[BACKGROUND CONVERSATION 00:00:00-00:30:00]

SHARON HEWITT: If you would please take your seats, let's get started.

[BACKGROUND CONVERSATION]

SHARON HEWITT: All right. Thank you all very much. Good evening, and welcome to the Joint Senate and House Committee on Governmental Affairs. Before we get started, just a reminder to silence your cellphones, so that we don't distract from any of the presentations or the testimony. I also want you to be aware that this meeting is being live streamed and recorded. I'm Senator Sharon Hewitt, Chairwoman of the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee, and sitting next to me is Representative John Stefanski, who is Chairman of the House and Governmental Affairs Committee. We'd like to welcome all of you, those of you who are here with us in Alexandria and those of you who are watching on the Internet. This is our fourth of ten public meetings of the Joint Committee of Senate and Governmental Affairs and House and Governmental Affairs. The two committees and our staffs have come together to provide you with information regarding the redistricting process. I want to give a special thanks to LSUA for hosting us in this beautiful facility, although the road

Hearing Exhibit
PR-41
3:22-cv-00211-SDD-RLB

1 construction made it a little tricky to get to the
2 building, but you were very helpful with lots of
3 student guides and directing us, and so, before we
4 proceed, I'd like to invite the Chancellor of LSUA to
5 say hello to us. Mr. Paul Coreil, Chancellor of LSUA.
6 Yes, sir.
7 PAUL COREIL: I want to welcome everybody here.
8 We're really honored to have you. This is such an
9 important task that our legislature has and I know
10 they want to get a lot of public input on this
11 important task. It's done only every 10 years, so
12 thank you all for all of your service, all of the
13 elected officials, both the Parish officials and the
14 City Officials as well. We do apologize for the
15 construction issues, but I want to tell you, I'm
16 going to thank you all for it because we got funding
17 from the legislature to do it, and we've been waiting
18 15 years for it. So, we celebrate the mud and the
19 dust right now, so thank you very much. We really
20 appreciate it because our students were having a lot
21 of problems with flooding on the campus. I do want to
22 introduce two other higher education leaders in the
23 community. Dr. Jimmy Sartell is here from Central
24 Virginia Technical Community College. Most people
25 know Jimmy, and he does an outstanding job, and we

have a brand new President at Northwestern State University, Dr. Marcus Jones, and he's here, and we really welcoming Marcus too. You've been the President for 24 hours now. Well, we really look forward to working with you, and I can tell you, Jimmy, Marcus, Rick Brewer at -- I think it's Louisiana Christian University now. We work very, very closely together in helping our students reach their potential, and that's the only way to do it. We got to work together. We're all in the same mission area, so thank you all for being here and if we can ever accommodate meetings in Central Louisiana to get people from North and South together. This place is open to you all any time, so thank you all very much.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you very much, Chancellor. All right. At some point, early next year and prior to the next session, the legislature will call our sells into special session for the purpose of redistricting the House, the Senate, the Congress, the Board of Secondary and Elementary Education, the Public Service Commission, and possibly the Courts.

[00:35:09]

It is our goal and our responsibility to redraw some of these districts in particular Congress in the PSC prior to the 2022 fall election cycle. The

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

public record. Finally, your voice, your 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 to use it as we begin the process of drafting redistricting plans. I can assure you that as Chairwoman of the Senate Committee, your ideas and 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 haven't completed a witness card, please fill it out and remember to give it to a member of our staff, and those are these cards that you found on the table outside when you came in. In an effort to give everyone a chance to speak, I'd like to ask that you keep your comments to five minutes and relevant to our purposes today. In addition, I'd like to remind the audience that this is a legislative hearing and ask that you not applaud or speak out during the hearing. Again, thank you for your presence and your interest in this very important process. So, with that, Madam Secretary, would you please call the roll for the Senate?

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Chairwoman Hewitt.

SHARON HEWITT: Present.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Vice Chairman Milligan.

VICE CHAIRMAN MILLIGAN: Present.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Senator Allain. Senator Foil. Senator Harris.

SENATOR HARRIS: Here.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Senator Price.

SENATOR PRICE: Here.

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

SENATOR WOMACK: Present.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Okay. That is six in a quorum for the Senate. Ready for the House?

SHARON HEWITT: Yes. If you would call the roll for the House, please.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Okay. Chairman Stefanski.

JOHN STEFANSKI: Present.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Vice Chairman Duplessis.

VICE CHAIRMAN DUPLESSIS: Present.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Representative Bouie.

REPRESENTATIVE BOUIE: Present.

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

REPRESENTATIVE DESHOTEL: Present.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Representative Farnum.

REPRESENTATIVE FARNUM: Here.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Representative Gadberry.

REPRESENTATIVE GADBERRY: Here.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Representative Hodges. Representative Horton.

REPRESENTATIVE HORTON: Here.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Representative Ivey.

REPRESENTATIVE IVEY: Here.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Representative Jenkins.

REPRESENTATIVE JENKINS: Present.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Representative Johnson.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON: Present.

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

REPRESENTATIVE LYONS: Present.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Representative Magee. Representative Newell. Newell.

REPRESENTATIVE NEWELL: Here.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. Representative Thomas.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS: Here.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. And Representative White.

REPRESENTATIVE WHITE: Present.

LAUR-EN CIMINO: Present. We have a quorum.

SHARON HEWITT: All right. Thank you. In addition to those members of the committee, we also have some other members who are here with us probably from the local area, and I want to make sure we introduce them as well. We have Senator Louie Bernard, Senator Heather Cloud and Senator Jay Luneau. We also have a couple of former senators with us. I'd like to recognize, if you guys will just sort of wave or stand up. Senator Gerald Long and Senator Edwin Murray. Thank you all very much for being here and being part of this.

[00:40:00]

I'd also like to introduce our staff, and we have a significant presence of staff with us, our staff for the Senate, Yolanda Dixon, Secretary of the Senate; J. W. Wiley, our First Assistant Secretary; Sue Morain, Second Assistant Secretary; Matt DeVille, our Committee Attorney; Laur-en Marinovich, our Secretary of the Committee; Dr. William Blair, our Demographer; John Keller, our Sergeant at Arms, in the back; Luis Corral, our Assistant Sergeant at Arms. And now, I'd like to turn the mic over to Chairman Stefanski to introduce his members and former members of the House along with his staff.

JOHN STEFANSKI: Thank you. I want to take this opportunity to just welcome everybody here. Thank you for coming. As the Chairwoman said, this is an extremely important part of the process. We listen to what you're saying. We ask you to participate. We do all this for a reason. Public participation is essential in this process, and so, I encourage you to come up to give testimony, to tell us what you want these districts to look like, and I encourage the members of the committee, as I know they will, to listen and take those things into consideration when we finally get to the point where we're drawing this map. So, thank you. We also have a few members who are here, not on the committee. First, we have Representative Rodney Schamerhorn, Representative Charles Owen, Representative Lance Harris, Representative Gabe Firment, and Representative Rhonda Butler. Hopefully, I didn't miss anybody. I also want to introduce our staff who is -- who do I miss? Representative Ed Larvadain. I apologize, I didn't see it. And Representative Marcus Bryant. He's hiding in the back. I'm going to go ahead and introduce our staff as well. We have House and Governmental Affairs Senior Analyst, Patricia Lowrey-Dufour. We have House and Governmental Affairs

1 Attorney Lorrainne Lucas. We have House Staff
2 Attorney Catherine Zeringue. We have the Committee
3 Assistant, Rosie Ammersbach. And we have Governmental
4 Affairs Division Director, Bryan Vincent. Chairwoman
5 Hewitt.
6 SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, Chairman. And then,
7 last but certainly not the least, the guys that are
8 sort of making all the technology work for us here
9 today, the Legislative Communications Office. We
10 appreciate you all and the work that you've done.
11 That's headed up by our Chief Communications Officer,
12 Cory Stewart; our Senior Digital Media Specialist,
13 Guillermo Cordon; our Communications Technician,
14 Steven Moe; our audio and video Engineer, Anthony
15 Long; Photographer/Videographer, Eric Schiele; and
16 Visual Design Specialist, Jeremy Hall. So, thank you
17 all very much, and I hope to the members of the
18 public, you see the significant presence we've just
19 brought the Capital to Alexandria, and so, with that,
20 I'd like to -- excuse me. One second.
21 JOHN STEFANSKI: Chairwoman Hewitt, I did forget
22 one. We have House Sergeant at Arms, Danny Leming.
23 He's here as well. Thank you. And Representative
24 Jeremy LaCombe. Jeremy is there in the back. Good to
25 go.

SHARON HEWITT: All right. So, as you can see the capital has descended upon Alexandria, and so, we're here and we're going to move to the next step now, and that is to begin the staff presentation so that you'll understand kind of what the challenges for us in the redistricting process, and then you'll have an opportunity to speak. We're going to talk about the 2020 population and population trends, redistricting terms and concepts and law, the redistricting criteria, the malapportionment statistics and maps and the redistricting timeline. And so, with that, I will turn it over to our first speaker, our Demographer, Dr. William Blair.

DR. WILLIAM BLAIR: Good evening, members and the public. I'm here to provide a brief introduction to Louisiana's Census Population Data and Demographic Changes and Trends. Now, historically, the Census Bureau makes two releases of the census data to the country and to the state.

[00:44:57]

First is the apportionment data, generally released on December 31 of the census year. So that would have been December of 2020 if things were normal, and that is the data that is used to allocate congressional districts across the 50 states.

1 Secondarily, they release what we call the P.L. 94-
2 171 data which is what jurisdictions, states,
3 localities use to accomplish the redistricting every
4 10 years. That is historically released early spring
5 of the year after the census. So, I think February of
6 2021. Now, we're all clear that this is not a normal
7 time, normal decade in 2020. So, unfortunately, this
8 data was not released on this historical trendline.
9 Instead, the apportionment data was released on April
10 26 of 2021 about five months later than usual and the
11 P.L. 94-171 redistricting data was not released until
12 August and September of 2021, six to seven months
13 later. So, let's have a look at that apportionment
14 data. The April 26 apportionment data release was
15 4,661,468. This data includes 3,711 overseas military
16 and civilian personnel and family. When you redact
17 those 3,711 individuals, you get Louisiana's resident
18 population data, the 4,657,757. This is the data that
19 you'll hear a lot of very soon when we draw statewide
20 plans. This number is what we use to create the ideal
21 number from which we draw our districts. You'll get a
22 definition and an explanation of that fairly shortly.
23 You'll probably hear it in your sleep tonight later.
24 So, how do we compare the rest of the country?
25 Louisiana grew at 2.74% from 2010 to 2020. As you can

see by the second line, this is far slower growth than the United States on average of 7.35% and that number for the United States, that's 7.35% is 80 year low in growth for the United States. So, that is a severe lag for Louisiana. Furthermore, that southern regional growth are sister states in the South and some of the Midwest grew over 10%. So, this trend is not new, which you'll see fairly shortly that we generally grow at a slower rate than the rest of the country. So, let's have a look at that P.L. 94-171 data. This data is called the P.L. 94-171 data after the federal law enacted its standards. This is the population by race and ethnicity to jurisdictions around the state we use to conduct the redistricting. This is everyone from Congress to your local city councils. This time around, it was released on two different dates on August 12th and September 16th. The September 16th release was in an easy to use format available at the Census Bureau's website, which you see on that slide. So, anybody can go to that website and access that data in a very easy to use format, so you have access to the same information that the legislature does and your local governments. Next, we're going to look at Louisiana's population and what may have changed in that

population. This is the first of many color-coded maps you're going to see tonight, and generally speaking if it's red, you've lost population. If it's green, you've gained population, and this is the data from 2010 to 2020 numerically gains and declines. So, I think there are three main takeaways from this map. One, significant 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.

[00:50:03]

And then some more generalized gains in suburban areas around the state. Now, this map is going to look really similar to the next slide of four maps. This is the population trend data for the last 40 years in Louisiana, and there's a lot of similarities each decade. There are some idiosyncratic sort of differences in individual decades such as the lower left Hurricane Katrina effect from 2000 to 2010 and the more significant growth in the upper right between 1990 and 2000. Regardless of this sort of individual trends each decade, the overall story remains the same. Population gains in the north -- I mean, I'm sorry, population losses in the north. Population gains along the I-10, I-12 corridor, and

population growth in suburban areas. Now, let's have a look at more detailed information on Parish and cities census data. This is the largest numerical population lost parishes in the state from 2010 to 2020. Fairly distributed around the state with one significant absence which is the southeast portion of our state. The next slide will show you why. Here we see our southeast parishes significantly overrepresented and the largest numerical gaining parishes in the state from 2010 to 2020. Finally, here are the top 12 largest census places in growth or decline in the 2020 census. Now, I have two points to make when we see this last slide. The first, be advised that the Census Bureau reports race and ethnicity separately. Ethnicity is reported in two categories. Either you're Hispanic or Latino of origin or you're not. You can only have one response to that question on the census. Secondly, race is categorized by one of six broad categories White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander or some other race. Now, be aware that people are able to indicate multiple races when they answer the census. This can lead to hundreds of combinations. The data you see on the chart represents the

1 aggregation of that multitude of data. I'm sorry. A
2 complete description of the legislature's aggregation
3 decisions is available at our Redistributing website.
4 The document's name is Allocation of 2020 Census
5 Population for Database and Reporting. So, we've
6 collected all that diverse data and combined into
7 something that's more understandable and useful, and
8 that's what you see here tonight. The second point I
9 need to make is you need to be aware that the Census
10 Bureau made changes to the questions on race and
11 ethnicity for the 2020 census. The census believe
12 these changes produced a more thorough and accurate
13 depiction of race and ethnicity self-identification.
14 So on to the chart. First two sections show you the
15 racial and ethnic composition in our state in 2010
16 and 2020, and the bottom shows you the change between
17 the two decades. Again, there are probably three main
18 takeaways from this chart. Over 6% drop in the White
19 only population, significant increases in other
20 groups proportion of our population, and three a very
21 large increase in those self-identifying in the other
22 category. These would be individuals who reported
23 themselves to be white plus one other race being
24 Hawaiian single race or other race that is not black,
25 Asian or American Indian.

[00:55:06]

And I think the conclusion you can come to by looking at that chart is just like the rest of the nation, Louisiana has become more diverse. Now, I will turn it over to Catherine Zeringue to begin the discussion of redistributing terms and concepts. Catherine?

CATHERINE ZERINGUE: Okay. Guess not. Can everybody hear me okay? All right. So, this evening I will be discussing Redistricting Terms, Concepts and Laws. Again, my name is Catherine Zeringue and I am an attorney with the House of Representatives. Okay. So, what is redistricting? To really understand redistricting, there's two terms you have to know, apportionment and districting. While the terms are often used interchangeably, they are two separate concepts. Apportionment or reapportionment is the process of allocating seats in a legislature. For example, in the U.S. House of Representatives, the State of Louisiana is presently entitled to six congressional seats in accordance with the U.S. Constitution, in a formula established in federal law called the Method of Equal Proportions. Following the 2020 census, Louisiana is still entitled to those six congressional seats. Each seat represents a district.

1 A district is a geographical territory from which an
2 official is elected. It is now the responsibility of
3 the state legislature to redraw district lines in
4 accordance with 2020 census data. This process is
5 known as districting or redistricting. So, next
6 question. Why do we redistrict? Well, because the law
7 tells us we have to. There are many legal
8 requirements involving redistricting, both statutory
9 and constitutional. For example, Article III, Section
10 6 of the State Constitution provides a deadline to
11 complete state legislative redistricting. For this
12 decade, the deadline is no later than December 31,
13 2022. There are also statutes that contain
14 redistricting duties and deadlines applicable to
15 local governmental bodies, including parish governing
16 authorities, school boards, and municipal governing
17 authorities. In addition to the statutory and
18 constitutional provisions, there are two general
19 legal requirements that must be taken into
20 consideration when redistricting. They are Equal
21 Protection and the Voting Rights Act. So, who gets
22 redistricted? The state legislature is charged with
23 redistricting the State House and Senate, Congress,
24 the Public Service Commission, the State Board of
25 Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Courts.

1 So, the next question, how do we do this?
2 Redistricting is accomplished through legislation
3 like other legislation, it begins with a bill that is
4 introduced in either the House or the Senate.
5 Generally speaking, the bill follows the same
6 constitutional procedure and requirements like any
7 other bill that comes before the legislature. Local
8 governmental entities, however, such as parish
9 governing authorities, school boards, and municipal
10 governing authorities are not redistricted by the
11 state legislature. They are in charge of
12 redistricting themselves. Okay. So, state law. The
13 Constitution of Louisiana contains many requirements
14 relative to legislative redistricting. Article III,
15 Section 1 requires single member districts. Article
16 III, Section 3 provides for the maximum number of
17 members in the state legislature, 39 senators and 105
18 representatives, and as previously mentioned, Article
19 III, Section 6 provides a deadline for the
20 legislature to complete legislative redistricting
21 which in this decade is again no later than December
22 31, 2022. This provision also requires the use of
23 certain census data for redistricting. The census
24 population data use is the Public Law 94-171
25 redistricting data mentioned previously. Now, onto

Federal Law. Specifically, equal population or the one person, one vote concept. The starting point for the one person, one vote concept is the 14th Amendment, which states that no state shall deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws. This concept was further developed through a series of court cases in the 1960's, in which courts held that there must be substantially equal legislative representation for all citizens of a state, and therefore, a state must have legislative districts of roughly equal population. So, how is population equality measured? By determining ideal population. Ideal population is the total population of the jurisdiction divided by the number of districts.

[01:00:03]

Another important term that you'll have to understand to really grasp redistricting is deviation, which is the amount by which the district's population differs from the ideal population. Standards for deviation differ for congressional districts and state legislative districts. The courts have determined that congressional districts must have as nearly equal in population as practicable or in other words, the

1 deviation must be as close to zero as possible. A
2 state must make a good faith effort to avoid a
3 deviation, but if a state does have a deviation, it
4 must provide a legally acceptable nondiscriminatory
5 justification for that deviation. The population of
6 state legislative districts must be as substantially
7 equal as possible, which, as you all just heard, is
8 different from the congressional requirements. An
9 overall deviation of 10% or less is generally not
10 enough to make a prima facie case of discrimination.
11 However, this is not a safe harbor. A state may have
12 districts with a deviation of 10% or less and may
13 still be subject to a lawsuit. In Louisiana, we have
14 kept the deviation below plus or minus 5%. In the
15 case Reynolds v. Sims, the court provided that the
16 overwriting objective of redistricting must be
17 equality of population. Therefore, a state must be
18 able to support the need for deviation with a
19 justification showing significant or rational state
20 interest, a few are listed on the slide. And now,
21 finally to get to courts. Although the concept of one
22 person, one vote does not apply to judicial
23 districts, Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act does
24 apply. So, now I'll turn it over to my colleague,
25 Lorri Lucas to discuss Voting Rights Act.

1 LORRI LUCAS: Good evening. My name is Lorri
2 Lucas and I'm the Attorney for Housing Governmental
3 Affairs. Today, I'll be discussing discrimination
4 against minorities when we redistricting. There are
5 several legal considerations involved in
6 redistricting that one should be aware of. The 14th
7 and 15th Amendment, the Voting Rights Act of 1965,
8 and vote dilution issues in regards to racial
9 gerrymandering. I will now share a little bit of
10 background leading up to the Voting Rights Act of
11 1965. The equal protection clause of the 14th
12 Amendment prohibits states from purposefully
13 discriminating between individuals on the basis of
14 race. The 15th Amendment, adopted in 1870, declares
15 that the right of a citizen to vote shall not be
16 denied or abridged by the United States or the States
17 on the account of race, color, or previous condition
18 of servitude. The amendment was ineffectual after
19 adoption in eliminating the problem of voting
20 discrimination, and the Voting Rights Act was enacted
21 in 1965 as a means to ensure that all citizens have
22 the right to vote regardless of their race, color or
23 membership in a language minority. In this instance,
24 language minority groups would be considered American
25 Indian, Asian American, Alaskan Natives or persons of

Spanish heritage. Specifically, Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act prohibits any state or political subdivision from imposing any voting qualification, standard, practice, or procedure that results in the denial or abridgement of any U.S. citizens right to vote on account of color, race or status. Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act was amended in 1982 to clarify that a violation of Section 2 is established if, based on the totality of circumstances, it has shown that the election processes are not equally open to participation by members of a protected class in that its members have less opportunity than other members of the electorate to participate in political process and to elect representatives of their choice. The extent to which members of a protected class have been elected to office is one circumstance which may be considered. However, nothing establishes the right to have members of a protected class elected in numbers equal to their proportion in the population. In 1986, those amendments were reviewed by the supreme court in Thornburg v. Gingles. The court imposed three preconditions that a plaintiff must prove before a court proceeds to detailed analysis of a redistricting plan and to establish a prima facie case.

[01:05:06]

Those preconditions are the minority population is sufficiently large and geographically compact to constitute a majority in a single member district. The minority population is politically cohesive and that, in absence of special circumstances, block voting by the majority defeats the minority's preferred candidate. Once the preconditions are established, the court will then proceed to consider other objective factors in determining the totality of circumstances, 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 voting requirements or other practices to enhance the opportunity for discrimination. Denials of access to candidates relating process for members of the class, extent to which members of the minority group bears the effect of discrimination in areas like education, employment and health, whether political campaigns have been characterized by racial appeals, the extent to which members of a protected class have been elected, whether there's a significant lack of

1 responsiveness by elected officials to particularized
2 needs of the group, and whether the policy underlying
3 the use of the voting qualification, standard, or
4 practice, or procedure is tenuous. The points of must
5 show that the totality of circumstances will support
6 a court's finding that the contested voting scheme is
7 dilutive of the minorities electoral power. We will
8 now discuss briefly racial gerrymandering challenges.
9 When drawing the minority district to avoid a
10 violation of Section 2. The line drawer must take
11 care to not create a racial gerrymander that runs a
12 file of the equal protection clause of the 14th
13 Amendment. As stated earlier, the equal protection
14 clause of the 14th Amendment prohibits states from
15 purposefully discriminating between individuals on
16 the basis of race. A racial gerrymander is the
17 deliberate and arbitrary distortion of district
18 boundaries for racial purposes. A redistricting plan
19 that expressly distinguishes among citizens because
20 of race must be narrowly tailored to further a
21 compelling governmental interest. That means that the
22 plan or individual districts drawn were drawn
23 narrowly to satisfy compelling governmental
24 interests. What is a compelling governmental
25 interest? It will be considered limiting past

1 discrimination, avoiding retrogression, or avoiding a
2 violation of Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act.
3 These interests must be strongly supported in
4 evidence. This applies not only to plans that
5 expressly distinguish citizens because of race but
6 also to plans that although race neutral is on their
7 face inexplicable on grounds other than race. Courts
8 have said that the legislature is always aware of
9 race when drawing district lines just as it is aware
10 of age, economic status, religion and a variety of
11 other demographics. That sort of race consciousness
12 or race awareness does not inevitably lead to
13 impermissible race discrimination. So, race can be
14 considered, however race cannot be the predominant
15 factor in drawing a district. Critical to determining
16 the needs -- I'm sorry, the factors involved would be
17 the shape of the district, the regard giving to
18 traditional districting principles, and the
19 motivations that drive the line drawing decisions.
20 When a majority minority district is created it must
21 be created giving due regard to the traditional
22 districting principles. Otherwise, the district will
23 be subject to strict scrutiny. To avoid the pitfalls
24 of gerrymander, one must be aware of bizarre shapes,
25 drawing district lines that are reasonably compact,

not making race or dominant motivation and following traditional districting principles such as compactness, consanguinity, respect for political subdivisions, respect for communities of interests, maintaining traditional boundaries, maintaining core districts and protecting incumbents from contest with each other. I will now turn this presentation over to my colleague, Matt Deville, who will discuss the Redistricting Criteria.

[01:10:09]

MATTHEW DEVILLE: Good evening, everybody. My name is Matt DeVille. I'm the staff attorney for in the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee, and I'm going to be discussing the criteria for all redistricting plans that are submitted to the legislature for consideration. These criteria were adopted by the legislature during the 2021 regular session which wrapped up in June and is contained in Joint Rule Number 21, which establishes the parameters for any submitted plan. Some of these criteria will apply to all plan types, whether it be the State House or Senate, Congress, the BESE Board, the Public Service Commission, or the court system. Others are more plan specific, and I'll point those out as we go. We'll start off by looking at the

1 requirements that every plan has to beat. So, all
2 redistricting plans shall comply with all applicable
3 federal and state laws, including the Equal
4 Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment and the15th
5 Amendment of the United States Constitution, as well
6 as Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which
7 were just presented by my colleagues. All
8 redistricting plans shall be composed of contiguous
9 geography within the district, meaning that if you're
10 essentially trying to trace it with a pencil, you
11 wouldn't have to pick it up. You can't have an island
12 over here and a larger portion over here. All has to
13 be contiguous. All redistricting plans need to
14 contain whole election precincts to the extent
15 practicable. If a precinct must be divided, it shall
16 be divided into as few districts as practicable,
17 using a visible census tabulation boundary or
18 boundaries which can be something geographic like a
19 river or drilled down to the more granular level like
20 a census block, which is the smallest redistricting
21 building block that's available in the census data
22 set. All redistricting plans shall respect
23 established boundaries of existing political
24 subdivisions, which include parishes and
25 municipalities, and the national geography of the

state to the greatest extent practicable. However, this criterion is subordinate to, and shall not be used to undermine the maintenance of communities of interest within the same district to the greatest extent practicable. Continuing with some of these requirements that all plans must meet, all redistricting plans must utilize the P.L. 94-171 data released by the U.S. Census Bureau and validated through the Data Verification Program of the House and the Senate that validated data can be accessed by the public on the redistricting website. Anyone is free to submit a proposed plan, but it has to be submitted in a specific format in order to be processed, and that's what's known as a comma-delimited block equivalency file, which is a typical export format on publicly available redistricting websites. If you do choose to submit a plan, we encourage you also to include any additional information that could assist with its consideration, including rationale for the decisions made in the plan, maps, shape files, et cetera. As for some of that plan specific criteria, each State House and Senate, Public Service Commission, BESE and Supreme Court plan must be a whole plan that assigns all the geography of the state. It's easy to draw a single

1 perfect district. The challenge comes in when you
2 need to assign all the surrounding districts to
3 accommodate it. These are all puzzle pieces and if
4 you change one, then the others have to change with
5 it. So, the plan must consider the whole geography of
6 the state. Continuing to focus on some specifics,
7 each redistricting plan for the State House and
8 Senate, PSC and the BESE Board must contain single
9 member districts and must contain districts that are
10 substantially equal in population, which for our
11 purposes means that it must be with at least within
12 plus or minus 5% of the ideal district population
13 figure, and they must give due consideration to
14 traditional district alignments to the extent
15 practical. Now let's talk about Congress, which is
16 subject to a different standard. Each redistricting
17 plan for Congress shall also contain single-member
18 districts, but the difference comes in when you talk
19 about population figures. Congressional districts
20 must be as nearly equal in population to the ideal
21 district figure as practicable. This is a much more
22 stringent standard than for state plans. For example,
23 the last time we did this in 2010, the congressional
24 plan deviation from the smallest district to the
25 largest was only 0.03% or 162 people, by comparison,

the 2010 State House plan deviation was about 9.89% or 4,268 people. And with that, I will turn things over to my colleague J.W. Wiley, who will begin the presentation of the malapportionment data.

J.W. WILEY: Thank you, Matt. Good evening, everybody. I'm J.W. Wiley. I'm the First Assistant Secretary of the Senate, and you have just been given a lot of words. I know you're excited about that, and so now we're going to move on to the color-coded graphs and numbers.

[01:15:11]

First, we will discuss the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, also known as BESE. This is a map illustrating the current eight BESE districts that were enacted by the Louisiana Legislature and pre-cleared by the U.S. Department of Justice after the 2010 census. When these districts were drawn back in 2010, the ideal population was 566,671. The new ideal population for each BESE district following the 2020 census is 582,219. That's a change of 15,548. This chart shows the current population in each BESE district and the difference from the ideal population. As you can see, districts three and eight in red are underpopulated, and districts six and seven, which are in green, are over

1 populated. This map illustrates the population
2 deviations with the dark red and dark orange colors
3 representing population below the acceptable range.
4 The orange representing the low side of the
5 acceptable range, the light yellow representing the
6 high side of the acceptable range, and the light and
7 dark greens representing over population. Now we'll
8 move on to the Public Service Commission which is
9 also known as the PSC. This is a map illustrates the
10 current five PSC districts that were enacted by the
11 Louisiana Legislature and pre-cleared by the U.S.
12 Department of Justice after the 2010 census. When
13 these districts were drawn in 2010, the ideal
14 population of the district was 906,674. The new ideal
15 population for each PSC district following the 2020
16 census is 931,551 reflecting an increase of 24,877 in
17 the ideal which is due to the population growth in
18 the state. This chart shows the current population in
19 each PSC district and the difference from the ideal
20 population. As you can see, district one in green is
21 over populated. This map shows the population
22 deviations with the yellow representing the low side
23 -- or yellow oranges representing the low side of the
24 acceptable range, the light yellow representing the
25 high side of the acceptable range, and the light

green representing over population. Now I will turn it over to my colleague Patricia Lowrey-Dufour to present the Malapportionment of Congress.

PATRICIA LOWREY-DUFOUR: Hi everyone, I'm Patricia Lowrey-Dufour. I'm the senior analyst for the house and Government Affairs Committee. Welcome tonight. We're going to be discussing the Malapportionment of the Congressional Districts. This is a map showing the current six congressional districts as they were enacted by the legislature and precleared by the United States Department of Justice following the 2010 census. When these districts were drawn in 2011, the ideal population for congressional district was 755,562. According to the 2020 Census Population, the new ideal of a congressional district is 776,292 or a growth of 20,730 per district. Now unlike the previous charts where we color coded the districts green and red to show under and over population, we did not color code this chart because I will tell you that based on the standard of absolute equal population among the districts, none, none of the congressional districts would meet the population's standard of as nearly equal as possible. Even though these deviations look fairly close, none of the districts would meet that constitutional

1 requirement of equal population. This map shows the
2 difference in each congressional district from the
3 ideal population of congressional district.
4 [01:20:02]
5 PATRICIA LOWRY DUFOUR: Again, with the dark
6 orange being the farthest from the ideal, the lighter
7 orange being still far from the ideal, with the
8 yellow being slightly above the ideal and the green
9 being well over the ideal population for a
10 congressional district. Now we're going to move to
11 the Malapportionment of the State Supreme Court.
12 Again, I want to remind you all that judicial
13 districts are not subject to the equal population
14 requirements that are contained in the constitution
15 for representative districts. The courts in that case
16 that was cited to you earlier decided that judges
17 serve people. They do not represent people. However,
18 when the legislature undertook a drawing of the
19 supreme court districts in 1997, this map represents
20 that drawing of the current seven supreme court
21 districts. If the legislature would have redrawn
22 those districts in 2010, the ideal for a supreme
23 court district would have been 747,624, and according
24 to the 2020 census, there would be 665,393. Again, if
25 the legislature would apply the equal population

standard to the supreme court, and I can tell you that when the legislature did draw these districts in 1997, they did apply that standard to that drawing, drawing the districts as nearly equal to the population at the time, which was slightly over 602,000 per supreme court district, and the districts had a mean deviation of less than 2%. This chart shows the difference in each supreme court district from the ideal district population. As you can see, there is a substantial variance between the districts and the population within each district, with a high of 838,610 in supreme court district number five and a low of 476,554 in supreme court district number seven. This map illustrates the deviations of those districts from the ideal population with, again, the dark red representing the furthest from the ideal population, the dark orange again below, the light orange still below, but perhaps within the separate range of plus or minus 5% and then the green representing above the acceptable range of 5% if the legislature would draw those districts substantially equal in population. Now I'm going to move to the Malapportionment of the House of Representatives. This map shows the current 105 House of Representatives districts as they were drawn by the

1 legislature following the 2010 census and pre-cleared
2 by the United States Department of Justice. When
3 these districts were drawn in 2010, the ideal house
4 district was 43,174. According to the 2020 census,
5 the ideal house population would be 44,359 or a
6 change of 1,185. And I would like to emphasize this
7 point. That means that every house district in the
8 state would have had to grow equally by 1,185 for
9 there to be no need for a change in the house
10 districts. Unfortunately, what this chart illustrates
11 to you is that did not happen. We have 29 house
12 districts that are well above the acceptable plus or
13 minus 5% of the deviation for a house district, we
14 have 39 house districts that are within that plus or
15 minus 5%, and we have 37 house districts that are
16 well below the acceptable deviation. This is a map
17 that illustrates statewide the deviations of those
18 house districts from the ideal population, and I do
19 want to point out to you that in the entirety of
20 North Louisiana, there are only four districts, four
21 that have populations substantially above the ideal.
22 The majority of the districts have populations that
23 are below the ideal population for a house district,
24 as well as those districts that are immediately
25

1 surrounding the area that we are currently in Rapides
2 Parish.
3 [01:25:01]
4 So, I'm going to move to a little bit more detail
5 about Central Louisiana and the house districts in
6 Central Louisiana. This map shows the districts both
7 within Rapides and immediately surrounding districts,
8 basically from the top of wind down to the bottom of
9 Evangeline and St. Landry. This is a chart of the
10 population of the districts in and around this area,
11 including the deviations of those districts from the
12 ideal. On this first half of the chart, you will see
13 that all but one district, district 25 which is in
14 the western half of Rapides Parish is under
15 populated, and this remainder of the districts in the
16 area, you will see that of the 21 house districts
17 that we've listed in this chart, 11 are severely
18 underpopulated. Five are underpopulated, but within
19 the acceptable plus or minus range. Two districts,
20 districts 25 and district 7 here in Rapides Parish
21 are slightly over populated, but within the
22 acceptable range, and three districts, two that are
23 based in Southwest Louisiana and one in Lafayette are
24 overpopulated. And this is a map that illustrates the
25 deviations of those house districts from the ideal

with the dark red and the dark orange colors representing population that is 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 and dark green representing population above the acceptable range. And again, I want to emphasize that there is no district in the immediate surrounding area where there is exceptional growth in population. It's a close up, including some boundaries of the districts immediately within Rapides Parish. Districts 25, districts 26 and districts 27 with the adjacent districts of district 24, and district 22, and district 28, and also district 38. And again, you can see that aside from districts 25 and districts 27 in Rapides Parish, they are all underpopulated. Now I'm going to turn it over to my colleague Yolanda Dixon, Secretary of the Senate, to discuss the Malapportionment of the Senate Districts.

YOLANDA DIXON: Good evening. Thank you, Patricia. So, this is a map illustrating the current configuration of senate districts that were enacted by the legislature and pre-cleared by the United States Department of Justice after the 2010 census. In 2010, the Senate ideal population for a district

was 116,240 and in 2020, after the 2020 census, the Senate ideal population is119,429, representing a change of 3,189. Again, this chart shows that there are 10 Senate districts in which the current population exceeds 5% above the ideal population, there are 14 Senate districts whose current population is within the deviation, and then there are 15 Senate districts in which the current population is more than 5% below the ideal deviation. This map is a color-coded map illustrating the population deviations for Senate districts with a dark red and dark orange colors representing population below the acceptable range, the orange representing the population on the low side of the acceptable range, the light-yellow representing population on the high side of the acceptable range and the light and dark green representing population above the acceptable range. And as you can see, there are no Senate districts in the north or in central that have had shown growth. Now, I'll discuss more about the Senate districts in your region. So, here are the districts from the map perspective and this includes some districts that maybe a little bit further north or east than what may be traditionally considered central Louisiana, but these districts are

1 included and you'll see as we go on that they're some
2 interplay that we'll need to happen among all the
3 districts as we seek to gain that population equality
4 in all the Senate districts.
5 [01:30:07]
6 And here are the population numbers from the
7 districts that we just displayed on the map. As you
8 can see, 10 of the 15 districts have lost population.
9 Eight of those districts are outside of minus 5%
10 deviation range. Five of the districts have gained
11 population. Districts 25 and 27 are heavily populated
12 and are above the 5% deviation. But again, what is
13 important to remember from the slideshow earlier with
14 a dark red and dark orange of all the Senate
15 districts, the Senate districts in the north are all
16 underpopulated and will have to grab population from
17 somewhere. Again, this is the Central Louisiana. Not
18 until we get down to districts 22, 24, 25 and 26 is
19 there any population gain. Most of the districts in
20 the central region are of the dark orange and red and
21 in fact, not until we get to district 25 is there any
22 population growth. Now focusing in on the Alexandria
23 area, you see here districts 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 and
24 35. And here are those districts in the dreaded color
25 combo showing population loss in each of the

1 districts I just mentioned in the Alexandria area.
2 That concludes my presentation, and I will now turn
3 it over to the chairwoman to discuss our timeline.
4 SHARON HEWITT: All right. Thank you, Ms. Dixon,
5 and thank you, staff, for a great presentation. So,
6 you'll see our timeline here. This is our fourth road
7 show, and we'll be continuing on November the 16th in
8 Baton Rouge; November 30 in Covington; Lake Charles,
9 December 15; New Orleans, January 5; Thibodaux,
10 January 11; and we are back, I think, in Baton Rouge
11 on January 20. And so, we've got a long way to go
12 still on the road show, but we do very much
13 appreciate the public input and your interest in this
14 very important topic. As we said earlier in the
15 presentation, we are cataloging all of the input that
16 we get and all the work that we're doing, all the
17 presentations that we make on this website, you can
18 go to the many of you are familiar with the
19 legis.la.gov website. There's a button on the left
20 that says redistricting, and you'll find lots of very
21 valuable information there. All right, so, now it's
22 time for you all to do the talking and we're going to
23 do the listening. Some of you have sent in comments
24 by email and members you have copies of all this in
25 your folders. I just want to, for the record,

1 acknowledge we did get input from James Henry, Sullen
2 Mickey, Chris Kaiser and the American Civil Liberties
3 Union of Louisiana, Tavares Swafford and the CenLa
4 Housing Alliance and David Cupp with the Walsh Timber
5 Company. So, that's the information that you have in
6 your file this last one will email you. It must have
7 come in after our 530 cut off. All right, so with
8 that, I'm going to open it up to members of the
9 public. If you haven't filled out a card, you'll need
10 to do that for me to be able to recognize you. We
11 have a microphone here at the center of the aisle,
12 and that will be where you'll go. And remember that
13 we want your comments to be relevant to the topic of
14 redistricting and to keep them under the five-minute
15 time limit so that everyone has an opportunity to
16 speak that wants to be heard tonight, okay? So, our
17 first speaker is Mike McCormick with the Sabine
18 Parish Police Jury. Yes, sir, welcome.
19 MIKE MCCORMICK: Well, thank you very much for
20 allowing me to speak. I'm from Sabine Parish, small
21 Parish, 18,000 people. My Senate district is 31 for
22 the biggest part of the Parish. My house district is
23 24. We live in a district where we have a lot of
24 other parishes that think like we do. We're a rural
25 Parish. We have rural ideals. We have rural needs. I

1 don't think cities like New York City could represent
2 us very well. I feel the same way in our district. We
3 need to be in a district where our district leaders
4 are people that live with us that think the same way
5 we do.
6 [01:35:04]
7 So that's my first point. I would like in our
8 redistricting. I'd like to continue to see us -- I
9 love to see us continue to be in 31 and 24, but I'd
10 like to see us maintain the relationship we have with
11 the rest of the parishes that's within this district
12 where we're small cities, we have same ideals, same
13 needs, and one representative or senator can know
14 what those needs are. The second point that I'd like
15 to make is that if you reconsider and I know you got
16 a lot of criteria and I have feelings for the
17 demographer, but we'd like for our Parish to be
18 represented in its entirety by one senator and one
19 house representative. Whenever you divide up a small
20 Parish like Sabine Parish into two parts, we have a
21 lot of meetings that go on within the Parish that our
22 representatives and senators attend. We don't feel
23 like we could get the same attention if we have two
24 or three different representatives or senators in our
25 region. They're there for us. We'd like to maintain

that relationship. So, that's my two points is try to keep us in a district that the other parishes within that district are like us. We'd like to keep our Parish in one part. Thank you very much for allowing me to speak.

SHARON HEWITT: Yes, sir. Thank you very much. All right, our next speaker, former Senator Gerald Long.

GERALD LONG: Good evening. It's good to be with you, and it's good to see so many familiar faces. I've had the privilege of serving with almost every person on that platform. And I want to tell you, they're good people. They're good people who take this very seriously, and I will tell you this when our representatives and senators speak together, we become a better group of people. So, I'm here to tell you that I'm very appreciative of the work that they do. For 12 years, I was privileged to serve as the State Senator for district 31. So, privileged to know that that torch was passed on to, I believe, one of the finest senators that we have in Senator Louie Bernard. But I would also tell you that each of these men and women bring something to the table. One of the first things I learned when I went to Baton Rouge is that there was 144 different senators and

1 representatives who came from a different
2 perspective. Who were raised differently, whose
3 values may be somewhat different. But I also found
4 there was a commonality and the commonality is that
5 they could work together for the good of the State of
6 Louisiana. This is a challenge to redistrict because
7 you're always trying to be sensitive to that
8 particular senator or representative who has worked
9 diligently for his people. In Senate district 31, we
10 are connected by our churches, by our schools, by our
11 universities. Interesting enough, in Senate district
12 31, we have the privilege of having two universities.
13 Now, keep this in mind. The largest employer in
14 Senate district 31 is Northwestern State University
15 with over 700, and when we think of the role of LSUA
16 and I want to tell you, I am so pleased with the
17 progress that is taking place at LSUA. And Jimmy,
18 your role in our technical and community college
19 cannot be overlooked. But I will tell you that good
20 government involves good people. We saw when the
21 pandemic hit. When COVID took over the activities of
22 our people, government became essential and important
23 and connectivity became the most valuable asset. I
24 have the privilege of working for Senator Cassidy.
25 I'd do one thing.

[01:40:00]

I travel to State of Louisiana. Tamara in Jennings, Louisiana will be my 70th broadband meeting. But think where we would be without the connectivity of our legislators to deal with the issues that involve our people. I want to concur with what Mike said, and that is keep these districts identical, keep these districts so that the people know who their senators and representatives are. Senator Womack, I would dare say that you represent rural people. Senator Price, I would say that the majority of your district is rural. Senate district 31, 73% of the people who live in Senate district 31 live in communities of under 5,000 people. We're rural. We're country, but we're okay with that because what keeps us together is one heart and one purpose, and that is to provide needs and services for the people that we represent. You have an incredible challenge in front of you. And I can simply tell you this. There are many people, including this person, who pray for you because I know you take this work seriously. But I want to remind you, as you begin to reshape and reestablish these districts, local people need to know who their senators are. They need to know who their

representatives are. And as close as you can maintain that you give our people a contact, I can tell you each one of you, especially if you represent rural people. Your wagon is always loaded because the districts are so spread out and the needs of the people have to be addressed. I thank you for the privilege that the Senate district 31 gave me for 12 years to serve. And I would ask that as we move forward and as we look at the future, the one thing that is most important is that people need to know that their representatives and senators care about them, and they're battling in Baton Rouge for the needs of our people. Thank you so much.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, Senator. We miss you. All right, our next Speaker, M. Christian Green with the League of Women Voters of Louisiana.

M. CHRISTIAN GREEN: Thank you. Good to see you all again. I'm up here from Lafayette. The League of Women Voters doesn't actually have a chapter in Alexandria or Central. We have Natchitoches, and we're thinking about moving a little bit east. So, if any of you all are interested, let us know. But I am the Vice President for the state organization. I'm also our voting rights chair, and I'm primarily here tonight to amplify something that my colleague Jared

1 Evans, will speak about. This is the league's role as
2 one of 17 organizations that have signed on to a
3 letter requesting that a second majority/minority
4 congressional district be created in Louisiana.
5 Louisiana has only elected four African Americans to
6 Congress since reconstruction. We think this is
7 wrong. As you've heard, all of the congressional
8 districts need to be reconfigured at this point. So,
9 we are hoping that Louisiana will take a bold step
10 towards justice and give us a second
11 majority/minority district. Now, that being said, I
12 mentioned that at our Lafayette meeting, some of the
13 process that went into this with the league, we had
14 to escalate this to the national organization because
15 we didn't have a policy in majority/minority
16 districts, except that we are to support policies
17 that further the goals of the Voting Rights Act of
18 1965, which we feel the majority/minority district
19 does. Then we had a state unanimous board vote in
20 favor of the majority/minority district. But then I
21 had to take the maps, and there are seven proposed
22 maps that I think will be conveyed to the legislature
23 and made public. I had to bring those back to
24 Lafayette. And what's interesting about that is we
25 have a little bit of a situation similar to what you

all will face here in that portions of districts may be reconfigured quite dramatically in Lafayette Parish, which is rather small. It unfortunately really cuts us along racial lines, and so we acknowledge the necessity of this. But we also do this with a certain spirit of lamentation because we feel this division of our Parish reflects some patterns of segregation that we quite frankly, didn't wish didn't exist. But many of us locally will work to address that. Here in the central part of Louisiana, most of the maps still have this part of the state sort of in three different congressional categories, but some of those may be more appealing to you than others in terms of facilitating rural interests.

[01:45:03]

There's a lot of discussion now about this I-14 being constructed and what that might have to do with the region. So, I urge you to consider all maps for the reconfiguration of congressional districts very seriously and to how they further your interests. I just want to close with a point on communities of interest, which has been an interesting concept to me in this whole redistricting process. This is the first time in my life I paid attention to

redistricting. So, I'm learning lots of new concepts. But what's really interesting is the Brennan Center for Justice has a chart that has the 24 states and who have language specifically defining communities of interest and how they define them. And they're the usual ones on race and culture and urban rural. But there are also some interesting ones in there, such as trade districts, environmental interests, and particularly with this influx of money that we're getting from things like the infrastructure bill and possibly build back better, there's going to be a lot of money coming into the state. So, districts will be challenged to think not only of racial and cultural interests, but also these other kinds of interests and how those actually might intersect with racial and cultural and historical interests. So, it's a very interesting pot of concerns that we have at a pivotal time in our state's history and economic development. And we hope that Central Louisiana will take every opportunity to improve its own development in the ways that reflect its values and hopefully support the majority/minority district. Thank you.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, Ms. Green. All right, our next speaker is Kevin Cavell.

KEVIN CAVELL: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Senators, legislators, I'm a resident of Central Louisiana. One of the things that we are proud of Central Louisiana is the fact our contiguous nature here in Rapides Parish. Unfortunately, during the 2010 redistricting, we wound up trying to get the ideal population of Senate districts. We have four Senate districts that have tentacles basically coming into our Parish. As of the recent survey, we're at 130,022 in population, which gives us approximately 2.93 representatives on the state level within Rapides Parish, we presently have three. We think that the 0.07% is a reasonable deviation from the ideal population for that. Our Senate situation, the ideal population is around 119,429. We're a little over on that. I feel as a resident of this area, that one Senate district would greatly benefit Rapides Parish. The fact that we have three universities, two major universities, a technical college here, which is equivalent to some of the major Metropolitan areas of the State of Louisiana. We have bustling industry here that we're trying to cultivate. Alexandria is the hub of the state. As mentioned before, with the project I-14 coming through, we have infrastructure, we have rail intermodal river traffic. We believe

that Alexandria, the Rapides area could be a growth opportunity for the next 10 years that would benefit not only just this area, but the state. To echo the sentiments of the police jury from Sabine Parish, we love the rest of Louisiana. We just want to make sure that Central Louisiana, we keep our contingency where we can grow as our community is now. We appreciate the job that all four senators have done in the region. It's just personal belief that I think one Senator in our Parish would be ideal not only for Central Louisiana, but for the State of Louisiana in its whole. Thank you all for the opportunity.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, sir. Our next speaker, Jared Evans with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund.

JARED EVANS: Good evening, members. Welcome to CenLa. I am Jared Evans and I'm an attorney with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF. I was born right here in Alex and I grew up right up the road in Natchitoches Parish where my parents and many of my family members still live in our beloved cane river. My testimony this evening will focus on compliance with Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act in our congressional map.

[01:50:02]

1 Because of the way our current congressional
2 districts are drawn, black voters in Louisiana have
3 less power and opportunity than our white brothers
4 and sisters to elect candidates that reflect our
5 community's needs. Under the current map, black
6 Louisianans have less influence over policies that
7 directly affect and impact our communities. As you
8 have previously heard with respect to Louisiana's
9 congressional map, LDF believes that Section 2 of the
10 Voting Rights Act likely requires the Louisiana
11 Legislature to draw two majority/minority districts
12 in the state's six district congressional map. Last
13 month, LDF along with 16 other civil and human rights
14 organizations submitted a letter that includes seven
15 different district map plans based on 2020 census
16 data in which two of the six districts are comprised
17 of a majority of black voters. In each of those maps,
18 the black community is sufficiently large and compact
19 to satisfy the first Gingles' precondition. Not only
20 do the maps include compact communities of black
21 voters as reflected by traditional redistricting
22 principles, but each of the seven maps is more
23 compact than the current map on at least two other
24 three widely recognized measures of compactness.
25 Second, there is ample evidence to show Louisiana's

1 well documented history an ongoing record of racially
2 polarized voting and elections across the state. Over
3 the past three decades, numerous federal courts have
4 found that racially polarized voting pervades
5 Louisiana statewide and local elections. Here in
6 Alexandria, black voters currently have no
7 opportunity to elect their preferred candidates to
8 Congress. The congressional candidates preferred by
9 Alexandria's black voters are consistently defeated
10 by the candidates preferred by white voters in the
11 fifth congressional district. Six of the seven maps
12 we included in our letter place Alexandria and one of
13 the two majority/minority districts. One of the
14 factors considered by Congress in the totality of the
15 circumstance's analysis are socioeconomic disparities
16 that can make historically disenfranchised racial
17 groups face extra barriers to voting. The
18 socioeconomic disparities among black citizens in
19 Louisiana are greater than almost anywhere else in
20 America. Consider the following statistics. According
21 to National Institute of Health, black Louisianans
22 are 60% more likely to have diabetes than white
23 Louisianans. Black women in Louisiana are four times
24 more likely than white women to die from
25 complications arising from pregnancy, and the infant

1 mortality rate for black infants is twice as high as
2 the rate for white infants. This is due to great
3 disparities in access to better healthcare. Black
4 Louisianans have accounted for more than 70% of
5 Louisiana's COVID-19 fatalities, while making up
6 only33% of the state's overall population. In
7 closing, a second majority black congressional
8 district would help close the representation gap and
9 create more equity in a state where racial
10 disparities exist in every socioeconomic category.
11 Black Louisianans continue to bear the brunt of
12 racial inequality in our state. We experience higher
13 unemployment rates and worse health outcomes,
14 particularly during the ongoing global pandemic. We
15 are incarcerated at higher rates than our white
16 neighbors. We have fewer economic opportunities and
17 experience poverty at higher rates than white
18 Louisianans, and our communities often experience the
19 most hardship with natural disasters like hurricanes
20 Laura and Ida strike. A second majority black
21 congressional district is essential to leveling the
22 playing field between black and white Louisianans and
23 to addressing racial disparities in our state. Not
24 only is it fair to draw a congressional map with two
25 majority black districts, but members, it is entirely

possible. A second majority of black district that encompasses Alexandria would keep the region's large black community intact and result in more equitable representation for black Louisianans. Thank you.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, Mr. Evans. Our next speaker is Buck Vandersteen.

BUCK VANDERSTEEN: Good evening. Buck Vandersteen, I'm a resident of this Parish, five minutes away, so for one time I can get home at a reasonable hour.

[01:55:02]

Thank you all for being here and I hope you all enjoy puzzles because this is really a puzzle to put together. But I do echo what previous speakers talked about of continuity. Knowing your representative having that interaction that rural understanding is extremely important because this is a rural community, a rural area from here north, we've been told from I-10 north, it's rural, and the basis of a large agricultural, forestry, natural resource industry is very important to have that rural connection. We've talked a lot of your positions in this redistricting, but I do want to echo strong support for a Congresswoman Letlow and her role in her very diverse district from Arkansas all the way

over to Mississippi, representing one of the largest diverse communities of all different agricultural products and citizens of the state. So, having a female congresswoman is certainly very helpful. As well as Congressman Johnson on the west side and all of the congressional members. I thank all of you who are here today and the fine work that you do in the legislature. It's not easy, but the progress that we've made in Louisiana is certainly great. But in closing, I encourage you to keep the districts as close as you can to being whole. Rapides has three representatives and four senators. If we break that up even further, the dysfunction, knowing who is your representative. When I talk to people about going to vote, they say, "Well, who are we voting for? We don't know who that representative or senator is." So, it's important for that continuity to keep the parishes, keep the local areas together. Again, thank you for all that you do, and welcome again to Rapides Parish.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, sir. All right, our next speaker is Doug Davis.

DOUG DAVIS: I can certainly see how difficult it is for you to do all of this with all of the different criteria. I would even say straitjackets

1 into which you have to fit in order to accomplish the
2 purpose. I was here 10 years ago at this hearing or
3 this roadshow, I believe it's called. I have lived as
4 an itinerant pastor all the way from Shreveport to
5 New Orleans over my career. I've been an election
6 commissioner for 16 years and I have been voting for
7 58 years. So, I want to indicate to you my deep
8 interest in this. I tried 10 years ago to speak about
9 the common sense and fairness that needs to prevail
10 in the redistricting process. One of the things I
11 noted a while ago was that race should not be a
12 predominant factor in drawing districts. It's
13 difficult to see how that can be true when we're
14 talking about majority/minority districts, because it
15 seems that the purpose of such district is to provide
16 a majority of people who are going to vote with
17 people like themselves. We're assuming that if you
18 are of a particular minority you're only going to
19 vote for people of that minority or majority. But
20 that's not necessarily the case. As I pointed out 10
21 years ago, the City of Pineville has had -- well, now
22 it's more than 10 years, the City of Pineville has
23 now had a black Mayor for 21 years very popular and
24 successful in a city that has a vast majority white
25 population. They have re-elected him because they are

able to see beyond skin color and I think that we should be able to trust people more in that direction. We've certainly come a long way from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who called for us to be color blind and to look at the content of character rather than skin color and yet everything we're looking at tonight seems to be statistics based on racial quotas and particular numbers.

[02:00:03]

I'm not particular at Senate districts 29 and 35. I am a resident of Senate district 29 and House District 26. The 29 senatorial district goes from approximately Ruston to Cheneyville, a far cry from when Senator Joe McPherson represented to Rapides Parish. We need to get back to more compact districts. In fact, to other criteria which you mentioned were geographic compactness and political cohesion. Now, how can all of these things fit together? If the district is shaped like a snake running from one end of the state to the other. It's certainly not politically cohesive or geographically compact, and the basic reason for drawing it that way is because of the effort to have a majority/minority district which ironically was came to be served by a white senator this last time around. What we need to

do, I think, is get away from segregated districts. By creating the 29th district as a majority/minority district, we created a majority white district parallel to it, district 35 running north-south. I call that segregated districts. We need to get away from that and recognize that the basic political subdivisions that people can understand and geographic compactness will enable people to know who their representatives and senators are. And instead of looking so much a race, let's look at the basic human dignity of all of us who can vote for anyone regardless of their color.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, sir. Our next speaker is Chris Henry.

CHRIS HENRY: Hello, everyone. Thank you for the opportunity to speak directly to the members of both committees. Thank you for everyone in the room here.

SHARON HEWITT: Come a little closer to the mic if you will so we can hear you better.

CHRIS HENRY: Hello, everyone. Thank you to all the members of both committees for having the opportunity to speak directly to you all. Thank you for everyone in the room for caring enough about our state to show up to voice your opinions on everything that is currently being done. Personally, I would

like to see a more-competitive races both nationally and statewide. I've submitted a congressional map with a single competitive district. We currently have none. My initial desire was to create three competitive districts, and although it is possible to create three competitive districts. I wanted to submit a map that actually had a chance of being accepted. I understand how difficult that change is. My hope is that my map will be given serious consideration to prove how beneficial having competition would be. Currently, of the 435 U.S. House seats, only 43 are considered competitive, none in Louisiana. Of the 39 state Senate seats, only one is very competitive. Of the 105 state House seats, only five are very competitive. Competitive races are an easy way for us to improve government. Nationally, the gridlock between parties is at an all-time high. The national approval rating of congress ranges from 15% to 20%. Public perception is that our elected officials only represent the desire of the party and not of the people. Non-competitive races combined with party primaries and many other states has created a form of democracy that elects people with the most extreme left and right views. Polarization has crippled our congress. Bipartisan action leads to

the inability to get reelected in noncompetitive districts. Competitive races are good for the people. In every district people in the minority party feel helpless and unrepresented. Why should they even vote when the party and power is already predetermined? Their representation is always someone who represents the majority party and not themselves. Competitive races would allow every member of the district to matter. Every vote would then matter because races would be decided by tens of votes instead of tens of thousands of votes. Competitive races are good for politicians. This will may be a little bit of a stretch and maybe not everybody would agree with this but currently it's easy to win reelection in non-competitive races. But then the politician can't get anything done. Their hands are tied and they can only do what the party is telling them to do. What's the purpose in that? Competitive races would free their hands for politicians to be able to make decisions for the good of everyone. It would allow them to work together and produce results. I believed that we can get back to a place where congress functions again.

[02:05:02]

Competitive races would also improve engagement for people wanting to run for office. This would

minimize the uncontested races that we have on the local races. Currently, it only makes sense to run if your party is in control of your district. How many people are forced to sit on the sidelines because their party is not in control of their specific district? Competitive races are good for our state. Competitive districts are valuable because there are so few of them as I've just talked about. This would bring in national investments from both parties, regardless of which party is in control in Washington the national parties would show attention and financial investments into that district. As compared to the 2011 congressional map, my map is more compact, more proportional better minority representation, less splitting, and less population deviation. My map includes two majority minority districts. Only five parishes are split across the entire map as opposed to the 15 on the current map. The population deviation across the districts was 27 negative 3, 5, 1, negative 38, and 7 with the maximum deviation across all districts of 65. I believe this one district could prove how valuable competition truly is. Thank you all for your time for listening and for considering the method I submitted.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, Mr. Henry. And just as a reminder to make sure that you've submitted it in the proper format so that we can accept it. I've been on the road, so I don't know if you did or you didn't but we just want to make sure that if you intend for it to be considered that -- we did. I'm getting a thumbs up from our staff. All right. Our next speaker, Ms. Gina Gore.

MS. GINA GORE: Thank you so much. I appreciate your time for all of you all and all the material that you all presented to us earlier, I did not know a lot of that. I've listened to a lot of people speak. I do think that people here at this meeting should be concerned about what goes on in central Louisiana. I do believe that with all my heart because you're having these meetings all over the state. So, talk about your area in your area. I of course, said I was going to talk about congress, and I am, but I do love my state rep. And I do think that he works very hard and I know he's not too far there on those numbers. I looked at it. So, I'd like for you to consider keeping him where he is. He does a great job and could be a preacher someday if he wanted to, kind of like Gerald Long. But on district five, congressional district five, I love my

1 congresswoman. We all know her situation. She's an
2 academic. She is not your typical congress person
3 that comes along. She worked very hard. I think the
4 most important thing I'm listening to races, and I've
5 been here 22 years and lived 71. No one knows that,
6 I've never told anybody my age. But in saying that I
7 have been around a while read a lot, listened a lot
8 and frankly, I think we've come a long way in race
9 relations. I hope we continue to grow. I've heard a
10 lot of different ideas and approaches on this. I
11 think if you search your heart and ask your Lord for
12 guidance, we can do much better. But in district five
13 I think the interests most of the employment to my
14 understanding comes from agriculture. Comes from the
15 medical community. And of course, we are blessed to
16 have a number of colleges universities to educate our
17 people and you can go back to school if you like. I
18 think we're fortunate that the congresswoman we have
19 right now understands all of that. But the main thing
20 is to me it's our community interests and you're
21 hearing that a lot and I've heard that a lot. I think
22 she understands all those community interests. I
23 think our district is drawn that way. So, I would
24 just ask when you're looking at that, to take that
25 into consideration.

[02:10:04]

We are rural. We are an agricultural district as well as, as I said, a medical. We are fortunate to have the rivers and the waterways. I'm very proud to be a member of our district, and I hope that you will keep the lines as close to what they are now as you possibly can for those reasons. Thank you so much.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, Ms. Gore. All right, our next speaker, Josh McAllister, Winn Parish President in the Louisiana Loggers Association.

JOSH MCALLISTER: I know you all travel a long way. I'm not going to keep you a long time. First of all, I just like to say thanks to all of you all for being here. I know this is a very tough position to be in, but this is the best group we've ever seen in Baton Rouge. All of you are included in all of your colleagues. We've truly accomplished some remarkable things over the last two years and we're very thankful for that both on the local government side and on the agriculture side. So, we're thankful for all of you just to reiterate some of what some have already said, we have three senators that represent Winn Parish. And all three of them are great. They represent our best interests. They have our best interest at heart. We have two representatives. But

one thing to keep in mind as the years progress over the next 10 years, if new people are elected, we lose out on a lot by having so many people represent our small parish. And I know it's tough when you're redistricting, but we lose out on capital outlay dollars. We lose out on a lot, that goes to Alexandria, Monroe, Natchitoches. We lose out on a lot of those funds and that's why our population continues to struggle or we continue to shrink and we continue to struggle. We're on an uptrend now in Winn Perish. I know the numbers don't show it, but we have stopped the sinking ship and we're moving forward. We're ticking upwards, but we ask you to keep that in mind. And once again, I just want to thank all of you all for your hard work. You're truly accomplish some remarkable feats over the last several years so thank you.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, sir. Our next speaker is Craig Smith with the Rapides Parish Police Jury.

CRAIG SMITH: Again, I'd like to thank you all. Welcome, Rapides Parish we're glad to have you all here. We're fortunate to have this group here to come down and discuss our redistricting. I'm currently Rapides Parish Police Jury. I represent District C, which is a rural area of the Rapides Parish. Rapides

1 Parish, we currently have three representatives with
2 the parish population of around 130,000 people. And
3 if you look back at the committee recommendations for
4 district, I believe you're recommending about 44,359
5 per district. So, if you look at those numbers, we
6 can only sustain about 2.93 house seats so that keeps
7 us about where we are if we could keep our districts
8 here. One thing that we have here in Central
9 Louisiana is we have a delegation of senators,
10 representatives and all who work together here in
11 Central Louisiana for the first time in many, many
12 years we see progress. I'd like to see us stay as
13 close as we can to the same districting here in
14 Rapides Parish. The committee has some guidelines
15 approved by legislation that recommends keeping
16 parish as whole when possible and not to diminish by
17 parish by dividing and going over and crossing over.
18 We'd like to keep our representative districts in the
19 same parish. I would like to not see us crossover
20 some of the districts and our representatives, keep
21 our three here in Rapides Parish and the same as for
22 house, Senate district number 32 which comes down
23 into my district. It serves the rural parish. I would
24 like to see that district stay as close as we can we
25 have good representation here in Rapides Parish so I

1 know you got a tough job as a police jury we're in
2 the same boat as you all guys. We're doing
3 redistricting but what we've got here in central
4 Louisiana with our representatives, our senate is
5 working for us. We've got a great group of people
6 that work together. I'd like to see us try to stay as
7 close as we can with the same district. Thank you.
8 SHARON HEWITT: Yes, sir. Thank you. Our next
9 speaker, Donald Kendrick Rapides District 27, from
10 Pineville.
11 [02:14:57]
12 DONALD KENDRICK: Well, I tell you, I'm following
13 a good guy, Craig Smith. Let me tell you about
14 myself. I'm a registered nurse and I worked in the
15 emergency room, and I thought I had a hard job
16 because sometimes I may have to deliver a baby,
17 fighting a lady that's pooped on herself and then
18 while giving blood. But when I saw all these maps,
19 your job is hard. You have to take a balloon and then
20 blow it up inside another balloon. Inside another
21 balloon. But then to realize that you got too much
22 air in the first balloon, you have to take it out.
23 So, I feel for you and thank you guys for doing what
24 you do. But I'm going to talk about what Craig Smith
25 said. In Rapides Parish, we have good representation,

and I understand that you're going to have to stretch out a little bit, but when you stretch out a little bit, you only go onto take the edges of another parish. And I think that we alienate those few people who are dissimilar from the parish that we're in. So, I just ask that you guys consider the cultural aspects, the populations that are served whenever you have to move into another parish by just a little bit. I think that when you take a sliver, you rob those people of representation because they're dissimilar from the parish that they're in. And Rapides Parish and Avoyelles Parish, we have -- I'm not very eloquent. We have rednecks and we have Cajuns and Avoyelles Parish. And if we mix them together, sometimes we don't get along, but we'll try. So, I'm just asking, I know that you guys have to stretch some, but when you stretch, keep in mind there's cultural differences and educational differences, and to paraphrase Rapides Parish is not broken so let's leave it alone. Thank you.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, sir. All right, our next speaker, Mayor Gail Wilking, from the Town of Ball.

MAYOR GAIL WILKING: I've whipped him before and I'll whip him again. His mother would be very proud

of him as I am. See these little cards right here? Right there? That tells you where you are. Congress, representative, Senate, BESS board, everything. I don't want to have to have mine redone, okay? It costs a lot of money to the police jury to redo these cards. So, you all have all said what you need to say. It's all been said, pro, con, I'm saying that most of the times -- Mike Johnson, put that phone down. He takes pictures of me everywhere I go. Oh, he's timing me now. Most of you know me as the mayor that comes up and says, I want your money. That's true that's not changed since I will make you remember that very soon. Anyway, I'm very proud of our representation, Rapides Parish. Everybody has said all the good things to help you understand. We've got great people representing us, okay? The Town of Ball has gotten since I've been mayor the last two years on the 26th, God has really come to our rescue. You all know the history of the Town of Ball most of you. God has brought us a long way. These good people here have gotten the Town of Ball more money to help us grow and move forward than ever before in the history. Even my friend Senator Luneau over there who says we're just friends and not have a letter behind our name. But anyway, that's the truth.

He's my friend. So is Mr. Louie Bernard and I adore Mike Johnson. I even pretty crazy about [INDISCERNIBLE 02:19:15] I can't forget you either. But listen guys, the fact is leave us alone, all right? We liked like it the way we are. You all go to Lafayette or somewhere else and fool around with all them leave us like we are. We're happy, we're good. I think that's all I can say. Did you get my message? Leave us alone. That's it, thank you.

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you, Mayor. All right, our next speaker is Mitzi LaSalle from Alexandria.

[02:20:00]

MITZI LASALLE: All right, great evening, everyone. Mitzi LaSalle, just a concerned citizen from the city of Alexandria, a former councilwoman here in the city of Alexandria. My concern is that I just want you guys to consider having the representation that the citizens feel that they have access too, that they have the same views with, that they can have easy access too. Being a former elected official that was one thing that I know that was absolutely important to my constituency is that they had access to me. They were able to come to my office. They were able to meet me in different places. And we just want you guys to take a look at

all of the lines that you're drawing for the congressional districts that we have someone that represents the interests of the entire population, which is hard, you're not going to please everyone. Everybody is not going to agree. But if you have some individuals and have those lines drawn where there's a possibility that those of us that are going out to pull that lever for a particular person that it is someone that shares some of our same interests and that we can communicate with. And that they will be able to compromise with us just as we will have to compromise with them. I am a proud mother of four, grandmother of which, hate that word, but anyway, of five little ones in a community and they are growing up here. And folks, we want to be able to have representation in our community that our children can look up to, that our children can look up to them and say, "Hey, one day I could be up there as well." And it's a big job for you guys, thank you so much for putting on this road show and being able to be available for the citizens, average citizens just like me to come before you and to be able to share our views and for you guys to consider them and just know it's a tough job. We definitely appreciate all of you for stepping up to the plate. I know that it's

not always easy, but thank you so much for sacrificing yourselves and being available for your constituency. But I ask you on the behalf of just an average Alexandria citizen, that when you all are considering and drawing these lines. Yes, do look at the population. If it happens to be based on race, sometimes it is. If it happens to be based on collective interest certain education levels, certain the college or universities that people attend, certain religion that people serve and make sure that those lines in those communities are equitable in those areas and where the individuals that are being represented that they feel as though they have someone that is truly representing their interests. As a woman, I want somebody to consider equal pay for women. I want you to look at the unemployment rate and try to figure out how it is that we can have more skilled labor in our communities. And when you're looking at drawing those lines, look at the communities and the people in those communities that represent some of those same interests. Thank you.

SHARON HEWITT: Yes, ma'am. Thank you. The next card I have said they do not want to speak but they submitted a written comment. It's Chuck Wilking, if I can paraphrase, it basically says I agree with the

mayor. All right, our next speaker is Jonathan Hirsch, the Vernon Parish Democratic Party Executive Committee.

JONATHAN HIRSCH: Good evening. Thank you for your time. This is nice to be able to speak with you all and tell you all a couple of things from Vernon Parish. I'm rather new because I served in the army for 28 years, went around the world, retired, came here. In Vernon Parish we got some problems and there are some problems in Louisiana and you all may not even be seeing them. Out of a population of about 4.3 million people in Louisiana? We have 100,000 people who just didn't register to vote. They have decided that the system does not work for them and so there was an economist who said "It takes some effort to get educated, to register and to go vote.

[02:25:05]

And if you think that your vote doesn't matter, you're not going to do it. They think, well, in the big picture those people are just 100,000 people. But when you get it down to the small level, we got a little town called Evans. And Evans has some seniors who could have been voting in the election this Saturday for their constable. Out of the four seniors who could have voted, three of them registered, one

didn't, why? Because he said it just doesn't matter. They're going to elect who they're going to elect and I don't have a real say in it. And so, I agree with young Mr. Henry in saying that what you really need to do is take hold of this historic opportunity that you've got to make competitive districts everywhere, in the house, in the senate, in the congress, and more importantly down at the police jury level. When we get people who really believe that their vote is going to make that difference for who gets contracts from their parish and is going to have some real effect, which roads are going to get paved and which ones are going to be left dirt. You're going to have those 100,000 people register. So, second issue that we got is perhaps some hollow districts. You got some districts that have incarcerated populations or populations of people who just can't vote, and yet they get counted for proportional representation purposes. So, you get an under represented population or an overrepresented population. And what that leads to is safe seats. And when you have safe seats, you get representatives who are about as reliable in being responsive to their constituents as a [PH 02:27:22] saint's receiver on third-down. So, I want you, if possible, to get down to the weeds and please

make all the districts as competitive as possible given all the rest of the parameters that you've got. Once you go for competitiveness, all the rest of the things if you take a look at the numbers and there's a couple of high-speed computer programs that allow you to crunch those numbers, it looks like it works out as far as all the rest of the representative type categories fall out. But in the end, what you really want is representatives who represent you whether you voted for them or not, representatives who will respond when you present them with an issue whether you voted for them or not. And the way to get that is through creating competitive districts. And the truth is, like in the army, we all wore green, we all bleed red. Here in Louisiana, everybody votes, everybody bleeds red. So, all the rest of the stuff goes to one side and you just represent the people who are in your district. Way to do that is through competitive district. So, the watch phrase for the next, however long it takes, is going to be no safe seats. We should have no safe seats and it's a hard thing for you all to draw lines which are going to make it so that you're going to have to work harder to get to your reelection, but I ask you to do the hard right over the easy path. Thank you.

SHARON HEWITT: Yes, sir. Thank you. Our next speaker is Herbert Dixon from Alexandria.

HERBERT DIXON: Good evening. My name is Herbert B. Dixon Sr. and I'm a lifelong resident of Rapides Parish in Alexandria, Louisiana. I want to welcome the members of the Senate and House Governmental Affairs Committee to Central Louisiana. I am married to Janet Dixon and we have five children and six grandchildren with an additional grandchild due in January of 2022.

[02:30:00]

I graduated from Peabody High School, now Peabody Magnet High School, which is the historical black high school in Alexandria. I received my bachelor's and master's degree from Southern University in Baton Rouge. I received 30 hours above the master's degree from Northwestern State University. I taught civics and geography at both in high school in Alexandria for six years, and I was employed by the Louisiana Federation of Teachers as a staff representative for 24 years. I served as an elected member of the Rapides Parish School Board for 15 years. I'm a member of Zion Hill Church Family in Pineville, Louisiana. At Zion Hill, I'm the chairman of the Governmental Affairs Ministry. I'm a member of the

first African American Greek fraternity established in the United States, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, which was also the fraternity of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. And I'm a Southern University alumni member. Under full disclosure to this joint committee, I've been where you are and I have the T-shirt to prove it. And it's plane right there, right? Okay, see that? And let me read this matter, Chairlady. House and Governmental Affairs 2011, Representative Rick Gallow, the Chairman; Representative Marc Smiley, Vice Chair; Representative Taylor Barra; Representative Jared Brossett; Representative Patrick Connor; Representative Craig Chroma; Representative Mike Donahue; Representative Herbert Dixon; Representative Brett Guyman; Representative Cameron Henry; Representative Girod Jackson III; Representative Rosalind Jones Lewis; Representative Nancy Landry; Representative Tony Ligi; Representative Nick LoRusso; Representative Erich Ponti; Representative Steve Pugh; Representative D. Richard; and Representative James Smith. Now, some of the staff people I work with a year, but I see some new faces over there, so I'm not going to call those names. The district that you currently represent I am proud to

say that I helped draw the line. During the time of the last census and redistricting, I served under a majority Republican House Legislature, and the chief executive office was occupied by Governor Bobby Jindal. As I stand before you, I truly know the task before you. We were able to finish the redistributing process with minimal push back. Several things that we were able to achieve for central Louisiana included one, establishment of a majority/minority senatorial district, Senate district 29 by Senator Luneau. Two, we were also able to create House district 23, a majority/minority district in the Nakadish area. And three, locally, we were able to establish all three House seats with the geographical boundaries of Rapides Parish. I stand before the joint committee to strongly encourage you to continue the creation of the majority/minority district that represents Central Louisiana. I also request the sincere consideration of the joint committee in creating a second majority/minority congressional district. In my community of similar interests, there should be a congress person that understand the importance of a $1.2 trillion infrastructure bill that would create vast opportunities for Central Louisiana and our state, according to Republican U.S.

1 Senator Bill Cassidy, one of the chief architects of
2 the bill the $1.2 trillion infrastructure Bill signed
3 by President Biden would do the following. One, $6
4 billion would be allocated to Louisiana for roads and
5 bridges for the first five years of the rollout.
6 Think what this would mean for Gilchrist Construction
7 Company, Diamond B Construction Company, TL
8 Construction, Madden Construction Company and all
9 other local contractors in our area. Two, the bill
10 would create tens of thousands of new jobs.
11 [02:35:00]
12 Three, the $1.2 trillion infrastructure bill
13 authorized the creation of an I-14 corridor that runs
14 through from Georgia to Texas. This corridor would
15 include Leesville and Alexandria. Four, provide for
16 flood mitigation. Five, provide for new ports. Six,
17 coastal restoration. Seven, broadband for rural areas
18 of our state. In the Alexandria region we should have
19 a U.S. Congress person that represent our community
20 interest. Every Louisiana U.S. House Congressional
21 member voted against the $1.2 trillion infrastructure
22 bill, except one. That one House Congressperson
23 represented the community interest of South Louisiana
24 and represented a majority/minority congressional
25 district. In a state with such a large minority

population, we should be able to create a majority/minority congressional district in Central and North Louisiana. I encourage this body to do so. At the conclusion of this redistributing process, one of three things could happen. Number one, a challenge to the process under section two. Number two, a veto by the governor of Louisiana. And three, we can all high five. We've done our job well. It will be on the news and we all be proud of ourselves. Thank you for allowing me this come in.

SHARON HEWITT: Yes, sir. Thank you. And I apologize for not recognizing you earlier as a former state rep. So, thank you for that. Thank you for bringing the T-shirts. You've planted a seed with the rest of my team now. Okay, our next speaker, we're down to our last three cards. I appreciate your patience. Our last speaker, Tavares Swafford with the CenLa Housing Alliance and the Power Coalition.

TAVARES SWAFFORD: Hi, my name is Tavares Swafford. I am the President of the CenLa Housing Alliance. I represent eight parishes around Central Louisiana. And your job is hard, my job is hard too. We have a lot of issues that we face particularly since we're going to talk lines, we'll talk about Alexandria. If you guys are familiar with Alexandria,

we're comprised of five districts. Districts one, two and three look nothing like districts four and five. However, the difference would be resources and availability of access to their people that they represent. More than likely, you guys heard about this area called Johnny Downs. They have a baseball field out there where Dixie League plays. They spent $7 million against a $1.1 million insurance coverage. So, in essence, what I'm saying is that, the insurance adjuster adjusted the property at 1.1 fix. Now, they invested another 7 million into that property in the midst of having a bridge and another district being down for five years, literally a bridge five years, $2 million fix, but we're talking baseball. We have high ends of poverty, poverty as we all know, is the nucleus of crime. Crime emerges from poverty. So, what I'm proposing is that there is an organized oppression that takes place in redistricting and its process previously during 1898 to 1950, there was a confederate pension plan. There are several families that have been very prominent in the local area whose names appear on that role. Unfortunately, those people have used their power or their accruement of power to draw a line around our city that would indicate one, two and district three

to be not dimmable for resources that four and five have. $7 million for ballpark or a program in districts one, two or three at the parks for the children. That money actually came out of a capital budget that was supposed to go around the different parks. There was an $8 million cup on it they took six. So, all the other parks in Alexandria and the other districts got to split what was left with, I think another department. What I'm saying here is that they drew the district lines wrong. I'm asking that you guys don't. Thank you.

[02:40:11]

SHARON HEWITT: Thank you very much, sir. Lisa Tomkies, Power Coalition. I'm sorry, Lisa, you have to pronounce your name correctly for me.

LISA TOMKIES: Good evening. You pronounce it correctly just like you did in Shrevewood and Monroe.

SHARON HEWITT: I'm trying to get better and your printing is much improved. I just want to tell you.

LISA TOMKIES: Thank you so much, I took my time. I thought about it again. And thank you so much for having me. Good evening, Madam Chairman, Mr. Chairman, my name is Lisa Tomkies and I'm a resident of North Louisiana, and I'm here on behalf of the Power Coalition for equity and justice.

[BACKGROUND CONVERSATION]

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. Power Coalition and our partners have been following this roadshow across the state to make it clear that we expect maps and political districts that are competitive and ensure that minority communities have the opportunity to elect a candidate of choice. In April and May of 2021, Power Coalition Partners conducted a representative survey of about 1,500 people of all demographics in Louisiana. And we found that 69% of survey respondents support redrawing these congressional districts in a fair and transparent way so that every person has equal representation and that includes 70% of the white respondents. Drawing fair and equitable maps that return power to minority communities has been taken from and is not a radical act, but is a necessary step towards creating a fair Louisiana. I'm concerned that in my beloved State of Louisiana that has historically not submitted maps that uphold racial equity standards, that with the [PH 02:42:36] Shelby

Court decision, our minority communities are at further risk of having their voting power and voices diluted. I ask that when you are drawing these maps, these districts, you uphold standards of equity and do everything in your power to keep communities together and not drop districts that crack or pack minority voting power. See you in Baton Rouge. Thank you.

SHARON HEWITT: I'll be there. Thank you. All right, our last speaker, unless anybody else has any other cards, but this is the last card I have of the night. Evelyn Tebow from Alexandria.

EVELYN TEBOW: Good evening to the members of the committees and to everyone. My name is Evelyn Tebow, and I live in Alexandria. I'm here tonight because of everything that's been part of my life for 75 years. And everything that has been part of my Louisiana ancestry for hundreds of years and everything that I hope for the future of my home state. I'm here tonight because I was born and raised in Alexandria. I lived here until I was 18 and returned here when I was 67. In between, I lived in San Antonio, Boston, Berkeley, the Washington DC area, Jackson, Mississippi, and New Orleans and then I finally really came home to Alexandria. My Southern small

town view of the world was greatly expanded with other ways of thinking and living. My circle of friends and co-workers included people who were poor and people who were rich and people in between. People who were Hispanic and people who were African American as well as people who were white. In short, I became more conscious much more conscious of people who were different from me, who are not me.

[02:45:00]

In all those years, there were two constants. One was my faith and one was my yearning to come home. My faith has always taught me that every person is created by God and so is equal in the eyes of God. The scriptures of my faith show that God is one who loves all equally but has special concern for the poor who abhors injustice against the vulnerable and who welcomes those outside the boundaries that define who is in and who is out. And my life has shown me how this creed translates into solidarity with others in their struggles for equality. My home is Louisiana. My parents, all of my grandparents, and most of my great grandparents and others before them were born, lived and died here in almost every part of the state. All of my siblings still live in Louisiana. Seven out of eight of us still live in the

Alexandria area. We know like you do, like everyone here knows that the people of our state are known for our generosity, our decency, our abiding faith, our resilient spirit. Yet in my own family history, and maybe the histories of many of us, several of my ancestors own plantations with hundreds of enslaved persons there is only one branch of my family that never owned slaves. This kind of terrible injustice lives on in conscious and unconscious decisions we make every day, year after year, decade after decade. And it will live on unless and until enough of us who now call Louisiana home decide otherwise. I have the same hope for my larger home, this country, which I hope is moving closer and closer to the real equality that its founding documents speak of. That's all the theory. Here's now is how this relates to the present topic. The process of redistricting is not one where most of us can judge the intent of those who draw the lines, but we can predict the outcome of those lines, and we can judge the result of those lines. We have seen that some of the lines clearly exclude certain communities from equal representation and we know that this is unjust. Specifically, to my mind it is not right that in a state where one third of its people are from minority groups, mostly African

Americans, only one out of six U.S. representatives is from those groups. That is, about half of the African American population does not have a chance of electing one of their own as their representative. And this result would continue forever if the current way of drawing the lines is kept. It has been shown that there are at least seven ways to draw the lines so that two out of six congressional districts that is one third of them are majority minority. You have those maps in your possession, all committee members. In Central Louisiana, we do have two state house districts 23 and 26, in which a minority candidate can be elected. I urge your committees to assure that this kind of chance for representation will be preserved in the redistricting process. On the other hand, I am concerned that in the state Senate districts the Louisiana, Pineville area is split or cracked into four pieces diluting the minority vote.

SHARON HEWITT: You need to kind of rap it up it a little bit ma'am, [INDISCERNIBLE 02:49:46] long.

EVELYN TEBOW: Yes, I'm sorry. Thank you. In short, I urge you to consider when you draw these lines. I know I haven't spoken as much of the practical elements of all of this as a lot of other

people have, but I urge you to remember the principles of justice.

SHARON HEWITT: Yes, ma'am. Thank you. All right, I did get one last card.

[02:50:15]

TRANSPERFECT

I, Anders Nelson, hereby certify that the document "F865553-louisiana-redistricting-2021-alexandria" is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, a true and accurate transcription from English to English.

Anders Nelson
Project Manager

April 27, 2022

216 EAST 45TH STREET, 9TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10017 T +1 212.400.8845 F +1.212.867.3106 LEGAL.TRANSPERFECT.COM