[MUSIC/OVERLAY 00:00:00-00:30:59]

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: All right, if you would please take your seats, I'd like to get started. All right, 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, I'm going to do the same thing myself, silence your cell phones so that we don't distract from the presentations or the testimonies. Also, please be aware that this meeting is being live-streamed and recorded. I'm Senator Sharon Hewitt, Chairwoman of the Senate and Governmental Affairs Committee. And next to me is representative, John Stefanski, Chairman of the House and Governmental Affairs Committee. We'd like to welcome all of you of those here in Shreveport lives in our audience, as well as those who are watching on the Internet to the first of the second of ten public meetings of the Joint Committee of Senate Governmental Affairs and the House and Governmental Affairs. The two committees and our staffs have come together to provide you with information regarding the redistricting process. At some point early next year and prior to the next regular session, the Legislature will call ourselves in the special session for the purpose of

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1 redistricting the House, the Senate, Congress, the
2 Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the
3 Public Service Commission, and possibly the courts.
4 It is our goal and responsibility to redraw some of
5 these districts, in particular Congress and the
6 Public Service Commission, prior to the 2022 fall
7 election cycle. The Legislature's districts must be
8 redrawn by the end of 2022. We've scheduled our
9 regional meetings in the evening hours. So that most
10 working people can participate in this outreach. It
11 is our desire, goal and objective to make this as
12 open, accessible and transparent redistricting
13 process as possible. In addition to our physical
14 presence here, we are utilizing every technological
15 tool with our ability to provide you with the
16 greatest access to the process. We have our
17 legislative redistricting webpage on our joint
18 legislative website, and we're utilizing social
19 media, including Facebook, and YouTube, to keep the
20 public informed about the process. Every slide and
21 all data presented here today can be found on our
22 website. Persons who do not feel comfortable giving
23 testimony in person may submit a prepared statement
24 in accordance with Senate and House rules in lieu of
25 appearing before the Committee. Statements or

testimony which were received timely, have been distributed to the members prior to the meeting. Statements or testimony received after our deadline of 5:30 p.m., the day 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.

[00:35:00]

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Finally, your voice, thoughts and ideas are absolutely vital to this process. This is a listening session. It's our goal to take whatever information that you provide to us and use it as we begin the process of drafting redistricting plans. I can assure you that as the Chairwoman of the Senate Committee, your ideas and 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 these are the white witness cards that are available on the table outside. In an effort to give everyone a chance to speak. I'm going to regulate or we're going to decide how much time we have in terms of comment time depending on the amount of time we

have and the number of people that want to speak. Please make sure that your comments are 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. So with that, Madam Secretary, would you please call the roll for the Senate?

MADAM SECRETARY: Chairwoman Hewitt?

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Present!

MADAM SECRETARY: Present. Vice Chairman Milligan?

VICE CHAIRMAN BARRY MILLIGAN: Present!

MADAM SECRETARY: Senator Alan, Senator Foil?

SENATOR FOIL: Present!

MADAM SECRETARY: Present. Senator Harris, Senator Price?

SENATOR PRICE: Present!

MADAM SECRETARY: Present. Senator Reese?

SENATOR REESE: Present!

MADAM SECRETARY: Present. Senator Tarver? Present. Senator Womack?

SENATOR WOMACK: Present!

MADAM SECRETARY: Present. The Senate has seven in a quorum.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you and Madam Secretary, would you please call the roll for the house?

MADAM SECRETARY: Chairman Stefanski?

CHAIRMAN JOHN STEFANSKI: Present!

MADAM SECRETARY: Present. Vice chairman Duplessis?

VICE CHAIRMAN DUPLESSIS: Present!

MADAM SECRETARY: Present. Representative Bouie, Representative Wilford Carter, Representative Deshotel, Representative Barnum?

REPRESENTATIVE BARNUM: Here!

MADAM SECRETARY: Present, Representative Gadberry?

REPRESENTATIVE GADBERRY: Here!

MADAM SECRETARY: Present. Representative Hodges, Representative Horton, present Representative Ivey, Representative Jenkins?

REPRESENTATIVE JENKINS: Present!

MADAM SECRETARY: Present, Representative Mike Johnson?

REPRESENTATIVE MIKE JOHNSON: Present!

MADAM SECRETARY: Present. Representative LaCombe, Representative Lyons?

REPRESENTATIVE LYONS: Present!

MADAM SECRETARY: Present, Representative Magee, representative Newell, Representative Thomas?

REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS: Here!

MADAM SECRETARY: Present. Representative White. The House has nine members.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you. All right, I would also like to recognize a few additional Senate members who are not members of our committee but are joining us here tonight, and if you all would just kind of give us a wave, Senator Barrow Peacock, he is out here. You can sit up here if you want. Senator Louie Bernard. Okay, he is in the back. Senator Robert Mills. Okay, and did I miss anyone else from the Senate. Where's Robert, out here in the audience? Oh, there's bright lights, I can hardly see you. Okay, there he is, sorry. Thank you. Over there in the corner. All right, are there any other Senators with us tonight that we have not introduced or announced? We have a former Senator, Senator John Milkovich in the House. John, where are you? Good. Thank you. Thank you and Senator Lydia Jackson. Welcome ma'am. Senator Ed Murray is in the House. All

right. Thank you all. All right, and now I'd like to turn it over to my Co-Chairman, Representative Stefanski to introduce members of the House and his staff.

CHAIRMAN JOHN STEFANSKI: Absolutely. I want to thank everybody for coming tonight. This is an extremely important part of the process where we get to hear from the public about how you want these lines to look or how you think they should look. And so we don't take this for granted. Thank you for your participation. And -- and I promise you, we're taking everything you say seriously. With that said, we do -- one of our committee members wasn't able to make it today Representative Melinda White, she's undergoing some health issues and so she wasn't able to make it here tonight, but I just want to say she would be here with us.

[00:40:02]

CHAIRMAN JOHN STEFANSKI: Also Representative Gabe Firment is also -- he underwent a surgery recently. He's not able to make it with us tonight. We do have Representative Alan Seabaugh, who is here. We have Representative Patrick Jefferson. We have Representative Wayne McMahen. We have Representative Danny McCormack. We have Representative Thomas

Presley. We have Representative Raymond Crews. We have Representative Tammy Phelps. We have Representative Larry Bagley. And we have Representative Jeremy LaCombe is here as well. Who did I miss? Oh, Representative Candace Newell. Also, we have a former Representative Barbara Norton, who's here as well. And I believe, if I'm sure there are some other reps, I'm missing. Former, if y'all tell me, I'll -- and former Representative Melissa Flournoy. Oh, yeah, and Representative Thomas Carmody is here as well. Also, I do want to mention our staff traveling on the House side. We do have our Clerk of the House, Michelle Fontenot, who's here with us tonight. We have our Senior Analyst with H&GA Patricia Lowrey-Dufour. We have our Staff Attorney with H&GA, Lorri Lucas. We have our Committee Administrative Assistant Rosie Ammersbach. We have our Sergeant at Arms Clarence Russ, who we call "Smoke", and we have our Assistant Sergeant at Arms, Danny Leming, and I also want to thank our communication staff who is helping us record all of this headed up by Corey. Madam Chairwoman.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, Chairman. And I think we also have former State Rep Rodney Alexander in the House. He was with us last night

too. Glad to have you here, sir. All right, I have a staff with us also, our Senate team, I would like to introduce briefly. We have Yolanda Dixon, the Secretary of the Senate over here on the front row. J.W. Wiley, our first Assistant Secretary. Sue Moran, our second Assistant Secretary. I have got Matt Deville, our Committee Attorney. Angela Bizet, our Committee Secretary. She's in the back. She was helping me set the table. Lewis Carroll, our Sergeant at Arms, here at the front, and Dr. William Blair, our Demographer -- Legislative Demographer. And then we have a whole team of communication staff that helped with all the microphones and the cameras, etc. We appreciate all the work that you all have done, that team is led by Cory Stewart. So thank you all for your work. As you can see, it's quite a production and we have a lot of resources here in Shreveport-Bossier to hear what you have to say. And so with that, I'd like to start with our staff presentation. We are going to talk about several things tonight with you, the 2020 population and population trends, redistricting terms, concepts and law, redistricting criteria, malapportionment statistics and illustrative maps, and our redistricting timeline. So we're going to kick it off

with our first speaker, Dr. William Blair, our Legislative Demographer.

DR. WILLIAM BLAIR: Good evening members and the public. Thank you for being here. It's my job to give you a sort of state of play of the population of the State of Louisiana and some background on how the Census Bureau delivers this data to us in Louisiana. So in normal times, historically, the Census Bureau provides two sets of data, one, we call the apportionment data, which is the allocation by -- which is the data by which we allocate seats to Congress between the states. So states that grow get more Congress men and women, smaller states, states with losses, lose congressional seats. There's a second delivery of census data called the PL 94-171 data. This is where each State gets granular data at the State level to which they do their redistricting and our State included. Now, normal times that data was delivered as apportionment data by December 31 of, for instance, 2020, and the granular PL 94-171 data is delivered no later than say February or March for the State of Louisiana.

[00:45:06]

DR. WILLIAM BLAIR: As you're probably well aware, these are not normal times. Therefore the

1 apportionment data was not released to the President
2 of the United States till April 26 of 2021 and we did
3 not receive the data from the Census to do granular
4 work, in this State with a P.L. 94-171 data until
5 August and September of this year. So given that,
6 let's have a look at Louisiana's population data. So
7 the top you see apportionment population that is the
8 data by which we apportion our congressional members,
9 you may or may not be aware that Louisiana kept six
10 congressional districts due to our growth. You might
11 be aware in 2010, we had lost a congressional
12 district. We used to have seven. So this data
13 includes 3711 overseas military and civilian
14 personnel, who are not included in the redistricting
15 data, which you see below that, the 4,657,757 that is
16 the statewide data by which ideal districts will be
17 drawn for statewide plans in the State. For instance,
18 when we say ideal, which Matt is going to talk about
19 in a second, you take that 4,657,757 number, divide
20 that by 105 for our House of Representatives, you'll
21 get 45,000 as an ideal. For the Senate, it would be
22 120,000 or for the six congressional districts, it
23 would be 775,000. You'll see all these numbers again
24 in a bit. So, how do we compare with the rest of the
25 country? These percentages, you see are essentially

1 multi-decade trends in the State, compared to the
2 rest of the nation. We grew at 2.74%. The United
3 States grew at 7.35% that is actually a -- the lowest
4 growth rate for the -- for the country since 1940 and
5 Louisiana still did not reach that number. Also,
6 multi-decade trend, the southern region, our
7 neighboring states grew it over 10%, this again is
8 natural phenomenon, we've been experiencing for
9 multiple decades. So let's talk about Louisiana's
10 redistricting data. This is the important data for us
11 here tonight, the P.L. 94-171 data, its name that
12 after the federal law that enacted its standards.
13 This is the population by race and ethnicity that
14 jurisdictions around the State will use to conduct
15 their redistricting. Everyone from Congress to your
16 local, municipal city councils will use this PL data
17 when drawing new districts. So it was released in two
18 different formats in 2020, or actually 2021, August
19 12 was released as a legacy format. This is the sort
20 of data you need some sophistication, data analysis,
21 work to actually use but they were nice enough to
22 release on September 16, the data again in an easier
23 to use format, which you can go to the census
24 website, listed here at data.census.gov and you can
25 very easily access your Parish, your city, the state,

and find all of the data that will be used for redistricting. So, let's talk about the specifics of Louisiana's population and composition change. This is the first of many, many maps you'll see tonight with all these pretty colors on them. If your color is green, you've grown significantly. If it's red, you've declined in population significantly. So the deeper the color, the deeper the trouble because growing is almost as bad as losing because you have to experience significant changes to any districts in those areas. Now, the main trends you see in this map here, population declines in the Northeast and Northwest of the State. Population gains along the I-10/I-12 corridor from St. Tammany Parish to Calcasieu Parish and more population gains and suburban areas around these population centers.

[00:50:01]

DR. WILLIAM BLAIR: Now these trends you see on this map here are not dissimilar from trends we've seen in the previous 40 years. Here, you see the population distribution changes for the last 40 years in the State of Louisiana and while in each decade, there may be some particular changes or unique population changes in though that particular decade generally speaking, well for instance, in the upper

1 right-hand corner, that is when we experience very
2 significant growth in the State of Louisiana. You can
3 see we grew it almost 6% in that decade and then in
4 the lower left you see some significant Katrina
5 effects from 2005, with losses in the Southeast and
6 New Orleans and surrounding areas. So despite any
7 particular difference between each decade, the
8 general trend is the same one we spoke of earlier
9 from 2010 to 2020 its losses in the north, its growth
10 along the I-10/I-12 corridor and gains in suburban
11 areas. Let's have a look at some of our individual
12 Parish lists. So here's a list of the Parishes that
13 have experienced the largest numerical losses in the
14 past 10 years. This list is fairly distributed evenly
15 around the State. What's noticeable by its absence is
16 the southeast portion of our State, which you'll see
17 in the next slide. Here, you see the numerical gain
18 by each Parish, the largest gainers, and they are
19 very concentrated again on that I-10/I-12 Corridor in
20 the State of Louisiana. The next slide will show you
21 the largest 12 census places ranked by population in
22 2020. And finally, the final slide here that I have
23 for you tonight shows you the demographic change that
24 we've experienced in the last decade in the State of
25 Louisiana. Now, obviously, the first top line is the

2010 data by race and ethnicity. The next line is the 2020 data by race and ethnicity and the bottom is the change within that goes to that decade. I think the three most interesting things you'll see in this slide on that bottom line of the change from 2010 to 2020 is a significant decline in White population in the State of Louisiana. This category is responded to the census who responded as their race as White alone. This is distinguished by growth in all the other categories, Black, Asian, American, Indian and other. So, all of those other categories had fairly significant growth in the State of Louisiana. And then finally, I think the most interesting -- the third most interesting thing perhaps is the very significant increase in the other category and that is those respondents for the census who reported themselves to be White plus one other race or another race that is not White, Black, Asian, American, Indian. So in conclusion, this sort of changing diversity in our State is very similar to the sort of demographic trends we see across the United States. We are no different than anybody else. Now I'm going to turn it over to Matt Deville to discuss redistricting terms and concepts.

MATT DEVILLE: Thank you. Good evening. My name is Matt Deville, I am the Staff Attorney for the Senate and Governmental Affairs Committee. And while Bill just gave you a bunch of numbers, I'm about to give you some words; namely some redistricting terms and concepts and a few legal issues that are relevant to the topic. So to get started, what is redistricting? Redistricting is an umbrella term and underneath that umbrella are two distinct terms that are used interchangeably but have distinct functions. The first of these is apportionment and this is simply the process of allocating seats in a Legislature. Districting itself is the process of drawing the lines for those districts. As to apportionment, for example, our congressional delegation, we've been allotted six members, which is the same as it was from 2010. We did not gain any, we also did not lose any.

[00:55:00]

MATT DEVILLE: Louisiana is entitled to those six as a result of a formula that is established in the United States Constitution called the Method of Equal Proportions. And now, the State Legislature has the responsibility to redraw those districts in accordance with the 2020 data and those districts are

1 simply geographical territories from which officials
2 are elected. So, why do we redistrict? Simply put the
3 law says we have to. There are specific legal
4 requirements in a few different areas of State law,
5 namely the State Constitution which includes a Duties
6 and Deadlines section for legislative redistricting
7 and establishes a timeline that must be followed for
8 Louisiana. All of the redistricting must be finished
9 by December 31 of 2022. For local and municipal
10 bodies such as school board, city councils, police
11 juries, things of that nature, there are various
12 statutes, not enumerated in the Constitution that
13 apply to them and those contain their duties and
14 responsibilities as well. And there's two large
15 general concepts that come up time-and-time again
16 throughout redistricting and those are the Equal
17 Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, as
18 well as the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Both of which
19 will be discussed later on in this presentation in
20 greater detail by my colleagues. So who gets
21 redistricted by the Legislature? There are several
22 different groups that do. The State House and the
23 State Senate, Congress, the Public Service
24 Commission, the Board of Elementary and Secondary
25 Education known as BESI, and as well as our court

1 system including the Supreme Court as well as other
2 judicial districts potentially. And so what does that
3 process involve? As they have to be enacted by the
4 Legislature, they are started in the same way that
5 any other law is as a bill and it will be introduced
6 either in the House or the Senate, work its way
7 through the legislative process where it is debated
8 in committee, voted on and ultimately a final
9 dispensation is reached on that bill. For those local
10 governments, I touched on a moment ago, parish and
11 municipal things such as school boards, those are not
12 redistricted by the Legislature directly and they are
13 responsible for redistricting themselves in
14 accordance with the applicable law. As I mentioned a
15 moment ago, there are some relevant State
16 constitutional provisions primarily contained in
17 Article III that sort of established some parameters
18 for this process. In Section 1, it establishes that
19 single member districts are required which are simply
20 those that only elect one person to represent the
21 entire District. Article III provides for the maximum
22 number of members in the State Legislature, which is
23 39 senators, and 105 representatives. And that
24 Article VI establishes the timeline. Everything must
25 be done by the end of 2022, and it has to use that

P.L. 94-171 data provided by the Census Bureau. Now, I'll turn things over to my colleague, Michelle Fontenot, the Clerk of the House to discuss population requirements.

MICHELLE FONTENOT: Thank you Matt. I am losing my voice. So just bear with me. My name is Michelle Fontenot and I'll be discussing equal population. So the starting point of the first, the one person one vote concept is the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, which states that no State shall deny to any person equal protection of the laws. This concept was further developed by some court cases back in the 1960s in which courts held that there must be a substantially equal legislative representation for all citizens of a State. Meaning, a State must have legislative districts of roughly equal population. How is population equality measured? It's measured by formulating the ideal population which is taking total population of an area and simply dividing it by the number of districts available. Deviation is a term that we use to refer to the amount of the district's population that differs from that ideal. There are different standards for equal population regarding Congress and State Legislative districts. Those are based on very

1 different legal provisions and for Congress, a
2 standard is, as nearly equal in population as
3 practicable. Again, that's based on Section 1 --
4 Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution and the
5 Fourteenth Amendment; that says, representatives
6 shall be apportioned among the states according to
7 their respective numbers.
8 [01:00:04]
9 MICHELLE FONTENOT: So the deviation for
10 congressional seats must be as close to zero as
11 possible and again, as nearly equal in population as
12 practicable. States must make a good faith effort to
13 avoid deviation and to be able to provide a legally
14 acceptable non-discriminatory justification for any
15 deviation. The standard for State Legislative
16 District is different. That standard is stand truly
17 equal as possible. And overall deviations of 10% or
18 less are generally not enough to make a prima facie
19 case of discrimination. This is not a safe harbor and
20 states must be able to support a need for deviation
21 with a justification, showing significant State
22 interest. In Louisiana, we try to keep that deviation
23 to a plus or minus 5%. So again, talking about equal
24 population, equality of population must be the
25 overriding objective of districting and any

1 deviations from that principle are permissible only
2 if incidental to the effectuation of irrational State
3 policy, and we provided some examples of State
4 policies that have been referenced in court cases and
5 those include allowing representations, political
6 subdivisions, compactness, reserving course of prior
7 districts and avoiding contest between incumbents.
8 With respect to the courts, the concept of one person
9 one vote standard does not apply. Although the
10 concept does not apply to judicial district's course
11 Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act does apply. And
12 now, I'm going to turn it over to Lorri Lucas who
13 will discuss the Voting Rights Act.
14 LORRI LUCAS: In discussing discrimination
15 against minorities and redistricting, there are
16 several legal considerations involved that one should
17 be aware of. The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendment,
18 the Voting Rights Act of 1965 in vote dilution issues
19 in regards to racial gerrymandering. First up, I'll
20 discuss the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The Equal
21 Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment
22 prohibits states from purposefully discriminating
23 between individuals on the basis of race. The
24 Fifteenth Amendment adopted in 1870, declares that
25 the right of a citizen to vote shall not be denied or

1 abridged by the United States or the states on
2 account of race, color, or previous condition of
3 servitude. The Amendment was ineffectual after
4 adoption and eliminating the problem of voting
5 discrimination and the Voting Rights Act was enacted
6 in 1965 as a means to ensure that all citizens have
7 the right to vote regardless of their race, color or
8 membership and a language minority. Specifically,
9 Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act prohibits any
10 State or political subdivision from imposing any
11 voting qualification, standard, process or procedure
12 that results in the denial or abridgement of a US
13 citizen's right to vote on account of race, color or
14 status. Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act was
15 amended in 1982 to clarify that a violation of
16 Section 2 is established if based on a totality of
17 circumstances, it is shown that the election
18 processes are not equally open to participation by
19 members of a protected class. In that, its members
20 have less opportunity than other members of the
21 electorate to participate in political process to
22 elect a representative of their choice. The extent to
23 which members of a protected class have been elected
24 to office is one circumstance, which may be
25 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 v. 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 in that in absence of special circumstances, block voting by majority defeats the minorities' preferred candidates.

[01:05:00]

LORRI LUCAS: Once these preconditions are established, the court then proceeds to consider several other objective factors in determining the totality of circumstances. These factors are including but not limited to the extent of the history of official discrimination touching on a class participation, in the democratic process, racially polarized voting, the extent to which the State or political subdivision has used unusually large election districts. Majority vote requirements

1 or other voting practices to enhance the opportunity
2 for discrimination, denials of access to the
3 candidates slating process for members of the class
4 extent to which members of a minority group bear the
5 effects of discrimination in areas such as education,
6 employment and health, whether political campaigns
7 have been characterized by racial appeals, the extent
8 to which members of a protected class have been
9 elected, whether there is a significant lack of
10 responsiveness by elected officials to the particular
11 needs of a group and whether the policy underlying
12 the use of the voting qualification, standard
13 practice or procedure is tenuous. The plaintiffs must
14 show that a totality of circumstances will support
15 the court's finding that the contested voting scheme
16 is dilutive of the minorities' electoral power. In
17 discussing Thornburg v. Gingles, a minority language
18 group would be considered American, Indian, Asian,
19 American, Alaskan natives and persons of Spanish --
20 Spanish heritage. Another legal consideration when
21 discussing discrimination against minorities and
22 redistricting is racial gerrymandering. When drawing
23 a minority district to avoid a violation of Section
24 2, the line drawer must take care not to create a
25 racial gerrymander that runs afoul of the Equal

1 Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. As
2 stated earlier, the Equal Protection Clause of the
3 Fourteenth Amendment prohibits states from purposely
4 discriminating between individuals on the basis of
5 race. A racial gerrymander is the deliberate and
6 arbitrary distortion of district boundaries for
7 racial purposes. A redistricting plan that expressly
8 distinguishes among citizens because of race must be
9 narrowly tailored to further a compelling state
10 interest. That means that the plan or individual
11 districts drawn were drawn narrowly to satisfy that
12 compelling governmental interest. What is a
13 governmental interest, a compelling governmental
14 interest? It would be remedying past discrimination,
15 avoiding retrogression or avoiding a violation of the
16 Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. These interests
17 must be strongly supported in evidence. This applies
18 not only to plans that expressly distinguished
19 citizens because of race but also plans that although
20 race-neutral are on its face inexplicable on any
21 other grounds outside of race. Courts have said that
22 the Legislature is always aware of when drawing
23 districts of race, just as it is aware of age,
24 economic status, religion, or variety of other
25 demographics. The sort of race consciousness and race

1 awareness does not inevitably lead to an
2 impermissible race discrimination. So race can be
3 considered however race cannot be a predominant
4 factor when drawing a district. Critical to
5 determining the factors involved will be the shape of
6 the district, the regard giving to a traditional
7 districting principles and motivations that draw the
8 lines and make the decisions by the legislators. When
9 a majority-minority district is created, it must be
10 given consideration to the traditional districting
11 principles. Although the district will be subject to
12 strict scrutiny, there are several pitfalls to avoid
13 when considering racial gerrymandering and
14 redistricting. Those pitfalls are being aware of
15 bizarre shapes, drawing districts that are reasonably
16 compact, not making race the dominant factor when
17 drawing those districts and following traditional
18 principles such as compactness, contiguity, respect
19 for political subdivisions, respect for communities
20 of interest, maintaining traditional boundaries,
21 maintaining core districts and protecting incumbent
22 context from each other. I will now turn it over to
23 my colleague, Ms. Yolanda Dixon, the Secretary of the
24 Senate.
25 [01:10:08]

SECRETARY YOLANDA DIXON: Good evening! I have the responsibility of talking to you this evening about the redistricting criteria. We have adopted or the Legislature has adopted redistricting criteria during the 2021 regular session and it is contained in Joint Rule 21 from that session. So this redistricting criteria is the criteria that will be used or must be used in submission of plans to the Legislature. Some of this criteria applies to all of the plans, whether it be House, Senate Congress, BESI or PSC or the courts, other criteria are plan specific and I'll talk about those. All redistricting plans should comply with all applicable Federal and State law. They should be composed of contiguous geography. All redistricting plans shall contain whole election precincts to the extent practicable. If a precinct is divided, it should be divided into as few districts as practicable using a visible census tabulation boundary or boundaries. All redistricting plans should respect established boundaries of political subdivisions and the natural geography of the state to the extent practicable and maintain communities of interest within the same district to the extent practicable. All redistricting plans should use the most recent federal decennial

1 census data as validated through the Date
2 Verification Program of the House and the Senate. And
3 if the plan will be submitted by anyone from the
4 public, it should be submitted electronically in a
5 comma delimited block equivalency file. We also
6 encourage you to include any additional information
7 that could assist in consideration of your plan,
8 including any rationales for the decisions that you
9 made in your plan, maps or shape files. Each
10 redistricting plan for the House, Senate, PSC, BESI,
11 Congress and the Supreme Court shall be a whole plan
12 that assigns all geography of the State. It is easy
13 to draw just one perfect district or two perfect
14 districts, but when the plan has to encompass the
15 whole State, the plan has to be a whole plan which
16 assigns all of the geography of the state. Each
17 redistricting plan for the House, Senate, PSC and
18 BESI should contain single-member districts,
19 districts that are substantially equal in population
20 or at least within plus or minus 5% of the ideal
21 district population as was talked about earlier and
22 give due consideration to traditional district
23 alignments to the extent practicable. Each
24 redistricting plan for Congress must contain single-
25 member districts and it must contain districts with

as nearly equal to the ideal district population as practical. As an example in the 2010 redistricting cycle, the Congressional plan deviation from the smallest district to the largest district was 162 people. Now I will turn it over to my colleague J.W. Wiley, who will begin the presentation of the malapportionment data for PSC and BESI.

J.W. WILEY: Good evening! As Yolanda said this is J.W. Wiley with the Louisiana Senate. As Matt Deville mentioned earlier, you all shifted over to words, now we can go back to numbers and pictures. We will first begin the discussion with the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, which is also known as BESI. This map shows the configuration of the eight current BESI districts. When these districts were drawn back in 2010, the ideal population of the BESI District was 560,671 people.

[01:15:00]

J.W. WILEY: In 2020, the ideal population has increased by 15,548 to 582,219. This chart will show you the current population in each BESI District and the difference from the ideal population. As you can see, Districts 3 and 8 are in red because they're under populated. Districts 6 and 7 are in green because they're overpopulated. This color-coded map

illustrates the population deviations within the dark red, and dark orange colors representing population below the acceptable range. The orange representing the low side of the acceptable range, the light-yellow representing the high side of the acceptable range, and the light in dark green representing overpopulation. Now, we will discuss the Public Service Commission, which is also known as the PSC. This map shows the current configuration of the five PSC districts. When these districts were drawn in 2010, the ideal population was 906,674. The new ideal population for each of the PSC districts based on the 2020 census is 930,551 with a population change of 24,877. This is all due to the growth in population. This chart right here shows the current population in each PSC district, and the difference from the ideal population and as you can see, there's only one right here, that's in green, District 1, which is overpopulated. This color coded map illustrates the population deviations 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 overpopulation. Now, I will turn it over to Patricia

Lowrey-Dufour to present the malapportionment of Congress.

PATRICIA LOWREY-DUFOUR: Good evening everyone! I want to make a few -- emphasize a few points that you've heard earlier this evening about Congress. One is, the State does not determine the number of congressional seats as allocated. It is allocated pursuant to the Method of Equal Proportions, which is a federal law that is established by the United States Congress in accordance with the Constitution. In addition, population equality is the overriding objective when drawing congressional districts. Before you see a map of the current configuration of the congressional districts as they were drawn following the 2010 census. When the districts are drawn in 2010, the ideal population for congressional district was 755,562. In 2020, the new population ideal for the Senate District is going to be 776,292 or an increase of 20,730. We did not color code this chart showing the malapportionment data for Congress, because as we again discuss population equality among the districts is absolutely paramount when it comes to congressional districts. Therefore, none of the congressional districts are apportioned close enough for that ideal population of 776,292. District I is

overpopulated quite a bit. District II is slightly under-populated. District III is slightly overpopulated. District IV, which is centered here in Northwest, Louisiana, is seriously under-populated. District V which is centered in Northeast, Louisiana is also seriously under-populated. And then District 6 is seriously overpopulated. This is the map showing the deviations of the Congressional populations from the ideal. And again, the dark orange showing the farthest from the ideal, the light orange showing closer but still below the ideal, the pale yellow showing above the ideal population, and the green showing the most population above the ideal.

[01:20:07]

PATRICIA LOWREY-DUFOUR: Now we're going to move to the malapportionment of the Supreme Court and I do want to make some points about the Supreme Court as well. As was discussed earlier, the Supreme Court is not subject to the one man one-vote requirement or the equal population standards. However, this is the configuration of the Supreme Court districts when they were drawn in 1997. When they were drawn in 1997, the ideal district for Supreme Court was 605,853 at the time the state population was 4.219 million people. If we had drawn them in 2010, the

1 ideal population for Supreme Court District would
2 have been 647,624 but they were not redrawn. If using
3 the 2020 census to redraw Supreme Court District,
4 Supreme Court Districts would be 665,393. And again,
5 when the legislature drew these districts in 1997,
6 they did draw them substantially equal in population
7 and the mean deviation of those districts was under
8 2%. This chart shows the current deviation of the
9 Supreme Court Districts from the ideal population and
10 again, Supreme Court Districts are not subject to the
11 equal population standard but as you can see here
12 from this chart there's a substantial variation in
13 the population of the districts. In this map is
14 again, illustrating the difference in the population
15 of each Supreme Court District from the ideal
16 population. Now, I'm going to discuss the
17 malapportionment of Louisiana House of
18 Representatives. This is a map of the current 105
19 House of Representatives Districts. As was discussed
20 earlier, the Constitution sets a maximum of districts
21 for the House Representatives at 105. When these
22 districts were drawn in 2010, the Ideal House
23 District was 43,174. Pursuant to the 2020 census, the
24 new ideal population is 44,359 or an increase of
25 1,185. In accordance with the 2020 census, it

1 indicates that 29 of the 105 House districts are well
2 above the acceptable deviation of plus or minus 5%
3 while 39 of those house districts are within the
4 acceptable deviation of plus or minus 5% from the
5 ideal and then 37 house districts are below the ideal
6 population and below the acceptable plus or minus 5%.
7 This map again shows the deviations in each district
8 from the ideal population of each House District. I'm
9 going to go into a little bit more detail regarding
10 the districts in your specific area of the State. You
11 may wonder, why am I showing you a map of the
12 entirety of North Louisiana starting at Vernon,
13 Rapids and Avoyelles and it's because I want to
14 emphasize to you that a redistricting decision made
15 anywhere in the state, but particularly in this area
16 of the state could affect how the districts are drawn
17 in your area. This is a map showing you the
18 malapportionment again of the districts and how far
19 these districts are from the ideal house population.
20 As you can see, in the entirety of North Louisiana,
21 there are only four House districts that are
22 overpopulated that include Districts 15 and Washita,
23 District 14 and Washita and Morehouse, and then your
24 area Districts 8 and 9 in Bossier Parish. The
25 remainder of the districts have not experienced any

substantial population growth and in fact, many have lost in population. Specifically, for the districts within your area and let's talk about this.

[01:25:00]

PATRICIA LOWREY-DUFOUR: So Districts 1 through 10 are really concentrated in the areas from Caddo, Bossier, Webster and DeSoto. As you can see, the majority of these districts are seriously under-populated, and if you remember what I told you about the growth in the ideal being over 1,100 people and if you think that each district in your area would have had to gain 1,100 people just to maintain status quo, but that did not happen. Plus the Parish population, as you know in Caddo, dropped over 17,000. So that is something for y'all to be aware of as you are thinking about the districts in your area. Of the 20 districts I will tell you that 11 are under-populated outside of the ideal, the population range. The districts 1, 2, 3 4, 10, 11, districts 13, 23, 24, 26, and 30, there are three more that are under populated but they're within the acceptable range and those are Districts 6, 7 and 22. There are four that are overpopulated but are within the acceptable range. Those are district 5 in here Caddo, District 12 and Districts 25 and 27. And then again

1 those two districts that are overpopulated District 8
2 and 9 in Bossier-Parish. This is a map again that
3 shows you the difference in each House District from
4 that, I'll do population again the dark red being
5 those districts that are the lowest in population and
6 the dark orange being the next class, the light
7 orange in being low, but within the acceptable range
8 and the light yellow being above the -- above the
9 ideal but within the range and the green being above
10 the ideal and outside of the acceptable range. And
11 then here's a close-up of the immediate report
12 Bossier area with some landmarks just to give you all
13 an idea about where those districts are located in
14 your area. And now, I'm going to turn it over to my
15 colleague, Yolanda Dixon, to discuss the
16 malapportionment of Louisiana Senate.
17 YOLANDA DIXON: Okay, all right, the first slide
18 shows the configuration of the 39 Senate Districts as
19 they exist today. In 2010, the ideal population for a
20 Senate District was 116,240 people. For 2020, that
21 Senate ideal population is 119,429, which is a change
22 from 2010 to 2020 of 3,189. So that means there are
23 10 Senate districts that are above the deviation, 14
24 that are within the deviation and 15 that are below
25 within the deviation of plus or minus 5%. There are -

1 - the next slide, again with the same color coding
2 combination, this is the map of the districts of the
3 State which indicates the population deviations with
4 the dark red and dark orange colors representing
5 population below the acceptable range. The orange
6 representing population on the low side of the
7 acceptable range, the light yellow representing
8 population on the high side of the acceptable range
9 and light and dark green representing populations
10 above the acceptable range and what this map points
11 out in particular is that in North Louisiana, until
12 you get to South Louisiana, everybody is under the
13 deviation. So there is a loss of -- significant loss
14 of population in North, Louisiana. Focusing on
15 Northwest portion of the State, as you can see here
16 from the districts that we consider as comprising the
17 Northwest, all of them are under the ideal of
18 119,429. All but two of the districts, District, 35
19 and District 36 are below the ideal deviation of
20 minus 5% and District 30 coming in close at minus
21 5.028%.
22 [01:30:00]
23 YOLANDA DIXON: The next slide will show you the
24 districts from the map perspective, all of that
25 District we include District 28, District 29. And as

you can see when we're just cutting off down by Evangeline, St. Landry, it is not until then that we get to a district that has maintained or as close to the deviation. All of the districts in North from Beauregard, Allen Evangeline up have lost population. The next slide showing you the districts that are in the Northwest section of Louisiana, District 39 Caddo, portions of DeSoto, you see District 38, DeSoto 36 Webster, Bossier, Bienville and District 29, which also has Bienville, Grant and Jackson. Next slide! And again, that same map with the color coding, dark red and dark orange, color districts are the districts, which are most under the acceptable range of deviation, orange is on the low side of the acceptable range. Focusing in the Shreveport area proper, you see the districts in 37, 36, 39 and 38 concentrated in this area and with the color coding, you can see that those districts had a significant loss of population as we described earlier. And now that concludes my presentation of the malapportionment for the Senate districts and I will turn it back over to our Chairwoman.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: All right. Thank you all very much! That was a very informative presentation to the staff. Thank you all. So the last slide here

1 shows the -- the timeline for the -- what we call the
2 Road show Hearings going forward. We were, as most of
3 you probably know, we were in Monroe last night. We
4 are in Shreveport today. Our third hearing will be
5 the Acadiana, Lafayette area October 26, we will be
6 in Central Louisiana, November the 9, Baton Rouge,
7 November 16, the North Shore area, November 30,
8 Southwest Louisiana, the Lake Charles area, December
9 15, New Orleans on January 5, the Bayou region, we
10 pushed back to January the 11th as you know, they are
11 still recovering from Hurricane Ida and have higher
12 priorities to deal with at the moment. And then we'll
13 be back to Baton Rouge on January the 20th. So that's
14 -- that's -- that's kind of the road show, the
15 opportunity to reach out to those of you in the
16 public and share with you all of our information on
17 redistricting so that you can understand kind of the
18 challenge before all of us. And now I'd like to move
19 into the public comment section of the program.
20 Members you have in your folders input that we
21 received via email. Now, for those of you that were
22 with us in Monroe last night, you had input in your
23 folders that was emailed by 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday. And
24 then we had in our folders last night. What's in your
25 folder today are things that we received at the

office basically since then, okay. So I'm going to just touch on those. We have a couple of things here that -- that are in your folders. One is from the ACLU of Louisiana authored by Alanah Odoms and Chris Kaiser, basically talking about an analysis of the 2020 census data and a review of the Voting Rights Act and the Fourteenth Amendment. We also received -- this was not by email, but was handed to us at the table here today, written Resolution from the Professional Republican Women of Caddo signed by their President Patricia Roach. And it basically is requesting that we draw the District lines in Northwest Louisiana to retain the same number of United States congressmen and State senators and State representatives. So that, I'll enter that into the public record.

[01:35:00]

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: All right. Now many of you here in the public that have been waiting patiently to speak. I appreciate that.

CHAIRMAN JOHN STEFANSKI: Madam Chair, if I could just recognize, I did see we have representative Cedric Glover who walk in the back. I do want to recognize him as well as Representative Barry Ivey also came in late as well.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Terrific. Thank you. Is there any other former State Senator/State Rep that we've missed? All right, lots of interest here. We appreciate everybody being here. All right, so now I have cards, witness cards that members of the public have asked to speak. We are going to go through those one at a time. I'm going to ask you all to keep your comments to 5-minutes so that we can make sure that everyone has an opportunity to speak before we wrap up at our designated closing time at 8:30. There is a microphone here for the public up this aisle in the very back, and we have cameras set up so that everything will be recorded as members of the public speak. Okay? So our first speaker will be Victoria Wenger with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. Ms. Wenger!

VICTORIA WENGER: On? Excellent!

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Yes, I can hear you now, thank you.

VICTORIA WENGER: Good evening Chairs, and members! Thank you for the opportunity to testify tonight and hello to all the members of the public here. My name is Victoria Wenger, and I'm an attorney with the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund. While my practice is out of our national office, it is my greatest pleasure to work with the coalition of

civil rights racial justice and civic engagement organizations in this great state to promote fair and equal access to the democratic process for all Louisianans. Through this work, we organize and educate voters on their rights. We advocate for pro-voting policy and when necessary, we litigate. Yesterday, you heard from my colleague Jared Evans regarding the requirement that maps you create honor Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 by ensuring that Black voters are able to elect their candidate of choice, where compact majority Black districts can be drawn and patterns of racially polarized voting have thus far ensured that Black voters candidates of choice have been defeated by the White majorities' preference. You also received a letter from LDF and 16 partner organizations explaining that you have an affirmative obligation to ensure that maps are in compliance with Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, which likely requires you to draw two majority Black districts for Louisiana's US Congressional map. We offered seven different options to do this, showing the versatility you have to account for broad redistricting principles, while prioritizing the federal mandates of one person, one vote and Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. The same

1 obligation to honor the US Constitution and Section 2
2 of the Voting Rights Act applies for every map you
3 advance at each level of Louisiana's government. As
4 you redraw maps for the legislative bodies, you serve
5 for BESI, the Public Service Commission, the courts,
6 you have the same unwavering obligation to ensure
7 fair maps. This means that Black voters cannot be
8 packed into limited districts nor cracked into
9 disparate and diluted districts that deny them an
10 equal opportunity to elect their candidates of their
11 choice. Finally, I have one further logistical note.
12 As you know, this process only happens once every ten
13 years. While the past year and a half have presented
14 unprecedented challenges, a silver lining has been
15 the advancement in technologies that allow people in
16 disparate places to come together in virtual spaces.
17 There are so many Louisianans who cannot be here
18 tonight or at any point in the road show because of
19 displacement due to Hurricane Ida, vulnerability due
20 to COVID-19 or because they simply do not have the
21 flexibility, mobility or transportation to join the
22 Road show in person. As someone who has written your
23 committees on multiple occasions, I know how
24 different it feels to speak directly with you right
25 now to talk and to see your reactions. Louisianans

1 deserve that kind of exchange for such a
2 consequential process. There is significant precedent
3 for virtual testimony, including meetings held by the
4 State Board of Election Supervisors, the Public
5 Defender Board, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries,
6 Federal Courts, broad-reaching Parish councils and
7 other State legislatures, like Georgia, and South
8 Carolina. Some committees have provided a hybrid
9 model allowing for both in-person and virtual
10 participation. These models can and should be adopted
11 here because public participation is the core of the
12 road show's purpose.
13 [01:39:57]
14 VICTORIA WENGER: I implore you to consider
15 hosting at least one virtual Road show session to
16 allow Louisianans unable to attend in person the
17 chance not just to write you or watch on the Internet
18 but to speak to you about their stories, their
19 communities, and their priorities for the districts
20 that they call home. Thank you!
21 [01:40:16]
22 VICTORIA WENGER: All I implore you to consider
23 hosting at least one virtual Road show session to
24 allow Louisianans unable to attend in person, the
25 chance not just to write you or watch on the internet

1 but to speak to you about their stories, their
2 communities, and their priorities for the districts
3 that they call home. Thank you!
4 SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you Ms. Wenger. All
5 right, our next speaker, it's a little bit of a duo.
6 I'll invite Lisa Johnson from the Bossier Chamber,
7 and Mr. Tim Magner from the Greater Shreveport
8 Chamber. They asked if they could address the group
9 together.
10 DR. TIM MAGNER: Thank you. I'm Dr. Tim Magner. I
11 am the President of the Greater Shreveport Chamber of
12 Commerce and joined by my colleague Lisa Johnson from
13 the Bossier Chamber. We wanted to speak to you
14 together because our Chambers have been meeting
15 collectively in addition to the Shreveport-Bossier
16 African American Chamber on a host of regional
17 issues, one of which is important to us, which is
18 redistricting. And so we wanted to be able to speak
19 to you as a region, and as a regional business
20 community focused on the challenges and opportunities
21 that we believe exist here in our region. Our Board's
22 about 60 folks have been meeting quarterly and we've
23 had a redistricting subcommittees that have met
24 periodically throughout the process and we will
25 continue to meet as we refine the maps that adhere to

1 the process and the goals that we've set forward, and
2 that we would share with you this evening. Our
3 rationale is to develop a workable approach that
4 addresses -- that takes into account our critical
5 local needs, one of which is ensuring the adequate
6 representation commensurate with the size and scope
7 of our Metropolitan statistical area and our region.
8 Second is ensuring that we have adequate
9 representation of all of our various communities and
10 constituencies. We are a very diverse community up
11 here. We want to make sure that the nature and scope
12 of the representation continues to reflect that
13 reality. We also want to develop workable models that
14 reflect the demographic changes in our region as this
15 has been pointed out by staff. There's a lot of red
16 in our area or orange or it's a lot of orange
17 skittles up here and so we are trying to make sure
18 that we maintain that proportionality while also
19 recognizing the reality of the shifts in our
20 demographics. We also recognize that the population
21 density is more difficult to reapportion the
22 populations that are spread over significant
23 geographies, and we believe that that's an important
24 consideration for the committees as you look at how
25 to rebalance those -- the districts and the

1 municipalities in our region. With regard to the
2 Congressional map in particular, we believe that the
3 current map that exists in fact represents well the
4 diversity and the range of the -- of our communities
5 and that is essentially tweaking those to expand into
6 and complete many of the parishes that are currently
7 broken up actually allows for a rebalancing that
8 adheres to the principles that we alluded to earlier
9 and does sort of the least violence if you will, to
10 the map in a way that is both representative of the
11 current reality, but also helps to strengthen the
12 representation that we currently have our
13 Congressional delegation is both diverse and has
14 significant leadership roles right now in Washington,
15 and that has resulted in our ability to be able to
16 bring resources in particular to the Fourth District
17 for our military installations. And so having those
18 continue to be part of the same district we believe
19 is an important component in that redistricting
20 effort. With regard to the Senate Map, again, we
21 believe that it's -- it's critical that we keep a
22 level of representation that's proportional to our
23 region. We know we're also the gateway to Texas
24 and/or to and from Texas and Arkansas. And so,
25 maintaining our ability to be able to bring those

resources that are essential to our region is requires a level of representation that we believe is commensurate with both the density and range of the population that we have. We would encourage the committee as you look at the need to reallocate, to reallocate large footprint districts with significant loss in representation to balance those underrepresented districts. While there's been some growth in our area in particular on the House side, that's not the case on the Senate side and so we recognize the reality that there will need to be some realignment. We would encourage you to look at the broadest sort of geographic footprint, which allows for the most smoothing out of those -- those districts to maintain the level of representation, a level of compactness that was alluded to earlier.

[01:44:58]

DR. TIM MAGNER: Similarly, on the House side, we believe that a similar approach is necessary. We know that although our urban areas have seen a significant amount of loss, we know that those geographies are particularly important both from the characteristics of the representation as well as the scope and scale of the nature of that representation. And so consequently, we would encourage you to look at the

1 broader map to allow for the maintenance of the
2 proportional representation in our area which will we
3 believe best serve not only our region, but the State
4 as well.
5 LISA JOHNSON: Thank you, Tim! Good Evening Madam
6 Chair and Mr. Chairman. Again, my name is Lisa
7 Johnson, I'm the President of the Bossier Chamber of
8 Commerce for the last 17 years, and I am a native of
9 the great State of Louisiana and born and raised in
10 Bossier City, Louisiana, and a graduate here of this
11 great institution, LSU in Shreveport. Just as Tim has
12 said that we've been working together collectively
13 with the Regional Chambers, so the Shreveport Chamber
14 of Commerce -- the Bossier Chamber of Commerce, and
15 the Shreveport-Bossier African American Chamber of
16 Commerce for several months now and then breaking
17 into subcommittees and redistricting being one of
18 those priorities. We have also been meeting with area
19 and regional stakeholders, and we have many more to
20 meet with to see and to confirm what those ideas are
21 and what we need to do with this growth and loss that
22 we have seen in this region to maintain our
23 representation in this area. We as has been stated in
24 the slides are the third largest growing area and
25 have maintained that for many, many years for the

State of Louisiana and that has great significance for the northern part of our State. Northwest Louisiana has a proud legacy of standing together, unifying and finding those priorities for our area to bring economic development, jobs, business and growth together, and we need to maintain that representation in the numbers at the Congressional level and at the House Senate -- Senate and House levels as well. So, for an example, we have currently four Senate -- Senator representations in our area and our area is much larger by about 100,000 or so folks than the next largest populated area going down I-20. And so, if we were to lose a Senate seat and have this population growth and maintained, then it's not exactly proportioned properly. And so, we want to make sure that we maintain the number of Senate seats that we have and we maintain the number of House seats that we have as well. And just as Tim said, just to go back to the congressional district, it's critically important as we are home to Barksdale Air Force Base here in Bossier City Parish and the Shreveport area, that we maintain our fourth congressional district with Fort Polk as it is. Now there are many training programs that happen between these two installations for our military branches,

and so whenever we go to the table and we ask for that funding from the Department of Defense and Armed Services, it speaks volumes of how we are working together in those joint forces. So we please ask you to remember that as well. So thank you for your time!

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you both very much! Our next speaker is Irma Rogers with the Martin Luther King Communication Development Corporation, Shreveport.

IRMA ROGERS: Good evening! Thank you for this opportunity. I was just trying to pin all of my words and I had to draw extra lines. Primarily, I represent a portion of MLK, which is in Shreveport, Louisiana Northern portion. We have members of MLK Neighborhood Association here and other members, about eight or nine nonprofits help to garner and watch over this area, which is your second largest African-American community in United States, second only to Harlem and Harlem Spanish mixed.

[01:49:57]

IRMA ROGERS: So we have grave concerns. My primary concern about reapportionment, under the Census count is last year I typically had to help people who came into our community to find addresses that were in that county. This address in particular

is what we call West MLK, also known as West Cooper Road. MLK is five miles long; from North Market all the way down to Hillary Huckabee, just past Southern University is four. There's another mile that makes a horseshoe which goes around behind the direction of the railroad, which is another mile. People don't even know about this area. The young lady who came was from Florida. I said, "Let me show you." I took her to this house, and the gentleman was not there. I knocked next door, and I said, "Is Mr. So-and-so home?" He said, "Yes, he's in there, just knock on the door. Just move the cats out of the way and knock on the door." We did knock. He came out, we got the information. But look at what this took. Meanwhile back, at the farm, another young lady that I knew Tasha, who lived in our area was fired away from the Census, who wouldn't know where this was. So, look at how we are undercounted. This is how we are undercounted because you send people with the Census. We did have a group here, some of them are sitting here, some of are senior citizens that we taught digital media to help them to do what we call the complete count with power coalition, and some other people giving the small grants to pay them even for their time and we did do that. But when you send

others in, who do not know the demographics, who do not the community and don't know where to go look and she came to our building. Thank the Lord, we had a building and I took her where she needed to go. But look how many of these people who live in our communities, that look like me, black and brown people who don't get counted, but then we get shifted and reapportioned because our numbers are down. You think our numbers are down, but they're not really down. So I'm asking that you really take a very hard look at where I live, where I live, where I work and play, my business is there. I live there. I am part of MLK, also known as Cooper Road. So just FYI, think very, very hard and come and talk to us. Thank you!

[APPLAUSE]

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: We are not going to applaud please, but I want to say Ms. Rogers, you know, normally we don't -- that we're not debating this but I just want to share a little information. There is a process as I understand it for you to like file a protest if you believe your area was undercounted in some way. I'll ask staff to make sure that we post that information on our website if that's something that you would like to further pursue. All right, our next speaker, former State Rep

Thomas Carmody, representing the Shreveport-Broadmoor Neighborhood.

THOMAS CARMODY: Good Evening members! Welcome to Shreveport! Just a couple of comments that I wanted to make and more or less reiterating what's already been said. I think in doing redistricting and at least one of our primary objectives should be to make sure that we're working for the proper representation of communities of common interest. And I would have to say that a community of common interest here is both Shreveport and Bossier, including our MSA. The five Parish areas surrounding this metropolitan area. Shreveport, being and Bossier being more or less the third largest metropolitan area. These imperative that we look at trying to preserve the current number of House seats and Senate seats in order to have proper representation in the legislative body. I think we're all aware of that. We do face challenges here. We appear to be bottom heavy on the State right now, and that in all likelihood when you all faced the challenge of trying to redraw the districts, they were more or less have to kind of melt South. It's the way I would have to see it. That being said, y'all are all in my prayers. I've done that this twice both on the municipal level, and at the state

level is a difficult thing to do, but I'm sure that all would do the best job you can. But please remember that again, this area really is a community of common interest. Thank you.

[01:54:59]

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, Sir. You can come visit us anytime. Our next speaker is Lisa Tom Keys with the Power Coalition. And for those of you that were with us last night, your handwriting is much improved. So, thank you very much for that.

LISA TOM KEYS: I will try to write a little clearer tonight.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Yes, ma'am. Thank you!

LISA TOM KEYS: Good evening Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Lisa Tom Keys, and I'm a lifelong resident of Shreveport and a Redistricting fellow at Power Coalition for equity and justice representing North Louisiana. I'm here this evening representing Power Coalition and also myself as a proud resident of Shreveport and urging you to ensure that any map submitted to the governor should adhere to principles of equity. Since becoming a voting resident in Louisiana at the age of 18 and I might add, I vote in every election. I begin to pay attention to the people that are vote to represent me

in Shreveport, Caddo Parish, Baton Rouge and Washington, D.C. I pay attention to their voting record and the things as I do while representing me. I understand that with growth comes change, but what kind of change? I've watched the trends in Louisiana over the years. Over the years I've also watched people, my family and my friends leave Louisiana, because the representation that they have simply does not have their best interest at heart, and in the past, the representatives didn't look like them. But things have changed over the years. In a state where one-third of the population is Black and there are increasing populations of people of color, we must draw districts that reflect our population and give all communities the opportunity to elect people that will represent their interest. Here's a little statistical information about the fourth Congressional District. The income per household in the fourth Congressional District is a mere $40,571. The fourth Congressional, District ranks third in Louisiana out of the six Congressional Districts in race, specifically Black are African-American. The fourth Congressional District ranks 40th of the 436 other Congressional Districts in the United States in race, specifically Black are African-American. We sit

here today in my beloved Shreveport with the population of 182616 people, 57.09% Black, but our Congressional Delegation does not reflect this, because the lines have been drawn to dilute Black voter power. Our partners at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and I thank them for coming. I have submitted seven possible maps that reflect ways that this area could be competitive and made more likely that the community can elect candidates of choice to lead and represent this State. And may I add have my friends and family come back. It is possible to not draw maps that uphold vestiges of Jim Crow and White Supremacy. We ask that you use your power to draw maps that reduce the efficiency gap, create competitive districts and start packing, cracking minority communities. Thank you for your time!

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you very much! All right, our next speaker is Kimberley. She even wrote it out phonetically for me, thank you, Kimberley Jones with the CARE Neighborhood Association in Shreveport, Louisiana.

KIMBERLEY JONES: Good Evening! My name is Kimberley Jones. I'm a resident of Caddo Parish City of Shreveport, and I'm of the community called Cedar Grove. I'm also a member of CARE, which is the Cedar

1 Grove Affirms Real Effort Neighborhood Association. I
2 grew up in Cedar Grove and I just recently returned
3 with my daughter as June of 2021. My testimony is to
4 demand for a fair map with District realized that do
5 not cause voter rights delusion which you all called
6 cracking. We are currently experiencing that in Cedar
7 Grove now because one neighborhood has four City
8 Districts and four different council members, and we
9 do not want to repeat or that at the state level. Do
10 not dilute our voter rights.
11 [01:59:58]
12 KIMBERLEY JONES: We the voters want you, our
13 elected officials, to act fairly and put people first
14 and protect our voter rights under the Fourteenth
15 Amendment and the Voters Right of 1965. As a disabled
16 Army veteran, I know and understand that freedom is
17 not free. Thank you.
18 SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you very much. And
19 thank you for your service. Our next speaker is
20 former State Rep Melissa Flournoy, representing the
21 Louisiana Progress Action.
22 MELISSA FLOURNOY: Good evening! I'm Melissa
23 Flournoy, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak
24 with you all tonight. And I want to thank the
25 Chairman and Chairwoman of the Governmental Affairs

1 Committee and all of the members for coming to North
2 Louisiana to participate in this very transparent and
3 educational process. I'd also like to thank the staff
4 of both the House and the Senate for the very
5 professional and informative presentations. It's
6 really important that all of us, as interested voters
7 around the state understand the dynamics of
8 redistricting and also understand the terms that are
9 being used. So I'd like to call to your attention on
10 the Louisiana Progress website, our Redistricting
11 Guide about making every vote count. Because I think
12 tonight we need definitions and information,
13 particularly on the use of packing and cracking. And
14 so I want to clarify that, one way that
15 gerrymandering is used is to unfairly minimize or
16 silence the power of communities of color is through
17 what is known as Packing or Cracking. This is how
18 minority votes are essentially wasted because they
19 either are made up in an inordinant percentage of a
20 district's population, we refer to that as Packing or
21 their split up across multiple districts, so they
22 don't make up a large enough voting block in any one
23 of these districts to have political influence.
24 That's the cracking that the speaker prior to me
25 spoke about. But it's important for us to know that

in creating and holding majority-minority districts, it's essential that those minority voters don't need to account for 90% of a district, they can account for 70% or 80% of a district resident in order to ensure that those districts remain majority-minority. At Louisiana Progress, we are very interested in two issues; competitiveness of districts and racial proportionality. We consider almost any majority-minority district that has more than two-thirds of minority voters could be considered to be packed. This is particularly true even here in Shreveport in District three. Former representative Barbara Norton in the redistricting process a decade ago was able to ensure that that District was 90% African-American voters. We believe that one of the ways to have more competitive districts is to really be mindful of the allocation of voters across districts. On the other side of this equation of cracking is apparent when you see District separated to have a reduced number of minority representation of 15 to 25%. So just in North Louisiana, you'll see the opportunity where you've got more and more conservative districts with about 15% to 20% minority representation, we are concerned that that reduces competitiveness of those districts. We would like to see a better balance of

two-thirds or one-third as we kind of consider the calculus of redrawing these districts. We understand that you have a very difficult assignment, given the loss of population across North Louisiana in redrawing some of these districts. The comments that have been made earlier about trying to maintain the same number of districts, the same balance of districts, we think is very important. So our caution really is, is that during this redistricting process, the Legislature should examine these potential instances of cracking and packing and do everything in its power to create districts that are misaligned or malapportioned or creating two heavily dominant one way or the other in terms of the creation of these districts. We believe that it's important to create the representation of minority voters and maintain their representation, but we also believe that it's important to have competitive districts where you see more inter-party competition rather than just those districts that are heavily favoring incumbent Republican legislatures, are those that are heavily favoring incumbent Democratic legislatures.

[02:05:09]

MELISSA FLOURNOY: So, as we talk about fairness and equity, and we talk about representation, we want

to make sure that the voices of all the voters of Louisiana, have a fair chance to be represented because we want everyone to know that their vote counts. And part of one of the reasons why I think we have lower voter turnout and more disengagement is that you've got districts that are heavy aligned one way or the other that people don't perceive as competitive. So I hope you'll consider those issues as you draw the new ones based on the new data. Thank you for your time!

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Yes ma'am, thank you very much! Our next speaker is Gisele Bryant.

GISELE PROBY-BRYANT: Thank you to the Chair, Co-Chairs. I had to do that. We are still in a pandemic. And by hosting this Road Show here in my hometown where I have resided all of my life, specially shout out to our two delegation members who serve on the committee, Senator Tarver and representative Jenkins and to all the delegation members are here, thank you all who live South [INDISCERNIBLE 02:06:42] but traveling North [INDISCERNIBLE 02:06:45]. I appreciate that. I'm Gisele Proby-Bryant and this is really impactful to us, the citizens of Caddo-Bossier and all of the surrounding areas here in the Fourth Congressional District. There are many faith-based

1 people here at this evening, civic, advocacy, and
2 service organizations. I recognize and I applaud the
3 effort of people to get out at 5:30 in the evening to
4 make a meeting because we are all volunteering. We
5 are not receiving the per diem. And it's critical
6 that we move meetings as has been said by other
7 speakers available not just online but face-to-face.
8 I'm seated this evening with members of the Delta
9 Sigma Theta Sorority, but I'm standing independently
10 as a citizen and a voter on the most impactful
11 legislation that happened, the Voting Right Acts of
12 1965. That provides a pivotal opportunity for an
13 African-American woman like myself, opportunities
14 that my parents, grandparents nor ancestors had, but
15 could only dream of. By outlawing racial
16 discrimination through this particular Act we empower
17 you this evening to do the things that are
18 appropriate for the citizens of this particular
19 Congressional District particularly, the Shreveport-
20 Bossier area and surrounding. Because of God's
21 faithfulness, you all have an opportunity and someone
22 voted for you. We want the same opportunity to vote
23 for candidates of our choice, who reflects our views
24 and understands our needs and desires. With that said
25 Redistricting Committee, the data that you've already

received from the Public Law 94-171, that makes it easier for Louisianians to ensure you do not draw districts and split precincts. You have the information, you're intelligent people, do what you need to do. You have been duly appointed to serve, some of you who've had some experience with redistricting. Some of you haven't had, zero. So this is a work in progress, but we are here, we are willing, able and capable to support the process. The people of Caddo Parish have the responsibility to set the course of Louisianians for the next 10 years and beyond through holding you accountable. But the maps you would draw and present through public hearings for Louisiana is to analyze and evaluate the four legislators vote for approval.

[02:10:00]

GISELE PROBY-BRYANT: Re-districting is a life-altering process for many communities. Please recognize that the best ideas and solutions will come from the people who live, work and play in these districts. Louisiana pervasive record of racial discrimination in voting qualified the State for coverage on the preclearance since its inception and up to 2013 when the Supreme Court rendered preclearance was inactive, not unconstitutional. So

duly note, every avenue available will be pursued by the citizens of the Fourth Congressional District, particularly Shreveport Bossier to ensure that we have fair and equitable maps. While our congressional districts are crystal clear examples of racial disproportionality, and lack of competitiveness, they are hardly the only addictions in our states like this. The same can be said by State Legislative maps, other political bodies like the Supreme Court, and many parish council and school boards, but we'll be working most definitely with the locals. Without initial maps review, the preliminary analysis of the criteria and population changes in Louisiana, particularly the northwest and northeast seems to indicate the redistricting committee needs to look for areas of minority voter growth and ensure these voters are able to elect their candidates of choice. I strongly recommend that you draw a fair mass for district lines, respecting and allowing voters to have equal weight, our voices' equal value and our community equal resources. It is my hope this evening that the testimonies you have heard, will compel the committee to move from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset. Equipping yourselves through prayer, to find the courage and resolve strength of character through

drawing maps that are fair, and represent communities of interest in Northwest Louisiana and throughout the State. We live in extreme perilous times. Join maps that are non-competitive, and provide safe seats is not the final answer for this redistricting cycle and this plan of action will not reflect the will of the 4 million plus people Louisiana and the 237,000 plus in Caddo Parish. The legislative body can no longer protect the interests of a few, while unfairly decay in the democracy of others. Join with us as we work with you to make this happen. Thank you.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you! Thank you very much! All right, our next speaker Chris Kaiser with the ACLU of Louisiana.

CHRIS KAISER: Thank you, good evening Chairwoman here, Chairman Stefanski and members. My name is Chris Kaiser. I am the Advocacy Director with the ACLU of Louisiana. Thank you for this opportunity to address you tonight. It's great to be with you again. First, I want to just reiterate that this redistricting process is an immense responsibility. It's not an exaggeration to say that five months from now, you will have laid the foundation for our State's democracy for the next 10 years. We need that foundation to be strong. We need that foundation to

be really strong. And so as you consider that responsibility, I want to emphasize that the United States Constitution and the Voting Rights Act, among other mandates, require that our maps fairly reflect the voting strength of our minority communities. So that means that by law, the Legislature must ensure that communities of color including our black communities, are not unduly fractured into multiple districts, nor unduly concentrated or packed into single. So, as I discussed with you last night, to help avoid that dilution of minority voting strength, the ACLU of Louisiana has conducted a thorough analysis of the census data from 2020 and we've broken that analysis down by road show region. So ahead of this hearing, you received a detailed summary of Caddo, Bossier, DeSoto and Webster parishes, that's this document here, and you'll see on that, that across this region the total population fell by about 2%. But notably, at the same time, the voting age population among people of color increased by 11%, while the White voting age population decreased by 9.5%.

[02:15:00]

CHRIS KAISER: And across the region, if you look at the House and Senate maps as currently drawn, four

of the eight House districts in this region, and three out of the four Senate districts in this region, actually increase the number of people of color living in them since 2010. So just the brief upshot with that is just that there are cohesive and sometimes growing Black communities in this region, and they deserve fair representation in this process. So I just want to say, we think that this information is going to be crucial in assessing whether any proposed maps adequately guard against the dilution of minority voting strength, and we hope that you will keep that top of mind as well as your obligations under the Constitution and the Voting Rights Act. Thank you for your time.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you very much! All right. Our next speaker is R.J. Johnson with the Louisiana Democrat Party in Caddo DPEC.

R.J. JOHNSON: Good evening, Madam Chair, members. I am a big Democrat. Most people who know me know that. One of the things I want to make sure that we understand is that this is not about political parties. It is about fairness. It is about responsibility. It is about Louisiana, taking its responsibility, and you all taking the responsibility as legislators to put us in a place where we can

compete, where members of our society feel like their voices are heard, where we can increase a voter turnout by having people be in districts that look like them, that act like them. There's not all the time that I agree with Representative Carmody, but he said that communities of interest have to be together, and here in this area, we have just that. So there are plenty of opportunities to ensure that communities such as Cedar Grove, MLK and others are able to elect representatives that look like them and give them an opportunity to compete in this State. Many of you have run in your districts and you can run in new districts and those people because of the work that you've done in your communities will choose to reelect you. Let's not let incumbency determine what our districts look like. Make sure that you guys put Louisiana in the news for the right things to say that this State is ready to move forward, ready to change the vestiges of Jim Crow as you've heard earlier, because we can do it. We want to restore the faith back into our Legislature and our elected officials to always do the right thing and while it's not required, that we have one-third of our State, be majority/minority districts, we should take that into account, because again, everyone in this State has an

equal voice when it comes to voting. No one vote is more than the other. And so, I'm asking you to continue to be transparent, continue to be fair, continue to be equitable in this process, and make sure everyone has the equal right and the opportunity to elect the candidates of their choice and keep Northwest Louisiana at equal population to what we are now, because the people in this area deserve just that. Thank you!

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Yes sir. Thank you very much! Our next speaker is Susan Beringer with the League of Women Voters.

SUSAN BERINGER: Thank you to the Chairs, Co-Chairs and Joint Committee for hosting this road show. My name is Susan Beringer. I have lived in Shreveport for almost 50 years. I am a member of the League of Women Voters of Caddo-Bossier. The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization witnessed by the fact that I and my co-author are members of different political parties. The League of Women Voters encourages informed and active participation in government. It influences public policy through education and advocacy.

[02:19:55]

1 SUSAN BERINGER: As redistricting determined our
2 representation and federal funds allocated for
3 education, healthcare, bridges, roads and
4 infrastructure, we are aware of how important this
5 process is.
6 Fairness and equity around the redistricting
7 process is non-negotiable. Maps must be drawn in the
8 interest of the people and not of those in power.
9 Committee, we the people, empower you to move from
10 the road show tours and stamped in solidarity
11 shoulder to shoulder in recognizing our shared
12 humanity is the State. Every community should have
13 voice, vote and political power that represent their
14 interest, values, and overall well-being. These are
15 some of the fundamentals of democracy. More
16 specifically, one goal we support is that
17 redistricting be such that there is a fair chance
18 that another Black person be elected to the U.S.
19 House of Representatives. All people have needs to be
20 addressed but there are many instances where a group
21 has commonality that are best understood by some of
22 their own and thus will be championed by such a
23 person. We say that the latest census has shown
24 increases in other minority groups such as Asian and
25 Hispanic. Channels of communication should be open,

we'd say and promoted with these voters as well. We ask that you likewise sincerely seek to learn and address the needs of Louisiana's indigenous people. With our national organizations, the League of Women Voters of the United States, the League of Women Voters of Louisiana strongly urges your support and to join with us as we advocate for people-powered fair maps. As you draw the maps, keep in mind that fairness, integrity and maintaining communities of interest together are paramount in this work around redistricting. Thank you!

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Yes ma'am. Thank you very much! Our next speaker is Kingson Wills with The People's Promise Youth Division.

KINGSON WILLS: Good afternoon! Thank you to the Chairs and members of the House and Senate Redistricting Committee for giving me the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Kingson Wills. I'm the Co-Chair and Co-Founder of The People's Promise Youth Division, which is an organization that works to promote the future for the future through civic engagement, community involvement, and preparation for post high school life. But more importantly today, I've lived in Louisiana since I was five-years-old. I moved here about 13 years ago from

1 Atlanta, Georgia and I came to bring the message that
2 Louisiana has changed. Since I have lived in
3 Louisiana for the majority of my life, I've been able
4 to experience firsthand the shifts in public
5 sentiment and opinion of Louisianians over the years.
6 Since the last census in 2010, my community has
7 become more diverse. Social activism has risen
8 dramatically on both sides of the aisle, and
9 Americans have become more-and-more divided on
10 political issues. Louisiana has changed. We have not
11 however, seen changes reflected and how we are
12 represented. Despite the immense changes in public
13 sentiment across the State, Louisiana representatives
14 have remained relatively the same and the voices of
15 the people have not been heard. That's why I stand
16 before you today. Today, I'm here to ask for
17 fairness, for equity, for you to listen to the people
18 you have been tasked with serving. We demand fair
19 redistricting maps and a fair redistricting process.
20 This means providing more opportunities for public
21 hearings in town halls, so the voices of every
22 Louisianan can be heard. It means drawing maps fairly
23 and accurately to reflect the average increasing
24 diversity of the State. This means transparently
25 sharing the criteria that is used to draw the maps

and allotting time for the people to give feedback that they accurately reflect to their communities and very importantly, it means committing to meeting independent, nonpartisan benchmarks with the maps you end up creating.

[02:25:00]

KINGSON WILLS: Louisianians deserve your commitment to these standards of transparency and fairness for the sake of not only your current voters, but the future voter. The maps you draw today, our roads created to determining where I, my friends, and even my little sister will end up tomorrow. If I can leave you with one thing is this idea, the idea of tomorrow. As a senior in high school, I have the unique perspective of someone who can tell you what the future looks like for Louisiana. As me and my peers, prepare our college applications, and discuss where we like to spend the next four years over the life, this idea of tomorrow has become ever more pressing. We discuss where we want to go and where we want to be and become and the tomorrow, the future for Louisiana has looked pretty bleak. Most of my peers feel that their ideas and what they would like to become will not be adequately expressed in Louisiana. So this importance of

tomorrow is what I would like you to think about when you're drawing redistricting maps. Make sure a future of Louisiana where everyone's ideas can be heard and everyone voices can be expressed in Louisiana. Thank you!

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you sir. And you have a very captivating voice.

Our next speaker is Omari J Ho-Sang with All Streets, All People - ASAP.

OMARI J HO-SANG: Good evening everyone! My name is Omari Ho-Sang and I am here in a couple of different capacities and that first capacity is as a mother and community member, a mother of two sons who live and breathe Shreveport air. My second capacity is as the State Organizing Manager for the Black Voters Matter Fund, and as the Founder for All Streets, All People - ASAP. We are committed and dedicated to organizing everyday people around systemic issues. Issues like redistricting, which is a word that I've heard a lot. But far too recently just really found out really the weight of this word and so I first want to thank you all because as I've listened to the presentation that your staff provided, as I've been able to attend teachings and trainings, I recognize how challenging and

1 complicated this process is. I wouldn't want to be in
2 those seats. But I'd be remiss if I did not show
3 appreciation for our allies, the Legal Defense Fund
4 of the NAACP, the ACLU of Louisiana, the Power
5 Coalition for Equity and Justice, and so many more
6 who have done the analysis and provided the summaries
7 to make this meaningful for the people. And that is
8 what ASAP and Black Voters Matter concern is. The
9 people behind the politics, the people impacted by
10 this process that we are going to endeavor on
11 together, and so the people of the State of Louisiana
12 from Shreveport, to Slidell, from Talulah to Plain
13 Dealing, from Coushatta to Castor. They are the
14 people that matter. And so being new to this
15 redistricting process, I've been asking myself,
16 what's in a name? What does redistricting really
17 mean? And I find that the real question is not really
18 about redistricting. The real question is what's in
19 the map? What's in the map for my people, in my
20 community, as it stands today? And what's in the map
21 as it could be if we gained a majority/minority
22 district. The opportunity to elect a representative
23 that cares - truly cares about the things that are
24 important to me as a mother of two sons and majority
25 Black schools who are under-resourced. A

representative who is willing to be held accountable irregardless of partisan politics and skin color, and so, when I do this work, especially in my capacity as Black Voters Matter, I often hear "my vote doesn't count". I'm sure a lot of people in this room have heard it, "my vote doesn't count", and who am I to tell any marginalized Louisianan any different in a State that has never, never, never had a nun racist map? Who are we to tell that to any voter who lacks the opportunity to elect not just vote for but elect someone who represents them, and can be held accountable, held accountable to represent.

[02:30:00]

OMARI J HO-SANG: So as I close I pull from renowned suffragette Sojourner Truth when I ask, ain't I a voter? Whose vote matters? Whose babies count? Whose children all 582,219 students deserves a fighting chance with quality schools and a Bessie Representative that will fight like hell until that is one? Whose body and healthcare matters in a State where far too many women who look like me, die from giving birth? Whose second largest population has been in a pandemic of poverty and systemic racism? Whose neighborhoods and communities matter even when plagued by gun violence? Who deserves peace in the

1 streets, justice in the courts and due diligence in
2 each and every decision-making chamber in our State?
3 We all know the answer, and I believe we have a
4 chance to show all 4,657,757 Louisianans matter by
5 breaking tradition and getting this right. Thank you!
6 SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Yes ma'am, thank you! Our
7 next speaker is Candace Batiste with the Power
8 Coalition.
9 CANDACE BATISTE: Good evening Chairs and
10 members! My name is Candace Batiste and I am a
11 resident of Shreveport, Louisiana, a graduate of
12 Louisiana State University as well as a graduate of
13 the Southern University Law Center. I live in the
14 South Highlands neighborhood, right next to the
15 border of Highland and Caddo Parish State District
16 Six and I'm the North Louisiana Organizer for the
17 Power Coalition for Equity and Justice as well as sit
18 on the board for the ACLU of Louisiana. I'm here on
19 behalf of my home and my organizations to ask that
20 you all adhere to the principles of equity
21 withdrawing new political districts. South Highlands
22 is an eclectic and historic neighborhood, bordering
23 Highland it is home to some of the oldest
24 architecture in the city and was the location of one
25 of the first colleges for women in the region Dodd

College. The community is known for its excellent schools, trendy restaurants, shopping, and recreation. The people in this neighborhood range from laborers, full-time students, doctors, entrepreneurs and young professionals. Our community is the type of place where the parks, specifically Betty Virginia Park, are home to cultural festivals such as Crawfest, Highland Jazz & Blues Festival, Parades, and many others. In the early 2000s it has won many National Night Out awards and more recently participated in National Night Out which was hosted by the City of Shreveport. However, because my neighborhood is in a State House District which also includes the neighboring parish of Bossier some of the uniqueness which makes up Shreveport is diluted by the concerns of Bossier residents who do not represent the same interest of those of us who live in Shreveport. We have the opportunity to draw new districts that will ensure that similar communities are represented by their candidate of choice and like has been mentioned this could be accomplished by keeping districts in one parish whenever possible. It is apparent the changes in the neighborhood once you cross the existing district border of Kings Highway into the highly neighborhood. However, nothing

happens in Highland that does not affect South Highlands. When neighborhood groups on social media discuss the increase in gunshots heard and property damage sustained in South Highlands, there is an assumption that it is due to riff-raff occurring in Highland but never the section of Highland that is contained in District Six, the unspoken assumption is the area of Highland and the neighborhoods across Kings Highway. The Highland and South Highlands community contains the only abortion clinic in the region and was at the forefront of the Supreme Court's recent reproductive justice battle decision regarding providers needing hospital admitting privileges.

[02:35:00]

CANDACE BATISTE: The clinic while located in a different district is less than two miles away from my home, those who support the clinic in my district deserve a representative who also advocates for the rights of those in our diverse community, who understand its importance and want to keep its doors open. The elected officials have an okay relationship with the community but I believe that if we draw maps that keep communities together and do not crack and pack neighborhoods to dilute voting power, we could

build even closer relationships where we can all elect candidates of choice. During the winter storm earlier this year, I was able to call on my Representative Thomas Presley, thanks, for assistance in getting water to those neighborhoods who were in need. I felt because of the work that I do in advocacy, it's fairly easy for me to meet with my representatives; however, I want this to be a reality for all of Shreveport's communities. The split between Highland and South Highlands means only some of the neighborhoods' residents have an opportunity to advocate in cohesive ways which affect both neighborhoods. Our districts deserve representatives who are aware of the important landmarks in and near their districts which affect the most vulnerable and this is achieved by drawing compact districts that keep communities together and do not reduce our power. We need elected leaders who understand the necessity in improving infrastructure across neighborhoods and communities equitably and making our schools, healthcare facilities, access to jobs, and affordable housing stronger. Fair maps equal fair elections. Thank you!

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Yes ma'am, thank you! All right, our next speaker is Demetrius Norman with

Northwest Louisiana Makerspace. Is Mr. Norman in the House? Yes sir, okay, thank you!

DEMETRIUS NORMAN: Good evening Chairman and members of the Board. My name is Demetrius Norman. I am a lifelong resident of Shreveport, proud resident, born and raised in the Queensborough Community specifically, coincidentally it was formerly a predominantly White neighborhood. My parents were actually one of the first couples to integrate that neighborhood, it's now become predominantly Black due to White flag. So it's interesting because we've seen it go from a very prominent neighborhood with representation and resources to one that struggles to even have a voice and a say in how our cities run, and so that's why it's very important for us that we have fair maps and fair representation because we see what happens when the lines are drawn in a way that gives leverage to one community over another. When we're doing our research to bridge the digital divide and do our stem programs and all that good stuff, it's funny because when we look at things like Internet access, you know, all of the Black districts, those are our lowest Internet speeds in the city, right? Those are the ones that are in the divide. Our communities of color, right? Our low-

income communities and the majority communities, the affluent communities; the affluent communities, have the highest speeds, have the greatest access, the schools have more of the magnet programs that come from the same sources of funding as the schools in our minority districts. Every single map that we look at concerning politics is drawn around racial lines. We go to school board meetings, half Black-half White, we go to commission meetings, half Black-half White, right? And it's almost like it's planned that way, like we've drawn our lines around racial lines, right? And it goes without saying that even though racism brought up in a lot of the political meetings, it's obvious to the citizens and it's obvious to the people that live in our communities that one community has a louder voice than others when it comes to getting the resources that we need. Now, I personally believe in voting and I believe that my one vote counts, but it's hard to convince the rest of my community when they see these unfair practices of one community being given leverage over another community for political reasons that don't align with the way that our political process is actually supposed to work.

[02:40:00]

DEMETRIUS NORMAN: So I'm here to demand fair maps. We stand proudly with Black Voters Matter, with Power Coalition, with ACLU. I'm also here representing NAACP Shreveport chapter, and we stand proudly with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, but that's all I have to say, there's been wonderful comments tonight, my peers have said everything that could possibly be said, I'm just here to double down because it matters to me as an African-American citizen, as a African-American software engineer that had to come through those disparities of what my community doesn't have and had to cross where I met professionally and I feel that my responsibility is to make sure that people in my community don't have to struggle the way I did to get to where I'm at. So that's why I'm here to demand fair maps. All right.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you very much! Our next speaker is Taryn Branson.

TARYN BRANSON: Good evening to the respective House and Senate Governmental Affairs Committee, the Chairpersons. My name is Taryn Branson. Thank you all for letting me speak on today. I had the opportunity to attend last night in Monroe and for whatever reason I could not just sit idly by and not drive all the way to Shreveport and come and speak, and so I

1 know you may be asking why is this lady driving to
2 Shreveport to come and speak? Well, not only am I
3 born and raised in West Monroe, Louisiana, have
4 family in Monroe, I have family in Shreveport as
5 well, but Shreveport is so important to me because
6 it's where I got my start as an educator. It was here
7 that I became a teacher, and one thing that I know
8 about the people here, the students here, is that for
9 the most part people really do care about their
10 communities, but then again there are some times
11 whenever we are met with challenges and we see that
12 there's one class or one group of people who do not
13 necessarily represent the complete interest of all
14 parties involved, and so I rise today to ask the
15 members of this committee and those interested
16 parties to really and truly draw fair maps. It's not
17 that people are uninterested in voting because as we
18 know in Louisiana we have low voter turnouts, it's
19 that people recognize that there's an apathy in
20 voting because whenever they go to the polls
21 consistently there is no one there to represent the
22 interests of all parties involved. I also had the
23 unique experience of running for State
24 Representative. I wasn't successful in their run, but
25 what it showed me was that fair maps do give people a

fighting chance. In my district it was 70% White about maybe 10% or 15% so Black and the rest other, and what I learned from that is people do listen, they do hear, but at the same time it would be nearly impossible for someone such as myself to win in a district that is purposely drawn to be Republican. And so, I asked that the members of this committee take into account all people. You know, we heard last night in Monroe that people are fair, that people are equitable, show members, show people and citizens in Louisiana that we really can be fair and equitable. For so long Louisiana, and please correct me if I'm wrong, I don't think Louisiana has ever not been challenged on maps that it has put forth. And so, we have the opportunity today for once to actually get it right, and so just justice can even can either be given or it can be gotten. So we can be given justice by having fair maps or we can have justice gotten by going to the court systems and wasting money that isn't necessary because people have to continuously fight in order to have fair districts and fair maps. And so, thank you for your time on today.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Yes ma'am, thank you! Our last speaker, Trandi Phillips from Shreveport.

TRANDI PHILLIPS: I have not come prepared with anything but I just wanted to say that I'm a conservative Republican and I'm still here saying that accounting is important, being conservative is important, pro-life is important, all these, you know, and like the maps and the being competitive and all of that, but I just hadn't heard anybody, conservative Republican stand up, so I just -- I'm here to say that.

[02:45:00]

TRANDI PHILLIPS: I don't know what else to say except for, don't forget about us because I'm out in the country on three acres of land by myself with two boys making $30,000. I'm a working class lady and I have high standards and I'm conservative because it's important to not just throw money at things, it's important the principles of liberty are important, liberty is more than just freedom where you can just do whatever you want but rather it's freedom and morality and I don't know just -- I just don't want to be forgotten about because other voices are so loud right now and I just -- I'm here too blue collar working class conservative, pro-life conservative, that's all.

SENATOR SHARON HEWITT: Thank you very much! Thank you! All right, that concludes the public comments, I don't have any other cards -- are there any other cards or anyone else wishing to speak before this committee hearing? I'd like to first of all thank those of you that came tonight, I think we had a great discussion, very thoughtful input, you were very attentive and I appreciate that very much. To the Legislators, thank you very much for traveling here to Shreveport, I appreciate your commitment to this process and I bid everyone's safe travels. We have our website address on the board; hopefully you've seen that, if you have questions that would be a way to reach us and ask questions and also see, again everything that we will be posting will be on that website. So with that, Chairman Stefanski moves that we adjourn, meeting adjourned. Thank you!

[OVERLAY]

[02:47:04]

TRANSPERFECT

I, Anders Nelson, hereby certify that the document "F844314-louisiana-redistricting-2021-shreveport" is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, a true and accurate transcription from English to English.

Anders Nelson
Project Manager

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