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STATE OF MINNESOTA

December 1, 2021

SPECIAL REDISTRICTING PANEL

**OFFICE OF
APPELLATE COURTS**

A21-0243
A21-0546

Peter S. Wattson, Joseph Mansky,
Nancy B. Greenwood, Mary E. Kupper,
Douglas W. Backstrom, and
James E. Hougas, III, individually
and on behalf of all citizens and
voting residents of Minnesota similarly
situated, and League of Women Voters
Minnesota,

Plaintiffs,

and

Paul Anderson, Ida Lano, Chuck Brusven,
Karen Lane, Joel Hineman, Carol Wegner,
and Daniel Schonhardt,

Plaintiff-Intervenors,

vs.

Steve Simon, Secretary of State of
Minnesota; and Kendra Olson, Carver
County Elections and Licensing Manager,
individually and on behalf of all
Minnesota county chief election officers,

Defendants,

and

Frank Sachs, Dagny Heimisdottir, Michael
Arulfo, Tanwi Prigge, Jennifer Guertin,
Garrison O'Keith McMurtrey, Mara Lee Glubka,
Jeffrey Strand, Danielle Main, and
Wayne Grimmer,

Plaintiffs,

and

1 **Dr. Bruce Corrie, Shelly Diaz,**
2 **Alberder Gillespie, Xiongpaoo Lee,**
3 **Abdirazak Mahboub, Aida Simon,**
4 **Beatriz Winters, Common Cause,**
5 **OneMinnesota.org, and Voices for**
6 **Racial Justice,**
7 **Plaintiff-Intervenors,**
8 **vs.**
9 **Steve Simon, Secretary of State of**
10 **Minnesota,**
11 **Defendant.**
12 -----
13 On October 20, 2021, at 6:30 p.m., this matter
14 was duly before the Special Redistricting Panel: Judge
15 Louise Dovre Bjorkman, Judge Diane Bratvold, Judge Jay
16 Carlson, Judge Juanita Freeman, and Judge Jodi
17 Williamson, for hearing at the Worthington Event Center,
18 1447 Prairie Drive, Worthington, Minnesota 56187.
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1 (The following proceedings were held:)

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3 THE CLERK: Please rise. This special
4 session of the Minnesota Special Redistricting Panel
5 will now come to order. Judge Bjorkman, Judge Bratvold,
6 Judge Carlson, Judge Freeman, and Judge Williamson; the
7 Honorable Louise Dovre Bjorkman presiding.

8 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Please be
9 seated.

10 Good evening. Welcome.

11 Thank you for being here. We are pleased to
12 be here in Worthington this evening, and a special
13 welcome and thanks to those who are observing this
14 evening's hearing by Zoom. Are you able to hear me
15 without the mic? Okay. We are glad that this
16 technology permits you the opportunity to review this
17 hearing remotely.

18 The redistricting process occurs once every
19 ten years and is important to all Minnesotans, so we
20 appreciate your participation.

21 My name is Louise Dovre Bjorkman. I'm a
22 judge on the Minnesota Court of Appeals and the
23 presiding judge of this Special Redistricting Panel.

24 I will now ask my colleagues, the other
25 judges of the redistricting panel, to introduce

1 themselves.

2 JUDGE BRATVOLD: Good evening. My name is
3 Diane Bratvold, and I am a judge on the Minnesota Court
4 of Appeals, sitting in St. Paul.

5 JUDGE CARLSON: Judge Jay Carlson, Seventh
6 Judicial District. I'm chambered in Becker County,
7 Minnesota, which is Detroit Lakes.

8 JUDGE WILLIAMSON: Good evening. Jodi
9 Williamson, Third Judicial District in southeastern
10 Minnesota, chambered in Dodge County.

11 JUDGE FREEMAN: Good evening. Juanita
12 Freeman, Tenth Judicial District, chambered in
13 Stillwater, Washington County.

14 JUDGE BJORKMAN: The Chief Justice of the
15 Minnesota Supreme Court appointed this panel to adopt
16 congressional and legislative redistricting plans only
17 in the event that the Minnesota Legislature does not
18 enact redistricting plans by the statutory deadline of
19 February 15th, 2022.

20 We recognize that the legislature has been
21 delayed in starting the work of redistricting because of
22 delays in the release of the 2020 census data, the final
23 census data, and we find ourselves in the unusual
24 situation of conducting parallel redistricting
25 processes. We intend to give the legislature every

1 opportunity to complete redistricting, but we also must
2 move forward with our work so that we will be prepared
3 to act, if necessary, by February 15th.

4 The redrawing of Minnesota's congressional
5 and legislative districts involves many considerations,
6 not the least of which is the effects of redistricting
7 on the people who have a stake in this process, and that
8 is all the people of this state.

9 Public hearings like this are central to the
10 redistricting process. Our legislature, like
11 legislatures across the country, has conducted hearings
12 to receive information from the public. And prior
13 redistricting panels, such as this one, have done the
14 same. These hearings enable members of the public to
15 directly voice their opinions and concerns and to share
16 local perspectives that will enhance our understanding
17 of communities across this state. This participation is
18 truly democracy in action.

19 We are particularly grateful for this
20 participation during this challenging time. We have
21 taken various precautions to create safe opportunities
22 for broad and diverse public engagement. For those
23 attending public hearings in person, masks are required
24 at all times, except when you are at the podium making a
25 presentation.

1 This hearing and all other in-person
2 hearings are being streamed live via Zoom so that
3 interested members of the public can watch remotely.
4 And the panel will receive and give full consideration
5 to written statements from the public. Written
6 statements must be submitted by October 29th of this
7 year. For details on how to submit written statements,
8 please see the panel's web page.

9 We welcome the comments of those who have
10 registered to speak at this hearing. We will call
11 speakers one at a time, in the order in which they
12 appear on the list of confirmed speakers. In the event
13 these speakers complete their presentations before 8:30,
14 we may allow others to speak.

15 Our marshal will display a clock to assist
16 us in staying within the five-minute time limit for each
17 speaker. And you can see that down at the end of the
18 table.

19 My fellow judges and I will be listening
20 carefully to each speaker. We may ask questions to
21 clarify or better understand a speaker's comments, but
22 we are mostly here to listen to you.

23 When speakers describe particular
24 communities, we encourage them to use the maps on
25 display up here. And there is a laser pointer at the

1 podium for your use. We also encourage speakers to
2 reference geographic markers, such as political
3 subdivisions, landmarks, bodies of water or streets, so
4 that we can understand where those communities are
5 relative to the district lines.

6 Our court reporter will take down each
7 speaker's comments and a transcript will be available on
8 our website at a later time.

9 Please be mindful that this is a court
10 proceeding. And with many thanks to the Worthington
11 Event Center, this is our courtroom for the evening.

12 If you have not already done so, please turn
13 off your cell phone. Cell phones and private recording
14 devices must be turned off during the entire hearing.
15 If you need to leave during the proceeding, please try
16 to do so in between speakers. Please be respectful of
17 the speakers and the listeners by not talking, adding
18 commentary, or applauding during or after a
19 presentation. And please respect and protect each other
20 by wearing your mask over your mouth and nose throughout
21 the session.

22 Again, on behalf of the panel, thank you so
23 much for your interest in this important matter.

24 We will begin tonight's presentation with
25 comments by Ethan Sykes. Good evening and welcome.

1 ETHAN SYKES: Good afternoon, Your Honors.
2 Thank you for allowing me to testify at today's
3 redistricting panel.

4 My name is Ethan Sykes, and I grew up in
5 Butterfield, Minnesota, which is about 45 minutes
6 northeast of here, about 40 minutes southwest of Mankato
7 as well. And I'm currently living in Eagle Lake, which
8 is right next to Mankato, and I'm studying political
9 science at the Minnesota State University.

10 Voting is extremely important to me. And
11 after the 2020 election, and before, I had to register
12 almost 500 people to vote. And that was actually my
13 first election I was eligible to vote in.

14 And today I'm here to ensure that the lines
15 are drawn so that we do not disenfranchise voters and
16 keep the First Congressional District a competitive race
17 and all the other legislative districts in this area as
18 well.

19 The First Congressional District
20 specifically was competitive in 2018 and again in 2020.
21 And I think that it's essential that we keep this in
22 mind when redrawing the district lines. In addition, we
23 need to make sure that there's no significant advantage
24 for one party over another.

25 Another point I'd like to bring up is

1 communities of interest. And this may include people
2 who have common concerns, social ideology, and different
3 ethnic groups. In the past, these communities have been
4 split up to draw unfair maps and give one party a clear
5 advantage over the other. And keeping these communities
6 of interest together is vital as several mapping ideas
7 will attempt to split them apart.

8 I would like the lines, when redistricting
9 the First Congressional District, to be as convenient as
10 possible as well. And what I mean by that is I would
11 like to prevent the maps from being drawn in a way,
12 which on my drive from my parents' place in Butterfield
13 to my current residence in Eagle Lake, I would like to
14 not drive across four different, like, congressional
15 districts. I'd like it to be as simple as possible.

16 And this leads me to my final point: And I
17 want to make sure that splitting is minimized. And just
18 for an example, New Prague. There was an article in the
19 Star Tribune about this city, and it had a community
20 member explain how it was odd that their permanent
21 address on one side of New Prague had a different
22 representative than their business on the other side of
23 Main Street.

24 And as a short summary of what I'm asking
25 you this listening session, is that you guarantee the

1 people that cast their votes and ideas and make sure
2 that they count; making sure that the lines are drawn
3 fairly while minimizing splitting up of communities.

4 I would, once again, like to thank you for
5 allowing me to speak here today, and I hope you consider
6 the ideas and suggestions of myself and the others who
7 testify.

8 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
9 are submitted.

10 We will next hear from Lawrence Czer.
11 Lawrence Czer? I hope I'm pronouncing that correctly.
12 (No response.)

13 Then we'll move down to Molly Byron.
14 Welcome.

15 MOLLY BYRON: Do I keep my mask on?

16 JUDGE BJORKMAN: You can remove your mask
17 while speaking, if you prefer.

18 MOLLY BYRON: Your Honors, thank you for
19 the opportunity to testify this evening.

20 My name is Molly Byron, and I grew up on a
21 family farm in St. Mary Township, right outside the city
22 of Waseca, which is located between the cities of
23 Owatonna and Mankato in south central Minnesota.

24 After graduating from Waseca High School in
25 2010, I left Minnesota to attend Loyola University in

1 Chicago and ended up living in Chicago for ten years.
2 Then the pandemic hit in 2020 and I found myself back
3 home on the farm. And during this time, I've started to
4 reconnect with my southern Minnesota roots, enrolled in
5 farm business management to learn how to manage my
6 family farm, and I began to engage and become part of my
7 hometown community.

8 Now, over one and a half years later, I'm
9 here to stay and currently work full time in Waseca on
10 economic and workforce development initiatives.

11 Today, I am here to advocate for fair maps
12 to be drawn and for people to be fairly represented, to
13 ensure communities have the opportunity to elect their
14 own voice so that every voter in the First Congressional
15 District, when they cast their ballot, knows that their
16 voice is being heard and they have an equal opportunity
17 to influence not only the outcome of an election but the
18 legislative and congressional process.

19 We need fair maps that keep communities
20 together and ensure that Minnesotans who share a common
21 identity, however that is defined, have the opportunity
22 to have a common voice representing them at the
23 legislative and congressional level, especially for
24 rural communities.

25 Rural people tend to see themselves and

1 identify with their counties and townships. And with
2 more people working from home, more and more people are
3 becoming local and developing more local identities as
4 well.

5 Still, we must make sure that communities of
6 interest do not include relationships with political
7 parties, incumbents, or political candidates. We must
8 keep politics out of redistricting. Therefore, we must
9 avoid districts from being drawn using home addresses of
10 incumbents or candidates for public office, and we must
11 prevent maps from being drawn in a way that gives an
12 advantage or disadvantage to any political party or
13 candidate.

14 Finally, we must establish congressional and
15 legislative districts that are equal in population to
16 provide every Minnesotan fair power in voting. And we
17 must prevent gerrymandered districts that are not
18 convenient for voters who live there, meaning a person
19 can travel across the whole district without ever
20 leaving it.

21 I understand the size of the first district
22 is a challenge; however, it is still a concern to many.
23 And even though we might not be able to avoid being a
24 large district, the shape of the first district should
25 feel connected. It is hard to keep communities of

1 interest together because it is such a broad area. And
2 even if communities are similar, the western side is
3 very different from the eastern side and they have very
4 different identities to them.

5 Thank you again for allowing me to share my
6 testimony here today and for Your Honors' consideration.

7 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
8 are submitted.

9 Our next speaker is Anita Talsma Gaul. Good
10 evening and welcome.

11 ANITA TALSMAS GAUL: Thank you very much.
12 Did you say there was a laser pointer for...

13 JUDGE BJORKMAN: It's on the podium.

14 LISSA FINNE: It's right next to the
15 podium.

16 ANITA TALSMAS GAUL: It's right next to the
17 podium. All right. It's working. It's always when you
18 need them that they don't work, you know, if the
19 batteries are dead. All right.

20 Thank you, Your Honors.

21 My name is Anita Talsma Gaul. I live in
22 Marshall, Minnesota, and I work as a history professor
23 at Minnesota West Community and Technical College right
24 here in Worthington.

25 I have lived in this area my entire life,

1 with the exception of ten years that I was pursuing my
2 education and lived out of state. But I came back home,
3 so you could say that I know this area very well.

4 When you commence the redistricting process
5 and the redrawing of lines on the map, please keep in
6 mind two things: No. 1, geographical compactness; and
7 No. 2, I'm going to sound like a broken record here, but
8 keeping communities together.

9 To my first point, please keep all districts
10 as compact as possible, whether that be congressional,
11 state senate or state legislative districts. I
12 currently live in Congressional District 7, which runs
13 nearly the entire length of western Minnesota, from the
14 northwest angle down to Pipestone County.

15 First of all, this district groups together
16 people with dissimilar interests. Sure, we're all
17 greater Minnesotans, but I'm not sure how much a farmer
18 on the southern prairies down here in Pipestone County
19 or Lyon County has in common with a person who lives in
20 the northwest angle.

21 Secondly, from a purely logistical
22 standpoint, how can a single congress person adequately
23 represent this entire district? Traveling from one end
24 of it to the other -- from Baudette, up here by the
25 northwest, up in the north, to Pipestone, down at the

1 very southern end -- is nearly 500 miles in distance,
2 which is a hard seven and a half hours of driving.
3 That's ridiculous. Who can do that? What person can
4 get around to his or her constituents in a district that
5 long? So I ask you to make the new congressional
6 districts as geographically compact as possible.

7 The same goes for state senate and state
8 legislative districts. Make them compact so that a
9 regular person can traverse them in a reasonable amount
10 of time. A person should not have to own and operate
11 their own airplane in order to get around their
12 district.

13 Secondly, keep communities together. Do not
14 split neighborhoods or cities or townships or travel
15 communities into different districts. Keep them
16 together. Communities need to be kept together because
17 they are bound by common interests. They also need to
18 be kept together because splitting a county or a
19 township or a reservation or whatever creates
20 difficulties for election officials. It creates added
21 difficulties in organizing voting places and also
22 creates additional costs.

23 So I ask that you use sense and efficiency
24 when it comes to drawing the lines and keep communities
25 of interest together.

1 So to summarize, when you are drawing the
2 new district lines in Minnesota, strive for, No. 1,
3 geographical compactness; No. 2, keeping communities
4 together. That is all.

5 Thank you.

6 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
7 are submitted.

8 We will next hear from Eric Satterlee.

9 Welcome. Good evening

10 ERIC SATTERLEE: Good evening, Your Honors.

11 I'm approaching this from a little different
12 angle inasmuch as I've only recently moved back here to
13 Minnesota. That was about six years ago.

14 When I was born in Minneapolis, my father
15 was in Korea. By the time he came back and before I was
16 one, we had been stationed at two bases. I spent my
17 childhood going from base to base.

18 But the only thing that was a constant in my
19 life was coming back to Minnesota on our vacations.
20 Minneapolis, we had a pair of grandparents; and up north
21 of Mille Lac, another one. That was every year for as
22 long as I -- you know, from my childhood. That my dad
23 retained his residency in Minnesota, I went to St. Cloud
24 State. His last station of duty was at the Pentagon.
25 So for eight years of my formative years, I got a

1 front-row seat on watching government in action or
2 inaction, if you want to say so. Back then, it was a
3 different government. It was a different nature to it
4 all. And that's dissolved. And we know it.

5 I live in the small town of Lamberton. I'm
6 not here really to -- there's not much in the way of
7 gerrymandering that could do anything with that. But I
8 have to say I agree with the woman that spoke before me,
9 that that is one heck of a congressional district to try
10 to manage.

11 Growing up, I think my first real connection
12 to Minnesota came with a Twins hat that my grandfather
13 bought me for a baseball game. Later, that got on to
14 be, okay, Vikings. Okay? I like fishing. But it was
15 when I was living and growing up in the D. C. area, the
16 respect the Minnesota politicians had, and for
17 Minnesotans in general, was phenomenal. You know, there
18 was a pride, a place, and a people.

19 And I'm just here to -- I'm really glad to
20 see that you're, like, mirroring what's to be done by
21 the legislature. And all I can say is, you know, even
22 as a child growing up that may not be here but know of
23 this place, you know, we need some rock solid
24 foundations that people can rely on. And seeing you all
25 here is evidence of that. And I say keep up the good

1 work.

2 Thank you.

3 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
4 are submitted.

5 Our next speaker is Jennifer Cronin.
6 Welcome.

7 JENNIFER CRONIN: Thank you.

8 Good evening, Your Honors. Thank you for
9 allowing me to speak today.

10 My name is Jennifer Cronin. I live in
11 Pipestone, Minnesota, which is in Congressional District
12 7 and Senate District 22.

13 I am the fourth generation of my family to
14 call the city of Pipestone home. In 2009, after more
15 than a decade of weekend commutes back to my hometown
16 from the Twin Cities, my son and I moved to my
17 great-grandparents' house, in part to take care for my
18 aging grandmother and to live again in the community
19 that has been home to my family since 1911.

20 Since moving back to rural Minnesota, I have
21 served on various boards for my community, including the
22 Pipestone Marching Arrows Band Board, the Charter
23 Commission, Historic Preservation, and the Pipestone
24 County Museum Board. For the last several election
25 cycles, I have been honored to serve as election judge

1 for the city of Pipestone.

2 Without a doubt, the Seventh Congressional
3 District is incredibly large. As Anita said, it is
4 roughly 500 miles from the city of Jasper in
5 southwestern Pipestone County to Baudette in Lake of the
6 Woods County. This is a distance I have traveled many,
7 many times as a member of the Minnesota State Parks
8 Hiking Club. And it is about seven and a half hours to
9 get to Zippel Bay from my hometown.

10 The reality is that while the Seventh
11 Congressional District is already a behemoth, it will
12 still have to grow significantly in order to meet the
13 population requirements for redistricting. Even with
14 that growth, farmers, whether they plant corn or sugar
15 beets, will still need a farm bill. Housing in rural
16 Minnesota will still be a critical issue that is
17 impacting economic development. Seniors will still need
18 care options. Women will need to travel hours to have
19 babies if rural hospitals continue to close. Parents
20 are still going to need to find daycare.

21 Our small town critical infrastructure
22 continues to be neglected and our historic buildings,
23 which are such an integral part of our rural identities,
24 continue to deteriorate at a pace we cannot hope to keep
25 up with.

1 Our basic needs are still going to have to
2 be met, regardless of who our representatives are. And
3 while our core values as Minnesotans remain the same,
4 Pipestone will regionally have some variation in our
5 needs, and that is regardless of whether we knead up
6 with Kittson or Houston Counties in a congressional
7 district.

8 As a resident of a very sparsely populated
9 county and a small Minnesota city, I would ask Your
10 Honors that even though the districts, both
11 congressional and state senate, must grow again, that
12 wherever possible our counties and small cities are not
13 split between congressional, senate, and house
14 districts. The logistics of splitting counties and
15 small cities and costs are a barrier.

16 In addition, representation for our unique
17 needs in rural Minnesota, now more than ever, is
18 critical in St. Paul and Washington. And splitting our
19 voices only drowns us out further against the urban
20 population centers in our state.

21 In addition, Your Honors, in order for our
22 counties and cities to adequately prepare for this
23 upcoming change and the 2022 election cycle, I
24 respectfully request that these decisions, if possible,
25 be made far in advance of the February 15th deadline.

1 Thank you for your time.

2 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
3 are submitted.

4 We will next hear from Deborah Cassel.

5 DEBORAH CASSEL: "Castle."

6 JUDGE BJORKMAN: "Castle." Sorry.

7 DEBORAH CASSEL: Your Honors, thank you for
8 allowing me to speak tonight.

9 My name is Deb Cassel, and I'm originally
10 from Rochester, Minnesota. I identify that as my
11 hometown. But my family, for many generations, comes
12 from Roseau, the Lake of the Woods area. And since I
13 have, in the last 13 years, moved to Cottonwood County
14 down in the southwest corner, I felt a sense of pride
15 and connectedness with my family and our interests with
16 the northern Minnesota area, where generations came
17 from.

18 I've lived the last 13 years now in a small
19 town in the middle of a cornfield, and I take care of
20 our smallest and youngest future farmers of America.
21 And I have learned that their families might be
22 Republican, they might be Democrat, they might not
23 identify with any party at all, but their common
24 denominator is that they are all really good people.
25 And they are reflective of my small town of Westbrook,

1 and they are reflective of the small towns in Cottonwood
2 County.

3 We work in many jobs, but we are the
4 backbone and the support that supports our agriculture
5 and our farming. Many of the people in my town will
6 commute to Worthington and Windom, and it is those towns
7 that also support our agriculture and our farmers. We
8 have pork farmers that live right outside of my town
9 that do business with the processing plants in
10 Worthington and Windom. And we have truckers that also
11 do business working in these areas.

12 I would very much like to see my county of
13 Cottonwood County -- and I understand has gone back and
14 forth between District 1 and District 7. And right now
15 my county is divided between the two districts.

16 When we divide these counties, we weaken the
17 voice. I would very much like to see my county be
18 reconnected in one county. And I would like to see my
19 county be in the Seventh District because I believe that
20 we have common interests with all of these towns, small
21 towns, up and down our border here. And I believe that
22 we are best represented on a national level by having
23 connected voices. Our farmers and our rural towns are
24 struggling. We are stronger if we are united.

25 I would also like to add, although I do not,

1 cannot speak for our communities of color and I cannot
2 speak for our Indian reservations, I will say that --
3 and I feel like I can say, as a granddaughter and a
4 descendant of some of the first immigrants to the United
5 States back in the 1680s who came over with William
6 Penn, I would feel not only great sadness but I would be
7 embarrassed for my state if we were to divide and weaken
8 the Indian reservations or communities of color as their
9 voices are starting to be strengthened and heard.

10 So I do thank you for letting me speak
11 tonight for my little town in the middle of a cornfield,
12 on behalf of my littlest farmers in Minnesota.

13 Thank you.

14 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
15 are submitted.

16 We will next hear from Jessica Velasco.
17 Good evening and welcome.

18 JESSICA VELASCO: (Speaking in Spanish.)

19 COURT REPORTER: Excuse me. You can only
20 speak in English.

21 JESSICA VELASCO: Hello. And welcome to
22 Worthington, Minnesota.

23 I guess I will skip ahead to what I had
24 stated in my letter as to there would be more folks here
25 in this room and submitting testimonies, but because I

1 live in Worthington, where we are so diverse, as well as
2 the rest of southern Minnesota, between us and Austin,
3 we are one of the most diverse communities in the state.
4 So that is one reason why it's important to keep us in
5 CD-1.

6 Our city in southern Minnesota did so much
7 work during the 2020 census. And we fought hard by door
8 knocking, text banking, calling, doing everything that
9 we could to make sure that we did not lose our
10 congressional seat. And because of the work of
11 communities of color, we do not have to worry about
12 losing a seat. And we knew that if we didn't do that,
13 CD-1 would be one of the districts that would have to be
14 renovated and redrawn.

15 Now, going back to that, we are not here,
16 and this room is not full because of barriers.

17 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Can I ask you to move that
18 microphone -- yeah -- so everyone here can hear you.
19 Thank you.

20 JESSICA VELASCO: Yep. So this room would
21 be full if we had asked our communities or we had given
22 the opportunity to not only have one hearing on a
23 Wednesday night, where our communities of color are very
24 faith-based oriented and they are at church. Our
25 communities here in Worthington, my neighbors, my

1 friends, are right now working during the second shift,
2 if not working first shift, and continue to work
3 overtime to continue to provide for their families.

4 Our communities of color also lack the
5 barrier of language, which luckily -- and sadly -- I do
6 speak English. And so when I was asked to speak only in
7 English, that would have been a huge barrier for
8 communities. These are barriers that don't just happen
9 here, but happen daily in our schools, in our cities,
10 and in our county level.

11 With regards to mapping in Worthington,
12 there is a district. There is a ward that is divided in
13 our city where the part of the -- I guess looking at the
14 map, the western part of Lake Okabena is in one ward and
15 the eastern part is in another ward, but it's
16 semi-divided where most of the homes that are in the
17 eastern part of the ward are also included in Ward 4, I
18 believe. But a lot of those homes are rental
19 properties. And a lot of those tenants are people of
20 color.

21 So when you are mapping and when you are
22 looking at districts and specifically my city and my
23 county, I ask that you please don't break us up. We
24 have gained so much by coming together, working
25 together, working through our barriers, and that is

1 something that our communities of color have done here.
2 Since I still have 20 seconds --

3 JUDGE BJORKMAN: I think you have a minute
4 and --

5 JESSICA VELASCO: Perfect --

6 JUDGE BJORKMAN: -- 24 seconds.

7 JESSICA VELASCO: -- then I will go back.

8 So... Sorry. That was just a trigger for
9 me, but -- I am not sorry because I needed to say that.

10 Within our CD-1, we not only share similar
11 demographics to our neighbors to the eastern part of
12 southern Minnesota, but we share work experiences,
13 living conditions, and transportation issues and so much
14 more.

15 I urge you to think wisely and listen and
16 read the testimonies of those who live and work here.
17 Sadly, many were not able to make it because of work,
18 because of lack of child care, language, and other
19 barriers that limit us to be included in these important
20 conversations and decision-making opportunities. Many
21 of our folks in CD-1 don't work a 9 to 5 job, but work a
22 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. or a 3 p.m. to a 3 a.m. job. And that
23 time that they need to take care of self and regroup to
24 come here and present to folks their issues is limited
25 when you only offer an in-person hearing one day and at

1 a specific time.

2 Just how our communities were not thought
3 about when deciding this hearing, we ask that the judges
4 include us when you are working on the redistricting
5 map. We, Worthington, want to stay in CD-1 because we
6 share many commonalities (timer sounded), again, with
7 our southern Minnesota counterparts.

8 Thank you.

9 JUDGE BJORKMAN: All right. Thank you.
10 Your comments are submitted.

11 Our next speaker is Leticia Rodriguez. Good
12 evening. Welcome.

13 LETICIA RODRIGUEZ: Welcome, Your Honors,
14 to southwest Minnesota. Can you hear me?

15 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Is that microphone on? I
16 don't know... I don't know if it's on or not.

17 LETICIA RODRIGUEZ: It wasn't on.

18 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Yeah.

19 LETICIA RODRIGUEZ: Can you hear me? Now
20 everybody can hear me.

21 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Perfect. Now you can
22 maybe raise it a little bit, but... Perfect.

23 LETICIA RODRIGUEZ: Welcome to southwest
24 Minnesota; Worthington, specific. My name is Leticia
25 Rodriguez, and I live in Rushmore, Minnesota, which is a

1 small community nine miles from Worthington. Even
2 though I live in Rushmore, Minnesota, I've lived prior
3 in Worthington for about 20-plus years. So I'm going to
4 speak a little bit about both.

5 So we are literally in the corner of Iowa
6 and South Dakota; 10, 15 minutes from Iowa and half an
7 hour to South Dakota. Because I consider both Rushmore,
8 Minnesota, and Worthington, Minnesota, my communities,
9 where I live and work, I will speak about concerns of
10 the small town of Rushmore, Minnesota.

11 It is 2021 and we still don't have access to
12 natural gas, which is a surprise for me when I moved
13 there. And we don't have paved roads. Only one. And
14 in the winter, our main roads are always in need of
15 repair. When we have a major storm, ice storms -- we've
16 had several or at least two -- our power is down,
17 electricity is down for days, if not weeks. And that
18 endangers the lives of our elder and the poor. We have
19 access to one cable provider and they seem to take
20 advantage by hiking the prices constantly. The need for
21 more upgraded rural broadband was never more apparent
22 during COVID when most of the children's only access to
23 school was through virtual learning. Small towns like
24 Rushmore and others struggle to attain this.

25 We know that this map will determine our

1 access to fair congressional representation at federal
2 and state levels, as well as the other key funding and
3 resources. We deserve to be represented by people who
4 will fight for our well-being and understand where we
5 come from.

6 Our state was so close to losing a
7 congressional district after the 2020, like Jessica
8 mentioned. Since the work and the deep organizing the
9 communities did to ensure that we were counted, we were
10 able to maintain our eight districts. We deserve to
11 have voices included in how districts that our
12 communities are and will be drawn.

13 And, lastly, I would like to ask you to keep
14 the interest of the peoples in mind. So I know that
15 you're not have the power or the authority to maybe
16 address the concerns I have, but you do have the power.
17 And I hope that you keep this in mind, that when you
18 decide under the linings of the map, to keep our
19 communities and our interest and concerns in mind.

20 Thank you.

21 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
22 are submitted.

23 We will next hear from Aida Simon. Did I
24 pronounce your first name correctly?

25 AIDA SIMON: Yes, ma'am, you did.

1 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Welcome.

2 AIDA SIMON: Thank you. Let us show
3 gratitude to the ground we stand on and to the
4 indigenous people of Dakota and Sioux, who cared for
5 this land and soil for thousands of years and whose
6 history and knowledge oftentimes goes unrecognized.

7 Let us not forget the sacrifice made by
8 African-Americans for hundreds of years that allow me to
9 be here in front of you all today. We owe it to the
10 generation of oppressed people to not only acknowledge
11 them, but to continue to advocate for our marginalized
12 communities.

13 Good evening. My name is Aida Simon, an
14 immigrant from East Africa who lived and worked in
15 Worthington for two decades, a mother to three, a
16 community organizer who seeks justice, and an activist
17 in many capacity.

18 During the heights of COVID-19 pandemic, I,
19 along with other leaders of color who were working on
20 the ground, responded to the needs of our communities.
21 It was left to leaders with full-time jobs and families
22 to sacrifice and advocate for supply, food security,
23 financial resource, child care, academic support, mental
24 health, and safety from COVID.

25 There exists a huge disconnect between our

1 marginalized communities and our decision-makers. And
2 in order to be better, we need to bridge this gap. We
3 have been advocating for a community center that would
4 act as a space for our BIPOC community to ask questions
5 and get connected to resource in a safe and inclusive
6 space. I believe that establishing a community center
7 would be a step in the right direction. But in order to
8 mobilize and get to work, we must stay united.

9 Worthington has been my home for these many
10 years, and I'm grateful for the strong, powerful, and
11 diverse community we have been able to build. At the
12 same time, it's frustrating to see the hard work and
13 dedication of BIPOC community to go unrecognized. This
14 is why you're seeing a number of us here tonight.

15 Our stories, our strength matters. Our
16 resiliency is the resiliency of Minnesota. We are one
17 of the most diverse corners of the state, and that
18 should matter when you would be making a decision about
19 the maps. And that will impact our lives for the next
20 ten years.

21 Please keep my community intact. Please use
22 the principle of community of interest as the key to
23 draw the map for us. I am here today to stress the
24 importance of keeping our one community strong and
25 united to be able to advocate for one another.

1 Thank you for your time. And we have had
2 endless listening sessions with our BIPOC communities to
3 create a map, and that will be submitted to all judges
4 via email.

5 Thank you so much.

6 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
7 are submitted.

8 We will next hear from Aisha Kimbrough.

9 AISHA KIMBROUGH: Yes.

10 JUDGE BJORKMAN: I apologize if I
11 mispronounced your name.

12 AISHA KIMBROUGH: No, that was correct.

13 Thank you.

14 Good evening. Thank you for having me here.

15 My name is Aisha Kimbrough -- I also go as
16 Adyiam -- and I was raised here in Worthington. I'm 24
17 years old. I'm a daughter of Eritrean refugees and
18 great-granddaughter of African-American slaves. I can
19 probably say that growing up in such a diverse and
20 flourishing community in rural Minnesota has shaped my
21 academic and professional endeavors in providing me a
22 unique perspective, having learned so much from the
23 cultural and social plurality of our community.

24 And so during my grade school years here in
25 Worthington, in the district, I was a very involved and

1 busy student. I was in band, I was in choir, theater,
2 student council, track, you name it. And I still had
3 time to work a part-time job and study and graduate with
4 highest honors.

5 I was able to succeed as a student not only
6 because I was ambitious and dedicated, but because I had
7 parents and mentors and teachers that believed in me and
8 that provided me with the resources to become
9 successful.

10 Flash forward to May of 2019, when I flipped
11 the tassel and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in
12 Politics and Global Studies. As an eager and newly
13 graduated woman, I was ready to develop my professional
14 career and continue to define my leadership abilities.
15 And as I was figuring out where to start, the thought of
16 returning home to Worthington and resettling here never
17 crossed my mind. Although I loved growing up here, I
18 never saw the Nobles County area as a place with
19 opportunities for young professionals of color like
20 myself.

21 But in the recent years, thanks to the hard
22 work of our community organizers and folks that have
23 stepped it up to create more opportunities by starting
24 new businesses, creating more nonprofit work and grant
25 opportunities so young folks like me cannot only give

1 back to their community but can see themselves reflected
2 in the change taking place in our area.

3 So thanks to the people of color that
4 tirelessly work to make our community a more successful
5 and equitable place for young folks.

6 Moving forward, I urge you all to recognize
7 and cherish the power that unity and collective action
8 has in our community specifically and specifically for
9 Black, Indigenous, People of Color that also identify as
10 refugees, immigrants, and low income. Whether it's our
11 cultural and social diversity or our political
12 organizing efforts, it's important that our community
13 stays together.

14 I would love to see Worthington become a
15 place for more innovation, more growth, opportunities
16 and accessibilities. And I believe that keeping our
17 community together, when thinking about redistricting,
18 is the way to continue to grow. I hope you can consider
19 my story and those of others that speak tonight when
20 you're deciding on redistricting.

21 Thank you so much.

22 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
23 are submitted.

24 Our next speaker is Paul Langseth.
25 Good evening and welcome.

1 PAUL LANGSETH: Thank you, Your Honors.

2 My name is Paul Langseth. I'm a Worthington
3 resident and I've lived here for over 50 years. I grew
4 up here and grew up with a family farm. And currently,
5 I'm a local businessman, an educator, an elected
6 official and concerned citizen.

7 Currently, CD-1 runs across the southern
8 tier of counties in Minnesota, and we have lost
9 population. We understand that. It's been an ongoing
10 thing. Worthington has gained population, in fact, so
11 we're increasing in this corner, and the diversity of
12 our community is tremendous. We love it, we embrace it,
13 and we would like to see that continued.

14 We are a rural county. And we have a common
15 thread within CD-1 of a rural district, and rural
16 businesses, rural educators, rural agriculture, and
17 rural medical concerns because we do include Rochester
18 and we do include that medical side.

19 In order for our voice to be heard, we need
20 a congressman who can focus on our priorities, on the
21 priorities of the rural side. So CD-1 needs to pick up
22 about 25,000 in population. We understand that. So I
23 and those that I represent would appreciate your
24 consideration of adding a rural county or counties to
25 our district in order to come up with that. Wabasha is

1 about 24,000, 23,000. We have other -- Pipestone or
2 Murray or Cottonwood, which are close and part of
3 District 7. They have been part of District 1 in the
4 past. And so we understand -- or we have been part of
5 District 7 in the past, when we went from border to
6 border on the west side.

7 So my concern is, is that you consider
8 keeping us within a rural priority so that our voice can
9 be heard at the congressional level, at the federal
10 level.

11 Appreciate your time. Thank you very much.

12 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
13 are submitted.

14 Our next speaker is Andrea Duarte. Is there
15 an Andrea Duarte? (No response.)

16 Jose Ivan Parga. I see people shaking
17 heads. No, he's -- Okay.

18 Samuel Simon. Good evening and welcome

19 SAMUEL SIMON: Good afternoon, Your Honor.

20 My name is Samuel Simon. I am a 14-year-old student,
21 and I was raised in Worthington for all my life.

22 Even though I am young, I have been very
23 involved in youth programs like *Be the Change*,
24 *Leadership on Purpose*, where I learned about social
25 justice, empowerment, and how I can be active in my

1 community.

2 As youth, we are the future. I am also a
3 Native-American and East African. So to me this is
4 important to recognize the land that we live on and
5 stand on. We have to remember those that came before
6 us, even before the European settlers. The land we are
7 on is sacred and must appreciate this land and its
8 people and take us into consideration when making
9 decisions that directly impact people of color and
10 indigenous peoples.

11 I am standing here today because I care
12 about my community, and I want my hometown to be a place
13 where I can be a leader and where my skin color and
14 ethnicity are celebrated and included in
15 decision-making. Our small but mighty town needs to
16 stay together because we are stronger that way.

17 Thank you.

18 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
19 are submitted.

20 Our next speaker is Yergalem Ghirmai.
21 Yergalem Ghirmai? (No response.)

22 Next person on the list is Tigisti Afeworki.
23 Tigisti Afeworki? (No response.)

24 We move on to Alex Rodriguez. Alex
25 Rodriguez? (No response.)

1 Than Than Kyaw.

2 THAN THAN KYAW: I'm here.

3 JUDGE BJORKMAN: All right. And I probably
4 mispronounced your name and I apologize.

5 THAN THAN KYAW: It is "taun-taun."

6 Good evening, Your Honor. Thank you for
7 having me. Hello, everyone. Hope everyone is doing
8 well.

9 My name is Than Than. I have lived in
10 Worthington for ten years now. I graduated here and
11 I've been here for ten years -- yeah, have all my life.
12 I moved from Thailand, a refugee camp, and I moved in
13 United States in 2010. Live in the city for one year
14 and then moved to Worthington, Minnesota, where my mom
15 start working at JVS here.

16 I'm currently working as a community
17 connector. As a community connector, I direct our
18 residents to available resources in our community, in
19 the west county area. But most of the time I provide
20 services to people from Austin, Albert Lea, and
21 Marshall; and also internetter in Minnesota.

22 I still continue to see many folks without a
23 safe and uncomfortable living situations sometime.
24 Sometime is without transportations to and from work,
25 not enough money to pay for their groceries or rent,

1 without mental health services to heal the traumas from
2 migrations processes, war, and displacement. Also see a
3 lack of representation in the city council, district
4 school board, higher paying jobs and positions making.

5 There's a lot of pain and divisions to be
6 healed in our community. And as a passionate leader and
7 care for the people in my community, I want to make sure
8 we still have those services, such as community
9 connector, because I mostly help them with
10 transportations, finding housing, employment, and many
11 other social services and legal services.

12 So please consider keeping our community
13 together because we can thrive together and also be a
14 very great citizens.

15 So thank you very much for your time and a
16 good afternoon -- good evening; not afternoon. I just
17 came back from Texas from a long flight so... I'm still
18 standing.

19 Thank you so much.

20 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
21 are submitted.

22 Our next registered speaker is Chansouk
23 Duangapai. Chansouk Duangapai?

24 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: He's not here.

25 JUDGE BJORKMAN: You're saying he's not

1 here?

2 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: No.

3 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Nancy Landeros. Do we

4 have a Nancy Landeros? (No response.)

5 Pamela Lomeli. (No response.)

6 Sofia Montoya. (No response.) I have the

7 same group that's -- Okay.

8 Adiyam Gebremedhin. Adiyam Gebremedhim?

9 (No response.)

10 Rosa Abdela. (No response.)

11 Leah Hanson. (No response.) No Leah

12 Hanson. All right.

13 I don't know if Lawrence Czer, who I called

14 earlier, has arrived late. (No response.)

15 Andrea Duarte? (No response.)

16 Jose Ivan Parga? (No response.)

17 I think we've been through these more

18 recently.

19 All right. It seems then that we've

20 concluded the comments from the people who were

21 preregistered.

22 We do have time remaining. And so if

23 there's anyone else in attendance who would like to

24 speak who have not had an opportunity to do so, you may

25 come forward. You will both have the opportunity or

1 whoever else wants to speak. Just come up one at a time
2 and state your name when you begin your comments. And
3 probably spell your last name. Thank you.

4 RICHARD KOCH: Thank you. You're very
5 insightful, and I do appreciate this opportunity to
6 talk. I hadn't prepared to talk, but I did make a
7 couple notes.

8 My name is Richard Koch. And that's
9 K-o-c-h. I'm from Jackson, which is Jackson County,
10 which is just to the east of here maybe 30 miles or so.
11 I grew up on a farm in Okabena, which happens to be in
12 Jackson County, which happens to be the namesake of this
13 room, just as a sidebar.

14 Related to my experiences, I grew up on the
15 farm, as I indicated, and I've had farmland for many
16 decades. I recently retired from a manufacturing --
17 equipment manufacturer that happens to be one of those
18 that's the largest in the world. I worked there for
19 about 45 years. So my entire life has been involved in
20 agriculture, literally getting my hands into the dirt
21 and/or making the equipment that allows others to do
22 basically the same thing.

23 I've been involved with economic development
24 in my town, Jackson, for many decades. Our town was one
25 of those in the last census that actually grew by maybe

1 a dozen or so. But that's pretty much unusual for this
2 area, for towns to actually grow. And our town actually
3 grows by 2,000 people during the day because of all the
4 things that are going on related to economic
5 development, manufacturing, and the diverse businesses
6 that we do here.

7 The people around here are very involved
8 with agriculture, typically, whether it's growing corn
9 or soybeans or turning that product into something that
10 we all can use. We have a lot of hogs being grown
11 around here. We also have a lot of hog processing.
12 I feel that this is a rural area. No matter where
13 you're at, you touch it in some way, shape, or form.

14 I think there was some mention about the
15 medical community. Obviously, on the eastern part of
16 this district we have the Mayo Clinic. But virtually
17 every town has a clinic in it or would like to have a
18 clinic, and we have some hospitals. So medical
19 environment or people that work in the medical
20 environment are extremely critical across this district.

21 It's important, I think, that our district
22 continues to be the same as it is so it doesn't get kind
23 of cut up in different things. My county right now
24 actually is in two different house and senate districts,
25 but it's still all organized in one county.

1 I think it's incumbent upon us that we
2 continue to have basically counties organized together
3 and be in one district. I think it'd be some logical
4 that we can gain some more size to the north, probably,
5 and I just recognize that that's just the way it is.
6 But it's important to also recognize that our community
7 has found out a way to actually grow within a day and we
8 actually attract people coming from Iowa. So it is
9 possible. We just need to get them to move here.

10 So thank you for your consideration.

11 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
12 are submitted.

13 I believe we have at least one other
14 speaker.

15 ROD SANKEY: Good evening.

16 My name is Rod Sankey, S-a-n-k-e-y.
17 Legislative and congressional redistricting. Welcome,
18 everyone, on the panel, to Nobles County, first, and
19 then Worthington. We appreciate the hard work before
20 you in the redistricting Congressional District 1.

21 The 20-year history of CD-1 has essentially
22 remained constant, give or take, for three counties and
23 predominantly rural district given by large medical and
24 agricultural interest that has spawned many small- to
25 medium-sized companies across the district. We are not

1 Minneapolis and St. Paul and have enjoyed prospering
2 because of the representation we receive as a unique
3 district. This has worked well for southern Minnesota
4 and should continue.

5 In needing new counties, it would make sense
6 to add one of the counties lost through the last
7 redistricting: Wabasha, which is on the eastern side of
8 Minnesota; and Pipestone and Murray County, which is
9 north of Nobles County.

10 As a concerned citizen, I thank you. Rod
11 Sankey.

12 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
13 are submitted.

14 Is there anyone else who would like to give
15 a presentation? Okay. Thank you. Please state and
16 spell your last name. Welcome.

17 EUGENIO LOPEZ: Good evening. My name is
18 Eugenio Lopez, L-o-p-e-z -- I'll actually spell my first
19 name.

20 COURT REPORTER: What is your first name?

21 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Yeah.

22 EUGENIO LOPEZ: Eugenio, E-u-g-e-n-i-o, and
23 the last name is Lopez, L-o-p-e-z.

24 JUDGE BJORKMAN: And I can tell you need to
25 slow down just a little bit in speaking so we can all

1 hear you. Thank you.

2 EUGENIO LOPEZ: My name is Eugenio Lopez,
3 and I have lived and worked here in Worthington,
4 Minnesota, almost all of my life, the exception of my
5 first year, which I was born in Mississippi.

6 I have always called the city of Worthington
7 my community, my home. As the districts are drawn, we
8 are asking you to keep in mind our community and
9 especially the city of Worthington, to keep us together.
10 As we as a city that is born as a city of a diverse
11 community, it is important that this city must be
12 together to share a common goal.

13 And especially for one of my major concerns
14 is the affordable housing here in Worthington and
15 especially for immigrant families who are trying to
16 purchase homes here in Worthington, but an unaffordable
17 pricing and escaping from a high rental cost that goes
18 between \$900 to \$1,300 a month, and that is besides the
19 utility bills.

20 I am asking the members of the Special
21 Redistricting Committee, you, Your Honors, to make sure
22 that our voices as people like me can be heard in this
23 process and to please ensure the communities of interest
24 are grounding principles to those of these district
25 lines are drawn. We deserve to thrive and have a

1 district that represents their residents.

2 Thank you for the opportunity of listening.

3 Thank you.

4 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
5 are submitted.

6 And, sir, you'd like to speak? Welcome.

7 And would you begin by stating and spelling your name.

8 RICKY MOJEKWU: Yes. My name is Ricky,
9 spelled R-i-c-k-y. Last name Mojekwu, spelled
10 M-o-j-e-k-w-u.

11 JUDGE BJORKMAN: You may speak.

12 RICKY MOJEKWU: Thank you.

13 So to preface, I didn't know about this
14 event. I was actually told about it, thanks to Aida.
15 And districting is, just in general, something that I
16 hold near and dear to my heart. I'm a big proponent of
17 having representation that is according to your
18 population.

19 So to begin, I will say this -- and keep in
20 mind, I've only been in Worthington for two months. My
21 job here is to be in fine tune with the immigrant
22 population and to ensure that they have accurate and
23 equal representation.

24 I had some time to write some stuff together
25 while I was listening. It wasn't easy, but I'll go

1 forth.

2 So to begin, I speak with a bias as my job
3 here is to listen to the immigrant community and to
4 encourage inclusion throughout the community. In order
5 to best serve this community, in my brief time living
6 here, I choose to take a seemingly common sense approach
7 to redistricting.

8 Worthington and, in general, southwest
9 Minnesota, speaking of Jackson County, Rock County, and
10 even more have more in common geographically and
11 culturally with Pipestone, Murray, half of Cottonwood
12 that is included in this county, and a lot of other
13 southwestern counties in District 7. More so even with
14 Houston Counties, Winona County, and Gillmore (sic),
15 which is over five- to six-hundred miles away.

16 I actually agree with the gentleman who
17 spoke of the 23,000 people we need to have accurate
18 representation. And considering that this is one of the
19 only cities in Minnesota, southern Minnesota, that has
20 the diversity here, I believe that we should do whatever
21 it takes to make sure they have the right voice.

22 Thank you.

23 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
24 are submitted.

25 Is there anyone else who would like to

1 speak? Please come forward. Welcome.

2 CAROL PAPLOW: I am Carol Paplow. I live
3 in Windom, Minnesota, in Cottonwood County.

4 COURT REPORTER: Can you spell --

5 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Can you spell your last
6 name, please?

7 CAROL PAPLOW: P-a-p-l-o-w. And we thank
8 you for your time in coming down here to listen to us.

9 Windom is quite a diverse city too for this
10 area; not as much as Worthington. And I grew up in
11 Worthington, and it's so nice to see diversity come to
12 this area. And, basically, it's still an agricultural
13 area. And we can't really understand why, when they
14 draw boundaries, whether it be in the senate or the
15 congressional district, they split counties.

16 Cottonwood County is split right down
17 Highway 71. We're in CD-1 and CD-7. And down here in
18 the rural area, we all have to work together. So it's
19 kind of confusing that you don't have the same
20 congressman and senators and house representatives when
21 you live -- your neighbors -- it's kind of dividing up
22 neighborhoods. We understand that it goes by
23 population. And when those rules were set or laws were
24 set on how to, you know, draw boundaries, agricultural
25 areas were entirely different than they are now. You

1 had four families in one section. You had a lot more
2 people. Now there's less agricultural families. And by
3 putting some of us in one CD and senate district and
4 your neighbors in another, it's dividing us. And I
5 don't feel that's the way to go.

6 Thank you for your time.

7 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
8 are submitted.

9 Is there anyone else who has not yet had an
10 opportunity to make a presentation who would like to do
11 so? (No response.)

12 Well, it looks like then that this will
13 conclude our hearing this evening.

14 On behalf of the panel, I want to thank you
15 all for coming, for participating, and for providing
16 information and ideas about your community. Your
17 contributions will aid us in the work we do in this
18 redistricting process.

19 We are heartened, truly heartened by the
20 civic engagement we've witnessed here this evening and
21 during our prior public hearings over the last two
22 weeks. We greatly appreciate you taking the time out of
23 your busy schedules and under these unusual
24 circumstances to participate in this important work.

25 So with that, I wish you all a good evening.

1 And we are adjourned.

2 THE CLERK: All rise.

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4 (At 7:37 p.m., the Special Redistricting Panel of
5 judges left the courtroom and this special session of
6 the court stood adjourned.)

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1 **STATE OF MINNESOTA**)
)
2 **COUNTY OF DODGE**)

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4 **CERTIFICATE**

5

6 I, Lane T. Knutson, Registered Professional Reporter
7 and Official Court Reporter in and for the State of
8 Minnesota, County of Dodge, Third Judicial District, do
9 hereby certify that I reported and transcribed the
10 proceedings herein; and that the transcript contained
11 on the foregoing pages is a true and correct
12 transcription of my shorthand notes as reported by me
13 at the said time and place herein noted.

14

15

16 /s/Lane T. Knutson
17 Lane T. Knutson, RPR
18 Official Court Reporter
19 Dodge County Courthouse
20 Mantorville, Minnesota 55955
21 (507) 624-7007

Dated: November 30, 2021.

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