

STATE OF MINNESOTA

December 1, 2021

SPECIAL REDISTRICTING PANEL

**OFFICE OF
APPELLATE COURTS**

A21-0243

A21-0546

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

Plaintiffs,

and

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

Plaintiff-Intervenors,

vs.

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

Defendants,

and

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

Plaintiffs,

and

1 Dr. Bruce Corrie, Shelly Diaz,
2 Alberder Gillespie, Xiongpaoo Lee,
3 Abdirazak Mahboub, Aida Simon,
4 Beatriz Winters, Common Cause,
5 OneMinnesota.org, and Voices for
6 Racial Justice,

7 Plaintiff-Intervenors,

8 vs.

9 Steve Simon, Secretary of State of
10 Minnesota,

11 Defendant.

12 -----

13 On October 12, 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 in the board room of the
18 Minneapolis Park Board Headquarters, 2117 West River
19 Road North, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55411.

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1	<u>APPEARANCES and INDEX</u>	
2	Andrew Brock (No Appearance).....	--
3	Amina Dedefo (No Appearance).....	--
4	Spencer Legred.....	9
5	Briana Rose Lee.....	13
6	Vincent Henry (No Appearance).....	--
7	Thomas Legg.....	16
8	Maxwell Collins.....	20
9	Wali Dirie.....	21
10	Mary Holmberg (No Appearance).....	--
11	Ian Oundo (No Appearance).....	--
12	Monica Hurtado (No Appearance).....	--
13	Abdirizak Bihi (No Appearance).....	--
14	Pakou Hang.....	25
15	Diane Hofstede.....	29
16	Dan Brady.....	31
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19		
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21		
22		
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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: Good evening. Please be
9 seated.

10 Welcome. Good evening. Thank you for being
11 here. We are pleased to be in Minneapolis this evening.

12 I want to give a special welcome and thanks
13 also to those who are observing this evening's hearing
14 by Zoom. We're glad that this technology affords you
15 the opportunity to witness what is happening here this
16 evening.

17 We recognize that you have taken time out of
18 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'm a
23 judge on the Minnesota Court of Appeals and the
24 presiding judge of this Special Redistricting Panel.

25 I will ask my colleagues, the other judges

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

3 JUDGE BRATVOLD: Good evening. I'm Diane
4 Bratvold. I am a judge on the Minnesota Court of
5 Appeals.

6 JUDGE CARLSON: Jay Carlson. I'm a Seventh
7 Judicial District judge. The Seventh Judicial District
8 is in central Minnesota.

9 JUDGE WILLIAMSON: I'm Jodi Williamson.
10 I'm from the Third Judicial District in southeast
11 Minnesota, and I'm chambered in Dodge County.

12 JUDGE FREEMAN: Good evening. Juanita
13 Freeman. I am in the Tenth Judicial District, chambered
14 in Stillwater, Washington County.

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

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

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

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

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

19 We are particularly grateful for this
20 participation during this challenging time. We have
21 taken various precautions to create safe opportunities
22 for broad and diverse public engagement. For those
23 attending public hearings in person, masks are required
24 at all times, except when making an oral presentation.
25 And I believe we have additional masks if you need one.

1 Please do wear a mask while we are here in this room.

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

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

17 Our marshal will display a clock to assist
18 us in staying within the five-minute limit for each
19 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 various maps

1 on display. And you can see them when you come up to
2 speak. Basically, they are maps that show the existing
3 congressional districts, existing Minnesota state
4 legislative districts in this metro area, including
5 Minneapolis. And we do encourage you to use the maps.
6 There is a laser pointer at the podium for your use.

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

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

15 Please be mindful that this is a court
16 proceeding. With many thanks to the Minneapolis Park
17 Board, this is our courtroom for the evening.

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

1 by wearing your mask over your mouth and nose throughout
2 this session.

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

5 First person on our list this evening is
6 Andrew Brock. Andrew Brock? (No response.)

7 All right. Then we have Amina Dedefo.
8 Amina Dedefo? (No response.)

9 Spencer Legred.

10 SPENCER LEGRED: That is me. Third time's
11 the charm.

12 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Yay. Welcome, sir.

13 SPENCER LEGRED: Good evening, Your Honors.
14 Did I do that right? This is my first time testifying,
15 so...

16 I appreciate you having us here tonight, and
17 I appreciate this effort that you're undertaking on
18 behalf of the people of Minnesota. I know that this
19 process is messy, and I appreciate the judiciary
20 stepping in to help make sure that we have an orderly
21 process here.

22 I come from a unique perspective because I
23 live less than a mile from here in northeast
24 Minneapolis. I was raised actually out, Judge, in your
25 neck of the woods, out in Mahtomedi; and I have a lot of

1 family down in southern Minnesota, a little town called
2 Bricelyn, about 20 miles between Albert Lea and Blue
3 Earth.

4 And so for me, when I think about
5 redistricting, I see a few different perspectives on
6 this. I understand that there are some areas, like in
7 Minneapolis, where money isn't really the problem;
8 right? Logistics aren't necessarily the problem. But
9 we go to a town like Bricelyn, where if we were to
10 divide that small town in between two legislative
11 districts, it would be incredibly cumbersome --
12 impossible, even -- to deal with it. And we have a lot
13 of really unique small communities around the state that
14 are like that.

15 And so I think it's important to recognize
16 that even though I come from the more metro perspective,
17 I too understand the priority of those small
18 communities, making sure that they have the resources
19 they need to have proper balloting, wherever that's at,
20 around the state.

21 I also come from Mahtomedi, which is in the
22 east metro, in between White Bear Lake and Stillwater.
23 And there, we were a school community. Mahtomedi
24 Zephyrs. That perspective, that community that we
25 had -- I actually lived in Grant, so even further out.

1 But the identity that I had was with Mahtomedi. And I
2 actually remember this because when I was younger, I
3 actually was not in the same State legislative district
4 as most of my peers at school. And I was politically
5 active, as you can tell; I've come in to testify at a
6 court proceeding. But one of those things was I noticed
7 those things and I understood that when people were
8 getting engaged, it was harder for me to vote,
9 especially in high school, than it was for some of my
10 peers just because of the nature of the way things were
11 drawn. And that doesn't necessarily mean it's bad or
12 worse.

13 But I do think that when you think about
14 these distinct communities around the state, I think
15 that school districts and also faith communities can be
16 pretty important. And you have some very large
17 congregations, very large schools that I think can be a
18 helpful guide, especially when looking at the east
19 metro, which is a little odd.

20 And then to Minneapolis. This is such a
21 rich community and there are so many different faith
22 communities but also distinct minority groups. But more
23 importantly, it's these communities and it's the way
24 that they're made up and there are these distinct
25 personalities. You go to neighborhood to neighborhood

1 here, you feel it, you kind of see it, you get to
2 visualize what it's like to live there. And that's
3 because I do think that we are able to have these groups
4 that are able to exert some power; right?

5 You know, unfortunately, that's what a lot
6 of redistricting is about, is making sure these smaller
7 groups, these people that don't necessarily have their
8 day have the ability to contact a representative, have a
9 relationship with a representative and making sure that
10 they are able to be a part of that process on a
11 day-to-day basis. And the only way that they can do
12 that is by making sure that now we set them up for
13 success.

14 And so the three things that I would leave
15 you with -- because I don't want to go too long here --
16 is the idea that we think about our smallest
17 communities, whether they are a small town, whether they
18 are a small diaspora in one of the communities around
19 the state; looking at even Willmar, we have the Somali
20 community there; also Rochester, and even, you know, a
21 lot of people don't understand this but there's a large
22 Latino population in some of those smaller towns in
23 southern Minnesota as well, and thinking about their
24 identity and making sure that they're protected as well.

25 I think where I leave you is just making

1 sure, with a sincere gratitude that you understand that
2 I am very thankful that you're doing this work, but also
3 that I hope you keep in mind the communities of this
4 state and protecting their interest but also making sure
5 that they are able to have that political power over the
6 next ten years to make sure they can effect change in
7 their own communities.

8 Thank you.

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

11 We will next hear from Briana Rose Lee.
12 Welcome.

13 BRIANA ROSE LEE: Thank you.

14 Hi, Your Honors. Good evening.

15 My name is Briana and I live in north
16 Minneapolis. My boyfriend and I just bought a house
17 last year.

18 I just also want to start by saying thank
19 you for all the work you're doing, and I also think
20 that, historically, Minnesota has actually done a really
21 good job with redistricting. I think our state has one
22 of the more balanced ones, and I feel like most people
23 do feel like their vote matters and they have a say,
24 which at the end of the day is the most important part.
25 We all want to feel like our vote matters, and we all

1 want to feel like our vote matters equally to everyone
2 else around us.

3 So when I looked to the map of the
4 districts' population density, I checked out a map from
5 2018 because that was the soonest one I could find. And
6 I noticed something: There are certain areas in our
7 state that have above four percent of a differential.
8 So, like, the area -- it said, like, the ideal density
9 so everything was even, and some are at four percent
10 higher and some are at four percent lower. And the
11 areas that are at that four percent higher are kind of
12 clustered into this one square, but it's all broken up
13 in the senate districts -- or the Congressional
14 Districts 3, 4, and 5. And so I know that they are
15 already historically, like, the smallest land mass area,
16 but I actually do think we need to examine that a little
17 bit further.

18 So the area that I noticed is really a
19 square kind of between Elk River, Stillwater, Faribault,
20 and Chaska. And I do think that there is maybe a couple
21 of the smaller suburbs from especially CD-5 that could
22 maybe move into 3 or 6, and then from there moving
23 others further out because we are right now clustered.
24 And I do want to make sure that all the votes are
25 equally weighted in our state.

1 I do also want to say that I know it's
2 really important that the smaller towns don't get eaten
3 up by the city because they do have different priorities
4 and different needs in rural communities than we have in
5 the cities. We already have great access to Wi-Fi, for
6 example, in the cities. The rural areas do need better
7 access to broadband.

8 So I do think it's important that we make
9 sure that our representative democracy is still
10 representative, but I also think that there is some
11 tweaking we can probably do around those three senate
12 districts to really make sure that we're all actually
13 kind of being equal.

14 As far as something a little bit just really
15 localized to Minneapolis, I don't know if that's even
16 what we're doing here, but I'll just say it: Ward 6 is
17 where we have the largest part of our Somali population,
18 and currently their vote is getting drowned out. So I
19 do think that there's also some tweaking we need to do
20 in Ward 6 to make sure that their voices are heard.

21 Anyway, that's all I have to say. I don't
22 want to take up too much time. But thank you so much,
23 and have a great night.

24 JUDGE WILLIAMSON: Thank you.

25 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. Your comments

1 are submitted.

2 Our next presenter is Vincent Henry. Do we
3 have a Vincent Henry in the room? (No response.)

4 Next then we will hear from Diane Hofstede.
5 Diane Hofstede? (No response.)

6 Maybe the third time. Thomas Legg. Yes.
7 Welcome.

8 THOMAS LEGG: Good evening, Your Honors.
9 Thank you for this opportunity.

10 My name is Tom Legg. I'm a retiree after 40
11 years of working in the Twin Cities and I went north to
12 Aitkin County, Senate District 10, 10B Legislative
13 District, and I just recently rented an apartment down
14 the street here in 59B. So I know I'm going to speak
15 mostly to Senate District 10 and my experiences there
16 because I've been pretty active. And then I have one --
17 basically one comment on 59B for my short stint here.

18 JUDGE BJORKMAN: And if you'd like to use
19 the map of the existing districts to show us anything,
20 you sure could.

21 THOMAS LEGG: Oh, okay. I don't know that
22 I will --

23 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Okay.

24 THOMAS LEGG: -- but anyway... Maybe I
25 will.

1 The first thing I want to say is that I
2 appreciate the fairness of the districts that the
3 judiciary has put together over the last 30 or 40 years.
4 Our Senate District 10 is two counties. It's nice and
5 square. It's easy to know whether you're in A or B if
6 you're running around. And the school districts -- I
7 think is most important is the school districts have
8 been preserved in those areas. I mean, there's not two
9 representatives or two senators representing any school
10 district in that area.

11 Also, we have two sets of administrators for
12 elections: the Crow Wing County auditor and the Aitkin
13 County auditor, and that gives us more -- it creates
14 less tension amongst the folks because everybody has
15 gotten to know those people because they've been around
16 a while and they trust the election system, which I
17 think we all recognize is important.

18 This nice, convenient senate district is not
19 going to be possible because you need to move 3,500
20 people into the senate district, which will mean going
21 outside of the county lines. And one thing I noticed
22 today is that every senate district in northern
23 Minnesota, save Moorhead, has lost population and so
24 everything has to be expanded geographically, which I'm
25 glad you're doing it.

1 But anyway... So I just encourage you to do
2 whatever you can to keep school districts in the same
3 legislative district and counties together as much as
4 possible.

5 Our school districts in northern Minnesota
6 are struggling in every way you can imagine -- they
7 can't find people, they don't have enough money, their
8 results are not very good, and they're having a lot of
9 political fights within the population. And that's
10 really -- running education is really the most important
11 role of government in northern Minnesota, in my opinion.
12 The county roads are okay. And so keeping the political
13 leadership as constant as possible -- I mean, or same
14 leadership for school districts is really, to my mind,
15 the most important deal.

16 We still in northern Minnesota still have
17 good trust in our elections, I think. I have not heard
18 anyone complain about funny stuff going on in the
19 elections. And so, again, keeping those counties
20 together is really good because you get a trusted county
21 auditor and that is a good thing. And so to the extent
22 possible, I think that's really important.

23 So those are my two deals, is keeping the
24 elections together and -- keeping the election
25 administrations working with a single district is

1 important; and then the schools are very important. But
2 you have a tough job with all of that loss of
3 population.

4 The story in Senate District 59 is -- it's
5 here in north Minneapolis and then along the river, all
6 the apartments along the river over to 35W -- that has
7 quite a different tenure to it because you have to take
8 9,000 people out of that district, which is quite a --
9 so the size of it, even if you keep 59, it's going to
10 have to get smaller.

11 And I only have one comment in that. I've
12 noticed that as I walk around the neighborhood here with
13 all the apartments, it's just a tremendous concentration
14 of young folks (timer sounded) --

15 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Your five minutes is
16 expired, but you can conclude your comments.

17 THOMAS LEGG: Okay. Thank you.

18 And it's my experience in being active is
19 it's darn difficult to get young people involved and to
20 have one leader of that area of population -- or the
21 apartments and condos along the river, of which there
22 are many, and most of the growth in population in the
23 district is, in the last 10 years, has -- there are all
24 these young people. And to have one leader seems some
25 opportunity to get those folks active. That's been so

1 hard to get young people active.

2 So thank you for this opportunity, and I'll
3 let you to our difficult job.

4 Thank you.

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

7 We will next hear from Maxwell Collins.

8 Welcome.

9 MAXWELL COLLINS: Good evening, Your
10 Honors, and members of the redistricting committee.

11 So I'm here to testify before you on
12 rezoning or redistricting my community that I come from.

13 I come from Bloomington, and we're currently
14 in CD-3. And I'm proposing to get into, like, CD-2
15 mainly because of the transportation routes; the
16 historical connections to the communities that we have
17 in CD-2 versus CD-3; to talk about, like, the cultural
18 aspect of Bloomington.

19 We don't really see ourselves as a community
20 that belongs with Minneapolis or Eden Prairie or Edina.
21 Instead, we feel like we resemble more of the
22 communities of Burnsville and Eagan and Mendota Heights.
23 And this is, like, done through even the cooperation
24 between the communities that are there.

25 So, like, currently Bloomington has put

1 input into Burnsville's expansion on the landfill that's
2 going on down in there and how that impacts our city,
3 even though it's in a separate city; and a lot of
4 connections between the cities when it comes to
5 pedestrian bridges and new infrastructure projects, such
6 as, like, the orange line and the red line for Metro
7 Transit and the brand new 35W bridge that's been put in
8 there with the pedestrian bridge. And it seems to me
9 that really we're trying to do more cooperation in that
10 region of the metro versus reaching out into Richfield
11 or into Minneapolis or even into Eden Prairie and so on.

12 The one thing that I feel like that region
13 really unifies around is the river itself. And in the
14 past, we've had a lot of time of where governments and
15 organizations kind of dropped political boundaries on
16 rivers. And I feel like in our area of the metro,
17 really the river is what unites us and what makes us all
18 in common in that area.

19 I thank you for your time.

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

22 Our next speaker is Wali Dirie. Welcome. I
23 apologize if I mispronounced your name.

24 WALI DIRIE: No, Your Honor.

25 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you. And welcome.

1 WALI DIRIE: Greetings. Peace be with you
2 all, Your Honors.

3 My name is Wali Dirie. I'm the Executive
4 Director of Islamic Civic Society of America, Dar
5 Al-Hijrah Mosque in Cedar-Riverside community of
6 Minneapolis.

7 I have worked in the Cedar-Riverside
8 neighborhood of Minneapolis for 23 years. I would like
9 you to respect my community has a common voice. We
10 believe that in our few blocks area is a home to over
11 8,000 Muslim community members and is one of the most
12 densely populated neighborhood in all of Minnesota.

13 The history of this neighborhood has always
14 been that of the immigrant. We can say that we
15 celebrate our diverse heritages and always working to
16 include our identity into what it means to be American.
17 Our neighborhood is a community, a great representation
18 of what America needs to be, what America needs and hope
19 to be.

20 Over the last five months, we have been
21 meeting one or two times per month in our community to
22 discuss common issues and how these issues affect our
23 community. We have deepened our sense of a shared
24 community and a common voice across our district.
25 Meetings include men, women, youth, religious leaders,

1 elders all coming from the Somali-American community who
2 identify aspects of our community which holds us
3 together, issues, events, and places. All of these
4 aspects give us common stories and a common dream for
5 our future. We are community that builds deep
6 relationship among ourselves and across cultures.

7 We want you to give respect to this
8 community identity as you make your decision regarding
9 districting.

10 I think the main issue that has come up
11 again and again in our local community and how we
12 together can address public safety, the abundance of
13 drug affecting the youth of the neighborhood, and how
14 this affects the safety of all.

15 We also have had numerous conversation about
16 the lack of affordable housing and social living with
17 job opportunities. Our community is very hard working
18 and are desperate for fair opportunities to help
19 maintain healthy families and the next generation.

20 Keeping communities of interest together is
21 an important principle in districting. It can be
22 especially helpful to our community, which has been
23 traditionally left out of many aspects of the political
24 process. If our community is broken apart, not given
25 opportunity to have its voice at the table, we feel we

1 will lose our chance to produce our next generation of
2 leaders, a generation who know the value of
3 participation and live with integrity and respect from
4 America. We feel that the hate messages, fear makers,
5 and those that want to divide us will crush the spirit
6 of our youth. Our youth are asking us, they asking us:
7 Will the true face of America prove to be one of
8 inclusion and justice or fear and division? This moment
9 of decision will be one of those key moments that
10 produces an answer to our youth's good question.

11 I ask members of this Special Redistricting
12 Commission to make sure that the voices of people like
13 ours can be heard in this process. Please ensure
14 communities of interest are a grounded principle on how
15 these district lines are drawn. We deserve to try and
16 have districts that represent their residents.

17 Thank you, Your Honors.

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

20 Next person on our list of speakers is Mary
21 Holmberg. Do we have Mary Holmberg in the room? (No
22 response.)

23 Then we will move on to Ian Oundo. Ian
24 Oundo? (No response.)

25 Next speaker is Monica Hurtado. Monica

1 Hurtado? (No response.)

2 Abdirizak Bihi. Abdirizak Bihi? (No
3 response.)

4 Then the final speaker on our list is Pakou
5 Hang. Welcome.

6 PAKOU HANG: Thank you.

7 Good evening. So my name is Pakou Hang, and
8 I'm a resident of south Minneapolis.

9 I was born in a refugee camp in Thailand.
10 And when I was just 15 days old, I immigrated to the
11 United States with my parents and my older sister as
12 part of the great Hmong exodus out of southeast Asia.

13 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Ms. Hang, I'm going to
14 have you slow down just a little bit because we want to
15 make sure that we hear everything that you have to say.

16 PAKOU HANG: Okay. Fantastic.

17 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Thank you.

18 PAKOU HANG: Sure. Again, good evening.
19 My name Pakou Hang, and I have lived in Minnesota since
20 1987. And I love this great state.

21 In my professional life, I serve as a Chief
22 Program Officer for a national nonprofit that works to
23 unleash the political power of women as voters,
24 activists, and elected leaders to create a sustained and
25 equitable democracy. Prior to that, I served as the

1 executive director of a local nonprofit that worked to
2 increase access to farmland, markets, capital credit,
3 trainings and research for Hmong-American farmers.

4 But tonight I stand before you to urge the
5 court to ensure that Black, Indigenous, and People of
6 Color communities have their interests represented when
7 U.S. congressional and Minnesota legislative maps are
8 redrawn as part of the census re-calibration process.

9 I want to share with you a story that
10 illustrates the importance of fair maps.

11 In 2001, my cousin Mee Moua decided to run
12 for State Senate, Senate District 67, in a special
13 election. Randy Kelly had just won the election to be
14 St. Paul's next mayor. And in doing so, he vacated his
15 seat in the Minnesota State Legislature that he had held
16 for 20 years. My cousin decided to run, despite the
17 fierce opposition from her own political party, because
18 she could see the demographics changing in St. Paul --
19 changes that today have made the East Side of St. Paul a
20 minority majority district.

21 Now, I remember on Mee's January winter
22 election day -- remember, it was a special election --
23 and I was picking up and helping interpret for an
24 elderly Hmong gentleman. He must have been in his 70s
25 and he often often volunteered for our campaign with his

1 young grandson.

2 After I helped him vote, I asked him:
3 Grandpa, was this your first time voting? Because the
4 Bruce Vento Hmong Veterans' Naturalization Act had just
5 passed. And because of it, many Hmong veterans and
6 their spouses were able to take the U.S. citizenship
7 test in the Hmong language.

8 So I asked this elderly Hmong gentleman, you
9 know, who had door knocked for our campaign, I asked him
10 if it was his first time voting. And he said to me:
11 Oh, no, daughter, I got my citizenship back in 1982.
12 But the first time I went to vote, they told me I had to
13 fill out a form; and I was so ashamed that I didn't read
14 or write English that I told them I would go home and
15 fill out the form, but I never went back. He said, But
16 now I'm an old man and I'm going to die soon. And
17 before I die, I want to vote for a Hmong person.

18 Mee did win that night, becoming the very
19 first Hmong-American elected to a state legislature in
20 U.S. history. And since her victory, there have been
21 seven more Hmong legislators elected to the Minnesota
22 Capitol, many in minority majority districts. But not
23 all. More importantly, there have been thousands upon
24 thousands of new Hmong-American voters, campaign
25 workers, election judges, and candidates.

1 Representation matters. It's connected to
2 our sense of belonging, to the viewpoints and
3 experiences that are promoted at the capitol, and the
4 interests that are eventually codified in our laws.

5 The great thing about these Hmong
6 legislators, past and future, is that not only can they
7 relate to the lived experiences of Hmong-American
8 voters, but they also represent the interest of fruit
9 and vegetable farmers or small business owners, college
10 students, LGBTQ parents, and so much more, finally
11 making our democracy more reflective and inclusive.

12 Representation matters and it begins with
13 fair maps. So what would fair maps look like; right?
14 They would look where BIPOC communities are not split
15 and they're kept together to increase their leverage.
16 They look like suburbs stained with urban areas because
17 the families, many in the BIPOC communities, were moving
18 out to the suburbs to be in the safe neighborhoods.

19 Fair maps will not give Black, Indigenous,
20 and People of Color an advantage. Like that old Hmong
21 grandfather who was door knocking in January, BIPOC
22 folks are not asking for a handout. They are already
23 fighting for their own dignity and self-governance.

24 But what fair maps will do is give an equal
25 footing to that hard work. Perhaps Spiderman's own

1 grandfather said it best when he told Peter Parker, *With*
2 *great power comes great responsibility.*

3 Please do the responsible thing for our
4 democracy and ensure that Black, Indigenous, and People
5 of Color communities have their interests represented
6 when the congressional and state legislative districts
7 are redrawn.

8 Thank you so much.

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

11 I will call again the names of individuals
12 who had preregistered to speak but did not answer when I
13 called the first time.

14 So I will see if there's Andrew Brock? (No
15 response.)

16 Amina Dedefo? (No response.)

17 Vincent Henry? (No response.)

18 Diane Hofstede? Welcome.

19 DIANE HOFSTEDE: Thank you. I must say I'm
20 really pleased to be here; I'm grateful for this
21 opportunity. But as soon as I entered the room, I
22 needed to revise my statements because they started with
23 *Good evening, Mr. Chair, and members of the committee.*

24 So good evening, Madam Chair, and members of
25 the committee.

1 My name is Diane Hofstede. And I want to
2 thank you for the opportunity to testify and hear the
3 testimony here tonight. The previous speaker, I am so
4 pleased she came to the United States, in Minnesota.
5 This is what makes who we are and why we're here today.

6 Your deliberation is probably one of the
7 most important items that is going to be occurring and
8 is critical for the future, I believe, of our democracy.

9 Given the most recent events in our nation,
10 I urge you to give equal representation to all of our
11 communities, regardless of their identification;
12 equality of all people in all areas of our state of
13 Minnesota.

14 And I want to thank you for the privilege of
15 speaking here tonight and the opportunity to share my
16 thoughts with you. Good luck. And I hope to continue
17 to be engaged.

18 Thank you very much.

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

21 Mary Holmberg -- Oh, we got that.

22 Ian Oundo? (No response.)

23 Monica Hurtado? (No response.)

24 Abdirizak Bihi? (No response.)

25 Well, it looks like that concludes the

1 comments from people who were preregistered.

2 We do have time remaining for comments by
3 others in attendance who have not already had the
4 opportunity to speak. So if you wish to make a
5 presentation, please come forward and we will continue
6 to observe the five-minute time limit rule.

7 Good evening. Welcome. Could you state
8 your name, please?

9 DAN BRADY: Dan Brady. Can people hear me
10 behind?

11 JUDGE BJORKMAN: Yes.

12 DAN BRADY: Because I had a hard time
13 hearing people who came up here.

14 I live in northeast Minneapolis, 620 Fourth
15 Street Northeast. And I came down here and I'm greatly
16 affected by who spoke earlier. But they were speaking
17 on a macro level. And my neighborhood is the Third
18 Ward, and we have a river that divides us. I don't mind
19 that the Third Ward crosses the river. But for the
20 history of northeast, the Third Ward was across the
21 river in northeast.

22 And since 2000, there have been 60,000
23 people that have taken up residency in downtown. So, if
24 anything, I will love to have the court look at closer
25 the ward system, such that realizing that downtown needs

1 their own representation and northeast needs their own
2 representation.

3 I just want to bring that out. I don't know
4 if you do micro work regarding redistricting at this
5 point, but if -- so in the future somebody will look
6 into that matter.

7 Thank you.

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

10 Is there anyone here who would like to make
11 a presentation? (No response.)

12 Then I think we have gone through the list
13 of preregistered speakers and everyone who has wanted to
14 share their comments has done so.

15 So this will conclude our hearing in
16 Minneapolis.

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

22 We are heartened by the civic engagement we
23 have witnessed this evening and in our hearing last
24 night. We greatly appreciate you taking the time out of
25 your busy schedules and under these unusual

1 circumstances to participate in this important work.

2 So I wish you all a good evening. And we
3 are adjourned.

4 THE CLERK: All rise.

5 - - -

6 (At 7:15 p.m., the Special Redistricting Panel of
7 judges left the courtroom and this special session of
8 the court stood adjourned.)

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1 **STATE OF MINNESOTA**)
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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	