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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 On October 21, 2021, at 6:30 p.m., this matter
13 was duly before the Special Redistricting Panel: Judge
14 Louise Dovre Bjorkman, Judge Diane Bratvold, Judge Jay
15 Carlson, Judge Juanita Freeman, and Judge Jodi
16 Williamson, for hearing at the Olmsted County Government
17 Center, 151 4th Street SE, Rochester, Minnesota 55904.

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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. Thank you for being here. We
11 are pleased to be in Rochester this evening. A special
12 welcome and thanks to those who are observing this
13 evening's hearing by Zoom. We are glad this technology
14 affords you the opportunity to view this hearing
15 remotely.

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

1 to my left.

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

5 JUDGE FREEMAN: Good evening. Juanita
6 Freeman in the Tenth Judicial District. I'm chambered
7 in Stillwater, Washington County.

8 JUDGE CARLSON: Judge Jay Carlson, Seventh
9 Judicial District, chambered in Becker County, which is
10 Detroit Lakes, Minnesota.

11 JUDGE WILLIAMSON: Jodi Williamson,
12 chambered in Dodge County, Third Judicial District.
13 Used to be chambered here in Rochester for 13 years.

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 do
18 so by the statutory deadline of February 15th, 2022.

19 We recognize that the legislature has been
20 delayed in starting the work of redistricting because of
21 delays in the release of the final 2020 census data, so
22 we find ourselves in the unusual situation of conducting
23 parallel redistricting processes. We do intend to give
24 the legislature every opportunity to complete
25 redistricting, but we must also move forward with our

1 work so that we will be prepared to act, if necessary,
2 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 the 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 other
10 legislatures across the country, has conducted hearings
11 to receive information from the public, and prior
12 redistricting panels have done the same. These hearings
13 enable members of the public to directly voice their
14 opinions and concerns and to share local perspectives
15 that will enhance our understanding of communities
16 across the state. This participation is truly democracy
17 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 hearings in person,
23 masks are required at all times, except when you come up
24 to the table to make your presentation, at which time
25 you may remove your mask if you would like to do so.

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, which I
16 believe you can probably see where you're sitting, which
17 will assist us in staying within the five-minute time
18 limit for each speaker.

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, which you will be able to see when you come

1 forward. And there is a laser pointer at the desk for
2 your use. We encourage speakers to reference geographic
3 markers, such as political subdivisions, landmarks, or
4 streets, so that we can understand where those
5 communities are 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, this is our courtroom
11 here in the Rochester Olmsted County Government Center
12 for this evening.

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

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

25 We begin with our first speaker, Mark

1 Liebow. Good evening and welcome.

2 MARK LIEBOW: Your Honors, thank you for
3 giving me the opportunity to testify tonight.

4 My name is Mark Liebow and I'm a
5 semi-retired internist. I live in Rochester, the
6 largest city in the First Congressional District, and
7 have for almost 28 years. I want to testify about
8 drawing legislative districts in Olmsted County.

9 Thirty years ago, the last redistricting of
10 the 1990s created a senate district that was almost
11 exclusively in Rochester, at a time when the population
12 of Rochester was a few thousand more than was needed for
13 a senate district.

14 The senator and both representatives from
15 that district were quite attentive to the needs of the
16 city and its people over the next decade. However, in
17 2001, the then mayor of Rochester asked that Rochester,
18 which had grown by 15,000 people in the decade and so
19 was the size of 1.2 senate districts, be split in half
20 in hopes of having two senators responsive to the needs
21 of the city. It wasn't inherently a bad idea, but in
22 hindsight it backfired. More importantly, it split
23 communities of interest. Let me say that again: It
24 split communities of interest.

25 Most of the minority populations in

1 southeast Minnesota live in Rochester. And unlike some
2 other cities, they are not concentrated in a
3 neighborhood or two close-by neighborhoods. They go all
4 around the city. Splitting Rochester in half diluted
5 their abilities to elect representatives of their choice
6 or to advocate effectively for their interests,
7 especially the state senate.

8 As a comparison, Duluth, the other regional
9 center city whose population is more than twice that --
10 or more than that needed for a senate district, is
11 predominantly in one senate district, with a small
12 amount of the city flowing into an adjacent district.

13 Fortunately, remedying this change that
14 happened 20 years ago has become easier. Rochester has
15 continued to grow briskly, with 35,600 more people than
16 20 years ago. It's just about 6,300 people short of
17 having enough people for three house districts.

18 So any redistricting that doesn't just split
19 the city in half again will help give Rochester a
20 senator whose focus is on the city.

21 However, to best accommodate communities of
22 color, which are largely in the northwest and southeast
23 parts of the city; that is, the northwest and southeast
24 parts of the city, the successor districts to House
25 Districts 26A and 25B, the two house districts

1 predominantly in Rochester, should be combined into a
2 senate district.

3 As background, the current Senate Districts
4 25 and 26 between them cover Olmsted County, and Senate
5 District 25 also has 14,875 people in Dodge County.
6 Both these senate districts have more people than the
7 ideal population for a district. All other districts in
8 southeast Minnesota in comparison have too few. So it
9 would be reasonable to have people at the east and west
10 ends of District 25 and 26 go to other districts that
11 need to add people.

12 However, there's one exception: Kasson,
13 which is -- I'm out of practice using a laser pointer --
14 but Kasson, which is right here, Kasson, Mantorville are
15 both in Mantorville Township. Kasson especially is
16 increasingly becoming a bedroom suburb of Rochester, so
17 it makes sense to keep Kasson and nearby Mantorville,
18 which, as I said, are both in Mantorville Township, in a
19 district that includes Olmsted County. That house
20 district, most likely the successor to 25A, could also
21 be the district of most of the smaller cities and rural
22 townships in Olmsted County, which forms another
23 community of interest.

24 This would leave two house districts
25 completely in Rochester, and you could have a fourth

1 made up of some of southern Rochester, Stewartville and
2 adjacent townships. These districts would be contiguous
3 and relatively compact.

4 Thank you again for letting me testify
5 tonight.

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

8 Our next speaker is Caitlin Nicholson. Is
9 there a Caitlin Nicholson? (No response.)

10 All right. Then we will move to Teresa
11 O'Donnell-Ebner. Good evening and welcome.

12 TERESA O'DONNELL-EBNER: Thank you.

13 Your Honors, I'm Teresa O'Donnell-Ebner, and
14 I'm a lifelong resident of southern Minnesota. I've
15 lived in La Crescent for the last 37 years. I've been a
16 paralegal for 40 years and recently retired from
17 Gunderson Health System located just across the river in
18 La Crosse, Wisconsin.

19 I currently serve on the La Crescent City
20 Council, but I am here tonight solely as a Minnesota
21 voter, not as a representative of the city of La
22 Crescent.

23 I firmly believe that every citizen has an
24 important role to play in making our government work at
25 its best, so I am here to express my own personal views

1 on redistricting.

2 First and foremost, the redistricting
3 process must be transparent and nonpartisan. I'm
4 in Minnesota House 28B, with the nice, neat borders of
5 Houston and Fillmore Counties. Census numbers indicate
6 that we are about 2,500 residents under the new ideal
7 average for a house district. I understand that
8 boundaries for 28B will need to be adjusted, and I would
9 like to point out that there are two neighborhoods in
10 the city of La Crescent which are physically located in
11 Winona County and are part of 28A.

12 If boundaries are to change, I believe that
13 those La Crescent residents would benefit from being
14 included in the same house district as the rest of the
15 city of La Crescent.

16 The boundaries of Senate District 28 will
17 also need adjusting, but I want to speak more about
18 CD-1. As you know, CD-1 is wide and narrow. It goes
19 from the Wisconsin border to the South Dakota border.
20 It takes me four hours to travel from my end of the
21 district to the other. This can be a hardship not only
22 for our candidates and elected officials trying to meet
23 with constituents, but also for those of us that live in
24 the district. I realize that CD-7 and CD-8 also have
25 large physical footprints. But keeping districts as

1 convenient and as compact as possible is an important
2 consideration. I encourage you to look for areas of
3 density that would enable CD-1 population to be
4 increased without greatly increasing the footprint.

5 I have heard testifiers at other public
6 hearings mention three primary communities of interest
7 for CD-1: Agriculture, health care services, and small
8 businesses, and I agree with all of those. But I have
9 not heard mention of the community of interest for those
10 of us who live in the driftless area of the bluffs and
11 river valleys of southeastern Minnesota. We have a
12 shared interest in the preservation and stewardship of
13 this unique part of Minnesota.

14 I ask that consideration be given to drawing
15 boundaries that would include more communities along the
16 southeast Minnesota, along the Mississippi River, to
17 better represent that unique community of interest.

18 I mention that I spent the last 37 years
19 working in Wisconsin. After the 2010 census, the maps
20 drawn in Wisconsin were a shocking example of the
21 partisan gerrymandering that can occur. The new maps
22 drawn did not enhance representative government. It was
23 not done in a fair and impartial manner. They were
24 drawn behind closed doors to favor one party.

25 As you know, when the matter went to court,

1 the map designers argued that they met the technical
2 requirements and so their maps should stand. And,
3 unfortunately, the Supreme Court refused to intervene
4 even though the map designers acknowledged multiple
5 revisions were made to create more and more partisan
6 results. In my opinion, this is wrong and does not meet
7 the spirit of redistricting.

8 Balanced representation is essential so that
9 communities of interest are fairly represented and each
10 person's vote has value.

11 Please do not let this happen in Minnesota.
12 We are better than that.

13 In closing, I can tell you that while I
14 loved my career as a paralegal in Wisconsin, I was
15 always grateful to cross the big blue bridge at the end
16 of the day and return to Minnesota. Our state prides
17 itself in citizen engagement, with the highest voter
18 participation in the nation. Our election system is
19 well run by dedicated election officials, clerks, and
20 volunteers, and there is much to be proud of.

21 But we cannot take that for granted. These
22 maps have consequences, and we must ensure the integrity
23 of Minnesota voting systems remain intact. I know you
24 will take your nonpartisan role in this process
25 seriously.

1 And I thank you for your time this evening.

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

4 Our next speaker is Christine DeVries.
5 Welcome.

6 CHRISTINE DeVRIES: Good evening, Your
7 Honors.

8 My name is Christine DeVries. I live in
9 Preston, in Fillmore County. And I will speak tonight
10 on how I would like Fillmore County to be viewed during
11 redistricting for our congressional district. Since you
12 are charged with making maps, my comments are informed
13 by maps. I hope to make three points about our
14 underlying communities of interest.

15 First, here is an important fact to know
16 about Fillmore County and our identity: Fillmore County
17 falls solidly within Minnesota's southeast region of
18 active karst, which the state describes as featuring
19 rolling hills, caves, sinkholes, dramatic bluffs, and
20 valleys. Fillmore County has more caves, sinkholes, and
21 disappearing streams than all other Minnesota counties
22 combined, according to the University of Minnesota.

23 We share our distinct geology with the
24 counties of Houston, Olmsted, Winona, Goodhue, and
25 Wabasha. Significant parts of Dakota, Rice, Dodge, and

1 Mower are also known for their karst features.

2 Our geology brings opportunity for wonderful
3 year-round recreation and tourism that comes with it.
4 The state's karst geology areas also share environmental
5 concerns because of our fragile caves and underground
6 water. Our geology creates a community of interest.

7 My second point: Rochester and Olmsted
8 County are employment centers for Fillmore and all
9 surrounding counties. In pre-COVID days, four daily
10 buses brought Fillmore County workers to Rochester, with
11 Mayo Clinic the main employer. The spider web of
12 privately funded bus lines shows a labor attraction
13 area, including Mower, Dodge, Dakota, Goodhue, Wabasha,
14 and Winona Counties.

15 Health care jobs in Rochester are critical
16 to supporting households throughout southeast Minnesota.
17 A \$5.6 billion Destination Medical Center, a 20-year
18 project, will only strengthen Rochester's position as a
19 health care hub and enhance the already large community
20 of interest in southeast Minnesota.

21 My third and final point reflects how the
22 state of Minnesota organizes itself into districts for
23 administering and funding of dozens of state and federal
24 programs that serve Minnesotans.

25 Fillmore County is part of a region defined

1 by state agencies that includes Houston, Fillmore,
2 Mower, and Freeborn counties along the southern tier;
3 Steele, Dodge, Olmsted, and Winona Counties in the next
4 tier; and Rice, Goodhue, and Wabasha Counties in the
5 northern tier.

6 This is true for the southeast service
7 cooperative among schools, the Minnesota Social Services
8 Association, Minnesota Department of Health, the State
9 Economic Development Agency, the Minnesota Department of
10 Transportation, USDA, and others.

11 This definition of southeast Minnesota also
12 applies to a district of water and soil conservation
13 which administers big projects by both government
14 entities and private landowners that affect watershed,
15 trout streams, farms, feed lots, and conservation,
16 et cetera -- much of it distinct because of our shared
17 karst geology.

18 With a couple of exceptions, the common
19 definition of southeast Minnesota matches the third
20 district trial court of the Minnesota Judicial Branch.

21 In Fillmore County, we do not experience
22 south Minnesota, an area reaching from the Mississippi
23 across the western prairies to South Dakota, such as we
24 see in the map of our current congressional district.

25 For responses to issues and service to

1 constituents, southeast Minnesota should be kept
2 together.

3 Thank you.

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

6 We will next hear from Julie Fryer. Good
7 evening and welcome.

8 JULIE FRYER: Good evening.

9 Thank you, Your Honors, for taking the time
10 tonight to hear our thoughts on this important issue.

11 My name is Julie Fryer. I am a small
12 business owner and a 24-year resident of Chatfield. We
13 sit on the northern edge of Fillmore County, with
14 approximately one-third of our city sitting in Olmsted
15 County. Highway 52 is our actual Main Street. We're
16 the largest city in Fillmore County, and we're
17 considered the gateway to bluff country.

18 Our community offers both outdoor activities
19 and arts and entertainment, including three trout
20 streams, which are also used by canoeists and kayakers;
21 two hiking trails and an ATV trail. We have an
22 internationally known music lending library and an arts
23 and entertainment venue, Chatfield Center for the Arts,
24 that draws patrons from all across the midwest.

25 The tourism industry in Fillmore County

1 generates up to \$22 million per year in gross sales, and
2 that is projected to grow even more in the coming
3 decade.

4 To leverage this important economic
5 opportunity in tourism, we are proposing that the
6 boundary of CD-1 be adjusted to include the counties to
7 our east, Wabasha and Goodhue, and to return the eastern
8 section of Rice County, which is now in CD-2.

9 As others have mentioned, we are all part of
10 the driftless region. We share unique geographies. And
11 together these counties form a vibrant tourism corridor.
12 Every community in this region is actively working on
13 tourism because we all recognize it is the way we can
14 rebuild our main streets.

15 The one missing piece we have is common
16 representation. Right now with these three counties
17 separated from us, we are unable to collectively bargain
18 for our shared goals. And, in fact, we often must
19 compete with them on legislative budgets.

20 Prior to 2010, these counties were part of
21 CD-1. By returning them, it would bring our district
22 back to what is widely considered southeastern
23 Minnesota, as many other testifiers have mentioned.

24 In their 2018 Southeast Minnesota Regional
25 Economic Study, the Community Economic and Development

1 Association, commonly called CEDA, and the state of
2 Minnesota included both Wabasha and Goodhue in their
3 review, grouping them with us into the Southeast
4 Minnesota League of Municipalities.

5 This study found that since 2009, employment
6 and tourism-related jobs rose by over 15 percent,
7 supporting more than 16,000 jobs in the region. This
8 growth is driven by major attractions that have sprung
9 up in our region, including Wabasha's National Eagle
10 Center, Red Wing's Treasure Island Resort and Casino,
11 our own Chatfield Center for the Arts, and Preston's
12 National Trout Center.

13 These attractions are combined with hundreds
14 of miles of bike trails, abundant fishing and hunting,
15 an emerging craft beer, wine, and spirits industry, and
16 a well-established B & B presence in the region.

17 But this growth does not mean our work is
18 done. What we've learned through our nearly 10-year
19 experience with Chatfield Center for the Arts is that
20 big transformative projects like this cannot get done
21 without legislative support. It has to be a group
22 effort, and we need a voice at the table when decisions
23 in transit and tourism are being made.

24 We want to be part of this growth, but we
25 need partners who share the same goals. We do not feel

1 that the western counties in our district; specifically,
2 Rock, Nobles, Martin, Jackson, Watonwan, and Cottonwood,
3 are similar enough to us in tourism interest to make
4 them part of our alignment.

5 Instead, we suggest keeping Brown County,
6 which is also a river county, and adding Wabasha,
7 Goodhue, and the remainder of Rice. This will connect
8 us with our neighbors who share our geography and vision
9 so we can work together with the same legislative
10 advocates to build southeastern Minnesota into its own
11 unique tourism brand.

12 As we've seen with these new population
13 numbers, rural Minnesota is changing. And what we do
14 right now is going to either make or break our small
15 towns.

16 I'm respectfully asking you to consider
17 adjusting our district boundaries in this way to give
18 all of our communities a tool that we can use together
19 to build our economic future.

20 Thank you.

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

23 We will next hear from Angie Hanson.
24 Welcome. Good evening.

25 ANGIE HANSON: Good evening, Judges. My

1 name is Angie Hanson. I live in Albert Lea, where I was
2 born and raised.

3 First of all, I want to say that I feel
4 privileged to live in Minnesota and honored to speak
5 with you today.

6 When it comes to voting, the state of
7 Minnesota is doing the right things to ensure that
8 eligible voters are able to exercise their right to
9 vote. Voters are allowed to vote early, vote by mail,
10 and register on election day. The efforts have paid
11 off. Year after year, voter turnout is among the
12 highest in the nation.

13 I recently, last couple of election cycles,
14 have been an election judge. In that role, I've been
15 able to witness the election process firsthand. It is
16 inspiring to see young people vouching for their friends
17 and seeing unregistered voters without necessary
18 documents coming back with their needed documents to
19 register and vote. Voters from other wards mistakenly
20 turn up at our polling location all the time because
21 it's City Hall. We always do what we can to get them
22 where they need to be.

23 In the role of an election judge, it doesn't
24 matter who they are voting for, my guy or the other guy.
25 What matters is that each voter is able to cast their

1 ballot. Regardless of politics, we strive to ensure
2 that every voter has a fair chance to vote.

3 That's exactly how I see redistricting.
4 What matters is that there's a fair process that strives
5 to ensure that politics are kept out of map drawing, and
6 that all of those voters in my ward and across Minnesota
7 are shared equal representation, with no group left
8 powerless.

9 Minnesota voters are trusting you to ensure
10 that maps are not drawn in a way to give an advantage or
11 disadvantage to a political party or candidate.

12 Minnesota voters are trusting you to ensure
13 that districts stay within one percent of the ideal size
14 so that we are all equally represented.

15 And Minnesota voters are trusting you to
16 ensure that those in minority groups are fairly
17 represented. And this includes American Indian
18 reservations, to keep them whole so that their voter
19 power is not so diluted that they have no voice at all.

20 On a more personal note, I live in House
21 District 27A, which comprises almost the entirety of
22 Freeborn County, with just, like, a tiny smidge that is
23 left out. As lines are redrawn and our district
24 expands, please keep in mind that Freeborn County is a
25 community that has unique needs and would benefit from

1 being kept whole.

2 I believe that we are the only county in the
3 state who does not have a full-service, inpatient
4 hospital. The community has worked together to ensure
5 that we have the health care that we need in our county.
6 And so if we are kept whole and Freeborn County remains
7 intact, citizens may continue to work together for our
8 county's needs in the area of health care and our other
9 needs as well.

10 I also live in Senate District 27, which
11 comprises mostly of Freeborn and Mower County, with a
12 little bit of extra pieces of counties put in there. I
13 want to also bring to your attention that these two
14 counties function as a community as well. We share
15 medical services with Mower County. They have the
16 inpatient hospital and Freeborn County does not right
17 now.

18 And then also, a lot of our school districts
19 share services. Albert Lea and Austin share some school
20 district services, and also there's a smack consortium
21 that spans across both counties.

22 So Freeborn and Mower County, it would be a
23 benefit if we could be kept whole in Senate District 27
24 because we share a lot of commonalities and we function
25 as a community as well.

1 In conclusion, Minnesota voters are counting
2 on you to draw fair lines that ensure equal
3 representation and leave no group powerless.

4 Thank you so much for your time.

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

7 Our next speaker is Janette Dean. Good
8 evening and welcome.

9 JANETTE DEAN: Thank you.

10 Good evening, Your Honors. I am Janette
11 Dean from Caledonia, Minnesota, in Houston County, and
12 am a graduate of La Crescent High School.

13 I currently work as an environmental policy
14 and human rights advocate, using my dual degree in
15 political science and sociology as an alumni of the
16 University of Southern California and the University of
17 Nevada-Reno.

18 Just last month, in Washington, D.C., on
19 August 28th, I also helped rally and march with 50,000
20 other people for U.S. voting rights, protections, and
21 fair elections.

22 I am also joining you here today to ask that
23 you do your utmost, whenever called upon, to help ensure
24 that we have fair and inclusive electoral maps in
25 Minnesota, including in my Congressional District 1, and

1 in our district's house and senate seats to prevent and
2 correct any unfair political advantage and voter
3 disenfranchisement through gerrymandering.

4 To achieve fair redistricting, I have
5 learned and wish to emphasize that we must create maps
6 that elect public officials that reflect the diversity
7 of Minnesota and prevent districts from being drawn to
8 divide or concentrate minority groups, including Black
9 people, Indigenous people, People of Color, racial
10 groups, ethnic groups, or members of a language minority
11 group; and that, two, a community of interest may
12 include an ethnic or language group or any group with
13 shared experiences and concerns, including, but not
14 limited to, geographic, governmental, regional, social,
15 cultural, historic, socioeconomic, occupational, trade,
16 or transportation interest.

17 To elaborate on that, while some may refer
18 to Congressional District 1 and different Minnesota
19 house and senate districts in terms of the agricultural
20 sector, I would like to say that I and many who live in
21 Houston County and Fillmore County, as well as in
22 Winona, Rochester, Mankato, and so many other areas,
23 think of our communities with much more richness than
24 one sector.

25 We have a strong educational sector as well;

1 are also in a state-of-the-art medical region; support a
2 wide array of many businesses that support our lives;
3 and also enjoy so many types of fine and performing
4 arts, culture, tourism, and recreation as well.

5 Furthermore, many more of us are working
6 from home offices in many fields and also commute to
7 cities with a diverse mix of industries and culture for
8 work, play, and extended family get-togethers.

9 As a Houston County resident, I know I and
10 others from nearby counties often go to Winona and
11 Rochester for various life activities, as well as nearby
12 La Crosse, Wisconsin. And many consider ourselves
13 tri-state area residents with nearby Decorah, Iowa,
14 residents.

15 Many of us also think of ourselves in terms
16 of the beautiful driftless area which geologically
17 overlaps four different states.

18 So while agriculture is an important part of
19 our congressional district, it certainly is not the only
20 one employment area, and I wouldn't want our different
21 levels of districts to be so pigeonholed into only that
22 perspective.

23 In addition, I and others are also working
24 on trying to increase more sustainable practices, such
25 as renewable energy, energy efficiency, and local

1 regenerative food web economies across urban, suburban,
2 and rural environments that will lead to more green
3 jobs, health, food security, and community building
4 everywhere so that they are not overly concentrated in
5 certain districts only.

6 I also believe that as more young people in
7 Minnesota also seek to stay and flourish in the areas
8 they grew up, particularly as more significant climate
9 change impacts make the thought of being separated from
10 close family less favorable than more reverse remote
11 jobs and entrepreneurial activities, will also be
12 expanded by them and others (timer sounded) across all
13 parts of our state, as well as the country.

14 Thank you again, Your Honors.

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

17 Our next speaker is Gale Julius. Good
18 evening. Welcome.

19 GALE JULIUS: Thank you. One moment here;
20 I have to pull up my words. (Pause.) Oh, there we go.

21 Honorable members of the redistricting
22 community, thank you very much for this opportunity.

23 My name is Gale Julius and I have lived in
24 Rochester, within Olmsted County and southern Minnesota,
25 for the past 30-plus years.

1 I'm here to testify that it would help our
2 community if both Goodhue and Wabasha are moved from the
3 second district to the first for the next decade. The
4 first district has historically been the greater
5 Minnesota district that covers most of southern
6 Minnesota, south of the Twin Cities metro area. After
7 redistricting, the first district needs to add
8 population, and adding Goodhue and Wabasha to the north
9 makes sense.

10 The first district historically covers the
11 southern part of the state, but is also the most compact
12 of the three greater Minnesota seats.

13 Olmsted County, where I live, is the largest
14 county in the district and contains the largest city:
15 Rochester. Wabasha and Goodhue are directly to the
16 north of Olmsted and would form a much more compact
17 addition to the first -- sorry -- to the first compared
18 to expanding into numerous rural counties to the west.

19 The entire First CD would be among the most
20 compact districts in the state with the addition of
21 Goodhue and Wabasha.

22 Aside from geographically, there are a lot
23 of cultural and economic reasons to consider Wabasha,
24 Goodhue, and Olmsted County as communities of interest,
25 many of which you've already heard this evening and I

1 won't repeat.

2 People in Goodhue and Wabasha Counties
3 depend on Rochester to get goods and services that might
4 be closer to home. Wabasha's County Community Resource
5 Guide tells folks who want to find housing, find a
6 lawyer, where to get food if they can't afford it, to go
7 into Rochester.

8 Everyone knows about the Mayo Clinic. And,
9 of course, folks from Wabasha and Goodhue come into town
10 to go there very often. But fewer people talk about the
11 Rochester VA, where area veterans come to get
12 specialized treatment and care. Rochester is a health
13 care destination for people who live up in Goodhue and
14 Wabasha as well.

15 Our transportation network also speaks to
16 how important these two counties to our north are. U.S.
17 Highway 52 is a major corridor of commerce from Olmsted
18 County into Goodhue. Wabasha County, though smaller, is
19 still connected to Rochester via its own highway,
20 Highway 63, which eventually becomes Broadway Avenue --
21 a thoroughfare here in Rochester.

22 By drawing Rochester into a different
23 district from nearby communities who rely upon it, it
24 weakens the power of these communities that depend on
25 one another.

1 I hope that the court will draw Goodhue,
2 Wabasha, and Olmsted Counties all in the same current
3 congressional district this decade.

4 Thank you very much.

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

7 Our next speaker is Ceri Nicole Everett. I
8 hope I pronounced your first name -- No? Sorry.

9 CERI NICOLE EVERETT: That's okay.

10 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Welcome.

11 CERI NICOLE EVERETT: All right. Thank you
12 for the opportunity to testify before your committee
13 tonight.

14 My name is Ceri Everett, and I'm a lifelong
15 resident of Red Wing, Minnesota, in Goodhue County, just
16 to the north of here, Rochester.

17 So tonight I'm here to testify that I
18 believe the first district is a much better fit for
19 Goodhue County than the current district of the second.

20 Growing up in Goodhue County, I always
21 identified as a southeastern Minnesotan. Even as an
22 adult, when I tell people where I'm from, I lead with
23 this. We have so many ties to this corner of the state
24 that have already been talked about tonight, that I
25 really believe it is the choice that makes the most

1 sense.

2 When the lines are redrawn, it not only
3 helps in the congressional district, but also my current
4 senate district is split amongst two congressional
5 districts right now. So Red Wing is a part of Senate
6 District 21, and 21 actually goes from Red Wing all the
7 way down, it skirts around the Rochester area, almost
8 just north of Winona. (Indicating.) And so we actually
9 have some of us belong to CD-2 and some of us are in
10 CD-1. And this creates a lot of problems for us to
11 organize and with representation.

12 Another thing that I wanted to mention
13 tonight was that most of our health care facilities,
14 they're not just -- you know, we don't just go to Mayo.
15 All of our health care facilities in Goodhue County are
16 actually aligned with Mayo Clinic. So not only do we go
17 to Rochester, but there's an even larger link. So they
18 are an employer, they are a health care provider. And,
19 really, it's in our best interest, in my opinion, that
20 our representation understands our community's needs.
21 Splitting up Goodhue from the rest of southern Minnesota
22 makes our voices less powerful.

23 Another thing that I wanted to talk about
24 was that Dakota County borders us to the north.
25 Currently, we're a part of the same congressional

1 district as Dakota County. While Goodhue County has
2 47,000 people, Dakota County has just under half a
3 million. That is a huge difference, and it also
4 provides a stark contrast in our congressional district.

5 By joining the southern counties to our
6 south here, we actually will be a better fit. One of
7 the reasons is that Dakota County is consisting of
8 suburban areas, suburban residents. Goodhue County is
9 mostly exurban and rural. So, again, our needs are a
10 much better fit for the First Congressional District.

11 For almost three decades, we were a part of
12 this congressional district. And with recent changes,
13 that didn't happen. And so I am going to ask that when
14 the panel redraws the lines or potentially redraws these
15 lines, that they consider adding Goodhue County back to
16 the first.

17 Thank you.

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

20 Our next speaker is Mary Jones. Good
21 evening and welcome.

22 MARY JONES: Thank you. Good evening,
23 honorable court members.

24 My name is Mary Jones, and I am testifying
25 on behalf of myself as an individual and not on behalf

1 of or as a representative of any organization.

2 I've lived in Olmsted County, just outside
3 of southwestern Rochester city limits, for about 30
4 years. I've grown up and gone to school and lived my
5 whole life in CD-1. And so as a resident and citizen in
6 Minnesota throughout my life, in CD-1 of Minnesota, I'm
7 fortunate for so many opportunities that have largely
8 been a good result of good representative governance at
9 the federal, state, and local level.

10 Congressional District 1 in Minnesota needs
11 to have an increased population as revealed by the 2020
12 decennial census. To be the same population as other
13 seven Minnesota congressional districts and the 2022
14 redistricting in Minnesota, as we're all here for
15 tonight, must be completed by February 15, 2022.

16 My first issue is that only since 2002, as
17 other speakers have said, has the first district spanned
18 the entire southern border of Minnesota. It's always
19 otherwise only been in the southeastern portion of
20 Minnesota, and it has not represented the counties of
21 Goodhue and Wabasha Counties along the Mississippi
22 River, except in the past, since 2002.

23 We who live in Olmsted County have more in
24 common, as many of the other speakers have already said,
25 with the residents of Goodhue and Wabasha Counties than

1 residents of the southwestern counties in the current
2 CD-1.

3 We need a congressional representative that
4 understands our shared regional governance needs --
5 roads and bridges, health care choices and access, land
6 topography, farming practices, public school education
7 funding and access, shared regional job opportunities.

8 Sixteen southeast Minnesota counties
9 together have about 95 percent of the residents needed
10 to populate an ideal Minnesota congressional district
11 for 2022 redistricting. Including part of or all of an
12 adjacent county would complete a compact and contiguous
13 district, a CD-1 district.

14 My second point is that Rochester's needs as
15 a city, that we have one state senator for Rochester.
16 Rochester, as previously said, is the third largest city
17 in the state of Minnesota. Over 75 percent of the
18 population growth in Olmsted County in the last decade
19 was within the Rochester city limits. Currently,
20 representation of the city of Rochester is divided
21 between two state senators who, together, represent
22 everyone within Olmsted County, as has been currently
23 noted.

24 This leaves the residents of the city
25 without the benefit of a single state senator dedicated

1 to their specific needs as a city. The farmers and
2 small town residents outside of Rochester, in the
3 townships that surround Rochester, have specific state
4 government needs that may differ from our city
5 residents. They deserve a state senator that is
6 dedicated to their specific needs as well. What happens
7 when different needs compete for the same funding is
8 probably not the best outcome.

9 Prior people have already mentioned
10 Rochester's needs as a city and that it should have its
11 own state senator as a result. And that's because of
12 the transportation, access to health, affordable food,
13 health care, affordable housing, education and safety.
14 Rochester has a diverse population, and all
15 government services need to be provided with the
16 understanding, respect, and tolerance of our differences
17 as well.

18 So my final points are that for
19 congressional districts (timer sounded), Goodhue and
20 Wabasha Counties, adjacent in southeast Minnesota, have
21 more in common in government needs than the southwest
22 counties currently in CD-1 and should be part of CD-1.
23 And our state senators, Rochester needs and deserves a
24 single state senator from within its city limits.

25 Thank you very much.

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

3 I am wondering if Caitlin Nicholson has
4 joined us since I called her name? No. Okay.

5 Then we have heard the comments of all of
6 those people who had preregistered to speak.

7 We do have some time remaining for comments
8 by others in attendance. So if you would like to make a
9 presentation and have not had an opportunity to do so
10 here or at another public hearing, I'd invite you to
11 come forward and make a statement.

12 Good evening. Welcome.

13 CHRISTOPHER BRANDT: Thank you.

14 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Please state and spell
15 your name before you begin your comments.

16 CHRISTOPHER BRANDT: Christopher Brandt.
17 Last name B-r-a-n-d-t. I can also provide a written
18 record of my comments.

19 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you.

20 CHRISTOPHER BRANDT: Your Honors, thank you
21 for the opportunity to give input.

22 My name is Christopher Brandt, a 42-year
23 resident of Rochester, Minnesota, with 33 years working,
24 work developing software at a major computer technology
25 firm here. I am now retired.

1 Southeastern Minnesota has been my home for
2 over four decades, and I feel it has its own feel and
3 culture from the rest of Minnesota. We are rural, with
4 many small townships, towns, and some medium-size
5 cities, including the third largest in Minnesota.

6 There are countless small and medium-size
7 businesses in the first district, as well as some of the
8 most advanced technology and medical enterprises in the
9 state; for example, the Mayo Clinic and IBM, which have
10 a very long history here.

11 All these enterprises have their home in the
12 first district, meaning they are not subsidiaries of
13 another entity elsewhere in Minnesota. The culture and
14 prosperity of these enterprises is deeply intertwined
15 with the first district, together with all the small
16 businesses, the agriculture, and the small communities.

17 While we certainly don't want to ignore the
18 rest of the state, we recognize this is our home and we
19 share a common interest in the well-being of this unique
20 region.

21 My representatives over time have been aware
22 of this commonality. They understand the culture and
23 the interests of the district and are able to represent
24 them. I don't relish the idea of losing my current
25 representative simply because the boundaries have

1 changed.

2 I think the current shape of the first
3 district makes sense and should be maintained as much as
4 possible. Our district is bordered on three sides by
5 other states, which is a very logical boundary.

6 If change is needed, then adding back a
7 county that the district had previously, such as Murray,
8 Pipestone or Wabasha, would make sense. They've been in
9 this district before. We are definitely part of
10 outstate Minnesota and would like to keep it that way so
11 that our interests continue to be representative.

12 As for the Minnesota senate boundaries, I
13 know some would like to combine the two senate seats and
14 have Rochester represented by essentially one senator.
15 But this has two drawbacks: It probably would make that
16 seat uncompetitive due to Rochester moving towards one
17 party in recent years. We know uncompetitive seats are
18 less moderate, and that good government and healthy
19 debate are better served when districts are more evenly
20 matched.

21 Secondly, it would also mean the third
22 largest city in Minnesota would essentially be just
23 represented by one senator. I think a city of
24 Rochester's size and importance is more properly
25 represented by two senators.

1 Thank you much for this opportunity.

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

4 Is there anyone else present who has not had
5 an opportunity? Please come forward.

6 Welcome. Please state and spell your name.

7 DAN SPECKHARD PASQUE: Dan Speckhard
8 Pasque. Pasque is P- as in Paul -a-s-q-u-e.

9 Good evening, Your Honors. As I said, my
10 name is Dan Speckhard Pasque. Thank you so much for the
11 chance to speak tonight.

12 I am a computer engineer who is a resident
13 of Rochester. I live in the Northern Heights
14 neighborhood in the northeast part of town. My wife and
15 I moved here just over two years ago, and we're excited
16 to say that we are expecting our first child in just
17 four weeks. So I wanted to offer my perspective as a
18 young family transplant to the city, specifically as it
19 relates to the state senate district lines and the
20 redistricting. And I'm glad to get to do so while I'm
21 still well-rested.

22 But I would like to voice my support for
23 maintaining the state senate district lines in the
24 capacity that is similar to how it is now: with two
25 senate districts centered on the city, with a majority

1 of the population of each district made up by equal
2 parts of Rochester. And I say this for several reasons.

3 As has been mentioned many times before, we
4 need adequate representation in state legislation
5 because we are a big city. We're the third largest in
6 the state and we just keep growing. As we continue to
7 grow, the issues and concerns that will need to be
8 addressed by our legislators will also grow.

9 We're also a really diverse community, and
10 it's essential that having the many diverse voices here
11 be heard and represented in state congress.

12 So for all of that, imagining having only
13 one senator representing all of Rochester feels like
14 underrepresentation.

15 Furthermore, I personally believe that
16 having competitive heterogeneity in political thought
17 within a district is essential to creating a healthy
18 democracy where every person's vote truly counts.

19 By isolating Rochester to a single district,
20 that would strongly homogenize the districts here
21 politically, and I believe that that would create less
22 accountability for representatives to all their
23 constituents and it would dis-incentivize people from
24 being engaged politically.

25 Finally, this approach would also allow the

1 court to make the fewest changes to district maps and
2 would also respect the need to be able to keep Olmsted
3 County relatively whole in that districting.

4 Thank you so much for your time.

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

7 Is there anyone else who wishes to speak?
8 Welcome.

9 KARIN SWENSON: I always worry about chairs
10 going back with my short legs.

11 Good evening. My name is Karin Swenson.
12 K-a-r-i-n S-w-e-n...

13 JUDGE BJORKMAN: You may proceed.

14 KARIN SWENSON: Thank you for letting us
15 make a statement. I appreciate it.

16 Again, I'd like to introduce myself. My
17 name is Karin Swenson. I live in northwest Rochester
18 and I run a small nonprofit preschool and child care
19 center in southeast Rochester. And I've been in my role
20 for about 30 years. I'm happy to be here as a voice and
21 concern when it comes to redistricting.

22 Rochester must continue with two state
23 senate districts that each cover large, equal sections
24 of our city. Over the past 50 years, I've lived in
25 Rochester, except for a short amount of time being in

1 college. And especially in those last ten years of my
2 time here, our city has grown and shifted immensely.

3 Young families, communities of color, and
4 immigrants are all communities that contribute to
5 growth -- rapidly here in Rochester -- and contribute to
6 the growth of our collective voice in our community. I
7 see these changes in my work with families every single
8 day as new people and families come to town as we grow.

9 By continuing with two senate districts,
10 each covering separate majority Rochester territories,
11 we ensure that our city and our rapidly growing
12 communities of young people and people of color have the
13 most representation at the capitol that they can have.

14 Two senators for Rochester means more
15 accountability and more community voices from Rochester
16 and to make sure that they are heard and reflected at
17 the capitol. There is a greater chance with two
18 Rochester senators that our large population and the
19 wide diversity of voices here can most adequately be
20 represented.

21 With roughly 120,000 people now here in
22 Rochester, Rochester dominates the population of Olmsted
23 County and exceeds the size of a single district and
24 will continue to grow. If we were to continue with two
25 Rochester-focused senate districts, Rochester could

1 represent well over half the population of each, and
2 this Rochester focus of the two districts would continue
3 to be the case upon subsequent redistricting as the city
4 grows.

5 Two Rochester-focused senate districts best
6 suit the growth trajectory we are on now, and there's no
7 need to change course to diminish our voice at the
8 capitol.

9 Thank you for your time and attention.

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

12 Is there anyone else who has not had a
13 chance to speak? Please come forward. Welcome.

14 ABDULLAHI MOHAMED ADAN: Thank you.

15 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Please begin by stating
16 and spelling your name.

17 ABDULLAHI MOHAMED ADAN: My name is
18 Abdullahi Mohamed Adan. I'll provide that --

19 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Yes, please spell it all.
20 Thank you.

21 ABDULLAHI MOHAMED ADAN: -- in writing.
22 Okay. It's A-b-d-u-l-l-a-h-i, Mohamed, M-o-h-a-m-e-d,
23 last name Adan, A-d-a-n.

24 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. You may
25 proceed.

1 ABDULLAHI MOHAMED ADAN: Good evening,
2 honorab!e judges. I really appreciate the time you guys
3 have given us and the chance to hear our comments.

4 I am new to Rochester compared to the other
5 people that came before me. And among the many
6 thousands that moved here to build a family, as a
7 Somali-American, I find the city and this area to be
8 very vibrant and welcoming.

9 Originally being from Minneapolis, where I
10 used to live, there are many senate districts in the
11 city. And because of this, there are wide multitude of
12 Minneapolis voices represented at the capitol, and
13 Rochester deserves the opportunity to have its voice
14 represented in the capitol in numbers reflective of its
15 population and size too.

16 It's clear that our city far exceeds the
17 target population; about 85,000 people for a new senate
18 districts. The size of its population calls for two
19 districts equally focused on the city. While a single
20 core district entirely based within Rochester could be
21 drawn, there would be unintended negative consequences
22 for Rochester residents and the community of color that
23 live in the city, who live in the peripheral district or
24 districts that would result.

25 For example, communities of color located

1 more closely to the periphery of town would be at risk
2 of being separated from other Rochester communities of
3 interest and lumped in within a large rural district
4 representing the greater southeast Minnesota. This
5 would dilute our community voice effectively. And
6 cracking the communities of interest, that line across
7 Rochester and providing them and the voices of 35,000
8 Rochesterians that might live in the peripheral district
9 with less representation at the state capitol.

10 I ask that you consider redistricting, you
11 maintain the principle of two separate senate districts,
12 each focused on Rochester, so the voices of our
13 neighbors and the weight of our population can be best
14 reflected in the representation in St. Paul.

15 Thank you for your time.

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

18 Is there anyone else who has not had an
19 opportunity? Please come forward. Good evening.

20 MARCO LOERA ALVAREZ: Good evening.

21 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Please state and spell
22 your name, please.

23 MARCO LOERA ALVAREZ: Yes. My name is
24 Marco Loera Alvarez. M-a-r-c-o L-o-e-r-a
25 A-l-v-a-r-e-z. And I'm sorry, Your Honor. Is it okay

1 if I turn on my phone to give my testimony?

2 JUDGE BJORKMAN: You may.

3 MARCO LOERA ALVAREZ: Thank you. Okay.

4 Hello, everyone. (Speaking in Spanish.) My
5 name is Marco Loera Alvarez. And I'm here with Conny
6 Vi- --

7 COURT REPORTER: Can you spell that last
8 name, please? Conny...

9 MARCO LOERA ALVAREZ: Yes. Conny,
10 C-o-n-n-y.

11 COURT REPORTER: The last name?

12 MARCO LOERA ALVAREZ: Villar, V-i-l-l-a-r.

13 COURT REPORTER: Thank you.

14 MARCO LOERA ALVAREZ: Yep.

15 I am a Rochester resident of 17 years. I am
16 here today to express the importance of redistricting
17 and what it means to my community; that it shows that
18 communities of color are fast-growing segment of
19 Minnesota population. According to the Post Bulletin,
20 southeastern Minnesota has grown more diverse. That's
21 what the U.S. census data shows.

22 The Latino community here keeps growing, yet
23 policies and resources don't reflect that. We must
24 ensure that during this redistricting process, it is a
25 fair and equitable one, one where there is no

1 gerrymandering or any type of manipulation of the
2 boundary lines that will be redrawn.

3 The Latino community here in Rochester is
4 more prevalent in the southeast area of town. The
5 mobile homes on Marion Road have become a safe space and
6 an only space for many Latinx families.

7 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Can you... What was the
8 road?

9 MARCO LOERA ALVAREZ: Yep. Marion Road.

10 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Marion. Thank you.

11 MARCO LOERA ALVAREZ: Yes.

12 And like I said, this is a safe space and
13 only one of the few spaces openly for that Latinos feel
14 safe in.

15 Due to expensive rent, many families are
16 forced to live in mobile homes that cost \$300-\$400 a
17 month, plus whatever they're paying off their trailer.
18 This has created a small community space for us, like
19 community gardening, the Mexican stores, and gathering
20 space. In this space, we have learned to take care of
21 each other by setting up resources, like electricians,
22 plumbers, construction workers, daycare, so that we
23 don't have to travel so far because, unfortunately, the
24 lack of access to driver's license for many Latino
25 families is not there because of politicians that have

1 voted against their interest.

2 I attended Mayo High School, where the
3 majority of Latino students attend; again, all located
4 in the southeast area of town. These areas now carry
5 power of the Latino community because more resources
6 have been created to those specific areas of town
7 because of the high immigrant community.

8 Like I said, we also have Conny here, who is
9 a Center Director of the Elgin Tri-Valley Head Start.
10 She has firsthand experience with what migrant
11 communities go through on a daily basis. She helps
12 expecting families to get on their feet by providing
13 resources to them. Many times the families she serves
14 don't even have the basic necessities for themselves or
15 the child. Places like Tri-Valley are building support
16 for their communities that serve many surrounding towns.

17 We need a fair system that doesn't break
18 these communities apart. If lines are created that hurt
19 POC communities, it will have a big impact on
20 generations to come.

21 Again, my name is Marco, and I'm a resident
22 of Rochester.

23 Thank you.

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

1 Is there anyone else who would like to make
2 a presentation who has not had an opportunity to do so?
3 (No response.)

4 All right. I don't see any hands up or
5 people approaching. So it appears that this concludes
6 our hearing this evening in Rochester.

7 On behalf of the panel, I want to thank you
8 all for coming, for participating, and for providing
9 information and ideas about your community. Your
10 contributions will aid us in the work that we do in this
11 redistricting process.

12 We've been so heartened by the civic
13 engagement we've observed tonight and over the past two
14 weeks as we've traveled throughout this great state of
15 Minnesota. We really appreciate you taking the time out
16 of your busy schedules and especially under the
17 conditions that we find ourselves in under these
18 circumstances to participate in this important work.

19 So with that, I wish you all a good evening.
20 And we are adjourned.

21 THE CLERK: All rise.

22 - - -

23 (At 7:41 p.m., the Special Redistricting Panel of
24 judges left the courtroom and this special session of
25 the court stood adjourned.)

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

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CERTIFICATE

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

<u>/s/Lane T. Knutson</u>	Dated: November 30, 2021.
Lane T. Knutson, RPR	
Official Court Reporter	
Dodge County Courthouse	
Mantorville, Minnesota 55955	
(507) 624-7007	