one additional voter or one fewer voter. So, this is as precise as you can possibly get, which is -- it is the standard for congressional redistricting to have mathematical equality between the districts. If this is the amendment, I believe it is, that is what this amendment achieves.

SENATOR HEWITT: Okay and so to accomplish that, are you splitting precincts in this map?

MICHAEL PERNICK: Yes, Senator Hewitt. I believe a small number of precincts are split to accomplish precise mathematical equality. Preserving precincts is not a requirement under federal law. Compliance with Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act is, that's a higher priority. My understanding and I'm not an expert on Louisiana Law. My understanding is that splitting precincts is not codified in Louisiana Law. There is HCR 90, which is a non-binding resolution which also does not require preservation of

1 precincts. It says you should try to the extent
2 practicable. So, we've certainly tried to do that
3 in this proposal and I don't know the exact
4 numbers because we're just getting this now. So,
5 it does split some precincts but this is
6 presenting you all an option that is very
7 similar, the racial population statistics are
8 almost identical, but it has zero population
9 deviation across the six districts.
10 SENATOR HEWITT: Okay, and then we still
11 have some of the same split parishes, et cetera.
12 We talked about earlier, I think.
13 SENATOR FIELDS: Yes, I think we do.
14 MICHAEL PERNICK: That's right, Senator.
15 This amendment, I don't believe makes major
16 modifications. The two versions are very similar.
17 It's just making small adjustments to correct for
18 the population deviations in the original version
19 of SB 2 that was provided.
20 SENATOR HEWITT: Okay. So, we've introduced
21 amendment Set 62. Senator Foil has offered that
22 up. Senator, would you move to adopt this set of
23 amendments?
24 SENATOR FOIL: I would Madam Chair at the
25 request of Senator Fields.

SENATOR HEWITT: Okay. All right. So, Senator Foil has moved that we adopt this set of amendments. Is there any objection? All right, seeing none then we will adopt amendments Set 62. All right. Senator, as we have been doing with the other congressional maps, I would like to make a motion that we deferred this bill so that we can consider the other maps before the committee decides to take any further action.

SENATOR FIELDS: Absolutely.

SENATOR HEWITT: All right. So, I'm going to move to defer this bill. Any objection to that? All right. So we'll defer the bill. Your next bill Senator is which one?

SENATOR FIELDS: SB 4.

SENATOR HEWITT: Senate Bill 4.

SENATOR FIELDS: All right. SB 4. I'm just going to hit on the minority district and then my colleagues to my right, Mr. Evans, will deal with more of the particulars. It creates two minority districts. The first minority district, it maintains the second minority district, which is 55% black --

[00:40:02]

1 -- in the New Orleans area, and it has a
2 voting population of 53.7% black and it also
3 creates a second minority district which is based
4 in Baton Rouge, and it runs up to the Monroe
5 area. That district population is 54.7% black,
6 and the voting age population is 51.9% black.
7 When I was working on these plans, I was always
8 concerned about how can voting -- the population
9 be less than registered voters being higher than
10 the voting age population, and I came to the
11 conclusion that's because we had an undercount
12 and a lot of people didn't fill out the census.
13 So the performance of these districts are going
14 to be, I think, absolutely fine. And I yield to
15 my colleagues to give further comments on Senate
16 Bill 4.
17 JARED EVANS: Thank you, senator. So as we
18 were going through, there's a variety of maps
19 before you and we just want to get the committee
20 a number of options. As we draw these maps, and
21 Senator Hewitt, as you well know, when you draw a
22 map and you show it to people. I want my parish
23 to be included with this one. Shreveport and
24 Bossier, Chicago and Bossier should be together,
25 Lafayette and Lake Charles should be together.

The Bayou Parish will be together. So it was hard to do all of that in one map, that's the very reason why we gave you a variety of maps. So as you can see in this one, all of the maps that Senator Fields is offering. They're all for the most part similar, but just deviate slightly. For example, if you compare the map before you to the one that we previously did, District 1 in the coastal region, it goes further up into Acadiana and catches more of some of the value parishes as well. District 4 goes further over closer to the Delta Parishes. It includes parts of Richland Parish and Franklin Parish as SB 2 does not. So, again, these are all just deviations. Basically, the same map that creates two majority minority districts. One anchored in Baton Rouge, one anchor in New Orleans and you have a variety of options for the rest of the state to choose from.

MICHAEL PERNICK: And I will just add for the record, this map on compactness is also more compact than the current map. It's also more compact than SB 5 on all three of the measures of compactness that we discussed earlier. It's not quite as compact as SB 2. It falls just slightly short by hair of SB 2, but it is still

substantially more compact than the current map, and some of the other proposals that have been submitted. I'll also note for this committee's record that the two majority black districts in this map also perform District 2 by significant margins.

SENATOR HEWITT: Okay. On District 5, South of Concordia. It gets awfully skinny through there and I guess I just want to double check and make sure that we know that it's contiguous. It's looking pretty thin there and so, Bill, you can blow that up. But even on your map, I can't tell that we actually have a precinct or are we down to a census block or something through there, south of -- it's on your map called Central.

[BACKGROUND CONVERSATION]

SENATOR HEWITT: You see where it gets really skinny there, where District 4 cuts in on the east part of --

[BACKGROUND CONVERSATION]

JARED EVANS: That District 9 on the side of District 4, it's just that the border on the map it's looking at just kind of thick, but it is continuous.

SENATOR FIELDS: Yeah. You could see it better on this map, quite frankly.

SENATOR HEWITT: You see the part I'm talking about Bill.

SENATOR FIELDS: I clearly understand what you're talking about, Madam Chair. But that map will depict it a lot better than what we're looking at on the overhead, but it is contiguous.

[00:45:06]

SENATOR HEWITT: Is that the same map? I'm not sure that that's the same map.

MICHAEL PERNICK: Senator Hewitt, I believe this is one of the maps that was provided in the record attached to our December letter. So I believe that is in the record, but the roadshow record, Senator.

SENATOR HEWITT: Well, I don't know that your letter convinces me that we have a contiguous district here. This is not the same map as the one we're looking at.

[BACKGROUND CONVERSATION]

SENATOR FIELDS: Okay. Well, it is contiguous, but I understand the gentleladies concern. I mean, I don't know how I can show you

as contiguous other than using the gentleman to my right. It is contiguous.

SENATOR HEWITT: I'll ask staff to look at that. I think we ran all of these maps through our evaluation system, it's my understanding and contiguousness is supposed to be one of the values that we checked for, but it's just not apparent here. I understand the lines get kind of thick through there, but it's got to be very thin connection in that part of the map.

MICHAEL PERNICK: Senator, to that point, I believe staff did run a contiguity check on every map that was submitted and I did review those contiguity checks for the seven congressional maps, and all seven of our submissions passed the contiguity check. Those are on your website with those plan evaluations. So, I would refer you to that and I'm sure that staff would be able to verify that.

SENATOR HEWITT: Okay. All right, they're checking on that, and we can come back to that. All right, any other questions from the committee? All right, seeing none. Senator, do you have any amendments on this bill?

1 SENATOR FIELDS: No, Madam Chair. No
2 amendments.
3 SENATOR HEWITT: Okay. All right, Senator
4 Milligan moves that we will defer this bill as
5 well with the other congressional maps.
6 SENATOR HEWITT: Senator Milligan moves that
7 we will defer this Bill as well with the other
8 congressional maps. All right. Senate Bill 9.
9 Senator, whenever you're ready.
10 SENATOR FIELDS: Next, Madam Chair, members
11 of the committee. Senate Bill 9 also, this is
12 just to give the members of the committee a menu
13 of options as to how you could draw a six-plan --
14 congressional plan with six members and create
15 two minority districts. This plan here creates
16 two minority districts. The second district is
17 54.5% and the voting age population is 52.2. And
18 the second minority district is 54.2% black in
19 population and in voting age population is 51.5.
20 So, Senate Bill 9 create two majority-minority
21 districts. And now yield to my colleague to my
22 right.
23 MALE 1: Again, Senator, District 5 is
24 anchored in Baton Rouge and District 2 is
25 anchored in New Orleans. And as we have said, we

are very confident that the minority choice candidate in both of these districts would perform. And again, there is really just marginal differences in all of these maps. If you don't like the configuration in SB 2 like the one in SB 4. Here is a third option for you. We don't have a favorite of any of these. These are just as Senator Fields has alluded to. These are just a menu for the community to consider. Anyone who's drawn a map knows there's no making everyone happy. It's really hard to find consensus. So, you just look at the one that makes the most people happy and you got a wide range of options to choose from here.

SENATOR FIELDS: And once again, I'll add for the record, when the compactness scores are measured, this map actually has the highest score of any of the maps before the committee today. On the Reocc measure, its tied for the highest on the other two commonly accepted measures, certainly higher than the current map by a significant margin. Thank you.

SENATOR HEWITT: Okay. All right. Just some observations here. We've spent a lot of time

1 talking about communities of interest and all
2 that and all the other maps.
3 [00:50:00]
4 What I see on this map, first of all, it
5 seems like it splits East Baton Rouge Parish
6 amongst three different congressional districts.
7 So, you would have, let's say, Baker and Zachary
8 and Central. They're all very close together.
9 We'd all be represented by different members of
10 congress. Am I reading that right?
11 SENATOR FIELDS: Yes, ma'am, you are. And
12 look, I represent East Baton Rouge Parish. I
13 mean, we pride ourselves on the fact - I mean,
14 the more the merrier. I mean, the more people we
15 can call upon to talk to about bringing dollars
16 to East Baton Rouge Parish, the better. But yes,
17 it does split Baton Rouge into several
18 congressional districts.
19 MALE 1: Senator, if I may add. As we've
20 gone through this process, there's arguments on
21 both sides that some areas prefer to have one
22 congress person represent their Parish. Some
23 prefer to have many. The more people representing
24 them in Washington, the better. And in SB 2, EBR
25 is only split two ways. This is the only map that

1 Senator Fields is proposing that splits it three
2 ways. So again, you have a variety of options.
3 SENATOR HEWITT: Yeah. I don't remember
4 hearing the Baton Rouge people in our roadshow
5 asked to be split up. I mean, there were some
6 that certainly wanted to be together, but that's
7 just an observation that does make this map a
8 little bit different. I know Senator Reese has
9 spoken on some of the other maps about Fort Polk
10 in that area. I mean, I think this splits. Am I
11 seeing that right? Fort Polk and Leesville. It
12 splits them up into two different congressional
13 districts, although I think they certainly see
14 themselves as a community in support of Fort
15 Polk.
16 SENATOR FIELDS: And this is introduced to
17 give you just another option.
18 SENATOR HEWITT: Yeah. Okay. And then pretty
19 large deviation numbers on this one, too, ranging
20 from minus 1,300 to plus 1,600, pretty big
21 deviation in terms of the size of the districts.
22 MALE 2: Senator, this proposal in SB 9 is
23 once again very, very similar to one of the
24 proposals that was submitted during the roadshow.
25 The equivalent version from the roadshow has no

1 deviation. Each of the districts, again, would
2 actually be precisely at the ideal or off by one
3 voter larger or one voter smaller. So, what that
4 suggests is it would be easy if this is a
5 proposal that the committee is interested in, it
6 would be relatively straightforward to tweak the
7 lines through an amendment to bring those
8 deviations down to zero or much closer to zero,
9 just like Senator Fields did on SB 2.
10 SENATOR FIELDS: And to further that point,
11 I just wanted to make sure that the committee was
12 aware the Bill was altered that way because I
13 wanted to be in compliance with the joint rule of
14 both the House and the Senate. And I changed it
15 back to the SB 2 back to its original form
16 because I want to give the committee the option
17 of doing both. So, you're going to have a zero
18 deviation in the first Bill SB 2. And then this
19 one, I'm going to keep it in compliance with the
20 senate rules so you have options.
21 SENATOR HEWITT: That's what we love is
22 options. All right. Any other questions from the
23 committee members? Okay. I don't see any other
24 questions. I appreciate the work and the
25

presentation. I'm going to move that we defer this Bill also. Any objection to that?

SENATOR FIELDS: Thank you, Madam Chair and members.

SENATOR HEWITT: Thank you very much, Senator. I appreciate your opening comments as well. I didn't get to comment on those. I appreciate that very much.

SENATOR FIELDS: Thank you.

SENATOR HEWITT: Thank you, gentlemen. I appreciate your participation in this process. All right, members, that is the end of our agenda today. I'm going to suggest that we consider working these congressional Bills as we have all the other Bills before our committee. We have an amendment on Senate Bill 2 that I think would be important for you all to have an opportunity to digest and for the public to digest those as well. So, I would entertain.

[00:55:00]

SENATOR HEWITT: Okay. So, we're multitasking here a little bit. So, members, at this point, we have heard six congressional Bills today. One of which was amended by this committee, Senate Bill 2. And so, I'm going to

1 suggest that we not take any action on any of
2 those Bills today. Let's digest the amendment and
3 we will consider any action that we want to take
4 on those Bills tomorrow. We will have a committee
5 hearing in the morning again at 9:30. And we will
6 take those Bills up in the morning at 9:30. All
7 right. We also have some unfinished business with
8 the Senate Bills. We're trying to multitask here
9 a little bit. And so, we've previously amended
10 Senate Bill 1, the president's Bill and those
11 amendments have lied over. Is that the right
12 term? Laid over, lied over? All right. They've
13 been hanging out for a day. Senator Price, I
14 believe you have some amendments to your Bill
15 that you are wanting to introduce. Is that
16 correct?
17 SENATOR PRICE: Yes. She's getting them.
18 SENATOR HEWITT: Okay. All right. I would
19 like to give Senator Price an opportunity again
20 to speak on his Senate Bill and for this
21 committee to consider amendments that he would
22 like to make to that Bill. And then we will take
23 up hopefully this will be a wrap. And tomorrow
24 morning and committee, we will address all of the
25

1 Senate Bills we've heard and the congressional
2 Bills that we've heard in committee tomorrow.
3 SENATOR PRICE: Thank you, Madam Chairman
4 and committee, I'll just start what happened. And
5 I kind of explained earlier, the New Orleans
6 delegation has worked with the president in doing
7 something with that district. And my map actually
8 mirrored the president's district in the New
9 Orleans area. And at that request, we bring an
10 amendment to mirror his Bill. And he explained it
11 this morning, what he did in New Orleans area.
12 And so, my amendment is going to do the exact
13 same thing that the president explained this
14 morning about the New Orleans area and why they
15 did it.
16 SENATOR HEWITT: Okay.
17 SENATOR PRICE: So that's one amendment. The
18 other amendment - oh, they're all together. Okay.
19 The other part is to the Baton Rough area. We are
20 submitting an amendment that was going to put
21 some precinct back together and put some areas
22 back together in Senate Bill 17, 1, 2 in East
23 Baton Rouge Parish was in 15. It's now going to
24 go to 14, 116 was in 14 it will go to 17, 117 in
25 East Baton Rouge Parish was in 14. It will go to

17. And 118 was in 14 is going to 17. 119 is going to 17. East Baton Rouge Parish is in 14. Precinct 121 was in 14 going to 17. And precinct 123, 14 is going to go to 17. 186 that was in 17, will go to 15. Precinct 192 was in 17 will go to 15. Precinct 104 was in 15 will to go 14. Precinct 210 was in 17 go to 15. Precinct 212 in 17 go to 15.

[01:00:00]

Precinct 225 was in 17 go to 15. And precinct 235 and 32, which was coming into Baton Rouge. And I think this is Senator Womack district. We're taking that back out of the Baton Rouge area and putting it back. So, it's going back in the 17th in that area. And then in Iberville, a couple of minor ones are 22 going to 14 from precinct Senate District 2, 16 goes to 17, from 17 goes to 17, 18 goes to 17, 19 goes to 17. And precinct 23 goes to 17. That's from Senate District 2. And it doesn't change the percentages on the maps or anything. It was just cleaning up some items to put some precinct closer back together. That's what they did. So, staff has provided me with this to make sure that we had it right.

SENATOR HEWITT: Okay. Good. Yeah. That would be tough to do from memory. All right. Do we have a set of amendments yet on that staff? Okay. Do we have a number? An amendment number?

[BACKGROUND CONVERSATION]

SENATOR HEWITT: Sixty-one. It is set 61. Okay. Are we square senator --

SENATOR PRICE: Yeah. They are cleaning this up for me. So, I'm sure they're doing what is the right thing.

[BACKGROUND CONVERSATION]

SENATOR HEWITT: Okay. Yeah. So, the question that we were debating up here was, I don't know how the amendments drafted if we have to reconsider the vote. Let's see, have we amended your Bill previously?

SENATOR PRICE: It was a technical amendment. All we did was change the letter.

SENATOR HEWITT: Is that technical amendment included in the new set?

SENATOR PRICE: It is. It's in the new set? Okay. So, we need to --

SENATOR HEWITT: Okay. So, we would reconsider the vote on amendment 40, which was

1 the technical amendment previously on Senate Bill
2 17.
3 SENATOR PRICE: Yes.
4 SENATOR HEWITT: Okay. So, I'll make a
5 motion that we reconsider the vote on amendment
6 set 40 on Senate Bill 17. Is there any objection
7 to that? All right, seeing no objections, then we
8 will reconsider that vote. The new set is set 61.
9 All right. So, in the spirit of trying to get
10 this done so that we can make it available to the
11 members and the public, Senator Milligan is going
12 to move that we adopt set 61, amendment set 61 on
13 Senate Bill 17. Is there any objection to that?
14 All right. Seeing none, we will adopt that
15 amendment. Okay. And then Senator Womack is again
16 going to move that we defer that Bill. It is my
17 expectation that we will hear these Senate Bills
18 tomorrow, that this is the end of the committee
19 amendments, both on the Senate Bills and the
20 congressional Bills that our committee has
21 already heard. Thank you, Senator, very much. All
22 right. So, one of the most important parts of
23 this process and I appreciate the patience of the
24 public in waiting through all of this is to hear
25 from you all. And so, you've been with us since

early this morning. I want to give you a chance to speak. We have a number of cards, and we're going to try to get through this as quickly as we can. So, I'll ask that you keep your comments to three minutes so we know that everyone has an opportunity to be heard. All right. And I think these are organized by Bill to the extent that you all were able to do that. Okay. So, I'm going to start with the Senate Bill 1 which was President Cortez's Bill. We have someone here that would like to speak present. That would like to speak in support, Susie Labry, if you'd like to come to the table.

[01:05:00]

SUSIE LABRY: This is going to be very short and sweet. What I'm going to say is going to apply to your Bill and to the president's Bill. I just want to say I want to mostly keep things as is and to keep it around community interest. Number one. Number two, don't split precincts in Parish, especially in a situation where you have military like Senator Reese. Senator Reese was saying. And number three, I want to please stand for Congressional District No. 5, because those are the rural people. Those are the farmers,

small property owners and families. And we want to keep the integrity of this district intact because if these are the people that feed us and these are the people that supply to us. I see personally, I'm picking up that it's an urban versus rural movement more than just a black thing. And I want to ask that you look at the different axis of economic development and taxation, as well as race and sex and everything else. Take that into account, Senator Price that is the answer to what you were saying. Shift your thinking on economic development, then we can handle racial and sexual and low economic class problems. So, I just want to keep this urban versus rural out and stand up for Congressional District No. 5. Thank you very much.

SENATOR HEWITT: Yes, ma'am. Thank you for being here. I appreciate that. On Senate Bill 1, we have two cards in opposition. You all can come to the table together if you like, Chris Kaiser and Frankie Robertson. All right. I apologize. You're present, you did not wish to speak, but you're in opposition. So, thank you for that. You just saved the six minutes. Okay. All right. Senate Bill 2, which was one of the congressional

1 maps. We have two folks here that are present and
2 would like to speak. We have one person that's
3 present and would like to speak, Edgar Cage. Mr.
4 Cage?
5 EDGAR CAGE: Good afternoon, Madam Chair and
6 committee. My name is Edgar Cage. And I'm with
7 Together Louisiana. I just like to voice my
8 support for Senate Bill 2 and other of the Bills
9 that create a second majority-minority district.
10 Yes, I've heard this process, by creating a
11 second is no guarantee. But by not creating a
12 second is a guarantee that we will never get a
13 second minority representative in congress. And
14 I've heard, too, that numbers are supposed to
15 drive the process. I agree with that. It
16 shouldn't be politics. It should be the numbers.
17 Let's stick with the numbers. And we've heard the
18 interests of other groups, the AG interests, the
19 rural interests, the military interests. What
20 about the minority interests? That should be a
21 consideration also. And we had a discussion about
22 population growth in Louisiana. Like the
23 roadshow, you heard comments from throughout the
24 state of creating the second majority-minority
25 district. Yesterday, sitting in this room, I

heard comments from our young people that you praised Madam Chairman for being a part of the process that they said, let's do the right thing because if you don't, it's a guarantee that they will probably leave the state. And we won't have their services or their presence here contributing to this economy. And you know, we want to beat Alabama in a lot of things. We can be better than Alabama and it's redistricting if we do what's right. And to do what's right shouldn't take courage. That's a responsibility and a duty. All we ask is for the opportunity. No guarantee the opportunity because Senator Fields gave a very eloquent history.

[01:10:10]

And for us to have a possible chance of changing that history and starting new. Then we need to create a second minority-majority district. Thank you, ma'am.

SENATOR HEWITT: Thank you, Mr. Cage. All right. I have several individuals here that do not wish to speak but they are in support of Senate Bill 2, Frankie Robertson, Peter Robins Brown, Janea Jamison and Devante Lewis. I have individuals here on Senate Bill 2, who the

president will provide information if requested, Jared Evans, Victoria Winger and Michael Pernick. All right. I have individuals here with Senate Bill 2 that are present do not wish to speak, but they are in opposition to Senate Bill 2, Susie Labry, Caleb Holmes and Chris Kaiser. No, you all have really challenged me so we have some cards, apparently, that were printed incorrectly so this is a green card but it says in opposition. So, as if it's not confusing enough, the red and the green thing doesn't even work anymore on these cards. All right. Just keeping me on my toes. Okay. Moving on to Senate Bill 4, again, one of our congressional maps present will provide information. Jared Evans, Victoria Winger and Michael Pernick. Thank you all. We've worn all of you all out, everybody's decided it's all been said. Senate Bill 4, these individuals do not wish to speak, but they are present and in support of Senate Bill 4, Devante Lewis, Janea Jamison, Peter Robins Brown, Frankie Robertson, Chris Kaiser, and Kaitlyn Joshua. All right. Not wishing to speak, but present and in opposition in Senate Bill 4, Caleb Homes and Susie Labry. All right. Moving on to Senate Bill 5. We have

one individual here present and would like to speak, Mr. Michael Bayham.

MICHAEL BAYHAM: Thank you, Senator Hewitt. First of all, I'd like to say that as a resident of St. Bernard, I appreciate that St. Bernard is being kept together in one congressional district and it's in a compact district. St. Bernard was previously in the third district 20 years ago, which is a district that went all the way from Shell Beach to New Iberia. So, we're very happy to be in the first district where our congressman's not so far away. Also, like to compliment you for the due diligence in your legislation in terms of keeping communities of interest together, military and agriculture, and also that North Louisiana will have two congressmen in this system under your plan and that there will be three coastal congressmen, which is very important to the interest of our state particularly in a fight against coastal erosion. On your Senate Bill 5, I was very pleased to see that Monroe and Alexandria are all in the same congressional district as has been the case since 1996 since the district was redrawn that all of the districts are anchored

along the population centers and if you look at the way the districts are now that all of the congressmen from each district come from the population center. So, I think that's something that's admirable about the plan and I'm glad your plan keeps much of this the same. So, I just wanted to speak in favor of your plan. I think it's an outstanding plan. We didn't lose any congressmen. We haven't gained any congressmen; I wish we would. It seems every 20 years we lose a congressman. In 1990s, we ended up going down by seven.

[01:15:03]

Twenty years later, we're down to six and hopefully lose animal can go the other way but just wanted to speak in support of your plan.

SENATOR HEWITT: Thank you, Mr. Bayham. I appreciate that and Senator Price and I had this conversation earlier. We're both committed to making Louisiana better so that we don't lose a congressman 10 years from now. So, we have a lot of work to do as policy makers to make sure that doesn't happen. Okay. Thank you, sir. Present in support but not wishing to speak on Senate Bill 5, Susie Labry and Mr. Colley, are you here? Bert

Colley, I'm not quite sure you didn't check a box?

BERT COLLEY: Yeah.

SENATOR HEWITT: But you have a green card so are you wishing to speak or are you just in support?

BERT COLLEY: Few minutes, yes.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Please come to the table.

BERT COLLEY: Sorry about that.

SENATOR HEWITT: That's okay. I'm pretty good on the red and the green thing now, but I can't read your mind on which box you want to check.

BERT COLLEY: Sorry about that. No, I just wanted to say --

SENATOR HEWITT: State yourself again, for the record.

BERT COLLEY: I'm sorry. Bert Colley, I'm from Burley, Louisiana, right across the river. And I just wanted to say I agree with a lot of things that you all are doing, and I disagree with some of it. Mostly, the reason why is I feel that if a Parish is divided, then it's lost its identity. You just assume change the Parish

lines. I come from a small town and my little small town is divided. My neighbor across the street is in a different state representative district as well as senator. So, we agree with some of the same things but our vote is basically divided and our town, we talk about this in the neighborhood. It's like our little old town is just not even a concern. We're divided, we're split down the middle of it. And I say this about ours because I believe that a lot of this goes on throughout the state. The lines can be drawn out in the middle of a corn field or cane field somewhere, not in the middle of a town because the town is the people and the same thing with the Parish. So, I think those should be considered because it divides your schools, you got two schools in the same Parish and you got that division going on, it creates more division and I think division is what we need less of. Whether it be race or gender or all that division stuff really, we need to take the step towards eradicating division. The country is getting divided and the way it has been, well, we see how it's been turning out, right? I served in the military, I'd like a united states, not a divided

states. I just wanted to let you all know that. Thank you very much for your time.

SENATOR HEWITT: I appreciate your comments and I think I speak -- for all of us, we're working hard to try to not let that happen to unite the communities so I do think that we intend to try to do that. All right. Thank you, Mr. Colley. All right, let's see. Let me work my way through some of these red cards. All right. This is still Senate Bill 5, we have several individuals present who would like to speak in opposition. The first is Frankie Robertson and Edgar Cage, if you all would like to come to the table.

MALE 3: Edgar Cage waive.

SENATOR HEWITT: Yes, sir. Okay, Mr. Cage waives. Thank you. All right. Frankie Robertson, would you like to speak, please?

MALE 3: She waives.

SENATOR HEWITT: Waives. Sorry, I thought you're just waving at me. Okay. You all can wave at me anytime. Okay, gosh. I don't know my rule about you have to print really big.

MALE 3: Catie.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Catie? Is there Kaitlyn? Kaitlyn?

KAITLYN JOSHUA: Yeah, Kaitlyn Joshua.

SENATOR HEWITT: Thank you, I apologize. Would you like to speak or would you like to waive at me?

KAITLYN JOSHUA: I'll sit.

SENATOR HEWITT: Okay. And also, Tanya Nyman, are you here Tanya?

KAITLYN JOSHUA: I believe she left.

SENATOR HEWITT: Okay.

KAITLYN JOSHUA: Kaitlyn Joshua, faith organizer with the Power Coalition for Equity and Justice. Just wanted to state a couple of things around SB 5.

[01:20:00]

My primary role at Power Coalition is to center the voices of faith communities, particularly communities of color, and engaging around issues that directly impact them year-round. It was mentioned earlier today that voter turnout is a civic duty or a civic responsibility and while we do believe that is true, I think your follow up comment, Ms. Senator Hewitt was that we have to ensure that the lines are drawn

in a specific way that does ensure that communities of color are centered and their voices are heard and their votes actually matter. I am here today to reiterate that issue and that concern of the communities of color across the state, more particularly around the minority-majority district that is possible. We do want to make ensure that there is a map that does not dilute the vote of color people, folks of color. I've been a lifetime resident of Congressional District 2 and understand the sentiment around centering people of color and making sure that their voices are heard and that the votes are not decided before they even make it to the polls. This idea around folks of color not voting, it's not the case if you look at the numbers, we do have turnout. Folks are encouraged to go to the polls, but would be even more incentivized if they did know that their votes did actually matter within their district. So, just wanted to reiterate today to explore all possibilities for a second minority-majority district. That is all.

SENATOR HEWITT: Terrific. Thank you very much. All right. Also present would like to speak in opposition to Senate Bill 5, Michael Pernick

1 and Janea Jamison, you would like to both come
2 forward.
3 JANEA JAMISON: Oh, good afternoon,
4 everyone, Madame Chairwoman, committee members.
5 Again, my name is Janea Jamison. I'm Director of
6 Programs with Power Coalition for Equity and
7 Justice. My colleague just spoke about the work
8 that the Power Coalition does from year to year.
9 We are a diverse group of community members who
10 work together to educate and to empower and
11 mobilize voters across Louisiana. And through our
12 voter engagement and community organizing work,
13 we seek to unify our collective voices into a
14 more vital, more cohesive force that can
15 successfully advocate for an agenda of shared
16 values and issues. Throughout the past five
17 years, I have personally worked on the ground and
18 engaged community on the importance of voting.
19 Our work is very diverse and includes power
20 mapping, listening sessions, organizing, voter
21 engagement, policy and advocacy, and leadership
22 development. And it's centered on centering
23 spaces where community can come together to lift
24 up the issues that impact them, then connect
25 those issues to voters of color and connect them

to issues at the local, regional, and national resources as well. So, I can say that based off of the work that I've done in the experience, we have successfully united 500,000 Louisiana voters of colors in a voting rate at 65% on statewide campaigns. Much of what was stated today on voters of colors and turnout has been based on assumption rather than results. Based on experience, when folks feel connected to a particular issue and they have a candidate that they can actually believe that can actually win, they will turnout. Community members believe in a movement. Community members believe in having a voice and turnout based on momentum and opportunity. Two hundred fifty people were here yesterday stressing the importance of having additional representation and having their voices heard. Two hundred fifty people were present yesterday because they want the opportunity to choose a candidate of choice or a competitive district. Two hundred fifty people were present yesterday in support of an additional majority-minority congressional district as well. It's pretty disheartening that Senate Bill 5 refused to include two majority-minority districts. If we

speak on data and numbers, voters of color above 18 or over 60% of the population and almost all of the proposed districts and maps introduced today by Senators Fields, Luneau and Smith. Today, there were conversations on communities of interest. In fact, I presented yesterday as well communities of interest and assets and more. Yet, there was an apparent negligence in not addressing the voices of thousands who spoke in support of additional representation of communities of color yesterday as well as in all road shows. Again, it's only fair that all Louisianans at least have the opportunity. We know that results are in list when the opportunity is given. Thank you.

[01:25:00]

SENATOR HEWITT: Thank you, Ms. Jamison. Mr. Pernick?

MICHAEL PERNICK: Thank you members of the committee, Senator Hewitt, my name is Michael Pernick. Once again, I'm a redistricting council with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. I want to be really, really clear about this. Senate Bill 5 violates Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. We know that because we've done the analysis the way

1 that the United States Supreme Court has told us
2 to do the analysis. The United States Supreme
3 Court in the 1986 opinion Thornburg v. Gingles,
4 has set forth three preconditions that you assess
5 to evaluate whether a map violates Section 2 of
6 the Voting Rights Act. If those three
7 preconditions are satisfied, then you evaluate
8 under the totality of the circumstances, whether
9 voters of color have less opportunity to
10 participate in the political process and elect
11 candidates of their choice. The first
12 precondition is there an alternate plan that can
13 be drawn where the minority community is
14 sufficiently large and geographically compact to
15 comprise a majority in an additional district. We
16 know that it's readily possible to achieve that
17 goal. Coalition of organizations submitted seven
18 different ways to achieve that goal. Just today,
19 this committee has heard a number of proposals. I
20 believe that there are six different proposals
21 that have been introduced, at least six different
22 proposals that would achieve that goal. To
23 satisfy that first precondition, you only need to
24 show one map, one alternative map, and this
25 committee has been presented with many

1 alternative maps. Second precondition are black
2 voters cohesive in their support for particular
3 candidates. I'm sure everybody here knows from
4 your own experience as elected officials who have
5 run for office that black voters in Louisiana
6 tend to support the same candidates and based on
7 numerous federal court opinions that have looked
8 at this analysis, it's confirmed that black
9 voters tend to support the same candidates that
10 second precondition is certainly satisfied. And
11 third, in the absence of an additional majority
12 black district, would voters of color usually be
13 defeated by the candidates preferred by black
14 voters and again, in Senate Bill 5, we know that
15 is the case. In five of the six districts, black
16 voters would have virtually no chance to elect
17 their preferred candidate in five of those six
18 districts. Once that analysis is complete, those
19 preconditions are satisfied, courts will look at
20 the totality of the circumstances and a wide
21 range of other factors to evaluate whether based
22 on history, based on socioeconomic disparities,
23 based on a whole range of other issues, whether
24 voters of color have less opportunity to
25 participate in the political process and elect

1 candidates of choice and there is a wealth of
2 evidence that's more than sufficient to satisfy
3 that requirement. Even on some of the objective
4 measures, Senate Bill 5 falls short.
5 SENATOR HEWITT: Mr. Pernick, you're running
6 out of time.
7 MICHAEL PERNICK: Thank you. I'll wrap it
8 up. It is less compact than all of the other
9 proposals that have been put to this committee on
10 at least two of the three compactness measures.
11 There are proposals that were submitted to this
12 committee that breaks fewer parishes then Senate
13 Bill 5 even on these other objective measures, it
14 falls short. So once again, we urge you to vote
15 no on Senate Bill 5 as I mentioned earlier, we
16 are providing a written assessment of some of the
17 Bills that have been available, some of the files
18 that have been available and we will try to get
19 that to you all so you have this in writing as
20 soon as possible. Thank you.
21 SENATOR HEWITT: Thank you. All right.
22 Present would like to speak in opposition to
23 Senate Bill 5 and I apologize, I think I misread
24 your card earlier. Frankie Robertson would like
25 to speak. Eva Williams, if you're here, if you

would like to speak. All right. And I've got two more. All right. So, you waived at me and then you changed your mind?

FRANKIE ROBERTSON: I did just want to say, hi. Sorry. And there's no confusion on your end. I actually changed my mind so thank you for your patience.

SENATOR HEWITT: You're entitled to change your mind.

FRANKIE ROBERTSON: Yes. Good afternoon. My name is Frankie Robertson and I'm here today to share written testimony provided by Raymond A. Jetson of MetroMorphosis. He's the chief executive catalyst for MetroMorphosis in organization based out of Baton Rouge. Good afternoon, Chairperson Sharon Hewitt and members of the Senate and governmental affairs committee. My name is Raymond A. Jetson and I serve as the chief executive catalyst at MetroMorphosis where we believe in the value of lived experiences and that the people closest to the matter are closest to the solutions.

[01:30:01]

I served in the Louisiana legislature for 16 years and had an opportunity to speak to the

1 issues and the interests of the people in my
2 district because there was one drawn that the
3 people who cared about the issues, I did could
4 vote, for someone to give voice to them. A little
5 less than 10 years later, I participated in the
6 first process for my time in drawing maps. The
7 redistricting effort is two-fold. It is to make
8 certain that there is representation and that
9 there are people who sit in seats who look like
10 live with and think like the people that have
11 elected you. But it is also important to make
12 sure there is influence in other districts which
13 can only be achieved without cracking and packing
14 of communities. What happens in this room and in
15 the chambers upstairs will impact black and brown
16 lives for a decade, this is a serious moment. My
17 prayer is that you will grasp a responsibility
18 and weight of this moment. You have an obligation
19 to those who years from now will look back on
20 this moment to see how responsible you were with
21 the powers you have been given by the
22 constituency of the state, these matters. It
23 matters to children yet born and it matters to my
24 ancestors and those among us who have told to
25 make a difference in the world that we live in so

that we have an opportunity to do the things that we do. Today, we add our voices to those of our community acknowledging the systemic nature of the issues faced by black communities that are a direct result of policy making here in our state legislature, in congress, and at the local level created by and sustained by redistricting and then equitable political districts from this public process. Louisiana's structural shortcomings have a disproportionate impact on black populations and populations of color. We have an opportunity to impact long term structural change that can address the maldistribution of resources provided to black communities by ensuring adequate distribution of political power and representation at every level of government. Black Americans make up over a third of the population in the State of Louisiana and yet are only represented by one of the six state representatives that are elected. This is a direct result of decades of unfair maps that have weakened the minority vote by packing black citizens and communities into a district.

SENATOR HEWITT: Sorry, you're running out of time.

FRANKIE ROBERTSON: I will finish. Thank you.

SENATOR HEWITT: You wrap it up.

FRANKIE ROBERTSON: Excuse me?

SENATOR HEWITT: If you could wrap it up, please.

FRANKIE ROBERTSON: Absolutely, thank you. District 2 stands alone as the only majority-minority district in the state and black Louisianans are cracked into Districts 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 where their votes input and voices are weakened by white majorities. It is because of this cracking and packing that since 1965, Louisiana has sent 45 white politicians to congress. I stand in solidarity with advocates today calling for the addition of a second majority-minority congressional district. For decades, we have felt a tremendous impact inequitable district maps have on black communities that have weakened the minority vote and input. We are here today to demand fair maps that allow for fair representation. Now is the time. Thank you for your time and for your leadership.

SENATOR HEWITT: Thank you. All right. Ms. Williams?

EVE WILLIAMS: Good afternoon to the Board. My name is Eva Williams. I have lived in this East Baton Rouge Parish for 50 years. There are thousands of folks who spoke out about the redistricting of road shores and thousands of people of color as well as others that have spoken out during the election cycle where I have phone banked for turning my neighborhood and community in effort to get out the vote. There is a strong concern around having one additional district and as a member of this impacted community, I have done my homework. I am aware that a second minority-majority district is possible and I urge the members of this community to go out and make sure that they can recycle and take the opportunity to look at this and make sure that they have explored all the possibilities. And I thank you all very much.

SENATOR HEWITT: Yes, ma'am. Thank you for being here.

[01:35:00]

All right. Jacquelin -- starts with a J ends in a Y. Okay and Caleb Holmes, would you like to

speak Caleb Holmes? Okay. If you would like to come down, please. Is it Germany?

JACQUELINE GERMANY: Hello.

SENATOR HEWITT: Hello. How are you?

JACQUELINE GERMANY: Good evening. Good afternoon, everyone.

SENATOR HEWITT: Good afternoon.

JACQUELINE GERMANY: My name is Jacqueline Germany and I'm a lifelong resident of East Baton Rouge Parish. I have lived in Baton Rouge for over 72 years. I'm very proud of that. I come from a long line of individuals who have fought for the rights of others and to ensure that our votes and our voices are heard. Traditionally, black people and people of color have been underrepresented. We have not had our fair shake of coming out and being a part of the process. This redistricting process that we're going through now, this cycle is going to help change that. We need you to hear us. We need you to understand that. We know that we are underrepresented. We want a fair shake. We want to be heard. We want our communities, our neighbors, my children, my great grandchildren, to live, grow and develop here in Louisiana. And

not have all of our talent leave because they don't feel like they're getting a fair shake here in Louisiana. This process in my lifetime is the first time that I've been a part of a redistricting process. And I'm so happy to be here to be able to voice my opinion, to be able to speak to each and every one of you, to let you know how we feel, what we want, and what we need. We need better fair representation. We need better neighborhoods. We need better schools. We need better communities. When you walk and ride through the neighborhoods, they're underdeveloped, they're poor. It's like sickly. I can keep up my neighborhood. I can keep up my yard, but I can't take care of the deliberated buildings and things that are in the communities that my neighbors, my friends and my relatives have to live with. And I can go on and on but I just wanted to let you know today and thank you for the opportunity to come before you to voice my opinion, because I have a voice and I use my voice, and I use it effectively. Thank you very much.

SENATOR HEWITT: Yes, ma'am. Glad to have you here today, Mr. Holmes?

CALEB HOLMES: Is it three minutes we have? I just wanted to ask.

SENATOR HEWITT: You know what, yeah, three minutes. Start in three minutes. I'm sorry, I'm seeing this card now. Are you speaking on Senate Bill 9 or Senate Bill 5? Your card says nine and I -

CALEB HOLMES: Both and--

SENATOR HEWITT: -- had you in the wrong pile.

CALEB HOLMES: Similar to Ms. Frankie, I changed my mind. So, what I want to -- you got it Ms. Germany, okay. My biggest concern is something that my grandmother always used to tell me, and she said, Caleb, sometimes it's not what you did, it's how you did it. I want to offer a slightly different perspective, and I understand that this is more of a principled opposition vote rather than a pure opposition vote to the congressional maps. I've lived in Louisiana 23 out of my entire 24 lives. I'm from North Louisiana, specifically from Shreveport. Specifically, my neighborhood is the district that Mr. Fields used to represent in congress in North Shreveport.

[01:40:01]

We do have an opportunity and need an opportunity for a second majority-minority district. My perspective is we should not be packing black voters into districts with disregard to their geography of the state. East Baton Rouge Parish does not have to be split up. Orleans Parish does not have to be split up. Rapides Parish does not have to be split up. Ouachita Parish does not have to be split up to adequately represent the need, the absolute need for a second majority-minority district while respecting other cultural and geographical differences amongst our great state. Once again, I want to be very clear. We need a second majority-minority district. That metric needs to be met. The differing perspective once again, it's not what you did, it's how you did it. You can keep these communities of interest together and satisfy their political representation ideologically, racially, geographically, culturally without splitting my people, our people up. We shouldn't do things in the name of fairness and representation without clear and precise definitions. And that definition is keep

our communities together, fulfill the metric of a second majority-minority district while also respecting cultural and geographical and compactness metrics. Thank you.

SENATOR HEWITT: Yes, sir. Thank you, Mr. Holmes. Okay. On Senate Bill 5, do not wish to speak and present and in opposition. Peter Robins Brown, Victoria Winger, Jared Evans, Chris Kaiser, Janea Jamison. No wonder we're running out of cards. Frankie Robertson, Devante Lewis, Hilda Debercu, Katie Carlson, Avery Mann, Lauren Primo, Caleb Holmes, Eve Williams. Okay. Senate Bill 9, all right. Present and will provide information if requested, Victoria Winger, Jared Evans, Michael Pernick. Okay. This is Senate Bill 9. Again, I am present in support, do not wish to speak. Frankie Robertson, Janea Jamison, Kaitlyn Joshua, Devante Lewis, Peter Robins Brown and Chris Kaiser. I think you got one of the messed-up cards so I'm assuming you're in support of this Bill. It says opposition, but it's on the green card. Okay. All right, Senate Bill 9. I do not wish to speak present and in opposition, Susie Labry, Caleb Holmes. That doesn't job with what I think I just heard him saying.

CALEB HOLMES: I change my mind.

SENATOR HEWITT: Okay, are you in support of Senate Bill 9 or in opposed?

CALEB HOLMES: I'll give you all the short version again. For all of the Senate Bills for congress that Senator Fields proposed. I'm not opposed to a second majority-minority district.

SENATOR HEWITT: Okay.

CALEB HOLMES: What I'm opposed to is breaking up communities of interest without taking into consideration the other perspective of their cultural and geographic boundaries. This last session, redistricting session there is a website called Dave's Redistricting. I'm sure many of you have heard of it or have used the software. We never had that up until this past decade. In that map, anyone from the state can go in and play around with maps all day long. I actually like maps. I'm a map nerd.

[01:45:00]

I was able to go in and keep East Baton Rouge Parish, Ouachita, Caddo, Orleans, Lafayette and Calcasieu Parish and Rapides. All of the major population centers together. And meet all

of the metrics with the deviation, the compactness.

SENATOR HEWITT: Yeah, continuity.

CALEB HOLMES: Yes.

SENATOR HEWITT: Okay.

CALEB HOLMES: Once again, like my grandma would say, it isn't what you did, it's how you did it.

SENATOR HEWITT: All right. Okay. Thank you. All right. Moving on to Senate Bill 11, present willing to provide information, Michael Pernick, Victoria Winger, Jared Evans. Present and in support but not wishing to speak, Devante Lewis, Janea Jamison, Chris Kaiser. Sorry, I think you got another one of the messed-up cards. Peter Robins Brown, Frankie Robertson. All right. Senate Bill 16, present will provide the information, Michael Pernick, Victoria Winger, Jared Evans. Present in opposition -- I think this is in support Senate Bill 16, Janea Jamison, Chris Kaiser, Frankie Robertson, Kaitlyn Joshua present and in support not wishing to speak. Senate Bill 16, present in opposition not wishing to speak, Susie Labry. All right, last Bill, Senate Bill 17, present will provide information

1 Chris Kaiser. Senate Bill 17, present in support
2 do not wish to speak, Kaitlyn Joshua. Kaitlyn, I
3 have another card for you here. Present and
4 support, do not wish to speak for Senate Bill 2.
5 I think we just got that one mixed up. Senate
6 Bill 17, do not wish to speak and support,
7 Frankie Robertson. Present in opposition to
8 Senate Bill 17 not wishing to speak, Susie Labry.
9 You are all very consistent in your cards. Thank
10 you. Okay. I think that is everything on our
11 agenda today. Is there any other business before
12 this committee? All right. So, just to give you
13 an idea. I know Senator Tarver that's your
14 favorite thing. Hold that thought. So, tomorrow,
15 the committee will convene again at 9:30 in this
16 room. We have amended several Bills, Senate Bills
17 and Congressional Bills that have been published
18 now for 24 hours or will be by the time we
19 consider them tomorrow so that members in the
20 public have had an opportunity to understand
21 them. So, tomorrow, we will consider what action
22 this committee wants to take on those Senate
23 Bills and those Congressional Bills that we have
24 heard and had a chance to look at the amendments.
25 Okay. And then we'll look just to look ahead my

plan is on Monday and committee to hear BESE and PEC Bills. Any of you that have those Bills filed, you will be given an opportunity to present those in committee on Monday. All right. Motion from Senator Tarver to adjourn. Thank you all for being here.

[01:49:28]

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Anders Nelson
Project Manager

May 1, 2022