

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.

Steven 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 13, 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 Shakopee City Hall, 485
18 Gorman Street, Shakopee, Minnesota 55379.

19 - - -

APPEARANCES and INDEX

1		
2	Lucina Gonzalez Miron.....	9
3	(with interpreter Jenny Finden-Watson)	
4	Jackie Craig.....	12
5	Susan Moravec.....	14
6	Paul McDowall.....	17
7	Gregg Peppin.....	21
8	Renita Fisher.....	26
9	Ryan Featherstone.....	30
10	Cathleen Thom.....	32
11	Michael McGuire (No Appearance).....	--
12	Dory Shonagon.....	39
13	Mar Valdecantos.....	43
14	Paul Staut (No Appearance).....	--

- - -

1 (The following proceedings were held:)

2 - - -

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: Good evening. Please be
9 seated.

10 Good evening to all of you. Thank you for
11 being here. We are pleased to be here in Shakopee this
12 evening.

13 I want to also offer a special welcome and
14 thanks to those who are observing this evening's hearing
15 by Zoom. We are glad that this technology affords you
16 the opportunity to view this remotely.

17 We recognize that all of you have taken time
18 out of your busy lives to attend this hearing. The
19 redistricting process occurs only once every ten years
20 and is important to all Minnesotans, so we appreciate
21 your participation.

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

25 I will now ask my colleagues, the other

1 judges of the redistricting panel, to introduce
2 themselves, starting to my left.

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

6 JUDGE CARLSON Judge Jay Carlson, Seventh
7 Judicial District. I'm chambered in Becker County,
8 Minnesota.

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

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's work has
21 been delayed because of delays in the release of the
22 final 2020 census data, and we find ourselves in the
23 unusual situation of conducting parallel redistricting
24 processes. We do intend to give the legislature every
25 opportunity to complete redistricting, but we also must

1 move forward with our work so that we will be prepared
2 to act, if necessary, by February 15th.

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

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

18 We are particularly grateful for this
19 participation during this challenging time. We have
20 taken various precautions to create safe opportunities
21 for broad and diverse public engagement.

22 For those attending public hearings in
23 person, such as this one, masks are required at all
24 times, except when making an oral presentation. So if
25 you are in this room and don't have a mask, I believe

1 there are extra masks outside the door and I would ask
2 that you please put your mask on at this time.

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

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

17 You will see that there is a clock that's on
18 display to assist us in staying within the five-minute
19 time limit for each speaker.

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

24 When speakers describe particular
25 communities, we encourage them to use the maps on

1 display. And I realize you can't see them very well
2 from where you're sitting, but you can take a moment and
3 look at them when you come up. And if there is some
4 that would be helpful to you in describing your
5 neighborhood or your community, you can refer to them.
6 And there is a laser pointer at the table to help you do
7 so.

8 We encourage speakers to reference
9 geographic markers, such as political subdivisions;
10 landmarks, such as lakes or rivers or streets, so that
11 we can understand where those communities are relative
12 to the district lines.

13 Our court reporter will take down each
14 speaker's comments and a transcript will be available on
15 our website at a later time.

16 Please be mindful that this is a court
17 proceeding. With many thanks to the city of Shakopee,
18 this is our courtroom for the evening.

19 If you have not done so already, please turn
20 off your cell phone. Cell phones and private recording
21 devices must be turned off during the entire hearing.
22 If you need to leave during the hearing, please try to
23 do so in between speakers. Please be respectful of the
24 speakers and the listeners by not talking, adding
25 commentary, or applauding during or after a

1 presentation. And please respect and protect each other
2 by wearing your mask over your nose and mouth throughout
3 the session.

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

6 So we will begin tonight's speakers with
7 Lucina Gonzalez Miron.

8 Welcome. I understand that you are using an
9 interpreter this evening. I would ask the interpreter,
10 please state your name and the language that you are
11 interpreting.

12 THE INTERPRETER: Jenny Finden-Watson,
13 Spanish interpreter.

14 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Are you certified?

15 THE INTERPRETER: I am, Your Honor.

16 JUDGE BJORKMAN: All right. Thank you.

17 Then you may proceed, Ms. Miron, with your
18 comments.

19 LUCINA GONZALEZ MIRON: Good afternoon to
20 everyone.

21 Dear members of the Special Commission for
22 Redistricting: My name is Lucina Gonzalez Miron. We've
23 been living here for the last 24 years in Northfield,
24 Minnesota. I am very concerned about what happens in
25 our community, and I have come here to testify and give

1 voice to those in my community about what goes on in my
2 community.

3 With regard to the creation of the
4 constituency maps, as Hispanics and Latinos, we are a
5 community that have always worked hard and have always
6 paid our taxes. It is also true that since the
7 emergence of the pandemic, most of us never stopped
8 working because we are considered essential workers.

9 And for me, it is worrying that everyone in
10 my community doesn't have access to decent housing for
11 every family. I know that there are some parts of
12 Northfield where there is no appropriate housing, and
13 the housing that there is, is too expensive. The
14 reality is that entire families continue to live in
15 inappropriate places. And in some cases, they do not
16 even have the appropriate utilities in their apartments.

17 And that is why I want to say that we need
18 to be heard, because all families work; and their
19 children, they'll be going to the universities. They
20 will be our future.

21 My Latino and Hispanic community need more
22 access to everything, all things that are essential.
23 For example, we need access to more transportation,
24 transportation that can be available at anytime because
25 there are people who are not able to drive and that

1 don't even have a driver's license.

2 And this is a truth that I would like to
3 share, that this is a problem for my community, and
4 that's why I would like to express this truth so that
5 our voices can be heard and that they can be taken into
6 consideration at the time that the electoral maps are
7 made. (Timer sounded.)

8 JUDGE BJORKMAN: The five minutes is up,
9 but I know there's a little bit of a delay with the
10 interpretation, so why don't you conclude your comments.
11 You can go ahead.

12 LUCINA GONZALEZ MIRON: And I'd like this
13 to take into consideration when drawing the maps so that
14 each family has access to all of the services and
15 utilities that they need. There are many families who
16 live in apartments that aren't worth living in, that
17 aren't decent dwellings.

18 So there have been so many injustices. And
19 so what I wish for my community and for my people is to
20 be able to have -- is that we are able to have access to
21 better housing, better transportation, better health
22 insurance, and better representation in our cities and
23 in our states.

24 Thank you very much for your attention.

25 Lucina Gonzalez Miron.

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

3 LUCINA GONZALEZ MIRON: Thank you very much
4 to all of you.

5 JUDGE BJORKMAN: The next person on the
6 list of speakers is Jackie Craig. Welcome.

7 JACKIE CRAIG: Thank you.

8 Hello. My name is Jackie Craig, and I
9 reside in Lakeville, Minnesota, in Dakota County -- this
10 is Congressional District 2 -- where I'm the proud
11 mother of two kiddos in public school at ISD 194. I'm
12 also a nonprofit leader and long-time volunteer in our
13 community.

14 I would like to begin by asking that we take
15 a moment to appreciate all of the folks who have showed
16 up already and are showing up now to impact the
17 important work of redistricting. Thank you. Sincerely,
18 thank you. My hope is that everyone will testify to the
19 importance of each person's vote counting equally while
20 centering equity. I'm going to repeat that again:
21 Votes counting equally while centering equity.

22 Many will wonder: Well, how do we center
23 equity while expecting each vote to count equally? It's
24 actually quite simple. We do this by making certain
25 that we center our decision-making not on how political

1 parties may be affected but how communities in Minnesota
2 will be affected.

3 When establishing equal representation
4 through the drawing of redistricting lines, we must
5 ensure that communities of Black people, Indigenous
6 people, People of Color, and other communities of
7 interest with shared experiences, especially those we
8 have systemically oppressed, are intentionally and
9 purposely maintained across our state.

10 It goes without saying, I hope, that the
11 intentional or even unintentional splitting of
12 communities to protect relationships with political
13 parties and even political candidates is not an
14 appropriate reflection of establishing equal
15 representation.

16 I would also hope that it goes without
17 stating that we must prevent gerrymandered districts.
18 Unfortunately, based on historical evidence, this hope
19 for districts free of gerrymandering, it's not a given,
20 even in the wonderful state of Minnesota.

21 Voters must not be inconvenienced by the
22 will of political parties to maintain power. We already
23 experience a lack of democracy and, quite frankly, the
24 watering down of the idealistic one-person one-vote
25 through our state and federal senates. This diminishes

1 the will of the people.

2 In opposition to this diminished democracy,
3 we need to lead by example in Minnesota, what they often
4 do. We need to leverage redistricting so that we
5 actually grow democracy. How wonderful that would be to
6 actually grow democracy here in Minnesota.

7 Please be wary of politicians and political
8 parties suggesting that lines be drawn or redrawn in a
9 manner centering their perspectives and in hopes of
10 retaining their power.

11 Power must reside with the voters. And for
12 that power to reside with voters, we must resist
13 political wills to hoard power into the hands of the few
14 and instead draw redistricting lines centering equity
15 and focusing on equal representation.

16 Thank you so much for your time and
17 consideration. I appreciate you considering my words.

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

20 We will next hear from Susan Moravec.

21 SUSAN MORAVEC: You pronounced it
22 correctly. Thank you.

23 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Yay.

24 SUSAN MORAVEC: I want to peek at your
25 maps. (Pause.) I guess it won't really be helpful

1 here.

2 Good evening. And thank you, Your Honor,
3 Your Honors, to the panel.

4 My name is Susan Moravec, and I live in the
5 Shakopee area. I'm going to say "area" because,
6 technically, although I have a Shakopee address, I live
7 in Louisville Township. And if I could have zoomed in
8 on maps, Louisville Township is just south of Shakopee
9 and we abut the Minnesota River. The Renaissance
10 Festival is in Louisville, the infamous or famous
11 Louisville swamp.

12 I'm going to tell you about my experiences
13 living in a township, especially in the redistricting of
14 the 2000s. Before I start, I just have simple requests.
15 I understand -- I think we all get it -- how hard it is
16 to represent one-person one-vote and somehow juggle all
17 these numbers to have equal districts as best as
18 possible.

19 But given my experience in Louisville
20 Township, I want to ask you this: Remember that we're
21 not numbers to be moved into districts; we're people.
22 And one other thing: Remember that we're not numbers;
23 we are communities.

24 So I'm going to tell you what happened in
25 Louisville Township. We moved here, my family and I --

1 I have two sons and now a granddaughter who all go to
2 school in this area. My sons graduated years ago,
3 obviously. We moved here 26 years ago. We had been
4 involved in our community in Crystal beforehand and we
5 became involved in our community down here.

6 I served on the Louisville Town Board as a
7 supervisor in the 2000s. And when redistricting was put
8 into effect for that decade, three townships -- Jackson,
9 which is just to the north of us and gradually being
10 annexed by Shakopee; Louisville Township, which is in
11 the middle; and Sand Creek Township -- were essentially
12 gerrymandered into Carver County to make the numbers
13 work. We were on the east side of the Minnesota River;
14 everything else was on the west side of the Minnesota
15 River.

16 As a township supervisor, my job was to
17 focus on local needs -- the roads, water, watershed,
18 flooding, et cetera. And all of our business
19 development along the 169 corridor -- our shopping, our
20 businesses, our jobs, our churches, our clubs and
21 associations, our schools and our school teams -- were
22 all centered in Shakopee, Prior Lake, other small cities
23 in Scott County. But my representative lived in Carver
24 County. I didn't even know who it was. We had no
25 input, we had no association, we had no awareness of any

1 involvement across the river or interest in us and our
2 needs. In fact, before the bridges were rebuilt, we
3 couldn't even get into Carver County when we had
4 flooding. We were simply numbers that fit the bill. We
5 were carved into Carver County.

6 I'm just here to ask you tonight, that when
7 you look at these tough issues to balance the numbers,
8 remember that we're people. We're local communities
9 that are bonded with each other. And when sometimes
10 boundaries are drawn that move others aside and
11 isolated, those who are elected to represent others are
12 put to a disservice, and those of us who live in the
13 communities are disserved because there is disinterest
14 from our legislature.

15 I thank you. That's really all I had to
16 say. Very simple.

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

19 Our next speaker is Paul McDowall. Good
20 evening. Welcome.

21 PAUL McDOWALL: May I remove my mask?

22 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Yes, you may.

23 PAUL McDOWALL: Thank you.

24 Thank you, panel. We appreciate the time
25 that you've given to this. We also appreciate the fact

1 that there's a parallel effort going on in this
2 important task of redistricting.

3 My name is Paul McDowall. I've lived in
4 Burnsville, Minnesota, which is part of Dakota County,
5 for 37 years. My wife encouraged me to move here from
6 the West Coast because of the perfect conditions that
7 exist in Minnesota to raise a family. Being a native
8 North Dakotan, I couldn't imagine coming back to winter.
9 But, luckily, my spouse is much smarter than I am, so
10 we've been here for a long time.

11 I'm a retired elementary principal. And
12 once I retired from public school service, I was able to
13 participate as an election judge. Both of those
14 experiences helped frame my comments tonight.

15 As I looked at the concept of communities of
16 interest, I realize that there's multiple factors in
17 that. And depending on where you look, the factors
18 change. I wish to standardize tonight with my responses
19 looking at the geographic, looking at the governmental,
20 the transportation piece and, to a limited degree, the
21 socioeconomic factors that comprise that concept known
22 as communities of interest.

23 I first want to speak about Congressional
24 District 2. I'm encouraging the panel to consider
25 maintaining the current boundaries for CD-2 in that if

1 you look at the geographic parameters, we have a natural
2 river boundary system: the Minnesota River on the north
3 side of Congressional District 2; the Mississippi River
4 forms the east side.

5 When you look at the factor of governmental
6 influence, you realize that there are four complete
7 counties that establish CD-2, starting from west to
8 east: We're currently in Scott County. And as you move
9 along to the east, you pass through Dakota County, as
10 well as Goodhue County, which is up against the
11 Mississippi River, and then down the river a bit to
12 Wabasha County. There are two smaller pieces of Rice
13 County, the northeast section of Rice County, which
14 incorporates the city of Northfield, as well as a small
15 section of south Washington County, which includes the
16 city of Cottage Grove.

17 But, again, when we look at the geographical
18 factors that help form CD-2, you recognize that we've
19 got the rivers; and then you add in the governmental
20 piece, which has the continuity of four distinct
21 counties.

22 Looking at that as an election judge, you
23 can't imagine how much easier it is when you have new
24 residents coming in to vote for the first time to point
25 out that there are city halls, there's county government

1 centers, there's established areas for people to find
2 out how to participate in their new residence.

3 The ideal population size, I understand,
4 according to some of the websites, would be 711,000 for
5 a congressional district. Based on what I was able to
6 determine from preliminary census data, it would appear
7 that CD-2 currently is at around 720,000. I understand
8 that you're working with a plus or minus one-percent
9 guideline? But I would submit that given what we have
10 as the framework for CD-2, we're right within that
11 framework of 711,000 people as an ideal population.

12 When you think about the factor of
13 transportation connected to communities of interest, we
14 have a natural north/south highway system in 35W. And
15 as you know, many of the communities in CD-2 are seen as
16 suburban or exurban. And pre-pandemic, many of our
17 residents committed into the core city: St. Paul and
18 Minneapolis.

19 We also have Highway 52 on the east side of
20 CD-2, when you look at transportation across east to
21 west. On the north side of CD-2 is Highway 13. In the
22 middle, we've got Highway 19; and, to a degree, over in
23 Wabasha County you have an east/west corridor of Highway
24 60.

25 I am understanding and sympathetic to the

1 previous person who mentioned that transportation is not
2 perfect south of the river, that there's a need for
3 increased public transportation 24/7. But given the
4 current structures, we have some efforts being made to
5 address those transportation issues.

6 The other advantage that CD-2 brings is the
7 wonderful mix of, you might say, suburban -- smaller
8 communities that are 10,000 population or around that,
9 such as Red Wing, to Farmington, to Prior Lake. And
10 then, of course, our tremendous agricultural. When you
11 drive those east/west roads particularly, you're
12 reminded about how agriculture drives what goes on in
13 Minnesota.

14 I would hope that you will see fit to
15 maintain the status of CD-2. (Timer sounded.) And due
16 to time, I won't be able to express my interest in
17 maintaining SD56, of which I'm a member.

18 Thank you again, panel, for your time and
19 for making it easy for all of us as citizens to
20 participate in this grand experiment.

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

23 We will next hear from Gregg Peppin.

24 GREGG PEPPIN: May I remove my mask while I
25 testify, Your Honor?

1 JUDGE BJORKMAN: You may, yes.

2 GREGG PEPPIN: Thank you.

3 JUDGE BJORKMAN: I thought I said that at
4 the beginning. While you're speaking, you can remove
5 your mask; but otherwise, please keep it over your nose
6 and mouth when you're in this room.

7 Welcome.

8 GREGG PEPPIN: Thank you, Your Honor, and
9 members of the redistricting panel.

10 My name is Gregg Peppin. I'm a resident of
11 Rogers, Minnesota, in northwest Hennepin County, in
12 Minnesota's Third Congressional District, where I've
13 lived for the past 28 years.

14 If we analyze the work of the 2011 court
15 panel, the plans it produced and the political outcomes
16 of our congressional and legislative representation is
17 undeniably a very fair and competitive plan. Our
18 congressional delegation is split 4 to 4 and our
19 legislature is evenly divided -- the only legislature in
20 the country that is structured as such.

21 As you begin the process, you do have to
22 look at the redistricting principles. And I urge the
23 panel to use the same redistricting principles that they
24 used in 2011, which helped create our highly competitive
25 and evenly divided congressional and legislative

1 delegations.

2 Other parties and testifiers are trying to
3 draft highly partisan maps through the use of
4 controversial and untested redistricting principles,
5 including this week, that substantially deviate from the
6 historical and neutral principles used by previous
7 redistricting panels. This is simply gerrymandering by
8 another name.

9 I'd also like to make a few suggestions on
10 the Third Congressional District, where I've lived my
11 entire life, except for a very short period of time,
12 going back to the 1960s.

13 Like many in Rogers, in northwest Hennepin
14 County, I live very close to the Wright County border
15 and much of our shopping and travel patterns take us
16 into Wright County. The third district has historically
17 consisted of suburban communities and over the decades
18 has expanded west to include more of western and
19 northwestern Hennepin County, where there are very
20 similar communities of interest.

21 In 2012, the court plan included the eastern
22 section of Carver County, which was a natural extension
23 of the historical expansion of the third district that
24 made sense. At the same time, however, the court
25 breached the large natural boundary of the Mississippi

1 River when it went north and east to include Coon Rapids
2 and Anoka County in the third district.

3 With all due respect to that court panel,
4 this was an unusual and rather odd addition that didn't
5 make sense either geographically or from a
6 transportation or communities of interest perspective.
7 In fact, at the time the map was drawn in 2012, the most
8 direct way to access the Coon Rapids portion of the
9 third was to leave the district via Highway 169, travel
10 through Anoka and then go back into Coon Rapids on
11 Highway 10.

12 The Mississippi River is a strong and
13 natural border that effectively separates Coon Rapids
14 from the existing third district border communities, and
15 the city of Coon Rapids would be a much better fit in
16 another district; likely, the sixth. Keeping Coon
17 Rapids with the remainder of Anoka County and removing
18 it from the third district would allow the third
19 district to continue its historical westward expansion,
20 which could be easily accomplished in one of two ways:

21 The first is to simply add the remainder of
22 Carver County to the third district. From a population
23 perspective, I believe this change would be very close
24 to break even.

25 The second option would be to swap Coon

1 Rapids for the eastern Wright County cities of Hanover,
2 St. Michael, Albertville, and Otsego.

3 Either of these reconfigurations make much
4 more sense for a number of reasons. First, Highways 212
5 and 7 are historical transportation corridors that
6 easily connect Hennepin and Carver County. Similarly,
7 Highways 12 and 55 and Interstate 94 seamlessly connect
8 Hennepin and Wright County.

9 Secondly, adding Carver and/or Wright to the
10 third will continue the historical blending of suburban
11 and exurban communities that have intertwined economies,
12 consisting of retail, manufacturing, and agriculture.

13 Many of the western-most regions of Hennepin
14 County are largely agricultural in nature. Coon Rapids,
15 in contrast, is fully developed, without the same
16 agricultural and economic development interests.

17 Thirdly, western Hennepin and Carver and
18 Wright Counties share historical settlement and
19 religious affiliations with family names that go back
20 two and three generations and continue to this day.

21 Finally, the I-94 west Chamber of Commerce
22 has for decades included businesses from Maple Grove,
23 Rogers, Hanover, St. Michael, and Otsego.

24 One final point I'd like to make in closing
25 since my time is limited, one of the plaintiffs in the

1 case, Mr. Peter Wattson, has in his redistricting
2 principles stated, "The Wattson plaintiffs believe that
3 the entire state benefits if this panel takes steps to
4 combat partisan gerrymanders in court-ordered
5 redistricting plans."

6 Unfortunately, the congressional maps
7 submitted by Mr. Wattson fails to follow his advice. By
8 his own admission in testimony to the house
9 Redistricting Committee, he stated, (timer sounded) "The
10 most significant changes in the third district, which
11 still favors the Democrats but may no longer be
12 competitive for a Republican..." And then he goes on to
13 talk about the changes that he made.

14 He attempts to achieve partisan outcomes via
15 carefully crafted principles that he didn't follow in
16 drafting his own maps.

17 I urge the court to reject this partisan
18 gerrymander and give consideration to the suggestions
19 which I have presented tonight.

20 Thank you very much.

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

23 Next person on our list of speakers is
24 Renita Fisher. Welcome.

25 RENITA FISHER: Thank you. Good evening,

1 Your Honors.

2 My name is Renita Fisher, and I live in
3 Congressional District 2, Senate District 56. I have
4 lived in Burnsville for 23 years, but my story starts
5 elsewhere -- it is that of an immigrant and a proud
6 American.

7 In coming here today, I am representative of
8 one of the many diverse voices of interconnectedness in
9 our communities, and I am asking today for your
10 consideration that honors representative equality and
11 fair allocations that keeps our communities together,
12 especially when we think of those considerations and the
13 impacts to our schools.

14 There's a novel pride in sharing that my
15 home in Burnsville, Dakota County, and my neighbor's
16 home right behind me is in Savage, Scott County. On
17 Saturdays, when we are both out mowing the lawn, we
18 often stop to check in with each other and sometimes
19 share a laugh about which city we're standing in or that
20 maybe we're standing in both at the same time but just
21 each foot in a different city.

22 The cities of Burnsville, Savage, and Prior
23 Lake are part of the School District 191 family. My
24 son's early education is grounded in the strong
25 traditions of Savage, Scott County, and he will graduate

1 high school in Burnsville, Dakota County, where he will
2 be *Future Ready, Future Strong* -- School District 191's
3 motto.

4 There is much to uphold in the community
5 values that shapes our lives in Burnsville and Savage
6 and why it's widely important to honor those things that
7 keep our communities whole. This representation is
8 reflected in who our community family is in so many ways
9 that I've experienced and heard in organizing community
10 conversations between law enforcements and community
11 residents who come from both Burnsville and Savage and
12 the surrounding cities in Congressional District 2.

13 I have also co-moderated discussions in
14 Burnsville, Shakopee, Prior Lake, and Savage with our
15 community members from red and blue sides of the aisle,
16 and we talk about sharing the same principles and
17 beliefs and the ones that we don't. But we value what
18 brings the best of who we are and how we can accomplish
19 these together as neighbors that honors our
20 connectedness.

21 In my role as a consultant in mortgage
22 banking policy management, each day I go to work
23 evaluating corporate policies that are driven out of
24 banking regulations, both federal and local; careful
25 consideration is made on the risk and impacts, and

1 wonder what those impacts are going to be both long and
2 short-term and how to mitigate actual and potential
3 harm.

4 I think of that as I sit here tonight: How
5 will those redistricting changes govern our lives for
6 the next ten years?

7 Today, there are lines drawn in sectors of
8 our lives, especially those that are political, that
9 constantly highlight our divisions and how to separate
10 us. Here we are today talking about more lines and
11 allocations. But what we are needing to talk about is
12 the fairness of those allocations that keep us together.
13 Who we truly are in Burnsville and Savage when we stand
14 on those lines, one foot in one city and one in the
15 other, sharing where to shop for food, where to buy
16 clothes, where to come together for that high school
17 football game or that band concert, we are one.

18 I ask for the court to keep top of mind in
19 your redistricting decisions that the wholeness and the
20 diversity of our communities remain the guiding
21 principle in your determination that centers and
22 protects our individual and our shared identities. The
23 next ten years, our future, and those beyond our
24 lifetimes depend on it.

25 Thank you for your time today.

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

3 We will next hear from Ryan Featherstone.
4 Welcome.

5 RYAN FEATHERSTONE: Hello. My name is Ryan
6 Featherstone, and I live in Congressional District 2,
7 right here in Shakopee.

8 I am here today because I am concerned about
9 the lack of representation that may occur during this
10 next redistricting process. I am asking you to keep
11 Scott, Dakota, and southern Washington Counties together
12 in Congressional District 2 and to move Goodhue and
13 Wabasha Counties into Congressional District 1.

14 The current Congressional District 2 lines
15 encompass a mixture of rural and suburban counties.
16 Scott, Dakota, and Washington Counties are extremely
17 suburban, whereas Goodhue and Wabasha Counties are much
18 more rural in nature.

19 Suburban communities like Shakopee are
20 growing in diversity, we are more educated than the
21 state as a whole, and our population overall has grown.
22 According to census data, Scott County has grown nearly
23 15 percent, Washington County 10 percent, Dakota County
24 8 percent since 2010. In comparison, Goodhue and
25 Wabasha Counties stayed level or lost population.

1 It is clear that the population shift is
2 occurring in Minnesota. Indeed, the current Second
3 Congressional District is around 18,000 people over the
4 population limit. I recognize someone before me gave
5 different facts, so I'm sure you'll be able to figure
6 that out. When populations increase, we drastically see
7 a need for new housing and affordable housing for our
8 communities.

9 Living in the suburbs, cities brush up
10 against one another. This blurs the lines between
11 communities. Just because I live in Shakopee does not
12 mean that I do not share community with Savage. For
13 work, I travel County Road 42 through Savage to
14 Burnsville very often, and I would not know that I'm in
15 Savage or if I'm in Burnsville unless I saw the sign.

16 You will know during this redistricting
17 where the city lines are. But I would remind you that
18 voters and citizens may not know where those are.

19 Further, the suburban communities are much
20 more diverse and our diversity is growing. In
21 particular, Latino and Asian communities have grown
22 substantially. This kind of diversity does not present
23 itself in other counties in Congressional District 2.
24 And by having those counties included in Congressional
25 District 2, we dilute the voice of diverse communities.

1 Redistricting should encourage community
2 cohesion. When we misplace emphasis from communities of
3 interest, like suburbanites or our communities of color,
4 redistricting often leads to a division of communities
5 of interest. This leads to representatives who do not
6 know us, listen to us, nor champion our causes. It can
7 also create a very difficult job for a representative to
8 represent a district with communities that are split.

9 Again, I respectfully ask that the Special
10 Redistricting Commission keep Scott, Dakota, and
11 southern Washington Counties together in Congressional
12 District 2 and move Goodhue and Wabasha Counties into
13 Congressional District 1 to preserve the diversity and
14 community created in the Twin Cities suburbs.

15 Thank you so much for your time.

16 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments
17 are submitted.

18 Our next speaker is Cathleen Thom. Did I
19 pronounce that correctly?

20 CATHLEEN THOM: Close enough. I married
21 into it; I have no particular attachment.

22 (Ms. Thom approached the bench and handed
23 documents to each judge.)

24 COURT REPORTER: Excuse me, ma'am. I can't
25 hear you.

1 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Why don't you hand them
2 out and then you can make your comments.

3 CATHLEEN THOM: Honorable members of the
4 redistricting panel, thank you for the opportunity to
5 testify here to tonight.

6 My name is Cathy Thom. My husband and I
7 have lived in Waconia, in Carver County, for 26 years.
8 We raised two daughters there and have owned two homes
9 there. I've been active as a community leader for over
10 two decades. I'm just retired from 12 years of service
11 on the Waconia School Board.

12 I'm testifying today because I felt for two
13 decades that central and western Carver County and Scott
14 County were placed into different congressional
15 districts in error back in 2000 after historically being
16 in the same CD.

17 In 2000, western Carver County was placed in
18 CD-3 and then in CD-6 in 2010, while Scott County
19 remained in CD-2. The separation disregards
20 longstanding partnerships and regulatory standards as to
21 how their transportation corridors, wastewater, surface
22 water, and groundwater are managed by MnDOT, the
23 Minnesota DNR, the Met Council and local watershed
24 management organizations. Those are layers that a lot
25 of people don't think about it; they only think about

1 transportation.

2 The separation also ignores decades old
3 traditions of cooperation between the two counties in
4 regard to education, health and human services, and
5 animal services.

6 As you can see from the first two maps I
7 provided in the packet, western Carver County and
8 central Carver County and all of Scott County together
9 comprise the entire Metropolitan Council District 4.
10 They basically are Met Council District 4. They share
11 transportation services, of course, and routes though
12 the Met Council and MnDOT, and they have a Met Council
13 representative, Ms. Deb Barber.

14 However, most importantly, they share
15 surface water quality and wastewater management services
16 provided and funded through Met Council District 4
17 budget fees and taxation.

18 Due to the topography of the region -- water
19 does run downhill, after all -- surface water within Met
20 Council District 4 all flows to the Minnesota River.
21 Because of this, Met Council District 4 provides funding
22 for lake water monitoring services for area lakes in
23 cooperation with the DNR. In addition, the local
24 watershed management organizations cooperate in their
25 efforts to preserve and improve the surface and

1 groundwater resources of the region.

2 Likewise, all wastewater from Met Council
3 district communities served by the metropolitan urban
4 services area -- the MUSA -- sanitary sewer system is
5 piped to the Blue Lake Wastewater Treatment plant in
6 Shakopee.

7 COURT REPORTER: Slow down just a little
8 bit.

9 CATHLEEN THOM: There, it is treated before
10 being released into the Minnesota River. All District 4
11 communities connected to the MUSA system pay taxes and
12 fees related to it -- significant ones. And
13 significantly, these communities' comprehensive
14 development plans that they are required to submit to
15 the Met Council are heavily influenced by the capacity
16 limits of the Blue Lake network, limits which are
17 determined by the Met Council.

18 This means that the pace and type of
19 development of communities in Carver and Scott Counties
20 are heavily intertwined due to their reliance on this
21 shared system. This, in turn, affects their tax bases,
22 their economies, as well as the resources allocated to
23 them at the federal, state, and regional levels.

24 That the Met Council itself has grouped
25 central and western Carver County and Scott County

1 within the same district should speak volumes about the
2 interconnectedness of these areas in regard to natural
3 and environmental resource management, transportation,
4 and their economies. It makes little sense that these
5 already recognized communities of interest are not
6 included within the same CD.

7 The residents of Carver and Scott Counties
8 themselves also recognize their shared interests. They
9 have longstanding traditions of cooperation,
10 particularly in regard to education, health and human
11 services, and animal services.

12 Southwest Intermediate School District 288,
13 which was for a long time known as Carver-Scott
14 Education Cooperative, provides numerous services for 11
15 member districts and six associated districts in the
16 region. These services include Special Ed., Career and
17 Tech Ed., chemical dependency care and treatment, adult
18 education and alternative education, including a fully
19 accredited online learning option that is expanded
20 greatly due to the COVID-19 crisis --

21 JUDGE BJORKMAN: And I'm going to ask you
22 to slow down a little bit --

23 CATHLEEN THOM: Okay.

24 JUDGE BJORKMAN: -- too. Thank you.

25 CATHLEEN THOM: As you can see from the map

1 of ISD 288 locations, which is the third map that I
2 provided, students from 17 school districts access
3 services at various sites across both Carver and Scott
4 Counties and even a few sites in western Hennepin and
5 Wright.

6 Because students served by ISD 288 often
7 have special circumstances, the two counties also
8 frequently cooperate to serve them and their families as
9 health and human services, law enforcement, and
10 education services often overlap.

11 In addition, the Carver-Scott Humane Society
12 is a 32-year-old nonprofit organization that serves both
13 Carver and Scott Counties that takes in fosters and
14 adopts out animals in need of care and homes. It
15 partners with area businesses across both counties to
16 host adoption sessions for available animals and
17 prospective owners.

18 To summarize, it's clear that many
19 entities -- MnDOT, the DNR, Met Council, area school
20 districts, animal care specialists, and the county
21 governments themselves -- recognize the
22 interconnectedness of central and western Carver County
23 and Scott County.

24 This is why I believe these areas should be
25 in the same CD. But which one? Given the current CD

1 map -- that is up there and I also provided one -- I
2 believe that it should be CD-6, just given the numbers
3 and crunching them myself a little bit. Why? For three
4 reasons: The first, it's as exurban areas that
5 straddle the transitional region between suburban and
6 rural areas. They are similar to many other communities
7 within the current CD-6 lines.

8 Second, a majority of Southwest Intermediate
9 School District 288 locations lie within current CD-6
10 lines.

11 Finally, western Carver County currently
12 comprises a stocking-shaped peninsula -- if you look at
13 the CD-6 map -- and is surrounded by three other
14 congressional districts: 2, 3, and 7. Because of this,
15 western Carver County has often been neglected by its
16 congressional representatives due to its geographical
17 isolation from the rest of CD-6. Similarly, Scott
18 County has been isolated on the western geographic
19 fringe of CD-2.

20 It's my hope that by joining forces, Carver
21 and Scott Counties could amplify each other's voices to
22 a common congressional representative to receive the
23 attention, resources, and legislative assistance that
24 they both need and deserve because they share so many
25 other types of representative and cooperative entities

1 now.

2 Thank you again for the opportunity to
3 testify and for your consideration.

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

6 Our next speaker is Michael P. McGuire. Do
7 we have Michael McGuire? (No response.)

8 Then we will next hear from Dory Shonagon.
9 Welcome back. I think we saw you on Monday night.

10 DORY SHONAGON: I'm going to take one piece
11 of the map. (Pause.) Okay.

12 My name is Dory Shonagon, and I want to
13 thank the panel for listening to us tonight, allowing us
14 to testify regarding redistricting --

15 JUDGE WILLIAMSON: Ms. Shonagon, would you
16 just talk a little bit louder --

17 DORY SHONAGON: Okay.

18 JUDGE WILLIAMSON: -- or move the
19 microphone closer?

20 DORY SHONAGON: If I get closer, does that
21 help? That helps.

22 JUDGE WILLIAMSON: That does.

23 DORY SHONAGON: Sorry. I thought
24 everybody -- when I was listening to other people, it
25 sounded really loud so I wasn't wanting to do that.

1 I live in Bloomington, Minnesota -- I'm in
2 Congressional District 3 -- and I'm here to speak as an
3 individual about comments about redistricting for
4 Minnesota borders. I am not representing any group or
5 organization, and I've never been an elected official.

6 Although I was born and raised and educated
7 in Wisconsin, I moved to Minnesota two years ago. Love
8 Minnesota.

9 I am here to talk about the congressional
10 districts; specifically, Congressional District 3, which
11 I'm in. I believe the redistricting rule of a district
12 being contiguous should apply to CD-3 in that Edina
13 should pulled as a whole city into CD-3 instead of being
14 split across two congressional districts as it is now.

15 From my experience of living in Bloomington,
16 there's a natural flow between the two cities,
17 Bloomington and Edina. My neighbors and I shop in the
18 two cities and there are other facilities -- medical,
19 et cetera -- that we participate in.

20 I would like to note that there have been --
21 I have listened to some of the other testimonies in the
22 senate hearings and also this panel where people have
23 talked about pulling Bloomington into another district,
24 polling it into CD-2. There has been a lot of talk. I
25 need to explain this in order to, you know, explain my

1 position; or to take some of the southern cities, like
2 Lakeville and Apple Valley, and pull them into CD-3.

3 And I think that that basically is a lot of
4 drastic change. And I think that from talking to my
5 Bloomington neighbors, we are very comfortable with
6 being in Bloomington and also shopping in Edina,
7 especially with the France Avenue corridor, which is
8 really important in that area. It doesn't really apply
9 to Lakeville and, again, pulling the district down.

10 So I wanted to say that in regards to that,
11 if you look at CD-3, which is why I wanted to take a
12 quick look at the map, again, it flows through all of
13 Bloomington, which I'm glad, of course, that Bloomington
14 is not split up, up into the western suburbs. And that,
15 to me, is a natural flow. A lot of those communities
16 are, I think, of a similar nature, which is why I say
17 pull Edina in, but also keep those cities in with
18 Bloomington instead of pulling Bloomington down into
19 another CD.

20 There's even been some talk of pulling
21 Bloomington into Ramsey County and down into Dakota
22 County. I just don't think that's a very good idea.

23 I think that, obviously, with the population
24 shifts that we've had in the last ten years, there are
25 going to have to be changes, but I don't think that it's

1 necessarily good to have drastic changes as some people
2 have noted.

3 I think that does -- and I think one other
4 speaker sort of alluded to this, that I think that does
5 confuse people. You know, if you have basically the
6 same district, you may need to make some changes because
7 of population. But if you have the same district, then
8 it's less confusing to the voters. And, really, the way
9 I'm looking at CD, the way it's constituted right now,
10 it seems like a pretty solid district; again, maybe to
11 have some changes around the edges because of the
12 population shifts. But that's what I am thinking about
13 CD-3.

14 I wanted to say that I think one thing
15 that's very important is for the citizens to have
16 participation, which they're having. And also in my
17 specific situation, I live in an apartment complex with
18 many minorities, and I believe that diversity that is in
19 Bloomington should be honored in the whole metro area
20 when we're doing the redistricting maps. It's very
21 important to keep the minorities fairly represented.

22 Thank you.

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

25 Our next speaker is Mar Valdecantos.

1 Welcome.

2 MAR VALDECANTOS: Thank you so much.

3 My name, as you said, is Mar Valdecantos.

4 I'm a Northfield resident since the year 1998. I'm the
5 Vice Chair of the Northfield Human Rights Commission;
6 I'm Director of the nonprofit Rice County Neighbors
7 United.

8 So dear Minnesota official redistricting
9 members: We worked tirelessly for everybody to be
10 counted in the 2020 census. It was wonderful to work
11 with so many people and educate them on the importance
12 of the decennial census. Despite all the obstacles --
13 the changes in dates and the pandemic -- we managed to
14 count our community members.

15 The challenge ahead is to make sure our
16 voices continue to be heard. As a Northfield resident
17 since 1998, I have seen the difference between groups on
18 how the lack of equity happens too often. Minnesota can
19 do better.

20 As you engage in the work of redistricting,
21 all the communities of color in the state want to make
22 sure our voices are included at every level in the
23 decision-making process.

24 Minnesota is a wonderful state, with so much
25 to offer to those born here and newcomers. We can all

1 and should be all be able to participate in the wealth
2 and well-being for all of us.

3 As a new American -- I am originally from
4 Spain -- I am gifted with the knowledge I have gained as
5 an immigrant. Being an immigrant is hard being away
6 from one's family, traditions, and culture. But it is
7 also a great opportunity to learn about others through
8 expand the capacity for empathy and view the world as an
9 ongoing melting of cultures and peoples. Diversity only
10 brings more to all of us. It enriches all of us.

11 At Shakopee, we are close to the Mdewakanton
12 community. We are on Dakota land. And in this region,
13 we are reminded of the many gaps that exist in Minnesota
14 between People of Color and White people. Native
15 people, Dakota and Ojibwe, know this well as do other
16 groups of people, Black, Hispanic, Latinos, and Asian
17 people. Minnesota can do better on work on the gaps
18 that are reproduced all over the system in home
19 ownership, at schools, and so forth, including when it
20 comes to respect the boundaries and keep communities
21 intact when it comes to redistricting.

22 Thank you very much for your attention.

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

25 We will next hear from Paul Staut. Do we

1 have Paul Staut? Or "Stout"? (No response.)

2 And I'm wondering if Michael McGuire has
3 joined us? (No response.) No.

4 It appears then that the comments of people
5 who have preregistered to speak have been concluded.

6 We do have time remaining, so if there are
7 others in the audience who have not had an opportunity
8 to share their comments, and if you wish to make a
9 presentation, you may do so. We will still honor the
10 five-minute time limit. So if there's anyone who has
11 not had a chance to speak who would like to do so, the
12 floor is yours. (No response.)

13 All right. Seeing we have no takers, this
14 will conclude our hearing in Shakopee.

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

19 We are heartened by your civic engagement
20 that we have witnessed this evening and we've witnessed
21 the last two evenings in other locations. We greatly
22 appreciate people like you taking time out of your busy
23 schedules and under these unusual circumstances to
24 participate in this important work.

25 So I wish you all a good evening. And we

1 are adjourned.

2 THE CLERK: All rise.

3 - - -

4 (At 7:32 p.m., the Special Redistricting Panel of
5 judges left the courtroom and this special session of
6 the court stood adjourned.)

7 - - -

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

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

3

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.

19

20

21

22

23

24

25