SHARON HEWITT: Good evening, everyone, and welcome to the Joint Senate and House Committee on Governmental Affairs. Before we get started, I'd like to remind everyone to silence your phones, if you will, so we don't have anything distractions and please be aware that this meeting is being live streamed and recorded. I'm State Senator Sharon Hewitt, Chairwoman of the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee. And next to me is Representative John Stefanski, the Chair of the House and Governmental Affairs Committee. We'd like to welcome all of you here, both with us presently in New Orleans, as well as those who are watching on the internet, to the 8th Public Hearing of the Joint Committee of the Senate and House Governmental Affairs. The two committees and our staff have come together to provide you with information regarding the redistricting process. At some point early this year, that's actually going to be here before you know it in the next few weeks and prior to the next regular session, the legislature will call ourselves in the special session for the purpose of redistricting the House, the Senate, the Congress, the Board of Secondary and Elementary Education, the Public Service Commission, and possibly the Judiciary. It's our goal and

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1 responsibility to redraw some of these districts, in
2 particular Congress and the PSC prior to the 2022
3 fall election cycle. The legislature's districts must
4 be redrawn by the end of 2022. We've scheduled all of
5 our regional meetings in the evening hours so that
6 most working people can participate in this outreach.
7 It's our desire, goal and objective to make this an
8 open, accessible and transparent redistricting
9 process. In addition to our physical presence here,
10 we're utilizing every technological tool with our
11 ability to provide you with the greatest access to
12 the process. We have our legislative redistricting
13 webpage on our joint legislative website, and we're
14 utilizing social media, including Facebook and
15 YouTube, to keep the public informed about the
16 process. Every slide and all data presented here
17 today can be found on our website. Persons who do not
18 feel comfortable giving testimony in person may
19 submit a prepared statement in accordance with the
20 Senate and House Rules in lieu of appearing before
21 the committee. Statements or testimony which were
22 received timely have been distributed to the members
23 prior to the meeting. Statements or testimony
24 received after our deadline of 05:30 p.m., the day
25 before the meeting will be transmitted to members as

soon as possible. All such statements and testimony will be made a part of the record. Finally, your voice, your thoughts and your ideas are absolutely vital to this process. This is a listening session. It's our goal to take whatever information you provide to us and use it as we begin the process of drafting redistricting plans. I can assure you that as Chairwoman of the Senate Committee, your ideas and your recommendations matter to me and they matter to us. Following the staff presentations, you will have an opportunity to make comments or suggestions and offer ideas. If you have not completed a witness card, please fill it out and give it to a member of our staff and those are the white cards that you can find on the table outside. In an effort to give everyone a chance to speak I'd like to ask that you keep your comments to five minutes and relevant to our purposes today. In addition, I'd like to remind the audience that this is a legislative hearing and ask that you not applaud or speak out during the hearing. Again, thank you for your presence and interest in this very important process. Madam Secretary, now would you please call the Senate roll.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Chairwoman Hewitt?

SHARON HEWITT: Present.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Vice Chairman Milligan? Senator Allain? Senator Foil?

SENATOR FOIL: Here.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Senator Harris?

SENATOR HARRIS: Here.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Senator Price?

SENATOR PRICE: Here.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Senator Reese? Senator Tarver? Senator Womack?

SHARON HEWITT: And if you would also call the roll for the House.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Chairman Stefanski?

JOHN STEFANSKI: Here.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. President Vice Chairman Duplessis?

VICE CHAIRMAN DUPLESSIS: Here.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Representative Bouie

REPRESENTATIVE BOUIE: Here.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Representative Carter? Representative Deshotel?

REPRESENTATIVE DESHOTEL: Here.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Representative Farnum?

REPRESENTATIVE FARNUM: Here.

[00:05:00]

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Representative Gadberry?

REPRESENTATIVE GADBERRY: Here.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Representative Hodges?

REPRESENTATIVE HODGES: Here.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Representative Horton? Representative Ivey? Representative Jenkins? Representative Johnson?

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON: Here.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Representative LaCombe? Representative Lyons?

REPRESENTATIVE LYONS: Present.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Representative Magee?

REPRESENTATIVE MAGEE: Present.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Representative Newell?

REPRESENTATIVE NEWELL: Present.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Representative Thomas?

REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS: Here.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Representative White?

REPRESENTATIVE WHITE: Present.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. And Speaker Schexnayder.

REPRESENTATIVE SCHEXNAYDER: Here.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present.

SHARON HEWITT: All right. Thank you very much. So those are the members of our committee. In addition, I'd like to introduce a few other legislators that are here with us today. We have Senator Gary Smith with us. Senator Smith, he's in the back keeping a low profile. And Senator Gary Carter right behind us. Thank you. We also have a few former senators that are here with us. Senator Diana Bajoie, where are you? There you are. Welcome. Glad to have you. I'd like to also introduce our staff that have come with us. As you see, I think we've brought a pretty significant people here in UNO including our staff. We have secretary of senate, Yolanda Dixon on the front row. Our first assistant secretary cannot be here. Our second assistant secretary of state, Sue Moran. Our committee attorney, Matt DeVille, and our committee secretary that you saw earlier, Laur-en Cimino. We also have our senate sergeant at arms, Mr. John Keller in the back, assistant sergeant at arms, Louis Coreil, and assistant secretary Faith Mitchell. We also have a number of our communications folks here so that everything - you've got, all the great audio and video. And so, I'd like to thank you all for being here, as always, and doing such a great job and

1 making sure that this is all recorded. You'll also
2 see a few folks from the state police. Thank you all
3 for being here. We appreciate that as well. And so
4 now I'd like to pass it over to Chairman Stefanski to
5 do some additional introductions for the House.
6 JOHN STEFANSKI: Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.
7 Thank you for all coming out today. For everyone
8 coming out today, this has been a long ride. We
9 started in Monroe and the end is in sight, headed
10 toward a February 1 special session. I'm turning over
11 most of my introductory duties to my vice chair
12 because we're in his home area and his home turf. But
13 I do want to recognize two former House members. We
14 have Emil "Peppy" Bruno, who did this and do my job
15 for a couple of times, who is here and there he is,
16 Mr. Bruno. Then we also have Renee Pratt, who is a
17 former state representative as well, right here.
18 Thanks so much. With that, I'm going to turn it over
19 to Speaker Schexnayder and who's going to then turn
20 it over to my vice chair Royce Duplessis.
21 REPRESENTATIVE SCHEXNAYDER: Thank you, Chairman.
22 And I just want to thank everybody for coming out.
23 This is a very important process that we have to go
24 through. I can tell you that I've been staying up to
25 date on what Chairman Stefanski and the committee and

vice chair the places they've done in traveling the state, seeing and getting information from the public so that we can go back and make well informed decisions on what we need to do as far as redistricting. I appreciate everybody. I appreciate your patience in being here and with these trying times that we have I know that it's important to make sure that we make the right decisions as we move forward. So with that, I think the committee, I thank the Senate side as well with their efforts in getting everything done. It's a task that takes a lot of time away from family and friends and these members have done a great job in going out and getting that information that we need to be successful in what we do. And with that, I thank you all.

REPRESENTATIVE DUPLESSIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I just want to give a short welcome to everyone who's here tonight. It has been an honor to travel this entire state from each corner, from northeast, you name it. It's good to be here in New Orleans. I'll just take a brief moment just to give a few additional introductions before I get to other House members who are here. I see we have a great turnout of House members who are not on the committee. There are also two former House members who I saw slipped

in. Former House member and Former Clerk, Arthur Morrell is here as well as Former Representative, John Bagneris. He's also here, so I want to make sure they were acknowledged.

[00:10:00]

Some of our other House colleagues who were here, Representative Stephanie Hilferty, Representative John Illg, both in the back. Representative Joe Marino, who's also in the back. I think I saw Representative Aimee Freeman come in. Representative Jason Hughes, Representative Matt Willard, Representative Joe Stagni, Representative Kyle Green. We got the speaker with us tonight, which I'm glad he's here. Okay. Representative Mandie Landry, also here tonight. Representative Ray Garofalo, Representative Greg Miller, Representative Tim Kerner, Representative Debbie Villio, Representative Laurie Schlegel, Representative Kathy Edmonston. And I think that is everyone. I hope I didn't miss anybody. I think we got everybody. And also, we have definitely acknowledged our staff who's just been incredible. Starting with Senior Legislative Analyst, Patricia Lowrey-Dufour, our Attorney Lorraine Lucas, Committee Administrative Assistant, Rosie Ammersbach, Attorney Claire Stevenson who's with us tonight, our

clerk for the House, Michelle Fontenot, Demographer, Dr. Bill Blair, who's with us, student intern/committee clerk John Harrington. Our Sergeant at Arms, Clarence Russ, who we also call Smoke, and our Assistant Sergeant at Arms, Danny Leming. Hope we got everybody. Thank you all so much. Madam Chair?

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, Representative Duplessis. And thanks for hosting us here. We also kind of slipping in. We have Senator Jimmy Harris. Senator, we appreciate you as a member of the committee and also hear from this area. Thanks to UNO and the staff as well for making the space available and hosting us tonight. All right. Well, let's get the show on the road. We're going to start out with Dr. Bill Blair, our demographer. The staff will be talking about a number of things tonight, the 2020 population trends, redistricting terms and concepts and the governing laws, the redistricting criteria, malapportionment statistics and maps and the redistricting timeline. And so, this will be kind of an educational piece of the hearing. And then we will hear from you all. So, thank you for being here, Dr. Blair.

DR. BILL BLAIR: Hello, everyone. Thanks for your interest in legislature redistricting process. Great

crowd here tonight. It's my job to provide a brief introduction to Louisiana's census data and demographic trends. So, what do we need to know about our census data in Louisiana? First, the Census Bureau historically releases two sets of data. One, the apportionment data. This is the state level total population data for each state. And number two, redistricting data. This is the sub state level population data for each state. Think of your parish, your precinct, your census block. The second thing you need to know is that the release of this data was delayed by several months. This decade, the apportionment data to the tune of five months, the redistribution data to the tune of seven months, which is why we are visiting with you now instead of earlier this spring. So, let's have a look at Louisiana's appointment data. There are two main numbers on the slide. The first number at the top is Louisiana's apportionment data. This is the 4,661,468, which includes 3,700 overseas military and civilian personnel and their families. This is the data used to allocate the 435 congressional seats among the 50 states. Based on this data and our relative growth rate, Louisiana maintained its six congressional districts. The lower number, the

4,650,757 removes the overseas population and becomes our resident population data. This is the population used for statewide redistributing plans such as congress and the state legislature. It is also used to determine the ideal population for these statewide plans. This concept will explain in great detail to you later in this presentation. So how does our apportionment data compare to the rest of the country?

[00:15:00]

This slide tells you a story that we've seen for several decades going, which is a lower growth rate for Louisiana when compared to the rest of the country and our southern region. We grew 2.7% versus a 7.35% for the country. And by the way, we're lagging 4% behind the nation, which was growing at the slowest rate in the last 80 years. Now, as mentioned, these patterns follow a historical trend of Louisiana's population falling further behind the nation and the region's growth rates. Let's have a look at our second set of data, our redistricting data. This data is called the PL 94-171 redistricting data named after the federal law that enacted its standards. This is the population by race and ethnicity that jurisdictions around the state will

use to conduct their redistricting. Again, this is your parish, your precinct, your lower-level data from the census. It will be used by everyone from congress to city councils to conduct the redistricting. This data was released in two formats. On August 12 in a data intensive format, and a user-friendly format on September 16. The easy-to-use format is available at the Census Bureau's primary data dissemination tool at www.data.census.gov on the slide where you, the public, can easily access information that your jurisdictions will be using to redistrict. Now let's have a look at Louisiana's population and composition change. This map shows us the numerical change in population over the past decade in Louisiana. This will be the first of very many color-coded maps you will see during this presentation. If you see red or orange, it reflects generally population declines. Greens usually reflect population growth. The main takeaways you have from this map, population declines in the northeast and northwest. Population gains along the I-10 I-12 corridor from St. Tammany to Calcasieu Parish, and population gains in suburban areas. This pattern will look familiar as we move to the next slide. This is the 40-year population trend from1980 to 2020 for the

State of Louisiana. And while we do have some unique experiences in several of these decades, such as a Hurricane Katrina effect in the southeast and the 2000s on the bottom left, and higher growth rates around the state in the 1990s on the top right, the overall patterns are similar in all of these decades. Generalized population declines in the northeast and northwest of the state, population gains along our I-10, I-12 corridor, and additional gains in population in suburban areas. So, let's have a look at in more detail on individual parishes and cities. These are our 12 parishes with the largest population declines over the decade. These declines are fairly evenly distributed around the state, with the notable exception of Southeast Louisiana. As we can see by the next slide, these are our 12 parishes with the largest population increase over the decade. Again, it's a broken record where the growth is concentrated in the parishes on the I-10, I-12 corridor. And finally, these are our largest 12 municipalities and their growth or decline rates over the decade. This again follows the same general trend of our previous slides. So now finally, let's take a look at how our population composition has changed over the decade in Louisiana. There are two points I'd like to talk

about before we talk about the slide itself. One, be advised that the Census Bureau reports race and ethnicity separately. Ethnicity is reported two categories --

[00:20:00]

-- being Hispanic or Latino or not. Race is categorized in one of six broad categories; White, Black or African American, Asian, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, or six, some other race. Now, be aware that people were able to indicate multiple races when they self-reported on the Census, which can lead to hundreds of different combinations of racial categories for an individual. The data you see on this chart represents the aggregation of this data. A complete description of the legislature's aggregation process and decisions is available at our redistricting site, which will be at the end of this presentation. The document you can find is titled Allocation of 2020 Census Population for Database and Reporting. Second point, be aware that the census data made changes to the questions on race and ethnicity for the 2020 Census. The Census Bureau believes that these changes produced a more thorough and accurate depiction of race and ethnicity self-identification in our

population. Given those two points, let's discuss this chart. The first two sections on the table show the racial and ethnic composition of our state in 2010 and 2020. The bottom section shows the change over the decade from 2010 to 2020. Remember, this is the individual self-responses to the census that we are showing you. Most interesting trends from this table. One, the 6% drop in White alone population. Number two, the increase in other groups proportion of total population, and three, the very large increase in those self-identifying in the other category. This other category captures anyone who is not part of our data aggregation mentioned previously. And more specifically, it is anyone who responded as not White alone and who responded as multiple race that does not include Black, Asian, or American Indian. All of this which leads to the conclusion that Louisiana, like the rest of the nation, has become more diverse. Now we'll turn it over to Michelle Fontenot, the Clerk of the House to begin discussion of redistricting terms and concepts.

MICHELLE FONTENOT: Thank you and good evening. So tonight, I'm just going to do a brief introduction with respect to some redistricting terms. So, we use the word redistricting. We use the word

1 apportionment. What do these terms mean?
2 Apportionment and redistricting are often used
3 interchangeably, but it's important to remember that
4 these are distinct terms. Reapportionment or
5 apportionment is the process of allocating seats in
6 the legislature. For example, as Dr. Blair just
7 alluded to in the US House of Representatives, the
8 State of Louisiana is presently entitled to six
9 congressmen in accordance with the US Constitution
10 and a formula established in federal law called the
11 Method of Equal Proportions. So, we have been
12 apportioned six seats following the 2020 Census, and
13 now the legislature must redraw those congressional
14 districts or redistricts in accordance with the 2020
15 Census numbers. So, districting just to recap is the
16 process of drawing those lines of each district, with
17 districts being the geographical territories from
18 which officials are elected. So why do we redistrict?
19 There are many legal requirements involving
20 redistricting, including Article 3, Section 6 of the
21 Louisiana Constitution. And that provision contains a
22 deadline to complete state legislative redistricting
23 for this decade by December 31 of this year 2022.
24 There are also other provisions of law that contain
25 redistricting duties and deadlines that are

1 applicable to local governmental bodies, including
2 parish governing authorities, school boards, and
3 municipal governing authorities. Further, there are
4 two general legal requirements which must be taken
5 into consideration. Equal Protection and Voting
6 Rights Act, and those will be discussed later by my
7 colleagues. So, who is redistricted by the state
8 legislature? House and Senate districts are
9 redistricted, Congress, the Public Service
10 Commission, State Board of Elementary and Secondary
11 Education or also referred to as BESE and the court.
12 How is redistricting accomplished? It's done by
13 legislation. Like any other legislation --
14 [00:25:00]
15 -- it begins with a bill can be introduced either in
16 the House or the Senate, and generally speaking, it
17 follows the same constitutional procedure
18 requirements that any other bills come before the
19 legislature. Your local governmental such as parish
20 governing authorities, municipal governing
21 authorities, and school boards are not redistricted
22 by the legislature and each of those bodies
23 redistrict themselves accordance with law. There are
24 some other provisions in the Louisiana Constitution
25 that you should be familiar with. Article 3, Section

1 of the Constitution requires single member districts. Article 3, Section 3 of the Louisiana Constitution provides for a maximum number of members, so there can be a maximum of 39 senate district and a maximum of 105 house districts. Article 3, Section 6 again provides that deadline to the legislature by which legislative redistricting must occur, and that is December 31 of this year. It also requires the use of the census population data that Dr. Blair referred to as the PL 94-171 data. And now I'll turn it over to Claire Stevenson, Attorney for House Judiciary Committee to discuss population requirements based on federal law.

CLAIRE STEVENSON: Good evening. My name is Claire Stevenson, and I will be going over the concept of equal population. One-Person One-Vote. The starting point of the One-Person One-Vote concept is the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment, which states that no state shall deny to any person equal protection of the laws. The concept was further developed through a series of court cases in the 1960s in which the courts held that there must be substantially equal legislative representation for all citizens of a state. Therefore, a state must have legislative districts of roughly equal population.

1 Population equality. How is it measured? It's
2 measured by determining the ideal population, which
3 is equal to the total population of an area being
4 redistricted divided by the number of districts.
5 Deviation is the amount by which the district's
6 population differs from the ideal. There are
7 different standards for equal population regarding
8 congress and state legislative districts. The
9 standards are based on different legal provisions.
10 For congress, the standard is as nearly equal in
11 population as practicable. Again, that is based on
12 Article 1, Section 2 in the 14th Amendment that says
13 representatives shall be apportioned among the states
14 according to their respective numbers. The deviation
15 for congressional seats must be as close to zero as
16 possible and again as nearly equal in population as
17 practicable. States must make a good faith effort to
18 avoid deviation and be able to provide a legally
19 acceptable non-discriminatory justification for any
20 deviation. The standard for state and local
21 legislative districts is different. That standard is
22 substantially equal as possible. An overall
23 deviations of 10% or less is generally not enough to
24 make a prima facie case of discrimination, but this
25 is not a safe harbor. States must be able to support

the need for deviation with a justification showing significant state interest. In Louisiana, we try to keep that deviation to about plus or minus 5%. Again, talking about equal population, equality of population must be the overriding objective of districting and any deviation from this principle is permissible only if incident to the effectuation of a rational state policy. We provided some examples of state policies that have been referenced in court cases and those include allowing representation to political subdivisions, compactness, preserving courts of prior districts, and avoiding contests between incumbents. With respect to the courts, One-Man One-Vote standard does not apply. Although the concept of One-Man One-Vote does not apply to judicial districts, Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act still applies. And now I will turn it over to my colleague, Lorraine Lucas to discuss the Voting Rights Act.

LORRAINE LUCAS: In discussing discrimination against minorities, there are several legal considerations that one must be aware of. The 14th and 15th amendment, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and vote dilution issues in regards to racial gerrymandering. I will first discuss some of the

1 background leading up to the Voting Rights Act of
2 1965. The equal protection clause of the 14th
3 amendment prohibits states from purposefully
4 discriminating between individuals on the basis of
5 race. The 15th amendment adopted in 1870 declares
6 that the right of a citizen to vote shall not be
7 denied or abridged by the United States or the states
8 on account of race, color, or previous condition of
9 servitude.
10 [00:30:10]
11 The amendment was ineffectual after adoption in
12 eliminating the problem of voting discrimination, and
13 the Voting Rights Act was enacted in 1965 as a means
14 to ensure that all citizens have the right to vote
15 regardless of race, color, or membership in a
16 language minority group. A language minority group is
17 considered American Indian, Asian American, Alaskan
18 Native, or persons of Spanish heritage. Specifically,
19 Section II of the Voting Rights Act prohibits any
20 state or political subdivision from imposing any
21 voting qualification, standard, practice, or
22 procedure that results in the denial or abridgement
23 of any U.S. citizens right to vote on account of
24 race, color, or status. Section II of the Voting
25 Rights Act was amended in 1982 to clarify that a

violation of Section II is established if, based on the totality of circumstances, it has shown that the election processes are not equally open to participation by members of the protected class and that its members have less opportunity than other members of the electorate to participate in the political process and to elect representation of their choice. The extent to which members of a protected class have been elected to office is one circumstance which may be considered. However, nothing establishes the right to have members of a protected class elected in numbers equal to their proportion in the population. In 1986, those amendments were reviewed by the Supreme Court in Thornburg versus Gingles. The Court imposed three preconditions that a plaintiff must prove before court proceeds to a detailed analysis of a redistricting plan and to establish a prima facie case. Those three preconditions are the minority population is sufficiently large and geographically compact to constitute a majority in a single member district. The minority population is politically cohesive and that in the absence of special circumstances black voting by the majority defeats the minority's preferred candidate. Once those

1 preconditions are established, the Court will then
2 proceed to consider several other objective factors
3 in determining the totality of circumstances,
4 including, but not limited to, the extent to which
5 history of official discrimination touching on the
6 class participation in the democratic process,
7 racially polarized voting, the extent to which the
8 state or political subdivision has used unusually
9 large election districts, majority vote requirements,
10 or other voting practices that enhance the
11 opportunity for discrimination, denials of access to
12 the candidates slating process for members of the
13 class, extent to which members of a minority group
14 bear effects of discrimination in areas like
15 education, employment, and health, whether political
16 campaigns have been characterized by racial appeals,
17 the extent to which a protected class has been
18 elected, whether there is significant lack of
19 responsiveness by elected officials to the
20 particularized needs of the group, and whether the
21 policy underlying the use of voting and whether the
22 policy underlies the use of voting qualification,
23 standards, practice or procedures is tenuous. The
24 plaintiff must show that a totality of circumstances
25 will support the Court's finding that the contested

1 voting scheme is diluted of the minority's electoral
2 power. When drawing a minority district to avoid a
3 violation of Section II, the line drawer must take
4 care not to create a racial gerrymander that runs the
5 file of the equal protection clause of the 14th
6 Amendment. As stated earlier, the equal protection
7 clause of the 14th Amendment prohibits States from
8 purposefully discriminating between individuals on
9 the basis of race. A racial gerrymander is the
10 deliberate and arbitrary distortion of district
11 boundaries for racial purposes. A redistricting plan
12 that expressly distinguishes among citizens because
13 of race must be narrowly tailored to further a
14 compelling governmental interest, that means that the
15 plan or individual districts drawn were drawn
16 narrowly to satisfy the compelling governmental
17 interest.
18 [00:35:01]
19 What is a compelling governmental interest? It would
20 be limiting past discrimination, avoiding
21 retrogression, or avoiding a violation of Section II
22 of the Voting Rights Act, and those interests must be
23 strongly supported and evidenced. This applies not
24 only to plan that expressly distinguished citizens
25 because of race, but also plans that, although race

1 neutral are on their face inexplicable on any grounds
2 other than race. Courts have said that the
3 Legislature is aware of race when drawing district
4 lines, just as it is aware of age, economic status,
5 religion, and a variety of other demographic factors.
6 That sort of race consciousness or race awareness
7 does not inevitably lead to impermissible race
8 discrimination, so race can be considered however,
9 race cannot be a predominant factor in drawing
10 districts. Critical to determining the factors
11 involved would be the shape of the district, the
12 regard given to traditional districting principles,
13 and the motivations that drive the line drawing
14 decisions. When a majority minority district is
15 created, it must be created given due regards to
16 traditional districting principles. Otherwise, the
17 district will be subject to strict scrutiny. To avoid
18 pitfalls of gerrymandering, one must be aware of
19 bizarre shapes drawing districts that are reasonably
20 compact, not making race the dominant motivation and
21 following traditional districting principles.
22 Principles mentioned in previous court cases have
23 included compactness, contiguity, respect for
24 political subdivisions, respect for communities of
25 interest, maintaining traditional boundaries,

1 maintaining core districts, and protecting incumbents
2 from contests with each other. I will now turn it
3 over to my colleague Matt Deville, the attorney for
4 Senate Governmental Affairs, to discuss the
5 redistricting criteria.
6 MATT DEVILLE: Good evening. My name is Matt
7 Deville. I'm the staff attorney for the Senate and
8 Governmental Affairs Committee. I'll be discussing
9 the criteria for all redistricting plans submitted to
10 the Legislature for consideration. This criteria was
11 adopted by the Legislature during the 2021 regular
12 session last year, and it's contained in Joint Rule
13 No. 21, which establishes the parameters for any
14 submitted plan. Some criteria will apply to all plan
15 types, whether it be the State House or Senate
16 Congress, the BESE Board, the Public Service
17 Commission, or the Courts. Others are plan specific,
18 and I'll point those out as we go. We'll start off by
19 looking at requirements that every plan has to meet.
20 All redistricting plans shall comply with all
21 applicable federal and state laws, including the
22 Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment and the
23 15th Amendment of the United States Constitution, as
24 well as Section II the Voting Rights Act 1965, which
25 were just presented. All plans shall be composed of

1 contiguous geography within the district. And when I
2 say contiguous geography, meaning if you were to
3 trace the outline of it with a pencil, you would
4 start at one end and you wouldn't have to pick your
5 pencil up until you reach the terminal at the other
6 end. You can't have an island out over here and a
7 mainland out over here. All plans have to contain
8 whole election precincts to the extent practicable.
9 If a precinct does have to be divided it must be
10 divided into as few districts as practicable using a
11 visible senses tabulation boundary or boundaries
12 which can be geographic like a river or drilled down
13 to a more granular level which is known as the census
14 block that is the smallest redistricting block
15 available in the data set. All redistricting plans
16 have to respect established boundaries of existing
17 political subdivisions which include parishes,
18 municipalities and the national geography of the
19 state to the extent practicable. However, this
20 criterion is subordinate to and shall not be used to
21 undermine the maintenance communities of interest
22 within the same district to the extent practicable.
23 Continuing with some of the requirements that all
24 plans must meet. All plans shall utilize the most
25 recent PL94-171 data released by the U.S. Census

Bureau as validated through the data verification program of the House and the Senate. That validated data can be accessed by the public on the redistricting website. Anyone is free to use that data to submit their own proposed plan but it has to be submitted in a specific format. It must be done electronically in what is known as a comma delimited block equivalency file which is a typical export format that's available on publicly available redistricting websites.

[00:39:59]

If you do choose to submit a submit a plan. We also encourage you to include any additional information that could assist in the consideration of that plan, including the rationale for decisions made in the plan, the maps, the shape files, etc. As for plan specific criteria, each House, Senate, Public Service Commission, BESE, and Supreme Court plan has to be a whole plan that assigns all the geography of the state. It's easy to draw a single perfect district. The challenge comes in when you have to assign all the surrounding districts to accommodate that perfect one. So, if you think of it like a puzzle piece, if you change the borders on one, then everything else has to change as well to accommodate it. Continuing

to focus on some specifics each redistricting plan for the House and Senate, the Public Service Commission, and the BESE Board has to contain single districts. It has to contain districts that are substantially equal in population, which for our purposes means they must be within at least a plus or minus 5% of the ideal district population, and they have to give due consideration to traditional district alignments to the extent practicable. Now we can talk about Congress, which is subject to a different standard. Each congressional redistricting plan also has to contain single member districts, but those districts have to contain as nearly equal population to the ideal district population as practicable. This is a much more stringent standard than for state plans. We're talking about fractions of a percent as opposed to that plus or minus 5% number. That concludes my section here. So, I'll now turn things over to Yolanda Dixon, my colleague and Secretary of the Senate.

YOLANDA DIXON: Good evening. Now, I'll be presenting some of our malapportionment data this evening. First, we will discuss the State Board of elementary and Secondary Education, also known as BESE. This map shows the configuration of the eight

1 BESE districts as they exist today, as enacted by the
2 Legislature and precleared by the Justice Department
3 after the 2010 Census. When these districts were
4 drawn in 2010, the ideal population was 566, 671, and
5 the new ideal population for each BESE district
6 following the 2020 census is 582,219, reflecting an
7 increase of 15,548 in the ideal due to the population
8 growth of the state. This next chart shows the
9 current population in each BESE district and the
10 difference from the ideal population. As you can see,
11 districts three and eight are under populated and
12 districts six and seven are overpopulated. This is
13 the first of many color-coded maps that you'll see
14 this evening, which illustrates the population
15 deviations with the dark red and the dark orange
16 colors representing population below the acceptable
17 range, the orange representing the low side of the
18 acceptable range, the light yellow representing the
19 high side of the acceptable range, and the light and
20 dark green colors representing over population. So,
21 as you can see, district three again, and four and
22 five are under populated and eight, whereas districts
23 seven and six are overpopulated. Next we'll go to the
24 malapportionment statistics for the Public Service
25 Commission, also known as the PSC. This map shows the

current configuration of the five PSC districts. These districts were enacted by the legislature after the 2010 census and precleared by the Department of justice. When the districts were drawn in 2010, the ideal population was 906, 674 after the 2020. This chart shows the current population in each PSC district and the difference from the ideal population. And as you can see district one is overpopulated and outside of the acceptable range. This map shows the population deviation with the orange representing the low side of the acceptable range, the light yellow representing the high side of the acceptable range and the light green representing over population.

[00:44:59]

And now, I will turn it over to Patricia Lowrey do for our senior analyst for the House and Governmental Affairs Committee, to talk about the malapportionment of Congress.

PATRICIA LOWREY: Good evening, everyone. I'll be discussing the malapportionment of the congressional of districts before you as a map of the six existing congressional districts as they were enacted by the Legislature following the 2010 census and precleared by the Department of Justice. When these districts

are drawn following the 2010 census, the ideal Congressional district population was 755,562. According to the 2020 Federal Decennial Census, the new ideal district population for a congressional district is 776,292, reflecting an increase in that ideal district population of 20,730. This chart indicates the current population of each of the congressional districts from the ideal. Now, we did not color code this chart, but like we did some of the others, because again, the congressional districts are held to a much stronger standard than other state representative districts and legislative districts. These districts must reflect that 776,292 population to the closest extent possible. As you can see from this chart, none of the congressional district, including congressional district 2 which is the closest being only 1,000 short, reflects the needed population that is required in a congressional district. And in fact, these districts are over 80,000 short between the highest district, which is congressional district 6, and the lowest district, which is congressional district 4. There's a difference of more than 80,000 people between those districts. This map reflects the deviations from that ideal. Again, with the darker color orange is

representing population the furthest below the ideal. Again, the orange representing a population below that ideal population with the light-yellow representing population above the ideal and the light green reflecting population the furthest above the ideal. Now we will move to the malapportionment of the Supreme Court. I will remind you that the Supreme Court districts do not have to be equally populated, as was discussed earlier by my colleague when they discussed the federal court case regarding judicial districts and population requirements. However, what you see before you is a map that was drawn by the Legislature in 1997 using the 1990 census figures. When the Legislature redrew these Supreme Court districts following in 1997. They did draw these districts substantially equal in population. At the time that these districts were drawn, the ideal population would have been 602,853 and the seven Supreme Court districts were drawn within main deviation of less than 2% at the time. If the Legislature would have drawn the Supreme Court districts following the 2010 Census, the ideal population would have been 647,624. According to the 2020 census, this would increase to 665,393, or an increase of 17,769. And again, here's a chart showing

the differences in the population between each Supreme Court district and the ideal district population. As you can tell, the population of the districts vary considerably from a low of 476,554 and district 7, which is based in Orleans and Jefferson, to a high of 838/16 and District 5, which is based in the Baton Rouge Metropolitan area. A difference of more than 362,000 people. This is a map showing those deviations, again with the dark red indicating population, the furthest below the ideal population, which would include district 4 and district 7, the dark orange being the next lowest from that ideal district six, with the light orange being still below that ideal population, but within the range of plus or minus 5% should the legislature choose to apply that standard to these districts and again the dark green representing substantial overpopulation in those districts.

[00:50:04]

Now I'll discuss the malapportionment of the Louisiana House of Representatives. This is a map illustrating the current 105 districts of the House of Representatives as they were enacted by the Legislature and precleared by the Department of justice following the 2010 census. When the

1 Legislature drew these districts in 2011, the ideal
2 district population for a House district was 43,174.
3 According to the 2020 census, the new ideal
4 population for a House district will be 44,359 for an
5 increase of 1,185. For each district to be
6 apportioned they would all have to have grown equally
7 by that 1,185, but as you can see in this chart that
8 did not happen. We have 29 House districts across the
9 state that are above the plus or minus 5% of the
10 ideal population. We have 39 House districts in the
11 state that are within the plus or minus 5% of the
12 ideal population of 44,359, and we have 37 districts
13 that are below the plus or minus 5% from that ideal
14 population. Here is the map that again illustrates
15 the districts and the deviations of each House
16 district from that ideal population with the dark red
17 representing population, the furthest below and
18 outside of the acceptable range moving to the darker
19 oranges, again representing population that is below
20 to the light yellow, which means population that's
21 slightly above the ideal, and the greens representing
22 population that is above the plus 5% of the ideal.
23 Now I move specifically to the districts within the
24 Orleans Metropolitan area. This is a map that shows
25 the current House district in the Orleans

1 Metropolitan area comprised of St. Charles,
2 Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines and St. Bernard. As
3 you can see from this chart, and this is only half of
4 the chart, starting with District 56 based in St.
5 Charles and proceeding through almost all of the
6 districts based in Jefferson Parish, concluding with
7 District 91 in Orleans and then continuing through,
8 starting with District 92 that is based in Kenner and
9 going through the districts that are based in Orleans
10 and then concluding with Districts 103 and 105,103
11 being based in St. Bernard and 105 being a Plaquemine
12 Orleans and Jefferson district. As you can tell,
13 starting with these districts, most of these
14 districts, particularly those that are on the East
15 Bank of the river, are either slightly above the
16 ideal district population or seriously overpopulated
17 with those on the West Bank. And I'm going to go to
18 the map now that shows the map illustrating the
19 deviations of the districts from that ideal
20 population, with those on the West Bank of the river
21 indicating population that is either slightly below
22 that ideal district population or in one instance,
23 District 84 is under the acceptable range, so it is
24 below 5% from the ideal. So there has been
25 substantial shift in the population of the districts

in the Orleans Metropolitan area that will necessitate redrawing of those districts. And now I'm going to turn it back over to my colleague Yolanda Dixon, Secretary of the Senate to discuss the malapportionment of the Senate.

YOLANDA DIXON: Thank you. First, we have a map illustrating the configuration of the current 39 districts of the Senate that were enacted by the legislature and precluded by the U.S. Department of justice. After the 2010 census. When these districts were drawn in 2010, the ideal population of a Senate district was 116,240. And after the 2020 census, the ideal population is 119,429 reflecting an increase of 3,189 due to the population growth of the state. This chart shows that there are 10 Senate districts in which the current population exceeds 5% above the ideal population.

[00:55:00]

There are 14 Senate districts whose current population is within plus or minus 5% of the ideal population, and there are 15 Senate districts in which the current population is more than 5% below the ideal population. Now this map illustrates the population deviations of the Senate districts with a dark red and dark orange colors representing

population below the acceptable range. The orange representing the population on the low side of the acceptable range, the light yellow again representing population on the high side of the acceptable range, and the light and dark green representing population above the acceptable range. And what's interesting to note about this particular slide is that most of the districts the Senate districts in the north and Central Louisiana are below the acceptable range for population. Now focusing in on the Metro area, here are the districts comprising the Orleans Metro Area, Districts 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, and 19, primarily based in Orleans, St. Bernard, Plaquemine, and Jefferson. And here are the population numbers for the districts we just reflected on the map. Districts 5, 8, and 9 and 10 are within the acceptable range of deviation. Districts 1, 3, and 4 are overpopulated, we will have to lose some of that population. Districts 7 and 19 are under populated and will need to gain population. Here's a closer view of the districts on the color-coded map. The orange districts 7 and 19 again are underpopulated, the districts in the dark green and light green are overpopulated, and the district and the light yellow are overpopulated, whereas districts 5, 8, 9, and 10

are within the acceptable range of deviation. This concludes my presentation, and I will now turn the presentation back over to our chairwoman to discuss our timeline.

SHARON HEWITT: All right. Thank you all very much for the presentation. You'll see that we are winding down our roadshow, as we like to call it. This is our eighth meeting. We have a meeting next week, January 11 at Nichols State in Thibodaux, and then we'll wrap up in Baton Rouge on January 20. It's been a busy couple of months, and I have been telling my colleagues here at the table you all must have gotten very rested over the Christmas break because you have really shown up today. We have more cards than we've had at any other meeting. It's something around 50 people that are interested in speaking tonight. You also have seen members as we were going through the presentation, which we've heard now eight times, members have been going through all the correspondence that was emailed to us. That's in our folders. So, we received 80 emails into the committee email address prior to the meeting, and I would normally read out the list of those names. I'm not going to do that tonight because of time, but these will all be posted on our website. You can see the

exact correspondence from every person that submitted an email. We also did receive two resolutions from Jefferson Parish Council and the Town Council of Grand Isle and members you saw those in your folders as well. Okay. So, I would like to begin now with the more of the listening part of this where you all get to share your thoughts with us and we get a chance to hear what you think. Because of the large number of people that would like to speak, I'm going to ask instead of you all having five minutes to speak that we limit it to three minutes. Okay. With 50 cards that's still two and a half hours of public comment and so I would like to make sure that we get to everyone and that everyone has an opportunity to speak. Okay. All right. The first person I'd like to invite to speak is Mr. Peppi Bruno, a former House Governmental Affairs chairman. So welcome, Mr. Chairman. Yeah, we have a microphone right here in the center.

PEPPI BRUNO: Thank you, Senator Hewitt. Senator Hewitt, representative Stefanski.

[01:00:00]

Members of the committee who all have an unenviable job, I have been there and done that. You will ultimately find it gratifying, but at times you're

1 going to find it extremely difficult, and sometimes
2 very frustrating. I'm here tonight to speak on behalf
3 of my Civic Association, Lakeview Civic Improvement
4 Association, as well as to make some general comments
5 with respect to District No. 94. District 94 is a
6 lake area representative district. It runs roughly
7 from the London Avenue Canal, which is Lake Terrace,
8 all the way to Causeway Boulevard and Jefferson
9 Parish. Keith, the largest part, the largest
10 subdivision in that area is in ZIP Code 70124. 70124
11 is like a big squares, it's pounded by Bayou St.
12 John, City Park Avenue, 17th Street Canal and Lake
13 Pontiac Train. Most of that is in Lakeview, there are
14 some other smaller subdivisions within that area,
15 Country Club Gardens, Lakewood, Lake Vista, Lake
16 Shore. It is a cohesive area, it is contiguous, and
17 there is a community of interest there, and that not
18 only extends with the people in Orleans going into
19 Jefferson, it extends with respect to the people in
20 Jefferson going into Orleans. 17th Street Canal is a
21 political boundary, it's not an ideological boundary,
22 and we are fortunate that our area has grown
23 significantly, I realize that some parts of the
24 periphery may need to change. See the Senate
25 districts tonight, and that may be true as well, but

our area is a little different than the rest of the Isle of Orleans. It's kind of like Maybury being in the midst of Las Vegas, and we kind of like to keep it that way, it's always been that way. It's a lot of homeowners, it's very family oriented, and it's generally politically conservative. So, it's like the hardest part of reapportionment. Members in the audience is the House of Representatives. It's like a big puzzle, they're all like puzzles, but if you have five pieces in a puzzle like the Public Service Commission, it's not so difficult as having 105 pieces in the same puzzle. So, it's time to wrap it up, I see that, I thank you all, and I'm encouraged to see a lot of people interested in this process, and good luck. Best of luck.

FEMALE 1: Thank you very much. You're welcome to come join us anytime. All right. I have a card here for Representative Stagni. Representative Stagni, would you like to speak?

REPRESENTATIVE STAGNI: Chairwoman Hewitt, Chairman Stefanski, Speaker [INDISCERNIBLE 01:03:28] of colleagues and staff. I'll be brief 22 of the 29 precincts that I represent is in the City of Kenner. There were no officials that could be here, I'm going to speak on behalf of the City of Kenner. In the 1980

1 census, Kenner grew big enough to require two state
2 representatives with the majority of their precincts
3 in the City of Kenner to represent the City of
4 Kenner. I know Ms. Lowry talked about the ideal
5 population, but most of East Jefferson of Jefferson
6 Parish is within the range of plus or minus 5%. So, I
7 think there would be very little change but I'm
8 specifically here to advocate that District 79 and 92
9 still keep a majority of their precincts. In the City
10 of Kenner, the population in this census had very
11 little change. I thank you for what you're doing and
12 thank you for allowing us to input.
13 FEMALE 1: Thank you, representative. All right.
14 Our next speaker, Michael Baham, LAGOP District 1 H.
15 Mr. Baham? Okay, I'll put this to the side and if he
16 makes it back in, we'll call him at the end. Carl
17 Galmon, Board Member, National Voting Rights Museum
18 and Institute.
19 [01:05:00]
20 [BACKGROUND CONVERSATION]
21 CARL GALMON: Okay. My name is Carl Galmon, I'm a
22 Board Member of the National Board and Rights
23 [INDISCERNIBLE 01:05:06] Institute, and let me say,
24 we've been investigating Louisiana for the last 50
25 years about voter suppression and discrimination. Let

me just read something, take this out of the file, so the voting section of the U.S. Department of Justice dealing with redistricting. Most of Louisiana 96 Section 5 objections since 1982 have involved redistricting. Officials have consistently attempt to limit African American voters political influence by over concentrating them in a few districts called [PH 01:05:48] packing. In the alternative, other fishes have favorite cracking dispersing African Americans among several majority white districts to prevent them from achieving a majority that provides opportunity for community to elect candidates of their choice even in the face of extreme racial black voting. This is directly from the files of the Justice Department; in case you want to find out. In fact, I got copies to give discovery your members. Let's take a look over here. In 1970, I worked with John Lewis in the voting section of the Justice Department, and we came up with a district, came up with redistricted maps that led to nine black state senators elected and twenty-three representatives. Prior to that, the state had submitted a plan calling for one black state Senator and four representative. Gerald Jones was chief of the voting section, they threw out the plan from Louisiana. Now, I heard folks

speak to you today. They didn't break it down based on ethnicity. Let's take a look at Louisiana, this is what our statistics show in Selma, Alabama. [INDISCERNIBLE 01:07:11] make up the population. Minorities make up 48%. Let's break this minority down. African American 33%, Hispanic 6%, Asian 4%, Native American 3%. In fact, we got people here in Louisiana from the Middle East and Pakistan. They are from Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Turkey and Pakistan. Now listen, this is the most serious thing facing this state. Let's take a look at two congressional districts in this state. Congressional District 4 runs from [PH 01:07:46] Cado Parish down to Lafayette, that's 227 miles, takes up 15 parishes. Let's look at congressional in District 5 run for Morehous Parish, that seats on the Arkansas border down to Bogalusa 41 miles, that is elongated district. It's a slick [INDISCERNIBLE 01:08:06]. Let's take a look at the congressional seats in this city.

FEMALE 1: Wrap it up, I'm sorry, you're running out --

CARL GALMON: I know you don't want to hear this.

FEMALE 1: No, I do want to hear.

CARL GALMON: With congressional seats, six seats, one black. State Supreme Court Judges, seven seats, one black. I'm going to bring it to close, but I have to talk about this. If you give me a chance.

FEMALE 1: You can also send us an email, sir, that we can [INDISCERNIBLE 01:08:32] for the record.

CARL GALMON: Okay. Let's take a look at Louisiana between 2013, 2019, that's six years. Five of those years Louisiana led the nation in incarceration, and the reason is 90% of those judges that was able to try those fellow cases is white, and you're only 52% of the population. You have elongated districts, but it comes down to criminal district called judges. We took a look at Tasburgh Parish and St. Helena Parish.

FEMALE 1: Yes, sir. Thank you.

CARL GALMON: They never had a black judge in those two parishes. St. Helena parishes is 60% African American.

FEMALE 1: Thank you, sir.

CARL GALMON: I got some more documentation, we're going to be addressing this. Louisiana is the most gerrymandered state in the Deep South. Thank you.

FEMALE 1: Thank you, sir and happy again for you to submit more comments in writing. I know you didn't get to finish.

MALE 2: No applauding.

FEMALE 1: Okay. All right. Our next speaker is Rita Weary with the New Orleans Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta.

RITA WEARY: Good evening, Senate and Governmental Affairs Committee, Chairperson Hewitt and House Chairperson Stefanski, Committee Co-chairs and all members of the Louisiana in all members of the Louisiana Legislature, who are here tonight.

[01:10:04]

Thank you for coming to New Orleans and given the citizens of our great city the opportunity to address you about the very important matter of redistricting. I am Rita Burns Weary, a Louisiana Native and a graduate of Southern University in Baton Rouge. I'm also a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated. Currently, serving as President of the New Orleans Alumnae Chapter, where I lead a membership of nearly 500 African American women. Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated is an international sisterhood organization of college educated women founded on the principles of

1 sisterhood scholarship and service. In Louisiana, we
2 have over 5,000 members in 27 alumnae and 16
3 collegiate chapters located in the cities, towns and
4 rural communities throughout the state. Tonight, I'm
5 here to testify on behalf of myself and Delta Sigma
6 Theta Sorority, Incorporated, and our goal is simple
7 and straightforward. First, we want to ensure that
8 black political participation is not decreased in the
9 state of Louisiana as a result of the redistributing
10 process, and second, to support and advocate for an
11 increase in black political participation in this
12 state based upon the size of the African American
13 population as established by the 2020 census. I am a
14 resident of New Orleans Senate District 3, House
15 District 100, and the community known as New Orleans
16 East. Like most of the city, my community is
17 predominantly African American. The City of New
18 Orleans is known for its unique culture, its music,
19 its history, food, and entertainment. However, New
20 Orleans also has serious problems, among them
21 poverty, an aging infrastructure, a shortage of
22 affordable housing, and severe vulnerability to
23 flooding enhanced by global warming, because of the
24 large majority African American population in our
25 city, we've been able to elect our preferred

candidate, Congressman Troy Carter, an African American to represent us in the Second Congressional District and a majority African American state legislative delegation. However --

FEMALE 1: Ms. Weary, you're running out of time. Please try to wrap it up.

RITA WEARY: Okay. All right, I will. So, we are requesting Delta Sigma Theta Sorority New Orleans Alumnae Chapter, Incorporated, we're requesting maps that create competitive districts that allow African American citizens to have a reasonable opportunity to elect representatives of their choice. Thank you for listening and thank you for the opportunity to be heard.

FEMALE 1: Yes, ma'am. Thank you very much. Three minutes goes fast, I'm sorry, you all. So, be very succinct in your thoughts, so you make sure you get your most important points out. Mr. Jared Evans, NAACP Legal Defense Fund.

JARED EVANS: I'll try to keep it under three minutes. Good evening, members. Happy New Year. I'm Jared Evans, I'm an attorney with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF, the nation's oldest and foremost civil rights law organization. I'm a Louisiana Native and a former law clerk legislative assistant and

1 staff attorney with the House of Representatives. So,
2 at this point, you all are well aware of LDF's
3 position on the congressional map as the seven maps
4 that LDF and 16 other civil and human rights
5 organizations submitted last year show it is entirely
6 possible to draw a congressional map with the two
7 majority minority districts in each of our maps. The
8 second district will be anchored by New Orleans and
9 the fifth district will be anchored by Baton Rouge.
10 Both of these districts would have a black boarding
11 gauge population of over 7%. The seven maps submitted
12 by the civil and human rights coalition illustrate
13 different ways to achieve two majority of black
14 opportunity districts while also considering
15 traditional redistributing principles. Each of our
16 maps is more compact than the current congressional
17 map on at least two of the three widely recognized
18 statistical measures of [PH 01:14:46] compagments. We
19 understand that some of you are interested in
20 maintaining roughly the current district alignments
21 and merely tweaking around the edges rather than
22 drawing two majority of black districts which as we
23 have explained, is likely required by Section 2 of
24 the Voting Rights Act.
25 [01:15:00]

1 The current district two packs black voters here in
2 New Orleans, in the same district with black voters
3 all the way up in Baton Rouge. There is no reason for
4 the region's two major black communities, New Orleans
5 and Baton Rouge, to be packed into just one district.
6 Baton Rouge and New Orleans are distinct cities with
7 distinct needs, and as we had demonstrated in our
8 submissions, there are many different ways to draw a
9 congressional map with two majority of black
10 districts, one centered here in New Orleans and one
11 centered in Baton Rouge. I would also like to implore
12 you to hold one remote show hearing that would allow
13 citizens from across the state to testify remotely
14 over Zoom or similar platform. Unfortunately, the
15 COVID situation here in Louisiana has taken a
16 dramatic turn for the worst in the last month. The
17 number of people hospitalized with coronavirus in
18 Louisiana is skyrocketing more than doubling over the
19 past week and quadrupling over the past month. On
20 Monday, the Louisiana Department of Health reported
21 over 31,000 new cases of the coronavirus. The total
22 number of cases in Louisiana since the beginning of
23 the pandemic is almost 900,000, and the coronavirus
24 has already claimed the lives of 13,000 of our fellow
25 Louisianians. This is a severe shift from the first

1 racial hearing on October 20 in Monroe, where I also
2 testified where there were only 495 reported daily
3 cases. As a result of the recent surge, the health
4 risks are especially significant for individuals who
5 are immunocompromised or have conditions that place
6 them in a high risk category. In closing, in the
7 three weeks between now and the redistricting
8 session, we once again urge you to hold a virtual [PH
9 01:16:51] racial hearing over Zoom that allows
10 members of the public to provide oral testimony.
11 Thank you.
12 FEMALE 1: Thank you. All right, that is not my
13 beeper but just saying, I don't know whose timer that
14 is, but. Okay. All right. Our next speaker, former
15 member Diana Bajoie.
16 DIANA BAJOIE: Okay, please. Good evening.
17 FEMALE 1: Good evening.
18 DIANA BAJOIE: First of all, I want to thank all
19 the members of the committee for giving a time for
20 this tough task. Let me tell you, I'm like [PH
21 01:17:56] peppy, I've been through it at least four
22 times, and it's not an easy thing, but I commend you
23 for stepping forward and participating in it. I'm
24 here, I'm Diana Bajoie, Former State Senator, I'm
25 here representing myself. I'm a member of Delta Sigma

Theta, but I'm representing myself today, and what I like to just say is that after looking at the maps, I certainly want to make sure that I represent my area. And I said, my Senate District 5, we are just slightly over populated, and I hope we do everything to maintain that district is very important. We sit in a very important area of Central City. Well, we're not in Central City Uptown, and we're not quite Maybury, but we are a very homogeneous population up there. We do a lot of good things and I would hope that we reserve everything we can to maintain that district. I also live in District 91 House District and once again, I see that it's overpopulated. So, there'd be no need to take in and not keep those two districts and so I want to make sure I say that but my only reason for coming to testifying today is that I became the tenth member after the force reapportionment by a special master and I don't know I'm sure you all know about that. Back in the '70s, they had a special master to redraw the district after they were not fairly drawn by the legislature, and in that special master they created ten African American districts, but only elected nine the first year, the first four years, the first term. I was elected the following term in 1976 is the tenth

1 member and the only woman elected at that time, but I
2 say that because you want to make sure that we don't
3 never get into that position again. You have a great
4 opportunity here, you have all the stats and
5 everything available to you because I can't remember
6 when we started to put the maps on the floor and
7 collect all the statistics ourselves and look at
8 different ways and looking at the way they had done
9 the senses.
10 [01:20:05]
11 We had tracks, they weren't even a precinct. So, it
12 made even more difficult, but you all are very
13 fortunate that you have a very accessible process,
14 and I would hope that you would keep it fair and do
15 everything you can to make sure it's inclusive,
16 because I'll say, like a friend of mine, as one of my
17 fellow legislation to say from Shreveport. The
18 legislature was a better place after we got there.
19 The diversity in the legislature, we were able to get
20 a better understanding of how people live all over
21 the state, everywhere from Maybury to other places in
22 the state, and we found out that people live very
23 well and very homogeneous in other parts of the state
24 as well, and we enjoyed our areas, but it's important
25 that we all get an opportunity to participate in the

1 process, and I think that's what we had when we began
2 to move that way when I was in the legislature and I
3 look at Peppi and many other people I served with,
4 and I never thought that because we were so diverse
5 and so different, but we became very good friends and
6 we understood that there was need for different
7 things in different districts, and we even work
8 together, and I know how my time is running out, but
9 it's been a long time since I've been able to talk at
10 the mic, so I'm kind of getting carried away, but I
11 want to just thank you and wish you good luck and
12 hope that you keep this process fair.
13 SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, Senator. All right.
14 Our next speaker is Maggy Baccinelli from New
15 Orleans.
16 MAGGY BACCINELLI: Good evening. I'm Maggy
17 Baccinelli, I work for the ACLU of Louisiana, but I'm
18 speaking tonight as an Orleans resident, which I've
19 been for eight years. I'm here tonight because of my
20 daughter Ruby, who will tell you she's two and three
21 quarters. I love New Orleans, but it's difficult for
22 me to imagine raising her because of the injustices
23 that pervade life in this city. I believe in
24 humanity's collective liberation, and I want her to
25 grow up knowing that every black girl and boy beside

her deserves everything that she deserves, but that's not the messages she'll receive in this environment. In my work at the ACLU, I've studied disturbing data on racial disparities, particularly with to our state as the top incarcerator in the world. For example, African American people make up 33% of the state's population, but 66% of our incarcerated population, black both the men ages 16 to 25 are five times more likely to be incarcerated after arrests than white boys and men of the same age. In Orleans Parish, that rate is almost 20 times more likely. Nearly one in ten individuals in Louisiana prisons are life without parole, and two thirds of them are of color, but all of this learning has not taught me half of what I know just by existing in New Orleans. I've learned more during daycares with revered programs only to find that the only black person in the building is serving the children lunch and by sitting with friends who have become like family to me. The day before their patriarch reported to a prison for a 15-year sentence for a possession charge. My hardest lesson came while holding my nine-year-old neighbor, the morning his father left for prison. He wept and told me I'm afraid to get used to it, and another one listening to an African American friend tells me

she's terrified her son will be killed by police if he doesn't get treatment for his mental health condition because he sometimes stands on the corner and paces. I can never know what it's like to feel the pain that our community members feel every day in New Orleans, and if you are a white legislator, neither can you. If we really stand for the ideals we espouse in the constitution, black people in this state must be able to have a fair chance of electing representatives who have walked in their shoes. Representatives who know what it's like to exist as an African American person in Louisiana. The birthplace of separate but equal and once home to the largest slave port in the country where 135,000 people were bought and sold to labor to their deaths. Tonight, I ask for you to reflect on the limits of your perspectives based on your lived experiences and for you to create the opportunity for leaders with other perspectives to sit at the table and represent their own communities. I ask for you to pass fair maps based on the population shifts in the state and to add a second majority minority district in Louisiana. For those of you who will represent more diverse districts, when you do pass fair maps, I ask for you to consider how you will lift up and center

the voices of the historically condemned. Doing so will ensure my daughter Ruby and all of our children live in a more just, equitable and free state. Thank you.

SHARON HEWITT: Yes, ma'am. Thank you. All right. Our next speaker is Michael Burnside.

[01:25:01]

MICHAEL BURNSIDE: Hello, elected people. My name is Michael Eric Burnside, I live at 2215 Felicity in this town, I've lived here six years. I built my own house, it's 176 square feet. My privilege is an interesting thing, I was talking to a lady who works for the city, and I told her I built my house, and we were talking and talking and talking, and she said, wait, wait, wait, you mean you put hammer to nail? She got confused, I guess, white people only build houses [INDISCERNIBLE 01:25:37] and Mexicans, but the bottom line is I built my house, it took a year and a half. I was homeless, cost $16,000, I'm not homeless anymore. We each have perspectives, and my perspective is different than a lot of people's. My granddad died of black lung right in front of me when I was in elementary school going to eat dinner with my grandma. We all have perspectives. Each one of us is special. Each one of us loved by God, but you guys

have a problem. And the problem is pretty basic. You care about people, otherwise your life would be easy. But here's the deal, you've got too many people to care about. I can get lost in a representative Senator who claims to have, like, what, three quarters of a million people? No, that can't be right. We've got 4 million and a half people here and 39 senators. So, if we had 45 senators and 4 and a half million people, each one of you would be worth 100,000 people. How can you listen to 100,000 people? How can you know what we feel? How can you know what we want? How can you know who we are? Even if you did walk in our shoes, because times change and old people don't know what new people know, 100,000 people with a lot of people for a part time guy who's got to earn a living because you don't get paid for full time and you got no staff, and God help us if we go to the representatives. Representatives are supposed to be the house of the people. You're supposed to be part timers because you're supposed to be businessmen, you're supposed to be laborers, you're supposed to be educators, and you're not supposed to be the homeless, but there's only 100 of you, and there's 4,500,000 people in this place, and if you do the division, that's 45,000 people each. I

grew up in a town of 12,000 people. There was an air force base outside of town for another 12,000 people. How can you know us? It's the death of democracy. There's no people between you and us. There's no people to come to my house and say, oh, this guy has shot. I got a shot window who feels my pain. You're too far away, and it's not your fault. There's not enough of you and you don't have enough staff. It's a really rude thing to say out loud, but fuck your maps.

MALE 1: You just refer to all Latinos as Mexican. Right there in front of him. [INDISCERNIBLE 01:28:15].

SHARON HEWITT: All right, hang on. This is a legislative hearing. We're not going to have a debate, all right? We're going to keep order in this hearing. All right. Our next speaker, Juliet Loughlin from New Orleans.

JULIET LOUGHLIN: Good evening. Thank you for having these hearings. My name is Juliet Loughlin, I lived in French Quarter for 14 years. I'm a constituent of U.S. Congressman Troy Carter. My state representative is Representative Royce Duplessis. My State Senator is Senator Jimmy Harris. In 2010, the boundaries that we currently have were approved by

the Obama Justice Department. We've had a very small change in Louisiana population and maybe small changes are merited but not anything major. I would like to ask the committee to keep our boundaries about the same as they are currently and I thank you for all your work.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you. All right. Next speaker, Tammy Savoie with the Democrat State Committee Congressional District 1.

TAMMY SAVOIE: Thank you so much and I want to thank you all for being here and also for your commitment to transparency and integrity.

[01:30:00]

We appreciate the roadshow that you all have put on. I'm here as a member and a representative of the DSCC Congressional District 1, and also State Representative 94A for the DSCC. So, I would like to say that what we collectively would like regarding redistricting is the public website that or some forum where we will have input in the process of you all drawing these districts and drawing these boundaries so that as you review the maps, we would like to be able to see that in real time over the course of the extraordinary session from 1 to 20 February and make public comments on them. So, if you

1 get a bunch of maps in, we'd like to see the ones
2 you're really considering and make sure that we are
3 involved in that process. We would also like to the
4 extent possible, that when you're drawing the state
5 legislative districts, that you minimize the multi-
6 state parishes, districts, and when you're drawing
7 the congressional districts, that you minimize the --
8 well, you minimize the split parishes among the
9 districts, and that's what we're going to be looking
10 for. We also think that incumbency should not be a
11 priority because no incumbent owns that district.
12 That district belongs to the people, and we should
13 elect our representatives. In addition, with the
14 state legislatures with term limits incumbency is no
15 longer really relevant. And finally, I think
16 representing District 94, I have to respectfully
17 disagree with Mr. Peppi Bruno, because the district
18 in 2010, when they were redrawn for 2011 and beyond,
19 were based on the fact that we lost so much
20 population from Katrina, so they were redrawn to
21 include Jefferson in District 94. So, we would ask,
22 given the expansion or the population growth in
23 District 94 that we revert back to the 2010, 11
24 districts, the district boundaries. And basically, 94
25 doesn't only include Lake View, but it also went up

to Mid-City and included that portion of New Orleans. So, we would like to keep the municipality of New Orleans in District 94. So, with that, I want to thank you all very much for listening to us and for considering our comments, and thank you very much for all of the effort that you all are putting in, and we very much want to be a part of this process, and thank you for creating that transparency and ensuring your integrity. Thank you very much.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you. Thank you very much. All right. Next speaker, Lloyd Harsch from New Orleans.

LLOYD HARSCH: Senator, ladies and gentlemen, and my representative, Matthew Willard. Thank you for having these meetings, even though I'm a pastor and a professor, I will be concise and resist the urge to pontificate on things outside drawing districts. In determining the appropriate boundaries for a district, one of the guiding principles is to look for communities of common interest, and there are a number of factors that contribute to making of a community. I encourage you to consider all of the aspects of the community not just one of them. Ten years ago, the boundaries of the second congressional district were determined by giving preference

primarily to one community characteristic and as a result, the district now snakes all the way up to Baton Rouge area, well, that's ridiculous. The second district is a New Orleans district and as a white republican, I share far more in common with my black democrat friends and neighbors than any of us do with interlopers up from Baton Rouge. My apologies to those that may live up in Baton Rouge. So, I urge you to expand your definition of community when determining its future borders and the borders of all others under your purview. Thank you for your consideration, and who that?

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you. All right. Our next speaker is Taylor Hodge with the Power Coalition.

TAYLOR HODGE: Hello. My name is Taylor Hodge and it's an honor and a pleasure to be here. I work for the Power Coalition, but as they say, opinions are my own. Tonight, I'll be speaking on behalf of young people because I am one. New Orleans and the rest of Louisiana is losing young people for a number of reasons. Firstly, because there are not enough a good opportunities and well-paying jobs. Why? Because companies that provide these jobs don't want to come here.

[01:35:02]

1 Likely due to structural issues and the uncertain
2 future here because of climate change. Secondly,
3 young people like these companies aren't sure if New
4 Orleans is a good long-term investment. I can't tell
5 you how many articles I've seen saying these cities
6 will be underwater by 2030 and New Orleans is always
7 first on the list. It makes me feel blessed to be
8 here at this redistricting road show because who
9 knows if there will be a next one. Young people are
10 thinking about where they might want to buy homes,
11 start families and businesses, and they don't want to
12 invest in a place that hasn't made the necessary
13 mitigative and adaptive changes necessary to stay
14 afloat. In short, young people don't feel that
15 elected officials care about their futures. There
16 will be people here and there have been who have
17 gotten up to say that despite the obvious changes in
18 population and changes in demographics in Louisiana,
19 that we shouldn't change the districts and there will
20 be legislators who agree with them. I'm sure that
21 many of you have young people in your lives, children
22 and grandchildren who you hope will stay in Louisiana
23 or at least move back when they're ready to settle.
24 Please think of them during this process. Think of
25 them when you have the option to make districts more

equitable, more fair to the communities that inhabit them and do so. We deserve to choose the people who run. We deserve to feel excited at the polls to struggle and dream with our candidates instead of what we do now, which, when it comes to the issues that impact us, feels a lot like choosing the best of the worst. Thank you.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you. Right. Next speaker is Linda Vincent O. [PH 01:36:53] from New Orleans or Metairie.

LINDA VINCENT: Linda Vincent O. from District 80 and legislative polys up there and District 9 for the Senate and Congressional District 1. I'm here because Katrina blew me here. I lived in St. Bernard Parish when I got married. Prior to that, I lived in Chicago and Orlando because after graduating from LSU, I left the state of Louisiana, but I came back and I've lived the rest of my life here, very happy, large family. So, this is just to give you folks up there an idea about the people down here that are talking to you. What I want to say is with the Congressional District 1, it's pretty evenly in need of numbers and people are relatively happy with where it is, and my philosophy in life has always been, if it isn't broke, don't fix it. So, you'll hear some people that

say, no, we have to get a certain type, and if you can get a certain type, according to the laws of the Constitution of Louisiana, more power to you, but I have trust in all of you up there that you all will do your best because you wouldn't be here in front of us if you all were here just to start sweeping things under the rug. So, I just ask that you look at the fairness of what you're doing and the legal part of the constitution, and if one district has to go umpteen miles, it's only because the population density of that district is different from the population density of the Orleans Jefferson Parishes districts. So, we understand that, we believe you understand it and I thank you for this opportunity.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, Ms. Vincent O. Next speaker is Dawn Aber.

DAWN ABER: Good evening, everyone, and I'm happy that you all came here for this roadshow. I'm going to be very short, but basically, I'm requesting an additional house seat for the New Orleans East area and the Lower Ninth Ward which she has grown substantially since 2010, and actually, looking at the math that you all had earlier, it does show that we do have a substantial increase in the population in these particular areas.

[01:40:00]
And also, I just want to mention the over lapping because in New Orleans East, the lower portion of New Orleans East, we have legislative district, which actually someone represents, but they basically live, I mean, they represent St. Bernard Parish, and we have a Senate district which kind of overlaps from Slidell. So, basically we would like New Orleans East, Lower Ninth Ward, to be all represented by one person that does represent the area. Thank you.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, Ms. Aber. All right. Our next speaker is Mark Spencer from Belle Chasse. Mark Spencer from Belle Chasse, there you are. Thank you.

MARK SPENCER: I would like to say, I would like a map that is simple and has a lot of vertical lines or at least keeps compact and is fair like this, and there's not much else to it. Keep an even population meet the requirements set by the state, it's all very nice. Have a good day.

SHARON HEWITT: So, Mr. Spencer, if that's a serious map that you're proposing, we have a process where you can submit that and we can really consider it, right? Online in the comma separated delineated file, whatever that is.

MARK SPENCER: Comma separated values?

SHARON HEWITT: Okay. All right. Thank you.

MARK SPENCER: Have a good day.

SHARON HEWITT: All right. Val Cupid [PH 01:41:55] as our next speaker from Lakeview. Val Cupid, he left. Okay. Adrian Bruno, Orleans Parish Republican Executive Committee.

ADRIAN BRUNO: Good evening. My name is Adrian Bruno, I'm the Chairman of the Orleans Parish Republican Executive Committee. I'm a Lakeview resident. I'm a native New Orleanian of 49 years. I've lived here my entire life, less my time in the United States Marine Corps. For the record, I never missed an election during my time in the Marines as deep my father made sure I secured and executed an absentee ballot. Thank you all for serving. This is an extremely important process and you all take time away from your families, your professional and personal lives to serve the citizens of Louisiana, it's greatly appreciated. I had unique experience with this process, as in 1980, when I was eight, my father, Peppi, who you heard from, and then Representative Louis Charbonnet, borrowed my crayons to redraw the maps at our kitchen table at our house. My comments are as follows. One, regarding the United

States congressional delegation, we support equal representation as per the census data. Specifically, we are supportive of the current districts in place, as they are. Two, regarding the State House and Senate, we are also in support of equal representation as per the census data. Specifically, in Orleans Parish, we support the Mid-City neighborhood having one state representative. In the Lakeview neighborhood, we support representation as part of District 94, and finally, we are supportive of being part of State Senate District 9 rather than where we are as we feel that, that is more representative of our neighborhood. I very much appreciate your time, your service and your efforts. Thank you.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you. All right. Next speaker is Stephen Kearny with Fair Districts Louisiana.

STEPHEN KEARNY: Hi. So, my group has long felt that the practice of lawmakers drawing their own districts in and doing so, choosing their own voters is one of the worst conflicts of interest ever to exist in politics. And so, we wanted to create a tool to help encourage good behavior despite this conflict of interest and so we created a public pledge

available on our website fairdistrictsla.org, where you can kind of publicly agree to abide by fair redistricting criteria. And so, I would like to just ask you to do that, please give your consideration and to ask members of the audience to encourage your lawmakers to sign this pledge into abide by it, and I would also like to echo the idea that we definitely need another, at least a competitive congressional district.

[01:45:01]

In order to have a more responsive democracy, and I would like to echo Ms. Tammy here, please share the block assignment files for any proposal during the session so that we can analyze them in real time, that would be really helpful. So, thank you. Please sign the pledge.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you. Next speaker is Ryan Gomez.

RYAN GOMEZ: Hello, Commission, it's an honor to be here. My name is Ryan Gomez, and I'm a Geospatial Data Engineer with common cause and their progressive state by state partners. I was trained by the metric geometry group of Tufts University, and I volunteered with Fair Districts Louisiana, I've been very lucky to do all of that in precinct 1111 Uptown. You can

tell I like maps, so I was able -- I'm wondering, what kind of information is the commission would provide the public about incumbents in the irrespective census tracts, voting tabulation districts, or block groups. Where are all of you? This would be very useful for the public as we complete our ensemble analyses and proposals to see if our maps smashed together or split apart any all incumbents. Otherwise, I congratulate your commission for providing clear and well-organized data sets. It's been a pleasure working through them. My brain is fried looking at precincts all day long. Have a safe Mardi Gras and have a Happy New Year.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you. All right. Next speaker is Mathew Schwarzman from New Orleans.

MATHEW SCHWARZMAN: Good evening. My name is Mat Schwarzman, I've lived in New Orleans Parish for the past 20 years. To me, it is a fairly simple and straightforward fact that while race cannot be used as a single or overriding concern to create a district, if black Louisianans comprise a majority of the voting population in a cohesive community of interests in two majority districts, they are entitled to those two majority districts, and that consideration should be the foundation of any new map

for the state. When I moved here 20 years ago, the thing that struck me more than anything else about Louisiana was the seemingly bottomless spirit of competition. People here will make a game out of almost anything, and everyone, it seems, has multiple things that we compete around to define who we are. I just helped elect the first woman sheriff in Orleans Parish history, and you better believe I feel very proud about participating in that competition. I guess that's why we're called the Sportsman's Paradise, but that also means Louisianans know a rigged game when we see it and we don't like it. It defeats the purpose of the game because it blocks the most talented people and the best ideas from coming forward. That's what a competition is supposed to be for, to figure out who or what is best. Yes, voting is a game, but it's the single most important game that we play in Louisiana, and you, our elected officials, are the umpires. You're in charge of making sure the game is played fairly. I urge you and I expect you to be fair. Use your natural superpowers as Louisianan to see through the smoke in the mirrors and reject any maps that will undermine the integrity of the competition and our state in the long run. Once again, if black Louisianans comprise a majority

in otherwise contiguous and coherent communities of interest, they are entitled to two majority districts. Thank you.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you. All right. Next speaker is Ronald Marshall with vote.

RONALD MARSHALL: Good afternoon.

SHARON HEWITT: Good afternoon, good evening.

RONALD MARSHALL: My name is Ronald Marshall, I'm a formerly incarcerated person, I served 24 years, I'm a member of Vogue and tonight I'm here to talk about prison gerrymandering, a very important topic, I didn't hear anyone talk about it, but it's something that needs to be discussed tonight. So, for those who don't know, what is gerrymandering?

[01:50:02]

The process of counting an incarcerated people where they live, where they are detained instead of the communities where they are from for the purposes of redistricting is an unfair practice that disproportionately affects urban communities of color by diluting and diverting political power to rule and often wider parts of the state where prisons are built. A political framework that includes prison gerrymandering can never be fair. Legislators can ensure in the practice of prison gerrymandering this

1 redistricting process. What is prison gerrymandering?
2 People incarcerated in housed in prison that are
3 typically isolated in rural parts of the state. The
4 Census council courts where the people as residents
5 of their prisons instead of their home communities
6 where their families and loved ones who still live.
7 Districts drawn using these numbers give unfair
8 representation of eligible voting population.
9 Incarcerated people are represented by leaders whose
10 interests are in direct conflict of their own. County
11 incarcerated people in prisons where they are
12 detained shifts their political power away from the
13 communities that they come from and where many of
14 their families and loved ones still live. Why should
15 you care? Why should you care? Why should you care?
16 Prison gerrymandering is another type of voter
17 suppression that influences which people get elected.
18 Building these fake districts gives more money and
19 influence to the prisons and strips legislative
20 representation from under resourced largely black
21 communities where incarcerated people are from. Mass
22 incarceration, disproportionately targets black
23 communities. Prison gerrymandering further serves to
24 diminish the power of minority communities and in
25 practice usually gives an unfair advantage to white

1 people. Louisiana is the most incarcerated place in
2 the world. Most incarcerated Louisiana comes from
3 black communities. In the urban, most populated parts
4 of the state. By allowing prison gerrymandering to
5 continue, we are diverting economic and political
6 power from communities that is most enhancing to
7 elected officials who do not have any incentive to
8 represent the interests of those incarcerated
9 constituents that can't even vote for them. Many of
10 the people incarcerated in Louisiana was sent to
11 prison on unfair non-unanimous voting's. A system
12 that was explicitly designed to uphold white
13 supremacy. Prison gerrymandering further compounds
14 the racist impacts and legacies of this Gemcal [PH
15 01:52:43] practice. In closing, I think that in order
16 to move forward, the redistribute process,
17 eliminating prison gerrymandering from the counting
18 process will give this legislative body a guide in a
19 redistribution process. My name is Ronald Marshall.
20 SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, Mr. Marshall. All
21 right. Next speaker is Alanah Odoms with the ACLU of
22 Louisiana.
23 ALANAH ODOMS: Good evening, everyone. My name is
24 Alana Odoms. I'm the executive director of the ACLU
25 of Louisiana. Thank you so much, members of the

1 committee for hosting this and the other roadshow
2 hearings. The last time I was before a body like this
3 was when we worked on the "Justice Reinvestment
4 Package" in 2017, and it was then that citizens from
5 all around the State of Louisiana were able to
6 actually bring truth to power, literally standing
7 before the power body that was going to make
8 decisions about mass incarceration in the state, and
9 what we saw then in 2017 was a more diverse body in
10 the legislature at the time. But one that had the
11 courage to take on essentially the original sin I
12 think of the State of Louisiana, which is slavery and
13 then its evolution into mass incarceration.
14 Unfortunately, Louisiana, despite the reform that was
15 made in 2017 once again holds the ignoble distinction
16 of being the top incarcerator in the world. And for a
17 time, New Orleans was the top incarcerated parish of
18 the top incarcerated state in the world which made us
19 the top incarcerator in the world. And that's not the
20 only ignoble distinction that we hold. We are a state
21 that is documented as the sixth most racially
22 gerrymandered state in the nation, which is why we
23 have so much support coming from national
24 organizations like LDF, the ACLU National
25 Organization. Despite the passage of the Voting

1 Rights Act 60 years ago, this is the first session
2 legislative redistricting session that will go
3 through without the protections of the Voting Rights
4 Act.
5 [01:55:08]
6 And so, what does that mean? Previously, our state
7 had to submit our maps to the DOJ and they had to be
8 precleared. Unfortunately, now this process is
9 reversed the burden of proof is reversed and that if
10 the maps that are incredibly brave, hopefully very
11 courageous legislators before us will draw. If those
12 don't pass legislative muster, we have to challenge
13 those maps and bring those maps before the federal
14 court, and I think we all know that we are all
15 prepared to do that but we are incredibly hopeful
16 that this body will recognize the history and then
17 act accordingly. So, we're not starting from a clean
18 slate. We're actually starting from a place where we
19 have lots to address with regard to minority
20 representation. I'll just talk briefly about some of
21 those other ignoble distinctions and the type of
22 legislative body and congressional bodies that are
23 needed to address those concerns. So, we're talking
24 about issues of mass incarceration. We're going to be
25 tackling issues of inclusive education, sometimes

1 referred to as critical race theory, but what we
2 teach our children about the past. We're also going
3 to be talking about issues of equal pay. What our
4 LGBTQ brothers and sisters deserve by way of their
5 quality of life? What women deserve by way of their
6 reproductive liberties, environmental justice. What
7 our brothers and sisters in St. John and St. James
8 the Baptist Parish deserve by way of air quality and
9 water, understanding that their cancer rates are
10 1,500 times the national average. What kind of body
11 do we need? We need a diverse body. We need a body
12 that looks like it's not afraid. Frankly, when we go
13 to the legislature, we know that sheriffs and the
14 District Attorneys Association and others have
15 unilateral power and really stifle conversation about
16 these most important issues. We need legislators that
17 are tenacious and not afraid to tackle those issues
18 and therefore the composition must change and we have
19 to be sitting next to people who look different than
20 we do, who have different perspectives and who are
21 not deeply entrenched in the political quagmires that
22 we've been in so that we can address these most
23 important issues. I thank you for the time.
24
25

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Odoms. All right. Next speaker, Regina Fields from New Orleans.

REGINA FIELDS: Good evening, Madam Chairman and Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I am a member of the board of the Mid-City Neighborhood Organization in New Orleans. But this evening, I'm speaking just as myself, my thoughts on my own. The first thing I wanted to talk about is the Mid-City Neighborhood is currently represented by four different state representatives. The neighborhood has increased in its cohesiveness and its identity over the years. For example, in the last District 94 race, the Mid-City precincts voted quite differently than the rest of the district. So given the mandate that districts should be cohesive, I think that's something I hope you'll take into consideration. Mid-City has increased in its identity and its values of diversity in age, in race and in economic status. So, I would like to ask you to take that into consideration and give Mid-City its own representative. I have to say I'm kind of stunned but also pleased to be agreeing with my friend from the Republican Executive Committee given that I'm basically a democratic activist.

SHARON HEWITT: You see it is?

REGINA FIELDS: Yeah, I know. It's amazing, isn't it? It's great. The second thing I'd like to say is I support the idea of having two majority black congressional districts. I think it's an open secret that the District 1 is not geographically contiguous and I hope that you'll keep that in mind as well. Thank you.

SHARON HEWITT: Yes, ma'am. Thank you. All right. Next speaker is Grant Tregre. I'm sure I'm not saying that right. I apologize from New Orleans.

GRANT TREGRE: Good evening and thank you, members of the legislature for being here today. Thank you, my fellow citizens of Louisiana. I am Grant Tregre, and I humbly represent members of the Social Justice Ministry at St. Joseph the Worker Catholic Parish in Marrero, Louisiana.

[02:00:08]

I'm born and raised New Orleans native, but our Parish is in Marrero. We have hundreds of families that make up our Parish that come from Jefferson Parish, Orleans Parish, St. Tammany Parish. We have people who come in from the River Parishes. Our Social Justice Ministry focuses on issues such as racism, economic exploitation, mass incarceration and

voting rights which is why we're here today. I have a very simple ask, and that is that when you take into account the redrawing of the maps that you do so fairly, you draw competitive maps and we support multiple majority minority districts. Thank you for your time.

SHARON HEWITT: Yes, sir. Thank you. Next speaker is Paul Deckert from New Orleans.

PAUL DECKERT: Thank you, Senator. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Speaker, thank you all for being here, ladies and gentlemen of the committee and everybody who stuck around, thank you all for showing up. So as far as Bonafides, who am I and why should you care? Retired Marine Corps Colonel, lifelong resident of New Orleans grew up here, went to school here. That means high school for those of you who've only been here six or eight years. Traveled around the world in the country, lived in several other parts, California for five years. DC for three years. We'll skip the overseas stuff, but came back to New Orleans. And unlike a lot of people, I'm going to ask about redistricting and what I'd like from that. So, what I'd like to say is let us follow the law. And to that end, if we've got areas that are over, they got to give some people up. If we got areas that are under,

they got to take some stuff in because at the end of the day, it's just about the math and all the legal challenges go away if we follow the math. I happen to be a resident of the Lakefront area. I live in Lake Vista. I would like 94 to stay contiguous part of Orleans Parish. I would like to have our senate districts be more reflective of Orleans Parish, if that's possible. According to the maps you all showed, there's some opportunity for that. There are some overages in some areas and some underage in some other areas. I don't know if that's a word, but I like alhague. So, I'm going to use it. When it comes to the bottom line of what we have going on here, a lot of discussions over and additional majority minority district follow the constitution. Race cannot be the only factor. If there are numbers that make sense, then it's legal. If race is your only reason, it's illegal. So let us stick with the numbers, let us do what makes sense, and God bless you all in your heavy work. Thank you.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, sir. All right. Next speaker, Corey Wax from New Orleans.

COREY WAX: Good evening. Thank you very much for being here. I didn't come here prepared. But I want to tell you that I've enjoyed being here. I like

being involved in the process. Education, right? So, you heard a lot of things being said. These different organizations, common cause, fair judges Louisiana, LDF, Power Coalition, NAACP, Legal Defense Fund, ACLU, all these different organizations. I would ask that you go educate yourselves and know where that information is coming from. Because when you look at a different organization, there's always a slant or a bias to it. I just ask that you go back and educate yourselves, know where the information is coming from. I'm a Christian, Catholic. I've been here nine years. I've watched this city kind of spiral. I don't have a long history prior to that for being here. But what I can see is there's a lot of good people in New Orleans. They work hard. Poverty knows no color. If you're poor, you're poor. Education, if you're uneducated, a lack of education, doesn't know color. It involves everybody. So, I'm going to ask that you fairly go and look at the districts. Follow the constitution, follow the legal process, do it fairly. It's not a prerequisite by my color of my skin or if I'm educated or poor that I should get something. It's all about doing it legally and fairly and our constitution outlines that. It lines that out for

everybody to see. So, thank you very much for your time. Good evening.

[02:05:03]

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, Mr. Wax. Next speaker is Kim Smith from New Orleans. Kim Smith? All right. I'm going to put the card at the bottom and we'll see. All right. Next speaker is Carlos Pollard, Jr. with the Power Coalition.

CARLOS POLLARD, JR.: Okay. Good evening, everyone. Thank you all for having me. I had originally came to represent Power Coalition, but I'm going to follow Taylor's lead and I'm going to all comments on my own especially since I'm coming behind someone who just invalidated all of the hard work that we've been doing. So, when you look at the history of Redistricting, as in previously used to weaken communities' political power, the best way to protect our power is by demanding the legislator to pass fair and equitable maps. Maps that reflect the Census data of 2020. To have opportunities for fair representation, we must change these maps. Change can be good if we do the right thing. To comply with the federal law, new maps must go into effect. Over the past few months, my team and I have been on the ground working like working, hosting community events

before each row show to ensure that all citizens voices are heard. Making sure that the citizens each of you serve in your district are aware of the Redistricting cycle and that their voices are heard and their concerns are heard. Providing innovative resources to communities and organizations. We do this because we believe it's possible to have fair maps, to have a second majority minority congressional district. So tonight, we are asking that you make the right choice. Do what the community is asking you to do. Serve, let's make a change for the betterment of Louisiana. Let's past these maps, let's pass fair maps that truly reflect the numbers in Louisiana. Let's pass the second congressional map because one third of Louisiana citizens are black but they're only one out of six congressional districts that are majority minority. Let's pass fair maps to the next group of leaders, for the next group of leaders that are coming after you because again change is coming. Let's just make sure it's the right change.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, Mr. Pollard. All right. Next speaker is Frank Maistrovich. I apologize if I mispronounce your name.

FRANK MAISTROVICH: No, you did good. You're fine. That's good.

SHARON HEWITT: All right.

FRANK MAISTROVICH: Was it something I said? I'm sorry. Thank you all. It's a wonderful opportunity to talk to the committee and to citizens and I want to thank the demographers and the lawyers. Apparently, they do a lot of work to get to this point. I don't have a lot to say about this because I have to agree with one of the speakers who was here before. I am very, very concerned about the committee itself. I've seen your voting records; I know your political affiliations and my prediction is this. You will draw up a redistricting plan. You will submit it; it will be vetoed and we'll be back fighting about this again. My suggestion of this is disband, go home to your respective parishes, form a committee unbiased. Three republicans, three democrats, three independents. Work this out and come back. I keep hearing all of the previous senators and representatives saying this is hard. This is so hard. This is so hard. Well, good. Stop. Go home. Quit. Turn it over to three of each party and an independence and let's go home. Thank you all.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you. All right. Next speaker is Al Aubry from New Orleans. Al Aubry?

[02:10:00]

All right. Next, speaker Julie Schwam Harris from New Orleans.

JULIE SCHWAM HARRIS: Dear Chairs, Hewitt and Stefanski, Vice Chair Duplessis and Vice Chair Milligan if he's here. And members of the Senate House and Governmental Affairs Committee. I want to thank you and your staff and the staff has gone. But for all the work that you have put into doing these road shows, they really are an important opportunity. My name is Julie Schwam Harris. I'm a lifelong resident of New Orleans. As a volunteer, I support the work of many civic and human rights organizations who've been educating people on Redistricting and inspiring people to come to these roadshows around the state so that they can have more voice in their government. You're providing that opportunity. We do this not just for maps. We do this in the hope of getting Louisiana off the bottom of lists regarding people's health, economic wellbeing, opportunity, and rights. Though I am mostly active with organizations working on the status of women, we know that when you do policies and laws that promote equity and

1 transparency, it will float all boats and improve the
2 lives of all. And fairer maps that support people's
3 communities of interests. Not just race, but
4 communities of interest. Not just geography, but
5 communities of interest can bring about those
6 positive changes. And it also might influence, if we
7 get off the bottom, whether or not we lose population
8 or gain it because we're at the bottom. That's one of
9 the reasons we're losing population. It's not just
10 the threat of storms and drowning, although that's
11 part of it. The key points I want to make on mapping
12 are based on population numbers. Louisiana should
13 have two majority minority congressional districts.
14 As Mr. Pollard I think said earlier, 33% black, 40%
15 people of color. There should be competitive
16 districts. Two of the six should be competitive so
17 that voters of color can get candidates of their
18 choice selected. Based on population numbers, since
19 Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans has grown 40,000
20 people, and that's almost a House district by itself.
21 So really, we should have one more or gain back
22 really, what we lost a House District in the City of
23 New Orleans. Based on numbers, the racial makeup and
24 the ethnic makeup of Jefferson Parish and the
25 interests of minority citizens, black Hispanic and

other they deserve more attention. There should be at least one more competitive seat for minorities. I'm not saying black, I'm not saying Hispanic, but just for people of color in the state House in the state Senate, from this most populous Paris, Jefferson Parish. The Supreme Court needs to be updated to ensure justice is served to all populations of the state. It's out of balance with numbers and out of balance with minority representation. And lastly, I echo what Mr. Marshall so eloquently said about prison gerrymandering. I hadn't put it in my original thoughts, but it's a really important concept for you to consider. Thank you for the time. Thank you for your work. And good luck with your task.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you. All right. Next speaker, Sharon Smith Lahoste from New Orleans.

SHARON SMITH LAHOSTE: Good evening. Good evening. My name is Sharon Smith Lahoste. I've lived in Louisiana since 1972 and in the greater New Orleans area since 1986. My husband is a lifelong resident of the greater New Orleans area. I'm concerned for the future of Louisiana, our beloved State. Compared with other States, we're not doing very well. I'll just quote a few stats, not many. Based on a piece published in the advocate last

1 March, we are dead last in job growth. We have the
2 highest nation's, highest incarceration rates and the
3 highest maternal death rates. We're 49th in poverty,
4 48th in education, 42nd in unemployment and 46th in
5 quality of health care. We have high crime and high
6 poverty. We have some of the dirtiest air in the
7 nation rising sea levels and a sinking coast. The
8 number and intensity of storms is increasing. We have
9 aging infrastructure and inadequate funding to
10 properly and timely update. In many places around our
11 state, internet and affordable housing are
12 unavailable.
13 [02:15:05]
14 Poor housing and educational opportunities, the
15 unavailability of healthy foods and lack of access to
16 modern necessities like affordable healthcare,
17 transportation and the internet plague many of our
18 communities. But here's the key, even though these
19 problems do affect all of us, they disproportionately
20 impact minorities and the poorest members of our
21 population. Minorities have a community of interest
22 in that the state's past practices have resulted in
23 the problems they disproportionately face every day.
24 Some like to blame minorities for their own
25 difficulties and the consequences and costs that

1 those difficulties caused the broader population. But
2 for far too long, minorities have been deprived of a
3 fair opportunity to participate in developing the
4 laws and policies that affect them and their futures.
5 We have seen time and again funding and social reform
6 bills introduced in congress, for example, and a five
7 to one vote from the Louisiana House delegation, with
8 only the one majority minority district
9 representative voting to support them. A recent
10 example is the basic infrastructure bill that worked
11 its way through congress last year. The bill passed,
12 but only one out of the six Louisiana House delegates
13 voted for it. Only one representative from
14 Louisiana's only majority minority district voted for
15 the bill. A bill that will bring millions of dollars
16 to Louisiana in desperately needed infrastructure
17 including infrastructure that will improve the lives
18 of Louisiana's minorities which in turn will improve
19 the lives of all of us.
20 SHARON HEWITT: You're just about out of time. If
21 you'll get to wrap it up, please.
22 SHARON SMITH LAHOSTE: I'm getting right there
23 right now. With the total state minority population
24 of almost 40%, only one majority minority district
25 out of six is not fair. Let's not continue the

disenfranchisement of our minorities with this round of redistricting, it's time to change. The only fair maps will create two majority minority districts in our state. Mr. Evans earlier indicated that at least two maps have been submitted that allows for two majority minority districts that will still adhere to the traditional concepts of redistricting. Please create fair maps.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, Ms. Lahoste. All right, next speaker Debbie Albert from Kenner.

DEBBIE ALBERT: Hello. Thank you, everybody. I'm Debbie Albert. I'm just a regular person. I'm a wife. I'm a homeowner. I'm a mother, and I'm a grandmother. I'm a retired banker. I've lived in Kenner for 32 years. Before that, Gretner, and before that, Orleans Parish. This is a redistricting meeting. I've heard a lot of all kinds of stuff, but I don't know, maybe I'm just a dummy. I don't know. But I mean, anyway, Louisiana has only increased its population a little over 3%. I'm in Senate District 10 and Representative District 79, Debbie and Congress congressional District One. And what I feel is all of the congressional districts are just a few percentage points outside of the target area and just need minor changes to meet the requirements set forth by the

Supreme Court for equal sized districts. And that's all I have to say. Thank you.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you. All right. Next speaker is Linda Doyle.

LINDA DOYLE: Hello. My name is Linda Doyle. I wanted to thank you all too for doing all these roadshow meetings. I've lived in Monterey for over 30 years. I'm a physical therapist homeowner, wife, mother and grandmother.

[02:20:00]

I agree with a gentleman from Lakeview that said to follow the Law by following the map. I am requesting fairness and equity in the redistricting process. Since the population grew by a mere 2.74% over the past 10 years, common sense says no major changes are needed to comply with the Justice Department's requirements. The current boundaries of the six districts have been in place for the past 10 years when they were approved by the Obama Justice Department. Since then, not much has changed. All of the congressional districts are just a few percentage points outside of the targeted population. These districts can easily be tweaked for compliance. By law the districts are to be drawn accordingly to common political, social and economic interests.

Louisiana citizens deserves to be represented accordingly. In addition, the Cook Partisan Voting Index shows that the current congressional districts are extremely balanced politically. Please do not try to fix something that is not broken. Thank you.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, Ms. Doyle. All right, next speaker is Pooja Prasio from Shalma.

POOJA PRADEEP: Sorry about that.

SHARON HEWITT: It's okay.

POOJA PRADEEP: Good evening to the committee. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today. My name is Pooja Pradeep and I am a resident of St. Bernard Parish and I am here to request that the redistributing process be fair and transparent. Specifically, I hope the committee will ensure all districts are geographically continuous and do not break up Parishes. I also hope they will be competitive for all political parties to lessen political polarization. I also hope the process for drawing new electoral boundaries should be open for all citizens to observe and provide input so I concur with Ms. Tammy Savoy on her website idea. I would also support a virtual roadshow, as was suggested by someone else, to allow the amino compromise or those with transportation issues to be able to comment. For

the next redistricting process, I really hope you all will appoint an independent commission because I do believe what you're doing right now is immoral and it is a conflict of interest. I would also echo the point that Mr. Marshall made about ending prison gerrymandering. I don't know about that until today, but I really think we shouldn't be doing that. Finally, I would like to point out that one third of Louisiana's population is black, but only one of the six congressional districts is represented by a black representative as the second congressional district packs much of the black population and the rest of it is cracked along the other majority white districts. As a result, the state has only had four black federal Congress people since reconstruction, which is in the late 1800s. Thus, I urge the committee to adopt a map that does not dilute the black vote. Thank you for giving me the time to listen and thank you for your service.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you. All right. Next speaker is Denise Holmes from New Orleans.

DENISE HOLMES: The Louisiana congressional maps from 1970 forward chronicle our sinking into gerrymandered chaos. The 1970 map does make some sense to me but every map drawn after that is an etch

a sketch of squiggles and snakes and bulges and splats. How does that support the basic principles of democracy, a republic and community? A democracy is based on the fundamental right to vote. A right that feels a little fragile these days. And a republic is based on citizens freely choosing the people who represent us and the community means choosing where we live, growing together, sharing our varied interests, respecting our values. Our cultural heritage is on our daily concerns. These tenants are powerful.

[02:25:00]

They should never taken for granted but there's nothing in this formula about political parties, nothing. We keep talking about Republicans and Democrats and our congressional and legislative districts must support these Republicans and Democrats. But no, these districts must support our democracy, strengthen our Republic, and enhance our communities. If we draw our district lines to strengthen the interests of political parties, we've lost our way. Maps, and those who would draw them must be trustworthy. So now I just want to speak briefly to those who represent us. If you run for office, you should be doing it because you care about

our access to jobs, our access to important resources, and the quality of our cultural environment. There's no reference there to Democrats or Republicans. So let me leave you with this sobering reality of our political history. Our entire nation, not just Louisiana, still suffers from a scarring, racist history. Republicans and Democrat presidents alike have promoted among their many Chartered achievements, national segregated housing policies and infrastructure programs that not only divide us, but divided up our wealth and our access to opportunities. Presidents Woodrow Wilson, Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and Dwight Eisenhower are among the greatest offenders. Democrats and Republicans alike. The stain of racism crosses party lines. So stop putting political party at the top of any list of priorities. We know better, and you should, too. Now let's just talk a moment about majority minority districts. If the wide population of Louisiana is about 60%, and if people tend to live in communities with similar values and histories, and if our neighborhoods still reflect the trends of segregation, which they do.

SHARON HEWITT: Wrap it up.

DENISE HOLMES: The question of majority minority representation is simple math. Close to 40% of the population with only one majority district is under representation. Simple math, demands two majority districts, and so do I. Thank you for your time.

SHARON HEWITT: Yes, ma'am. Thank you, Ms. Holmes. Our next speaker is Byron Alumurst. Sorry. Anybody named Byron? Byron A. All right. Okay. Tony Brule of the Jeremiah Group.

TONY BRULE: Good night, everyone. My name is Tony Brule and I'm a community leader in West Bank of Jefferson Paris. Tonight, I'm here to speak on behalf of Ms. Jackie Harris. She's a lead organizer for the Jeremiah Group. I'm going to be reading her testimony. Dear members of the Joint Governmental Affairs Committee, my name is Jackie Jones, the lead organizer for the Jeremiah Group. And I'd like to thank you for holding this hearing and listening to the concerns and residents in greater New Orleans and area as it relates to redistricting. The testimony I am submitting today is on my own behalf and also on behalf of the more than 100 residents of the West Bank of Jefferson Parish who attended a community redistricting meeting in December. Many of those 100 plus had planned to attend tonight's hearing but

chose not to due to the recent surge in COVID cases. Nonetheless, we all felt it necessary to make our voices heard on this important matter. The West Bank of Jefferson Parish is one of the largest communities of interest in Louisiana and also one of the most diverse. Yet many of us feel that our voice as a community is diluted in the state government because our representation is split up among many other different legislative districts, especially in the State Senate.

[02:30:00]

I am testifying today and representing so many of my friends and neighbors because we want to see that change. We believe, based on the latest census numbers, that Jefferson Parish should gain an additional Senate district and that it should be a majority black district, which would give our community more direct representation in the legislature. There are several important data points, we believe support our case. One, Jefferson Parish is the second most populous Parish in the State, with 440,781 residents, behind East Baton Rouge with 456,781 residents, and ahead of all these Parish, which has 383,997,000 residents. Two, however, Jefferson Parish has only three senators who reside

in the Parish, while East Baton Rouge and Orleans each have four senators which reside in those respective parishes. Three, three of our four resident Orleans based Senate districts come into Jefferson Parish. Jefferson Parish makes up nearly 25% of Senate District 3 and approximately 40% of Senate District 4. The final point number four, both districts take a large block of Jefferson Parish of the African-American voters, when Jefferson Parish has enough African-American voters to be drawn into one majority black senate district that is either entirely or almost entirely confined within Jefferson Parish. The West Bank represents the future of Louisiana.

SHARON HEWITT: Wrap it up, please, sir.

TONY BRULE: Yes, I will. More socially and racially and economically diverse, with young families, transplants from other places and international immigrants helping to drive our growth and ensure that our community thrives in the decades to come. Creating more direct representation from our community will not only serve as the best interests of those of us who live on the West Bank. It will provide a voice and a road map to how Louisiana can

move forward in the 21st century. Thank you for your time.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, sir. All right. Our next speaker, is Mary Anne Mushatt from New Orleans.

MARY ANNE MUSHATT: Good evening. First, I want to thank everyone for being here, for giving us the time. I'm a voter in House District 98, Senate District 9, Congressional District 1. Again, my name is Mary Anne Mushatt, and I have lived in New Orleans for over 20 years, returning after Katrina to raise my family. My husband an infectious disease physician at Tulane and University Medical Center, and I believe fair representation of our populace is crucial to the longevity and prosperity of our state. New Orleans is mower much more than our festivals. We are business people, educators, healers, artists, engineers, poets, technology innovators and, of course, musicians. As such, we have the needs of every community to thrive. Clean drinking water, repaired roads, safety from crime and the ravages of climate change fueled storms, and an educational system preparing our young for the challenges of today and tomorrow. I'm a member of Together Louisiana and Together New Orleans sister organizations working to educate citizens on the

challenges facing our city and our state. We utilize experts in areas such as preparing and evolving the energy grids to rally, support, engaging and encouraging voters and politicians to work together to create fair results for all. I agree with the ACLU that district maps must allow communities, my community to elect leaders, representatives of our choice who hold our interests at the forefront of their agendas. Officials who welcome public input before voting on issues impacting our health, our lives and our future. Creating designated Republican or Democratic districts divides us one from the other. We have tremendous challenges ahead of us as a country but specific as a state. We need. We deserve. Elected officials who are beholden to us.

[02:35:00]

All of us to discover and implement solutions that benefit the citizens of Louisiana and not the dictates of national party on either side of the political spectrum. I support a second minority majority district and competitive races across the board and ending prison gerrymandering. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you this evening. And happy King Cake Day.

SHARON HEWITT: That's right. It's today January. Tomorrow is January 6. Great. All right. Thank you very much. Our next speaker is Will Harold with vote.

WILL HAROLD: Good evening. My name is Will Harold, Senior Policy Council with Vote, Voice of the Experience it's great to see so many familiar faces in New Orleans. I look forward to working with you here in a couple of months when we're all back in Baton Rouge. You heard from my colleague Ronald Marshall earlier, and I guess I can end my testimony with saying what he said. But I want to add a couple of things. I'm a recovering lawyer. I've never practiced voting rights law but as this process has ramped up, I've learned, I've listened a lot. And what shocks me is that a lot of people I know who are kindred spirits don't see the connection between prison gerrymandering and redistricting writ large is very much a part of this conversation and should be very much an issue on your minds. It is very much directly relevant to how maps should be drawn. When I hear conversations in list serves and webinars about this process, I hear terms like maps should not have a discriminatory effect on black people. Well, we know people of color are disproportionately representative of our criminal justice system. So, if

1 you don't count and take into consideration where
2 people incarcerate are coming from. You are ignoring
3 the fact that those voters who are left behind are
4 not getting the representation that they deserve.
5 We're told that by law you cannot pass maps that
6 dilute the vote. Ronald Marshall's mother waited for
7 him for two decades while he was incarcerated in the
8 State of Louisiana. She was denied adequate
9 representation because he counted not where he lives
10 now in her home, but where he lived then, which was
11 in Rayburn. And there's a reality to this that I hope
12 that people will consider when you're looking at
13 these maps and people in this audience who are
14 thinking about this debate. When someone is
15 incarcerated, I know this from experience and from
16 talking informally to people incarcerated who Vote
17 represents and who lead Vote as an organization when
18 someone's incarcerated and they have a problem and
19 then they need support from elected officials. They
20 called elected officials from the district where they
21 came from. When Ronald was in Rayburn, he didn't call
22 Senator Mizell, and that's because he knew Senator
23 Mizell though she may care about the rights and
24 interests and conditions of incarceration.
25 Representative Mizell probably never considered him

her constituent. Royce Duplessis would, because this is somebody from his community. So when thinking about this issue, I hope that you do take into consideration this critical point. This State has done so much since 2016 and 2017 to overcome some of its past wrongs in the context of criminal justice reform and not only have we done some of these things going forward, but we've done some of these things going backwards and this is one of those things. The origins of prison gerrymandering are no different from the origins of the unanimous jury requirement that we've recently addressed. Thank you very much for hearing from me. Welcome to town even you, Chairman Stefanski. We'll see you in Baton Rouge soon. Thank you.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, Mr. Harold. All right. Our next speaker is Teresa Kenney from New Orleans.

TERESA KENNEY: Hi, you all. Thank you for doing this. It's been great to be here in person and see you all and I know you don't always do this, so please do this again. My name is Teresa Kenney. I'm a small business owner. I'm in District 98 and District 5. When I moved here, I increased the population so you can thank me for New Orleans on needing another district.

[02:40:06]
I support a Mid-City district. I think that would be a really great place to have a cohesive community in that house district. Another thing I want to talk about with redistricting this morning, I was at [INDISCERNIBLE 02:40:23] for Homer Plessy who was arrested in Louisiana for riding a segregated streetcar. I bring this up because we haven't redistricted our Supreme Court since 1990. A lot has changed since then in New Orleans and people in this area are being disadvantaged by the Supreme Court not being readjusted. So I'd really like you all to consider looking at that Supreme Court and making it more proportional, making it more of a One-Person One-Vote kind of situation instead of where it's at right now. I would also say that I support a second majority minority district. The reason is not like what they said because they're Black, they deserve it. It's because if we want something, we have to try really hard to get it. We have to be deliberate about making these things happen for us. So if we decide that it's important for us to have a diverse government that speaks for all the people in our district, then we need to make it a priority to go out there and sell this second minority district to

the other people that you're going to be talking to around the state. I know that it's a hard sell in some places, but I just want you to know that it's the right thing to do and we have to make the way in our government if we're going to be able to make change and have diverse government. Lead our state forward and to be able to make progress on some of the things that need to be changed. So that's what I wanted to say. I wanted to say thank you. I want a diverse legislature, and I want to see nationally the people we send to -- our national government also be representative of who we have in Louisiana because myself and other people like us, we moved to Louisiana for a lot of reasons and part of those reasons is because of the diverse beauty we have here, the culture, the melting pot, the Gumbo, whatever you want to call it. And if we don't see that represented in our government, it means our government isn't going to be reciprocating and giving us back what we need. So if we can get those kinds of things happening, that would make me really feel supported, so thank you.

SHARON HEWITT: Yes, ma'am. Thank you, Ms. Kenney. All right. Next speaker is [PH 02:42:45] Lyddie Rodman.

LYDDIE RODMAN: Good evening. For three years, I've driven a truck with principled representation matters painted on the side. It amazes me how many people inquire as to what that means or refers to. I graduated at [PH 02:43:18] Lafourche in 1979. I got this little mixed up, and now I'm a Montessori educator in Metairie. My district is getting redrawn, and I'd like to speak to this to the eyes of one of my youngest students. This student is from a family that emigrated from the Middle East. I've been his teacher for eight months now through masking and now redistricting. Recently, I was at the meeting held in Baton Rouge and this is where the need of a familiar identity landed on me. It landed hard. Back to my student. For eight months, the faces that greet him are ones he's grown to know. Mine. It was not until I got a new student, an Afghan refugee did I start to understand. The father of the student entered the room, and he had a familiar look to my student. His features were recognizable to my student. I then saw my student of eight months throw himself into the man's arms. That's when I understood those citizens in Baton Rouge asking for the redistricting to consider the need to draw them so all persons feel heard and are principally represented. I ask this not

for me, but for my students and the children that need to see and know they are being represented principally. We've been failing all our posterity, and we can do better.

[02:45:02]

The same meeting in Baton Rouge, I was given an opportunity to speak to my State House Representative. I watched as I was not heard, and I listened when only lip service was paid. I'm not asking for anything more than what our constitution guarantees. We wouldn't be guaranteed something if it could be made arbitrary. Thank you.

SHARON HEWITT: Yes, ma'am. Thank you. All right. Our next speaker is [PH 02:45:35] Frankie Hires from Jefferson Parish.

FRANKIE HIRES: Good evening. Frankie Hires from Jefferson Parish. Here to spark a little curiosity and away we go. You see, you were fed a little lip service about apportionment. Representatives shall be apportioned among the several states according to their respective numbers that was what you heard probably early on by one of the first administrative assistants. I believe the clerk. The think of it is, is apportionment in the constitution what they spend an hour selling you on and I'm going to appeal to the

1 people because really, they're just a reflection of
2 our neglect and occasional opportunism. You see, the
3 constitution prescribes how representation will be
4 done for the state. In fact, if it's ever made
5 arbitrary like 105 or 39 which bear no respect to the
6 64 parishes, we all live in, right? If it's ever made
7 arbitrary, you've got this Article IV, Section 4
8 that's supposed to remind you of what you're missing
9 out on. The United States have guaranteed to the
10 several states among it a republican form of
11 government. Well, that's to ensure it. It can't be
12 arbitrary. We can guarantee it, right? Here's a
13 Jeffersonian, a former candidate for Senate District
14 9 and as such, as a Jeffersonian Republican, you can
15 imagine what it was like to knock on the doors in
16 Orleans Parish and try and sell myself for a vote. It
17 is not easy. The thing is, I ran to unbecome the
18 senator for Orleans Parish because I don't live in
19 Orleans Parish, right? Virtual representation is the
20 reason we had a revolutionary war. When federal or
21 state laws endorse or promulgate that which we fought
22 that war over, well, they failed us. Now, whether
23 we're going to abide federal and state laws or we're
24 going to abide the constitution is up to us. They're
25 just a reflection of our neglect to the fundamental

form. See, apportionment means that the biggest parishes will get the most representation and conversely, if we want to impose an income or property tax, they pay the cost to be the boss. So if you want to actually, none of you need to do this job. It's not really your gig. I'd take all the work off your shoulders. You don't have to do any of it. It's really simple. If you want to adhere to a cap which is unconstitutional in and of itself because it disproportionately will ship power to the most rural and moneyed interests, but if we're going to settle on a cap of 105, it's pretty simple. You end up with a representative ratio, a basic divisor as George Washington put it at the first enumeration of 51,000. That means that Orleans Parish will get I believe seven representatives. Jefferson Parish would get eight. Your parish government. I'm going to appeal to the parish presidents right now. Every parish president should be suing the state for taking their job from them. You see, if we were going to allow the state representatives to redistrict themselves, fair districts you listening? We don't need a commission. I don't need a bipartisan committee. No, it's not their gig. Their job is to argue about the ratio of representation then they give it to the parish

governments. See, representatives shall be apportioned among the several parishes according to their respective numbers is how the republican form will be sent to us. It's what we are entitled to. It's what we must abide. Last, we suffered to arbitrary governance. Now, I've been asking anybody to explain what this means and nobody's --

SHARON HEWITT: Mr. Hires, you're running out of time.

FRANKIE HIRES: Thank you.

SHARON HEWITT: We're on a three-minute time limit this here.

FRANKIE HIRES: You see the thing it is, if anybody could explain to me what the principal apportion means. Imagine you got an option. I've got a truck full of gas masks going to save us all from certain doom. All you got to do is explain the principles of apportionment or sign over to the title of your car. I'm willing to bet that I'm starting to used cars. That's where representation matters it's not your gig.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you. All right. Our next speaker is Sharon Bernard. Lower 9th Ward Voters Coalition.

[02:50:00]

1 SHEWAN BERNARD: Good evening. It's [PH 02:50:00]
2 Shewan Bernard, and I'm with the Lower 9th Ward
3 Voter's Coalition, and good evening and welcome to
4 New Orleans. My approach is a little different, so
5 I'm going to move this. I'm speaking on behalf of the
6 Lower 9th Ward Voter's Coalition and some background
7 about us, we are a non-profit organization
8 established to promote political, educational, and
9 informational responsibility through informed and
10 active participation in government. We work primarily
11 in the Lower 9th Ward, which is in the City of New
12 Orleans. And that area was severely impacted by
13 Hurricane Katrina with the breach of the levees, and
14 we have not fully recovered since then. The area is
15 rich in history. Prior to Hurricane Katrina, most
16 residents were homeowners. Today, overgrown lots,
17 secession issues and economic access has hindered the
18 potential of generational wealth. Another historic
19 event that occurred in the Lower 9th Ward took place
20 six years after Brown v. Board of Education ruling
21 that declared the state's separate but equal to be
22 unconstitutional, and on November 14, 1960, three
23 Black, six-year-old girls Leona Tate, is a member of
24 this organization, the Lower 9th Ward Voter's
25 Coalition, Tessie Prevost and Gail Etienne, known as

1 the McDonogh Three, were the first students to
2 integrate in all-white school in New Orleans. Today,
3 the school, McDonogh 19, located at 5909 St. Claude
4 Street in the Lower 9th Ward through the Leona Tate
5 Foundation for Change is dedicated to teaching New
6 Orleans civil rights history. The building is
7 scheduled to become an innovative educational
8 facility with an overall mission of promoting civil
9 rights and to undo structural racism. The community
10 is also rich with culture barriers. It has an
11 extensive number of families, and I didn't name them
12 all because I didn't want to miss anybody, in the
13 [INDISCERNIBLE 02:52:03], and we even have Fred Luter
14 from the Lower 9th Ward who was elected as the first
15 Black President of the Southern Baptist Convention.
16 Our work honoring residents who have been registered
17 to vote for the last 50 years. That's some of the
18 work that we do. We also organize, plan and host
19 community forums for candidates. We speak and share
20 their platforms directly with residents. We hosted,
21 canvassing events, community discussions, and
22 conducted surveys of residents to gather information
23 about their needs and challenges, and we share this
24 with our local officials. I live in the New Orleans
25 East, and I'm a representative from the State or

Harris with District 4 and also with Jason Hughes of District 100. Over the last five years, the Lower 9th Ward Voter's Coalition has collaborated with our partners, and many of those organizations who represented and have presented to you tonight to conduct voter registration drives at public, private and parochial schools within the City of New Orleans, and I'm going to get to my redistricting platform. It says, as it relates to redistricting --

SHARON HEWITT: You're running out of time.

SHEWAN BERNARD: We ask that you support the position of One-Person One-Vote, and create fair districts across the state. We also suggest that the congressional map includes two majority minority districts based upon the population of the 2020 Census. We ask that you pay particular attention to all precincts that are divided into different districts and ask that you include a rationale as you publish your maps as to why those districts were divided, and in closing, I'll leave you with our mission statement that says all that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good people to do nothing. We encourage you to do the hard work and to create fair districts and to allow residents to elect good

1 people who will advocate and represent their
2 interests. Thank you.
3 SHARON HEWITT: Yes, ma'am. Thank you. All right.
4 Next speaker, Rachel Hilegram [PH 02:54:13]. Probably
5 I'm not saying that right. Rachel Hilegraham. All
6 right. Next speaker, James Harlan from Covington.
7 JAMES HARLAN: Yes. I'm Jim Harlan from
8 Covington. Member of the Democratic State Central
9 Committee, and former member of congressional
10 candidate in the first congressional district when it
11 looked much more compact and contiguous than it is
12 now.
13 [02:55:00]
14 And I appreciate the effort of this committee has
15 gone through, and in my remarks in Covington, I
16 focused on what we heard there which was a preference
17 for compactness and community of interest, because
18 those are the principles that all voters, whatever
19 their political philosophy may be recognized as
20 associating with representative democracy, compact
21 communities. When I spoke with you, I suggested
22 taking the Northshore and moving it west as far as
23 you needed to, to get to the right numbers. There are
24 maps to do that. However, there's a fundamental
25 trade-off. When you do that, you tend to go into what

is now the 6th congressional district and what is recognized in all the map making as being the primary place centered around Baton Rouge where you can create a majority minority district. However, when you look at the numbers and I've had a chance to do that since I spoke with you all in Covington, there's a basic trade-off. If you go that far west, you lose the Baton Rouge district and you basically end up with having to move to pick up and maintain the fact that the first congressional district now includes the Northshore and major parts of Metairie. I happen to think that it's more important that the community of interest concept for the New Orleans suburbs and the development of a second competitive district, and when we look at the numbers, what competitive means 50%, it's not 75%. And we all know that last time everybody went through this process in 2010, that was when Bobby Jindal was the governor and the Republican Legislature were trying to operate without the kind of attention that this process was getting to create greater gerrymandered advantage, and the newly elected congressional person in the congressional second district encouraged the process and the political trading that happens to create the aberration of the second congressional district going

1 up and reaching as far into Baton Rouge as it does,
2 and that is just wrong. It's obvious to every voter,
3 it's a shame on Louisiana, and it created a 70% Black
4 second congressional district and diluted the power
5 of the Black voters in Baton Rouge. The voters, the
6 people, and the interest of democracy understand want
7 to see compact and contiguous districts, and if you
8 don't deliver that, what are you going to do? You're
9 going to hand something the governor won't accept,
10 and it'll go to the courts and it will delay the
11 ability of anybody to plan and it will end up and
12 what is the judge going to do? He should, if he's a
13 judge, neutral, not trying to carry partisan water,
14 end up drawing compact and contiguous districts, and
15 a lot of the tools can generate maps that deliver
16 that result.
17 SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, Mr. Harlan. All right.
18 Next speaker is Olin G. Parker. Orleans Parish School
19 Board. Looks like we wore him down. Okay. Esther
20 DeJong from New Orleans. All right. Okay. Apologize.
21 Esther DeJong has a comment did not wish to speak, so
22 I will recognize those at the end. All right. William
23 Wallis from River Ridge.
24 WILLIAM WALLIS: Thank you, guys, for being here
25 tonight. I really appreciate you. A lot of people

don't know that this is your legislative duty to be here and to create redistricting. It's your constitutional duty, and I want to thank you for that in working so hard at it. But what a lot of people don't realize is that I've had a chance to meet all of you and talk with all of you is how hard I know you're working, but also because I've got to know you guys, I want to vouch for how much it's in your heart for public service, and I don't think that people really realize that and haven't got a chance to know you want to let everybody know that is what's in your hearts.

[03:00:02]

But also, I want to thank everybody else for being here because it's up to you to really ask for change and create change and that be able to help these people because if you're not helping them, because they are short handed by the way, and they need our help. They need our help professionally. They need our help personally. They need our help in all kinds or ways that are kind, and I'll say it kind, because it's all too easy to throw stones at these guys, and that what they are doing with the reality is are doing their job, and if we help them, we can get the results that not only that we want but that our State

needs. For those of you who don't know me. My name is William Wallis, and you might not recognize me because I don't have my kilt on, and I don't have my face painted blue. If you've seen the movie, you'd know the joke on that. But I have a radio show here in New Orleans and I love to talk about freedom, and liberty and finding things that unites us, and the reality is we all have more things that unites us that we realized. We all have more in common that what we realize, and as long as we don't let our ideologies or narratives get in the way, not only can we work together to get the districts that we want, but we can work together with these guys to help them be able to reflect our needs and our wants and our desires. I've heard a lot tonight about equality, and I've heard a lot of people that are against gerrymandering, and I want to tell you something about gerrymandering. A lot of people don't realize that he was a real person. Gerry Elbridge, Jerry was his name, and he was actually not only signed on the declaration of independence, but he was in the constitutional convention, and he actually is one of the ones that's responsible for giving us the Bill of Rights. It was his efforts that helped us on that. A lot of people don't realize that. But what he's most

known for is gerrymandering, and he is known for showing and creating a way to create districts to get a certain outcome, and that is what's wrong. However, I find it ironic that a lot of people here tonight or most everybody here is against gerrymandering, but everybody here wants a district that looks like them. They want a district that they feel represents their needs. But the way the population is, it's going to be extremely difficult to create the districts that we want without it looking like a map of a bowl of spaghetti got splattered on the State of Louisiana. So, the best way that we can get the results that we want and know in our hearts that these guys did a good job is by getting involved and doing the right thing professionally and working with them and not against them. Not blaming everybody for what we feel they're not doing, but help them do what they need to do. A few more points. Do I have another second?

SHARON HEWITT: You're out of time.

WILLIAM WALLIS: I'm out of time? All right. If you guys want to hear more, you know how to get a hold of me. Thank you very much and thank you all very much for being here.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, Mr. Wallis. All right. Next speaker, Michael Baham, LAGOP.

MICHAEL BAHAM: Thank you, Senator. And as a former elected official, I appreciate everything you all are doing here, spending so much of your time not just being here, but traveling all over the State of Louisiana, and I know you all give a lot of time and you'll catch more rocks and bouquets from the public but what you're doing here is a great service that I can't recall anyone doing what you all are doing with redistricting. A few points I'd like to talk about first is a St. Bernard resident. I would like to see St. Bernard put back into one Senate district. We've historically been in one. We should go back in one in my opinion. We were split for whatever reason. We have had good senators. We appreciate that. But we would like to be back. I would like us to be back in our district, but on these other points, first of all, you can't just group people into simply in politics. Bernie Sanders and I checked the same box on the Census form. We do not vote the same. Not at all. In St. Bernard, we had a justice of the peace election in a white majority district. An African-American Republican unseated the democratic incumbent in that district. Whites voted for blacks. A black candidate. It happens. It's not that unusual. The way the districts are right now, they're compact all of

Louisiana's six members of congress, all live within the population centers of their districts.

[03:05:00]

We aren't losing a congressional seat. We have six seats. Obviously, the numbers, the lines do have to be adjusted due to the population shifts, but they're not dramatic like what we experienced after Katrina and St. Bernard. So, I hope that you will keep these districts compact. The incumbent congressmen all live in the centers of their respective districts, and once again, thank you for your time. Thank you for your service, and we'll see you along on the road.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you. Thank you. I appreciate that. All right. Janae Jameson, are you here? Would you like to speak? I had a card that implied you were going to provide a written comment, but you're welcome to speak.

JANAE JAMESON: Okay. Sure. Well, good evening. Thank you all for allowing me to speak. I can't complain about the wait because I did get here kind of late because I have been working on the ground, advocating and educating community about this overall process. So, my name is Janae Jameson. I'm with the Power Coalition for Equity and Justice, director of programs. So, I'm coming to you as an advocate for

1 affair and equitable process, but also as a lifelong
2 resident of Louisiana. I've lived in various areas
3 throughout the State. Louisiana is near and dear to
4 my heart. Born in Thibodaux and by Eurysians [PH
5 03:06:19], raised in Napoleonville and the River
6 Parishes, living in East Baton Rouge, Jefferson
7 Parishes, and now, a homeowner in New Orleans. So,
8 maybe I'll stay in Orleans for a couple of years. But
9 nonetheless, I've lived in various communities right
10 some suburban areas, some rural areas and some urban
11 areas within cities, and during the previous
12 redistricting cycle. 10 years ago, young, 21 years
13 old, I realized the difficulty in passing legislation
14 and laws for communities of color because these
15 communities weren't being equally represented in the
16 lack of competitive districts to get policies passed
17 through legislative bodies at both the State and
18 local levels, and so, it's evident that within the
19 past years, Louisiana is now more black and browner
20 than it's ever been, right? You've heard it over and
21 over again, and with a rising population within
22 minorities, folks should be able to choose their
23 candidates of choice, and even if you take out race.
24 I've heard people talk of their religious
25 affiliations and not looking at color and race. If

1 you take out race, what's still evident is that there
2 are various population shifts that others have spoken
3 about throughout the State. So, some areas have
4 actually lost population and chose to move out of
5 State. Specifically, young professionals have chosen
6 to move out of State because lack of job,
7 opportunities. As my colleague mentioned earlier,
8 failing school systems, right? Poor infrastructure,
9 all of these things. But the heart to finding many of
10 these solutions to many of these issues can
11 contribute to people being able to have that
12 confidence in choosing a candidate of choice to fix
13 those problems that are plaguing our communities and
14 throughout the State of Louisiana, and while some
15 areas have population decrease, there is hope some
16 areas have an increase such as Orleans Parish. New
17 Orleans has gained the most population than any other
18 Parish or region because many areas look completely
19 different within a 10-year span. We have to look at
20 these population shifts. New Orleans gained 40,168
21 people since 2010, and gaining representation is
22 definitely on the table for the New Orleans area and
23 neighboring parishes. So, as we look at these
24 changes, I also hope that you keep in mind that
25 community voices are the pillar within the process

because those are closest to the problem or also closest to the solution. So, our community voices should be honored within this process and have an overall influence on how district lines are drawn and what assets they wish to include within their district, and if you look at the historical context of the redistricting process that someone stated about the education, Louisiana has never submitted a map that has not been racist, districts have not been followed in proper deviation and has not been affair and equitable process. So, in closing -

SHARON HEWITT: Wrap it up.

JANAE JAMESON: I hope that you all keep in mind the political will of the people and fair principles and equitable practices within this redistricting process that focuses on reducing the efficiency gap, creating competitive districts and limit vote dilution. Thank you for your time.

SHARON HEWITT: Yes, ma'am. Thank you. Christi Lynch. Christi Lynch.

CHRISTI LYNCH: Hello, everyone. Thank you so much for being here tonight. I just want to advocate for as much as is possible to keep our neighborhoods together, and to keep them contiguous within any type

of districting that you would find yourselves able to do.

[03:10:00]

We have found through working in our neighborhoods that a lot of times all we're really particularly concerned with is who can get the job done. I have a very vibrant neighborhood association that I'm involved in, and as we work shoulder to shoulder to work on the various problems in our neighborhoods, we have found as we're doing stuff that will say, hey, you don't understand that much about this. You must be a Republican, and maybe you don't understand that much about that. You must be a democrat, and so, we're finding that not only within the executive committee of our neighborhood association, not only is it racially diverse, but it's also very politically diverse, but what is most particularly important to us as we want to move forward together is to look at who can solve problems. That's what we're looking for. We're looking for those types of people in our neighborhood associations. We're looking for those types of people in our candidates, and we're looking for that type of solution when it comes to our precincts. My neighborhood is very diverse. Senator Gary Carter lives two blocks from

me. I live in a humble cottage. He lives in a nice house, and Troy Carter is a mile and a half from me, and he lives in a very nice house, right? But we all have common problems that we're working together with, and we're working neighborhood beside neighborhood, beside neighborhood to get our voices heard, and we're trying to do the best that we can to become an even better neighborhood association. We've reached out to the East New Orleans Neighborhood Advisory Committee to find out how are you guys so successful in getting things done, and getting attention and brought to your problems? So, what I would advocate for is to look at the smallest level which is our neighborhoods, because we have very common problems. You can go five miles over, and for me, that's Algier's [PH 03:12:12] point. Their problems are very completely different than ours. You can go across the river which is five miles away from us, and you have the French Quarter by water. All of those various neighborhoods. Their concerns are very different from ours, too, as well. So, what I would again advocate for is looking to keep our neighborhoods as much together so that we can solve common problems and move forward together despite everything, despite economic differences, despite

color skin differences, despite every political difference, how we can all move forward together.

SHARON HEWITT: Yes, ma'am. Thank you. All right. I was given a wallet with a vaccination card. If someone is here by the name of Adonis Perkins or if anyone knows him, I have his vaccination card and wallet here. We'll have it here. Yeah. We'll hang on to it. Okay. Thank you. All right. Kim Smith, are you here? Kim Smith, would you like to speak? I think these might have been cards that I called earlier. Al Aubrey. George. This is a new card. George Malik, Neighborhood United Way. Actually, I'm probably butchering that. Sorry.

GEORGE MALIK: Yeah. My name is George. [INDISCERNIBLE 03:14:28] neighborhood unity and merge. The reason why we're here today is because of age old wrongs that we are fighting. The problem is that the voting playing field has not been ever balanced. We had the problem of slavery. First of all, which loud minority of black people to vote. You had the three fifth compromise that was too used by white supremacist south -

[03:15:01]

-- to ensure that they had political power in Washington. You had the Mississippi plan which was

the first steps of voter suppression that we use, and now, we use redistricting to stack and gerrymander districts that favor the incumbents who are supporting white supremacy and white power, and so, this is why we are here today. In order to change, we have to balance the playing field, and the only way we can do that is ensure that everyone has a chance to elect the people that we have an opportunity to vote for, and that's why we're here. We're going to have these problems until we change and look at the situation and try to balance the field, and if we're not trying to do that, then this is all a shame. So, we're asking that these minority districts be added to ensure that we have equal opportunities that we've been denied all that time. We're just trying to catch up, and we hope that you understand that and consider that when you are making your judgments. Thank you for that time.

SHARON HEWITT: Yes, sir. Thank you. All right. I think Representative Lyons was asked us to speak on behalf of Bernadette Johnson from Jefferson Parish.

REPRESENTATIVE LYONS: Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. This is from Ms. Bernadette Johnson. She's supposed to be here tonight, but because of COVID, she wasn't able to do that. So, she asked me

1 to read this communication for her, and she says, my
2 name is Bernadette Johnson. I'm from Jefferson
3 Parish, and I'm here to give my testimony on
4 redistricting in Jefferson. It has been since 1992
5 that the process started with the fight for fair and
6 equitable representation in my Parish. Those three
7 seats were council, school board, and state
8 representative, and they were all result of a federal
9 lawsuit. Since that time in 1992, the demographics of
10 Jefferson has changed along with the numbers, and we
11 are now in the correct position to receive a tendency
12 in Jefferson Parish. In Jefferson, the minority
13 population is cracked. There are three State
14 districts that come into Jefferson and use the
15 minority population to make up the minority districts
16 based in other parishes, District 3 23%, District 7
17 43% and District 19 15% of Jefferson residents. When
18 you look at the maps, you see two districts in the
19 East Bank that Jefferson that are proportionally
20 significantly from the Parish lines and squared off.
21 When you look at the West Bank, you see how
22 gerrymander the districts are relative to minority
23 areas. Jefferson Parish has 400,781 residents and
24 28.3% of them are black and mostly reside on the West
25 Bank. As the presentation earlier outlined, the

reason is out of balance and several districts need to be adjusted and this is the right time to place the majority minority district in Jefferson. This is not Jefferson or Orleans issue. It's a very important part of the region, especially the West Bank. Since the [INDISCERNIBLE 03:19:04] stated at the meeting that he understands that the districts are for the people and he would be submitting a map that would remove District 3 out of Jefferson and we appreciate his statesmanship. He also informed us that only a Senator can submit changes to Senate districts. So, that raises the question as to the other senators whose districts carry over into Jefferson and are in Jefferson. Will you do what the people of Jefferson Parish is requesting for fair representation for us and the ability to elect someone from this Parish? Thank you.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, representative. My timekeeper says you run to three minutes so brownie points for that. Okay. I have three cards from individuals who did not want to speak.

[03:20:00]

But they submitted a written comment and will enter that into the record with the other 80 or so emails that we have received. That's Esther DeJong, Milton

Hunter and Sharon Lider. Are there any other folks here that would wish to speak? You all have been very patient. Appreciate your attendance, and your participation on the process. You all drive safe. Motion from Chairman Stefanski to adjourn.

[03:20:33]

TRANSPERFECT

I, Anders Nelson, hereby certify that the document "F879958-louisiana-redistricting-2021-new-orleans" is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, a true and accurate transcription from English to English.

Anders Nelson
Project Manager

April 27, 2022