

NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

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1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: The committee will
2 come to order. Members will take their seats.

3 I want to first thank our
4 sergeant-at-arms: Gary Bridges, Tequila
5 Cogdill, John Enloe, Dwight Green, Sherry
6 Hedrick, Mike Norton. Thank you for being here.
7 I appreciate your work.

8 We have one bill on the calendar today.
9 First let's go ahead and -- sergeant-at-arms, go
10 ahead and pass out the bill. Pass that out to
11 the members.

12 What the members should be getting,
13 you'll have a copy of a congressional map along
14 with a bill. There should be a stat pack
15 attached to that, and then you also receive a
16 copy of the criteria.

17 Did they give you a copy?

18 Does every member of the committee have
19 a copy of the materials?

20 All right. So the bill before the
21 committee today will be Senate Bill 249. It's
22 proposed committee substitute. Do I have a
23 motion that the committee consider the PCS?

24 Senator Amy Galey.

25 All in favor of the motion say aye.

1 COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Aye.

2 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All opposed no.

3 COMMITTEE MEMBERS: No.

4 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: The ayes have it.

5 Senate Bill 249 is before the committee.

6 Just for the schedule of today, we'll
7 have -- Senator Hise will explain the bill,
8 then, of course, we'll have member discussion,
9 have the opportunity for members to present
10 amendments, if desired. And then when
11 that -- when we've gone through that, we'll have
12 time for public comment.

13 We do have about I think 30 members of
14 the public that have signed up to speak. So
15 once we see how much time we have remaining in
16 the committee, we'll determine how much time
17 each speaker will get to speak. And for those
18 of you who maybe wished to speak publicly but
19 weren't able to sign up because of the cutoff,
20 then I would just remind the public that the
21 portal is still open online for public comments
22 to be submitted through there.

23 So, Senator Hise, you are recognized to
24 explain the bill.

25 SENATOR HISE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 Members of committee, the motivation
2 behind this redraw is simple and singular: Draw
3 a new map that will bring an additional
4 Republican seat to the North Carolina
5 congressional delegation.

6 Republicans hold a razor-thin margin in
7 the United States House of Representatives, and
8 if Democrats flip four seats in the upcoming
9 midterm elections, they will take control of the
10 House and torpedo President Trump's agenda.

11 This is a political arms race that
12 Republicans did not start. Democrat-controlled
13 states across the country adopted far more
14 aggressive gerrymanders that systematically
15 diluted Republican votes. To take an example
16 from last week alone, Barack Obama was featured
17 in an ad campaign endorsing California Governor
18 Gavin Newsom's efforts to double down on
19 California's already severe political
20 gerrymander.

21 President Trump has called on
22 Republican-controlled states across the country
23 to fight fire with fire. This map answers that
24 call. In fact, on Friday, President Trump
25 signaled his support for this plan.

1 Before I discuss the specifics of the
2 changes we propose, I will address one other
3 preliminary matter. To be clear, consistent
4 with our practices in 2003 and 2001, absolutely
5 no racial data was used in the creation of this
6 map. I stood before this committee two years
7 ago and talked about our decision not to include
8 racial data in the congressional and legislative
9 plans. Those words are worth repeating today.

10 The predominant use of race to draw
11 districts violates the US Constitution unless
12 doing so serves a compelling government
13 interest. In other words, if the legislature
14 draws districts predominantly based upon race
15 without a compelling interest, those districts
16 would be declared illegal, racial gerrymanders.

17 As for the Voting Rights Act, in order
18 for the predominant use of race to be justified
19 under Section 2, there must be a strong basis in
20 evidence of three Gingles preconditions. Even
21 assuming the presence of three Gingles
22 preconditions, the use of race to draw districts
23 must also be supported by the totality of
24 circumstances. This was true then, and it's
25 true now.

1 Past decisions and court records
2 demonstrate that there is no evidence of three
3 Gingles preconditions in North Carolina. In
4 fact, just weeks ago a federal court told us in
5 a case concerning senate districts in the
6 northeastern part of the state that there was no
7 evidence of legally significant racially
8 polarized voting that would require a
9 majority-minority district.

10 In the absence of any evidence of the
11 three Gingles preconditions, the chairs elected
12 not to use race in the drawing of these proposed
13 districts strictly to protect the state from
14 lawsuits alleging illegal racial gerrymandering.

15 To be clear, the chairs do not believe
16 that the use of racial data would have been
17 helpful in reaching any political or other
18 legislative redistricting goals. Any political
19 consideration in line drawing have been informed
20 by political data and not racial data.

21 Now, the plan before you.

22 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Senator Hise, I think
23 you may have said in your comments 2001, 2003,
24 but I think you meant 2021 and 2023.

25 SENATOR HISE: Yes.

1 Now the plan before you. The new
2 congressional plan makes no changes to 12 of the
3 14 districts. The only districts that are
4 changed in the new proposal are NC 1 and NC 3.

5 The following changes in the new
6 congressional plan consistent of the following:
7 Greene, Lenoir, Wayne, and Wilson counties are
8 moved from District 1 to District 3.

9 Beaufort, Carteret, Craven, Dare, Hyde,
10 and Pamlico counties are moved from District 3
11 to District 1.

12 To balance population of the two
13 districts, 4,853 people, according to the 2020
14 census numbers, out of the 204,576 in Onslow
15 county, that is 2.4 percent, are moved from
16 District 3 to District 1. The split occurs in
17 Swansboro precinct, leaving much of the town in
18 one district, NC 1, as possible minimizing the
19 municipal split.

20 As I stated previously, the motivation
21 behind this new plan is straightforward: The
22 new congressional map improves Republican
23 political strength in eastern North Carolina.
24 It moves NC District 1 from a district where
25 President Trump earned 51 percent of the vote in

1 2024 to 55 percent of the vote, an increase of
2 four points.

3 To balance strength, NC 3 loses the
4 same amount NC 1 gains, four points moving from
5 a 60 percent President Trump performance in the
6 previous map to a 56 performance in the new map.

7 The end result is a congressional map
8 that should perform to elect 11 Republicans.

9 Not only does the new congressional map
10 better improve Republican political strength in
11 eastern North Carolina, giving Republican
12 candidates a better opportunity to win in NC 1,
13 the new map adheres to traditional redistricting
14 principles. Importantly, it is more compact
15 than the current districts in all recognized
16 measures.

17 Here's a comparison of the overall map
18 NC 1 and NC 3.

19 The Reock measure of compactness is
20 always between 0 and 1, with 1 being the most
21 compact. The 2023 congressional plan has a
22 maximum Reock score of 0.59. The 2024 plan
23 improves the maximum Reock score to 0.60.

24 The '23 congressional plan has a mean
25 Reock score of 0.40. The 2024 plan improves the

1 mean Reock score to 0.42.

2 In NC 1, the 2023 congressional plan
3 has a Reock score of 0.42. In the 2024 plan,
4 the Reock score for NC 1 improves to 0.49.

5 NC 3 in the 2023 plan has a Reock score
6 of 0.37. In the 2024 plan, the Reock score for
7 NC 3 improves to 0.60.

8 The Polsby-Popper measure of
9 compactness also is always between 0 and 1, with
10 1 being the most compact. The '2023
11 congressional plan has a max Polsby-Popper score
12 of 0.29. The 2024 plan improves the max
13 Polsby-Popper score to 0.33.

14 The 2023 congressional plan has a mean
15 Polsby-Popper score of 0.24. The 2024 plan
16 improves the mean Polsby-Popper score to 0.25.

17 NC District 1 in the 2023 plan has a
18 Polsby-Popper score of 0.27. In this plan, the
19 Polsby-Popper score for NC 1 improves to 0.33.

20 In NC 3 in the 2023 congressional plan
21 has a Polsby-Popper score of 0.25. In the 2024
22 plan, the Polsby-Popper score for NC 3 improves
23 to 0.26.

24 In both of the recognized measures of
25 compactness, Reock and Polsby-Popper, both NC 1

1 and NC 3 as well as the map as a whole are more
2 compact in the new plan than the 2023 plan.

3 I'd be happy to answer any questions
4 you may have, and the map before us.

5 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Senator Hise, I think
6 a couple times you said the 2024 plan. Did you
7 mean the 2025 plan?

8 SENATOR HISE: I mean the current plan
9 that's before us.

10 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: So anything you said
11 2024, you meant this map, 2025.

12 SENATOR HISE: Yes.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right. Just
14 wanted to clarify that.

15 All right. Senator Batch.

16 SENATOR BATCH: Thank you, Chair. Just
17 a preliminary matter so that we allow enough
18 time for people who want to speak from the
19 public.

20 Do you know how long you're allowing
21 for this committee to go on today?

22 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: We potentially could
23 be here for up to two hours.

24 SENATOR BATCH: Okay. Thank you.

25 And then I have a series of questions.

1 Do you want me to direct them individually and
2 ask each time?

3 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Do you have an
4 approximate number of questions?

5 SENATOR BATCH: Yes. I have about
6 four.

7 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: So why don't you just
8 be recognized for a series of questions.

9 SENATOR BATCH: That would be fabulous.
10 Thank you so much.

11 Good morning, Senator Hise.

12 When was the decision made to redraw
13 the maps?

14 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Senator Hise, you're
15 recognized to answer a series of questions.

16 SENATOR HISE: The decision has not yet
17 been made to draw these maps. The proposal is
18 before the committee, and the decision will be
19 made by the full House and the Senate this week
20 that's coming in.

21 We began drawing these districts, I
22 believe it was Monday, October 13th is when we
23 began looking at alternatives to propose before
24 the committee, but the General Assembly as a
25 whole is the one who will make decisions as to

1 changing the maps.

2 SENATOR BATCH: And what communications
3 have the Senate Republicans had with the
4 White House and the president regarding these
5 maps, this map?

6 SENATOR HISE: I've had no direct
7 communication with the White House or others.
8 There are obviously some tweets out there and
9 others that are in public domain. I think the
10 president has endorsed -- as I said, the
11 president has endorsed our proposal for doing
12 it. There has been a broader public discussion,
13 but I have not been connected directly by the
14 president or by the White House staff.

15 SENATOR BATCH: Do you know if any of
16 Senator Berger or leadership staff in the Senate
17 Republican Caucus have had communication with
18 the White House?

19 SENATOR HISE: I cannot speak to other
20 people's communications.

21 SENATOR BATCH: The current
22 congressional map, as you are aware, is being
23 challenged in federal court, NAACP versus
24 Berger. So my question is why draw a new
25 congressional map now rather than wait on the

1 decision after this summer's trial concluded?

2 SENATOR HISE: To respond, I think
3 clearly that California has moved ahead in an
4 attempt to move multiple seats towards
5 Democrats, and it is important in that timeline
6 that we respond.

7 SENATOR BATCH: On that matter
8 specifically, it's my understanding that
9 California has sent it to the people of
10 California to determine whether they want new
11 maps.

12 Are you open to sending it to
13 North Carolinians for the decision about whether
14 or not we want new maps before drawing this?

15 SENATOR HISE: Our process in the State
16 of North Carolina is that legislative districts
17 are passed by the General Assembly. I think
18 California had some process that involved
19 independent redistricting commissions that were
20 out there that they completely bypassed and
21 chose another route to go for doing that.

22 We will remain consistent with how we
23 pass maps in the State of North Carolina.

24 SENATOR BATCH: Was any effort made to
25 remedy or litigate the alleged violations from

1 the 2023 map that were challenged in court?

2 SENATOR HISE: There are no violations.
3 There is no such ruling.

4 SENATOR BATCH: And what is the
5 committee doing to ensure public participation
6 in drawing these new maps outside of public
7 comment on the portal?

8 SENATOR HISE: We're open for public
9 comment this morning. We've had the portal open
10 I think since Thursday to receive comments from
11 the public.

12 SENATOR BATCH: And will any public
13 hearings be held as they have been in the past,
14 prior to this map going to the Senate floor for
15 a vote?

16 SENATOR HISE: This map is drawn under
17 the same data and proposals that all the other
18 previous maps in this decade were drawn, and so
19 we continue to have all the public comment as to
20 how maps should look and how they should be
21 drawn in North Carolina.

22 We're receiving different -- additional
23 input regards to this change, but nothing has
24 changed in the data, and we do not intend to
25 schedule additional public hearings outside of

1 the House committees that may take it up and may
2 have public comment available at those as well.

3 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Senator Batch, is
4 that all your questions?

5 All right. Senator Smith.

6 SENATOR SMITH: Thank you. I would
7 like to also be recognized for a series of
8 questions.

9 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Do you know about how
10 many questions you have, Senator?

11 SENATOR SMITH: About three or four.

12 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right. You're
13 recognized for a series of questions.

14 And, Senator Hise, you're recognized to
15 answer those.

16 SENATOR SMITH: Thank you so much.

17 So in listening to your answers,
18 Senator Hise, I guess I'm hearing some semantics
19 about the maps because we're looking at one
20 right here in front of us that has been drawn
21 for consideration.

22 So when and where was this map drawn?

23 SENATOR HISE: We set up software with
24 staff in our committee room that's been the same
25 since we drew before. I think it's the

1 conference room outside of my office at 301 for
2 those software system. That's where we went in
3 to draw the map. All the same data was
4 available on the map that was available at the
5 previous draws, excluding racial information.
6 And we had multiple central staff members and
7 others that assisted with that process.

8 SENATOR SMITH: Okay. And can you tell
9 me when this happened.

10 SENATOR HISE: First we drew was on
11 Monday of last week. I believe that was Monday
12 the 13th, October, and had the room open through
13 Thursday as we put out the proposals and those
14 kind of things. And it was published online on
15 the committee website.

16 SENATOR SMITH: Okay. Next question:
17 Did you collaborate with Democrats with
18 this? Did you invite Democrats to the table to
19 look at those maps? Because these maps affect
20 Democrats and Republicans, right, constituents.

21 SENATOR HISE: On the Thursday at I
22 believe -- I don't have -- I'm looking to see if
23 I have a time we posted. I think it's around
24 3:00 p.m., 3:53 p.m. that we sent out and posted
25 the map for all the public to see for this

1 proposal before the committee meeting today.

2 SENATOR SMITH: Okay. So, again, just
3 for the public, but I'm saying for the
4 Democratic members who represent like you do in
5 the senate, did you invite them to the table to
6 assist with this map that you put out on Monday
7 the 13th for the drawing to happen?

8 SENATOR HISE: I do not represent
9 Democrats in the senate. I represent nine
10 counties in western North Carolina.

11 But, no, there were no Democrats
12 involved in the process of the drawing.

13 SENATOR SMITH: Thank you.

14 So you talked about the numbers of
15 constituents that were moved. How did the
16 committee or the mapmaker, whoever that was,
17 decide which counties to move between CD 1 and
18 CD 3?

19 SENATOR HISE: It was a move for
20 changing the directions. We looked at what the
21 political outcome was of all of the counties as
22 well as the VTDs in eastern North Carolina as we
23 were trying to balance the electoral outcomes of
24 the two districts coming in and trying to move
25 that margin from a -- basically a 60/50 split

1 closer to a 55 split. That decision was made on
2 that basis.

3 SENATOR SMITH: Okay. And was any
4 outside consulting or law firm paid with public
5 dollars to assist in these maps?

6 SENATOR HISE: I received no assistance
7 from any outside consulting or other law firms
8 in drawing these maps.

9 SENATOR SMITH: Last question: I was
10 listening to some of the answers that you
11 shared, and you personally did not speak with
12 anyone from the White House.

13 SENATOR HISE: That is correct.

14 SENATOR SMITH: Your peers. You've
15 seen some tweets that they put something out. I
16 heard someone ask you about the citizens'
17 feedback, and you said we're going to get that
18 today.

19 And so in your opinion, is there a
20 possibility that with citizen feedback that
21 these maps will possibly change or based on what
22 you received from your peers, speaking with
23 whomever from the White House, it's going to
24 stay the same regardless?

25 SENATOR HISE: I have reviewed comments

1 through I think it was this morning was the
2 cutoff time with coming in. I am proposing no
3 amendments or changes to the proposal that is
4 before the committee.

5 What changes -- we are still open for
6 amendments to come from the members of the
7 committee here. Obviously, with any bill,
8 amendments can come on the floor of the senate
9 and whatever will convince the body to make its
10 final decision will be part of that process.

11 SENATOR SMITH: Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Senator Mayfield,
13 same protocol?

14 SENATOR MAYFIELD: Yes, please.

15 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Go ahead.

16 SENATOR MAYFIELD: Thank you.

17 Before I get to my questions -- well,
18 actually, I guess this is a question.

19 Senator Hise, you just -- you just said
20 that you do not represent Democrats. I know a
21 lot of Democrats who live in your district. Are
22 you suggesting that you don't represent them?

23 SENATOR HISE: I do not represent
24 senators that are Democrats.

25 SENATOR MAYFIELD: Senators. Okay.

1 Sorry.

2 SENATOR HISE: That was a specific
3 comment made from Senator Smith is that I
4 represented the senators, and I do not represent
5 the senators.

6 SENATOR SMITH: That is not what I
7 said.

8 SENATOR MAYFIELD: I understand. Just
9 want to be clear because -- about who we
10 represent in our districts which in my view is
11 everybody, whether they voted for us or not.

12 I would also like to make a preliminary
13 point. You continue to reference that
14 North Carolina is acting in response to
15 California. I would like to make the point
16 about who started this dance, and Texas started
17 this dance in response to a request from our
18 president. So we wouldn't be in this dance if
19 it were not for our president having made a
20 request to Texas, Texas having kowtowed and
21 complied with that request, and California
22 acting in response.

23 So just let's just do away with the
24 fiction that California has started this
25 process. They have not. Everybody in the

1 country knows that, and it is frankly shocking
2 to me that the intelligent and thoughtful
3 Republicans that I work with continue to
4 perpetuate this fiction. So I hope we can just
5 do away with that. It's a nice message. I get
6 why you're doing it. It's the national message.
7 It is also completely and utterly false and
8 everyone knows it, including every Republican in
9 this room.

10 All right. Now, on to my questions.

11 How long will the public portal be open
12 for comment?

13 SENATOR HISE: For right now, as we
14 don't have votes scheduled, the public portal I
15 think is intended to be open until Thursday
16 while we are in session.

17 SENATOR MAYFIELD: Thank you.

18 And I think Senator Batch asked this
19 question. I'm just going to ask it again since
20 this is all happening rapidly and both for me
21 and for the public.

22 So was there any effort made to remedy
23 the alleged violations in the 2023 map that were
24 challenge in court?

25 SENATOR HISE: I think it is obvious as

1 part of that lawsuit that we did not find any
2 violations with the 2023 map. No court has
3 ruled that there are violations in the 2023 map,
4 and I adamantly believe we complied with all
5 federal and state laws in drawing the 2023 maps
6 and see nothing that needs to be remedied by
7 this process.

8 SENATOR MAYFIELD: Okay. Thank you.

9 And did the committee -- and you may
10 have just answered this, but I'm going to ask it
11 anyway.

12 Did the committee that draw this map
13 identify any other issues with the prior
14 congressional map that you attempted to address
15 in this map?

16 SENATOR HISE: I did not identify any
17 additional things that had to be remedied other
18 than the breakdown of the districts within
19 eastern North Carolina and how they would
20 produce Republican representatives.

21 SENATOR MAYFIELD: Okay. I think
22 you've also answered this question, but I'm
23 going to ask it again.

24 Were partisan performance data included
25 in the drawing of this map?

1 SENATOR HISE: Depending what you mean
2 bipartisan performing data, the answer is yes.
3 What we looked at particularly were election
4 outcomes that are available in your stat pack
5 for multiple races. Obviously, we focused most
6 on this does have the 2024 data which we've not
7 had in an opportunity to draw before, so there's
8 a lot looking at the 2024, especially the
9 presidential elections.

10 SENATOR MAYFIELD: Thank you.

11 And were incumbent addresses used in
12 the drawing of this map?

13 SENATOR HISE: I do believe they are
14 available. As I said, I did not put them on
15 maps I was particularly drawing, but I am
16 generally aware where Representative Murphy and
17 others live.

18 SENATOR MAYFIELD: You mean
19 Representative Davis?

20 SENATOR HISE: Yes.

21 SENATOR MAYFIELD: And again, I think
22 you've said this, but can you explain why those
23 political factors were relevant in the drawing
24 of this map?

25 SENATOR HISE: Redistricting, as the

1 courts have ruled, is a political process that
2 both the State Supreme Court and the
3 North Carolina Supreme Court, and how we express
4 that in data centers is the results of prior
5 elections.

6 SENATOR MAYFIELD: Just three more
7 questions, Mr. Chair.

8 You have passed out the criteria that
9 you used. And if you -- so my question is, I
10 guess, did you use all of these criteria, or
11 which of these criteria did you use in terms of
12 compactness, contiguity, equal population, all
13 of that? And was there an order -- a priority
14 order in your use of these criteria?

15 SENATOR HISE: The criteria are not
16 listed in any type of priority. There are
17 criteria that are part of this plan that are
18 absolutes criteria. Whether a district is
19 contiguous is something we've always considered
20 as absolute. Whether or not it meets equal
21 population is something that the district could
22 not or should not be proposed without doing
23 that.

24 We have been through kind of all of
25 these things like compactness. We've had two

1 scores that are out there. We improved on both,
2 but obviously we're not creating districts with
3 a compactness score of 1. That would be
4 impossible. So we look at compactness as how it
5 performs on those two scores, but it's not an
6 absolute criteria that if it's not .47, no
7 standard was set that it would have to meet.

8 So in that sense there is a priority to
9 these, but there's nothing in the manner in
10 which they are ordered in our criteria that
11 lists what were priority, but there are innately
12 some of those criteria that I see as absolutes.

13 SENATOR MAYFIELD: So maybe you can
14 just elaborate on that a little bit. And I
15 realize -- I think the way you answered it is
16 that they're not listed in priority order here.

17 My question is more as you thought
18 about drafting this map, can you give us, you
19 know, a rundown of what you -- your priority in
20 thinking about this map?

21 SENATOR HISE: I think that -- if I go
22 through them individually, I think this
23 committee has decided for several iterations of
24 redrawing that not using racial data is an
25 absolute and would not consider any map that had

1 used racial data.

2 Equal population is fairly defined,
3 although Senator Blue has made some arguments
4 that you could add variation, but I think we
5 have a one-person-in-six-district variation
6 that -- six districts are one person less than
7 the ideal population number. That's with coming
8 in.

9 We have seen no indication that any
10 part of our maps don't apply with federal law.
11 If we believe that, obviously, we're not doing
12 things that would violate federal law.

13 We do look at traditional redistricting
14 principles: Compactness, contiguity, respect
15 for political subdivisions. Up for -- other
16 than continuous, not having districts in two
17 places, not -- I think all of those would be
18 subjective to the drawers. And there are things
19 we try to maximize more than absolutes. And I
20 think that covers them. Sometimes we have to
21 divide political subdivisions because of equal
22 population, but we always try to minimize any of
23 those divisions.

24 SENATOR MAYFIELD: And I assume
25 political considerations with the first one on

1 this and the first one that you mentioned that
2 was also an absolute.

3 SENATOR HISE: We did not set every
4 district has to perform at X percentage. We
5 took districts that were 60 percent Donald Trump
6 performance and a 51 percent Donald Trump and
7 tried to move those to even districts towards
8 55. I think we got them to 56, 54. So it is
9 something we tried to maximize versus an
10 absolute.

11 SENATOR MAYFIELD: And would you and
12 the committee that you worked with to draw these
13 maps support the use of these same criteria by
14 an independent commission?

15 SENATOR HISE: The committee can speak
16 for what the committee would support.

17 I do not support abdicating the
18 authority of the General Assembly to an
19 independent committee.

20 SENATOR MAYFIELD: You mentioned that
21 the Swansboro precinct is split. Is that the
22 only county and municipality that is split on
23 this map?

24 SENATOR HISE: That is an additional
25 split in this map from the --

1 SENATOR MAYFIELD: It's the only
2 additional.

3 SENATOR HISE: -- from the previous
4 map.

5 I think if you look at in Granville
6 county, that county is split with District 1,
7 but that's been the same split that's been there
8 for multiple years. There may be others of
9 those. That is the additional division that
10 recurred when we shifted the counties.

11 SENATOR MAYFIELD: So just to follow
12 up, the Swansboro is the only additional one.

13 SENATOR HISE: Correct.

14 SENATOR MAYFIELD: And can you talk
15 about why that -- why Swansboro was chosen as
16 opposed to any other place where you needed to
17 pick up I think it was a little over 4,000
18 folks?

19 SENATOR HISE: For those -- for -- when
20 you look at the border between the -- after
21 you've shifted the counties and you have to
22 balance population, when you look at those
23 borders, it's political performance was most in
24 line with trying to move the entire districts to
25 the balance we were looking for.

1 SENATOR MAYFIELD: So again, it was
2 political considerations that drove that?

3 SENATOR HISE: It was.

4 SENATOR MAYFIELD: Okay. Thank you.

5 Final question: And I know that you
6 used 2020 census data to draw these maps. We're
7 obviously aware of more recent census data.

8 So do you have a sense of which of
9 these two districts is maybe overpopulated based
10 on that new census data? Yeah, I guess that's
11 my question.

12 SENATOR HISE: I would argue there is
13 not new census data. The census is collected
14 only once every ten years, and it is the actual
15 only count of the population that we do. The
16 census bureau does put out estimates from that
17 point on, and we have never used estimates, and
18 I would actually believe are not allowed to use
19 estimates for that process. It's only the
20 constitutionally mandated decennial numbers that
21 drive this process.

22 SENATOR MAYFIELD: Agreed. That makes
23 sense.

24 Were you -- and thank you for that
25 correction on the census data.

1 Were you aware of or was anyone in the
2 process of drawing this map aware of those
3 population estimates done by the -- done by the
4 federal government? And did -- were folks in
5 the room drawing these maps aware of that
6 whether -- regardless of whether it influenced
7 the map at all?

8 SENATOR HISE: I am not aware of how
9 those estimates have impacted what would be
10 District 1 and 3 or how they would reset in
11 2030. I have not looked at any of that data.
12 That data was not available as part of the data
13 system that -- for this drawing.

14 SENATOR MAYFIELD: Thank you.

15 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

16 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Senator Robinson.

17 SENATOR ROBINSON: Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Do you have a series
19 of questions as well?

20 SENATOR ROBINSON: Yes, and a
21 statement.

22 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Do you want to say
23 your statement first?

24 SENATOR ROBINSON: Yes. Yes. It
25 doesn't matter. I'll include it.

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Do you know about how
2 many questions you might have?

3 SENATOR ROBINSON: About six.

4 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Okay. You choose
5 your order, then.

6 SENATOR ROBINSON: Okay. I usually do.

7 Senator Hise, I know that you have said
8 that no racial data was used, but did you
9 consider using race in compliance with the
10 voting act, Voting Rights Act?

11 SENATOR HISE: No. As I said earlier,
12 all of our court rulings and others, there is no
13 evidence of the Gingles preconditions that would
14 require -- that would require the use of race in
15 its totality, and we have made the decision on
16 multiple draws of congress to not use race, and
17 we continued with that process.

18 SENATOR ROBINSON: Are you aware that
19 in the past the Supreme Court said that race
20 could be a factor in drawing maps even though it
21 didn't have to be the primary one?

22 SENATOR HISE: Assuming that the three
23 Gingles preconditions are met and that the
24 totality of the district requires the use of
25 race that you could. We do not believe those

1 exist, therefore do not believe that we could or
2 should use race for drawing maps.

3 SENATOR ROBINSON: Okay. Thank you.

4 Now, are you aware or do you consider
5 that [unintelligible]. You cut my -- did you
6 cut it off?

7 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I don't even know how
8 to do that, but I might -- let me see. There it
9 went. I did it. I turned it back on.

10 SENATOR ROBINSON: Okay. Did you
11 consider that you diluted the representation of
12 the black population in terms of having a
13 representative that actually is a person of
14 their choice?

15 SENATOR HISE: I did not. We have not
16 considered any racial data in the drawing of
17 these maps or any implications as to how
18 particular race groups have voted or selected as
19 a candidate of their choosing.

20 SENATOR ROBINSON: You do know that
21 there are only three black representatives in
22 congress. Aren't you aware of that?

23 SENATOR HISE: I am aware it's a low
24 number.

25 SENATOR ROBINSON: Okay. You made it a

1 low number.

2 The other thing is did the mapmaker or
3 whoever drew the maps have access to racial
4 data?

5 SENATOR HISE: I did not, and I am the
6 one who drew the maps.

7 SENATOR ROBINSON: You are. Okay.
8 Okay.

9 What partisan -- I think
10 Senator Mayfield asked a question about partisan
11 data in terms of drawing the map.

12 Was socioeconomic data included in
13 drawing these maps, or did you consider any
14 socioeconomic data?

15 SENATOR HISE: As far as I'm aware,
16 socioeconomic data, we didn't have a specific
17 prohibition from that, but it is not part of the
18 data system, is not included in the stat pack
19 reports that you have depending on how you're
20 defining socioeconomic data, but, right, it's
21 not part of the process.

22 SENATOR ROBINSON: I think you define
23 it in a way that the federal government defines
24 it.

25 SENATOR HISE: We looked at political

1 data. We look at geographic boundaries. We
2 look at municipal boundaries, all that
3 information is in there. I think we include
4 campuses, where the campuses are and how those
5 maps are available. Age is part of the
6 breakdown so -- but we don't have votes and
7 compelled in age. So that's the data we have.
8 It's all available in the stat pack, everything
9 that's in the system.

10 SENATOR ROBINSON: So you did include
11 socioeconomic data?

12 SENATOR HISE: In partial, I'm not
13 aware of any income data that's available in the
14 system.

15 SENATOR ROBINSON: Okay. Under the
16 current political map, how many of the 14
17 districts are now competitive based on what
18 you've done?

19 SENATOR HISE: Wherever you set the
20 standards of competitive. If it's at 56,
21 57 percent, does that make it a competitive
22 district, then the answer is up to 11 districts
23 that are competitive within the system. If you
24 lower that number to 51, then none of the
25 districts would be considered competitive.

1 SENATOR ROBINSON: Considering that
2 North Carolina is basically a 50/50 state or
3 40/40, you know, plus independent, how does this
4 11/3 plan reflect the fact that our state's
5 overall electorate is evenly distributed?

6 SENATOR HISE: It doesn't, quite
7 simply, that's with coming in. Map drawing is
8 much more of a district and land based that's
9 with coming in. By no stretch of the
10 imagination would 50 percent of the VTDs in the
11 state. It would be a 50/50 VTD divided state.

12 If you looked at it in that manner,
13 what you find if you look at the entire
14 North Carolina is Democrats have very
15 concentrated distributions into smaller areas of
16 the state. The vast majority of the state would
17 be red or would be a Republican area.

18 As you divide geographies and up, it
19 doesn't necessarily balance to population unless
20 you were to start breaking and cracking all of
21 those highly concentrated areas for the sole
22 purpose of balancing that number.

23 I think every court we've seen have
24 rejected to this point any concept that we set
25 some predetermined goal of balance and that we

1 are required to meet that.

2 SENATOR ROBINSON: Okay. So that
3 cracking is why fast-growing and diverse
4 populations like in Wake, Guilford, and
5 Mecklenburg have been fractured rather than kept
6 intact.

7 SENATOR HISE: In general, it means
8 that they are concentrated into more
9 congressional districts -- fewer congressional
10 districts.

11 What we have done in the past is that
12 the --

13 SENATOR ROBINSON: I don't understand
14 that. Tell me. Guilford has three
15 congressional districts in it as opposed to one
16 or two, two at most. So tell me --

17 SENATOR HISE: Yes. As I've said
18 before on previous maps, nothing is changing in
19 Guilford on this particular map. I do need to
20 emphasize that, but our intent is to keep as
21 many counties whole as possible and by therefore
22 putting additional divides into larger counties
23 means that more counties are kept whole as then
24 the map in its entirety. And, for example, with
25 Mecklenburg, it must be divided, so dividing it

1 twice means the number of counties divided are
2 less.

3 SENATOR ROBINSON: So my final
4 question: Did anyone give you input regarding
5 how races might be impacted regarding this map?

6 SENATOR HISE: No, we have received no
7 information regarding specifically legally
8 significant racially polarized voting. And so I
9 think the committee in multiple meetings over
10 drawing the previous maps asked for that on
11 multiple occasions. Nothing was ever submitted.
12 And, no, we've not received any information
13 regarding race on this map.

14 SENATOR ROBINSON: Okay. Well, my
15 final comment is did you consider that
16 North Carolina -- or your Republicans consider
17 that President Trump is actually doing what's
18 unconstitutional?

19 SENATOR HISE: President Trump has made
20 a request. We are fully within our
21 constitutional rights to redraw the
22 congressional districts of the state of
23 North Carolina, as the Democrats have
24 historically as far back at least as the '60s we
25 can find mid decade draws from the Democrats.

1 This is fully within our constitutional
2 authority, and we are exercising it. The
3 president can make requests and supports and
4 others, but we're making the choice to move
5 forward.

6 SENATOR ROBINSON: Was this ever done
7 by a president before?

8 SENATOR HISE: It's not being done by a
9 president now.

10 SENATOR ROBINSON: Did president Obama
11 do this?

12 SENATOR HISE: It's not being done by a
13 president now either.

14 SENATOR ROBINSON: Yes, it is.
15 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

16 SENATOR HISE: I drew these maps.

17 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Senator Mohammed, do
18 you have a series of questions?

19 SENATOR MOHAMMED: Thank you,
20 Mr. Chair. Yes, a series of questions for the
21 sponsor.

22 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Do you know about how
23 many questions you have?

24 SENATOR MOHAMMED: Probably three or
25 four.

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right. You're
2 recognized.

3 And, Senator Hise, you're recognized to
4 respond.

5 SENATOR MOHAMMED: Thank you,
6 Senator Daniel.

7 So first of all, Senator Hise, thank
8 you so much for coming out bluntly and
9 acknowledging the scheme of this body to
10 essentially give President Trump a 11th yes man
11 from this General Assembly and this
12 congressional map.

13 With that being said, my question to
14 you is did you as -- as you acknowledge as the
15 mapmaker, did you reach out to legislative
16 counsel or outside experts and get a written
17 opinion about does this map actually comply with
18 the United States Constitution, the
19 North Carolina Constitution?

20 SENATOR HISE: I have multiple
21 conversations with our counsel about what we're
22 doing. I've been involved with them in multiple
23 cases up to this point about what are the
24 authorities of North Carolina.

25 Outside of our counsel, I have

1 consulted -- we have consulted with no one
2 independent district people or whatever else in
3 regard to that process.

4 SENATOR MOHAMMED: Thank you,
5 Senator Hise.

6 Senator Hise, question for you. And my
7 apologies if I don't know this about your
8 background, but can you tell me, are you from
9 North Carolina? Were you born and raised in
10 this state?

11 SENATOR HISE: I was.

12 SENATOR MOHAMMED: You're pretty aware
13 of this state and the demographics of this
14 state, I would say.

15 SENATOR HISE: I was born and raised in
16 western North Carolina. I have general
17 knowledge of the demographics of this state, not
18 specific memorized data that would be utilized
19 for any of those purposes.

20 SENATOR MOHAMMED: But you essentially
21 have basic common knowledge of where people live
22 in this great state.

23 SENATOR HISE: Sometimes you would
24 agree I have basic common knowledge, sometimes
25 you wouldn't, but I appreciate the compliment.

1 SENATOR MOHAMMED: With that being
2 said, Senator Hise, and I'm so thankful for your
3 intelligent mind and that you're so familiar
4 with this wonderful state.

5 So that being said, I'm pretty sure
6 that you have common knowledge that there's a
7 heavily black voting bloc in eastern
8 North Carolina which would be Congressional
9 District 1.

10 SENATOR HISE: I would say that I am
11 aware that District 1 has a higher minority
12 population than the state average that's coming
13 in, but to any specifics beyond that and whether
14 or not I would characterize it as heavy or
15 anyone else would characterize it as heavy for
16 an entire congressional district.

17 Congressional District 1 is not and was
18 not a majority-minority district.

19 SENATOR MOHAMMED: So, Senator Hise,
20 you've brought up again and again that you
21 haven't taken any racial data in the drawing of
22 this map, correct?

23 SENATOR HISE: That is correct.

24 SENATOR MOHAMMED: So my question for
25 you is just looking at the clear review of this

1 map based on your previous map where you had a
2 ten Republican map and four Democratic map, and
3 you look at the new numbers on this map, it's
4 clear that you've diluted the black voting
5 population in this new map. It's just a fact.

6 So with that being said, I just want to
7 get from you, are you telling me essentially
8 you've provided no safeguards to make sure that
9 we are complying with the Voting Rights Act,
10 specifically Section 2, to ensure that we are
11 not diluting a specific group's voting
12 population?

13 And the reason I say that is that
14 because the people in this room and people
15 outside of this room probably need to understand
16 that the whole reason you have the Voting Rights
17 Act is to make sure that people -- people, not
18 politicians, have a meaningful opportunity to
19 influence the outcome of an election, not
20 predetermine as this map does.

21 So I just want to get from you that
22 you're telling me that there are essentially no
23 safeguards with your line of answers that you've
24 previously made to my colleagues and myself.

25 SENATOR HISE: What I will repeat, as

1 I've said multiple times, there is no evidence
2 submitted to this committee or others that the
3 Gingles criteria were met and that therefore we
4 were required to draw a district that met the
5 majority-minority standards that's coming in.
6 Therefore we did not consider it at all in
7 that -- in that process.

8 What we did is that we created -- we
9 took a map that had performed with one district
10 60 percent for the Republican presidential
11 candidate, the other district at 51, we've
12 created new districts that were closer to 55 and
13 have no specific information on to what move of
14 minorities or not move of minorities may have
15 changed that even at this [unintelligible].

16 SENATOR MOHAMMED: My next question,
17 Senator Hise, is so in the past I've been
18 appreciative of this body where we've had public
19 hearings and we've been able to get feedback
20 from constituents in different parts of the
21 state and get their thoughts on the proposed
22 maps that you've set forth, the criteria.

23 Why not follow that process? What's
24 the rush? Why do we have -- why do we have to
25 see this map I believe on Friday and here we are

1 on Monday without an opportunity to have public
2 hearings, especially in District 1 and
3 District 3 where these people are directly
4 impacted through their representation that they
5 may or may not like or want and would want to
6 share with you their thoughts? Why not have
7 that public hearing.

8 SENATOR HISE: I would say it was
9 actually on Thursday that those were put out and
10 available, not Friday, and the public comment
11 portal has been open. Comments about the map in
12 general or proposed maps in general have been
13 made multiple times since we drew the maps in
14 2022. There is no need to reengage in that
15 process again.

16 I think we can put out the public
17 comments that have come in to this point. I'm
18 not aware of any them as I have been through
19 them that actually dealt with any specific
20 information about what a district should look
21 like or what communities of interest should be
22 preferred or anything around traditional
23 redistricting principles.

24 There's a lot of partisan comments that
25 are in those comments or how bad and evil we are

1 for doing things that are there, but I will
2 leave it at that.

3 SENATOR MOHAMMED: Senator Hise, again,
4 I appreciate the public portal that you've made
5 available to the public, but as leaders, we're
6 supposed to be stewards.

7 So don't you believe that it's
8 incumbent upon us to go out to the people and
9 hear from them before we just make decisions
10 about the future of their life?

11 Because what folks needs to understand,
12 and I'm sure you understand, the whole reason
13 we're here, it's not about these maps, it's
14 because this specific decision is going to
15 impact education, it's going to impact
16 opportunity, jobs, access to healthcare and a
17 whole host of things.

18 And we can defer on opinions on how we
19 go about certain issues, but I would think as a
20 leader, you would want to go out to the people
21 that are going to be affected by this map and
22 directly hear from them, do you not?

23 SENATOR HISE: We are open to hear from
24 them. When we have talked about the maps in
25 general, there were multiple occasions in 2022,

1 2023. Occasions in '23 to hear public comments.
2 We had those all over the state.

3 With the exception of the availability
4 of 2024 election data, the data has not changed
5 since any of the those. The population data is
6 the same for those areas which is the basis of
7 drawing the maps. We did not feel that having
8 additional public forums was necessary.

9 SENATOR MOHAMMED: So, Senator Hise, my
10 last comment and question for you:

11 As a proud citizen and taxpayer of this
12 great state, I'm extremely bothered that my
13 hard-earned tax dollars, like I'm sure you do,
14 go to costly litigation instead of going to
15 education and roads and infrastructure and so
16 many different things that we could do for this
17 great state.

18 So how confident are you that this
19 plan, once again, won't lead you to costly
20 litigation, tax dollars, hard-earned tax dollars
21 that are going to be used for litigation
22 defending these maps instead of using our money
23 and being good stewards again and using those
24 hard-earned tax dollars the right way?

25 SENATOR HISE: All I can say is that I

1 am confident that these maps will be upheld by
2 the courts, by the federal courts. I'm assuming
3 that's where someone would try to bring cases.
4 By the rulings of the US Supreme Court, by the
5 panels we've had, I'm confident that these meet
6 the laws. I can't determine beyond that.

7 Once we're in compliance, why I'm
8 responsible for defending litigation when our
9 maps are perfectly legal, I don't understand,
10 but we will defend these maps, and I am
11 confident that they will be upheld by the
12 courts.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Senator Batch.

14 SENATOR BATCH: Thank you. I just have
15 a few -- be recognized for a series of
16 questions. I have about three follow-ups.

17 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: You're recognized for
18 a series, and Senator Hise is recognized to
19 respond.

20 SENATOR BATCH: Thank you.

21 Senator Hise, did you consult with
22 either congressman Davis or Murphy regarding
23 this map?

24 SENATOR HISE: I did not and have
25 spoken with neither.

1 SENATOR BATCH: And who else was
2 involved in helping you draw this map?

3 SENATOR HISE: Staff support, central
4 staff. There were several members of central
5 staff that were there while we were drawing as
6 well as pro tem staff which generally assists us
7 on all the drawings.

8 I was the only member involved in the
9 drawing of the map in the room.

10 SENATOR BATCH: Did you consult with
11 any of your Senate Republican colleagues or
12 House Republican colleagues in drawing the map?

13 SENATOR HISE: The map was available to
14 them before it was posted to the public, but I
15 did not have those consultations before drawing.

16 SENATOR BATCH: And there are several
17 times that you said "we" throughout your
18 remarks. Who is the "we" when you speak of
19 this? Is this the general Republican caucus,
20 et cetera?

21 SENATOR HISE: When things like what
22 you have here for the criteria and others would
23 be discussing with the "we" as the chairs. When
24 I'm discussing about actual drawing in the room,
25 it is myself who directs the drawing as well as

1 central staff that implements it and legal
2 counsel that advises me that are part of our
3 staff.

4 SENATOR BATCH: And you made a comment
5 before that you were within your constitutional
6 right to draw maps even if it's mid decade.

7 But isn't it true that this is the
8 first time mid decade that congressional maps
9 have been drawn without a mandate from a court?

10 SENATOR HISE: I believe the last time
11 it occurred without a mandate from the court was
12 in the '60s. That's actually an article I read.
13 The Democrats redrew mid district in the 1960s.
14 I believe that was on WRAL. That's as far as I
15 could verify that concept.

16 But obviously redrawn -- redone many
17 times. For example, in '22, there was -- after
18 the 2022 maps there was no court order to
19 redrawn them, but the maps the court had drawn
20 expired after two years when they had put
21 in temporary interim maps, there was no court
22 order requiring us to redraw them. We obviously
23 did redraw those maps, so there may be some
24 other iterations for that if you go back in
25 history, but I'm sure someone in research or the

1 staff could give us better information, but I
2 can't really give you a lot before I was born.

3 SENATOR BATCH: And just a comment. I
4 think that there's a lot of back and forth that
5 we have in this building of Democrats used to do
6 it this way, Democrats used to do it this way.

7 What I would say is it's incumbent upon
8 all of us to learn from history and to do the
9 right thing. Historically speaking, slavery was
10 legal, right. Smoking inside buildings was
11 legal. We have changed the laws because we have
12 realized that the actions in the past have been
13 very detrimental to our democracy.

14 And so when want to go ahead and say
15 what has happened in history, all of us can come
16 up with examples in history of which we were
17 wrong and that we have tried to correct those
18 harms. I think this is now a time in history
19 where we will look back when this map is passed
20 because we cannot stop it and find that this was
21 absolutely against every single democratic
22 principle that this country was founded on.

23 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Senator Mayfield.

24 SENATOR MAYFIELD: Sorry. One
25 follow-up question.

1 Was the public notified that the map
2 drawing room was open? And were they -- was the
3 public -- would the public have been allowed
4 into that room to watch this process?

5 SENATOR HISE: No. The drafting
6 process of any bill has never been public. We
7 have in the past opened up I believe it was this
8 room where we did drawing and had it broadcast
9 in others and allowed viewers in the back of the
10 room. We did not do that in the previous
11 iterations of the map and have not done it with
12 these maps here.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Senator Robinson.

14 SENATOR ROBINSON: Just a couple of
15 questions, Mr. Chair.

16 When did -- Senator Hise, when did the
17 Republican caucus review this map?

18 SENATOR HISE: The map was sent out
19 publicly last Thursday. That's when they would
20 all have received it as well. That's with
21 coming in. Without getting into caucus
22 business, we have not sat down as a group and
23 reviewed the map.

24 SENATOR ROBINSON: Did they have any
25 previous notice of it?

1 SENATOR HISE: Not aware of any
2 that -- whether the map was drawn between Monday
3 and Thursday, there was nothing that could
4 have -- between that drawing because we
5 hadn't -- decisions weren't made as to what map
6 was going on, but once they were, they went out
7 to the caucus, they went out to the House, they
8 went out to the public in general in a matter of
9 hours of each other.

10 SENATOR ROBINSON: Okay.

11 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Any other questions
12 from the committee or comments?

13 All right. Seeing none, we'll move to
14 the public comment period.

15 Given the amount of speakers we have
16 and the amount of time we have remaining, I
17 think we will limit speakers' comments to one
18 minute. So we'll try to get to every member or
19 every member of the public that wishes to speak.
20 So I'm going to ask two at a time to come up
21 just so we'll kind of get through the queue
22 faster.

23 So let's start with Mark Swallow and
24 Reyna Walters Morgan. If you'll identify
25 yourself, who you're with, and then address the

1 committee, please.

2 PUBLIC SPEAKER: Good morning. My name
3 is Mark Swallow with Democracy Out Loud.

4 First, I'd like to remind the senators
5 that you are selected to serve the citizens of
6 North Carolina, not Donald J. Trump, and what we
7 really need you to do is pass a budget.

8 Last year, 51 percent of all the votes
9 went to Democrats; 48 percent went to
10 Republicans, yet the senators have a
11 supermajority -- Republicans have a
12 supermajority in the Senate and one seat shy of
13 a supermajority in the House. You also have 10
14 out of 14 elected officials in congress. How
15 did this happen? Surgical gerrymandering.

16 Now you're saying this is all because
17 of California action. As we heard earlier,
18 California hasn't redistricted a thing. What
19 they've done is they've responded to Texas,
20 which started this fiasco for our country, and
21 they put an initiative on the ballot to ask
22 Californians if they should be redistricted.

23 You should do the same, but I doubt
24 that you will because you know that
25 North Carolinians would never approve this

1 scheme. So you're liars and cheats. That's
2 what this boils down to, liars and cheats. You
3 can prove me wrong. You can turn this aside and
4 deny this bill passage.

5 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Reyna Walters Morgan.
6 Next would be Karen Ziegler.

7 PUBLIC SPEAKER: Hello. My name is
8 Reyna Walters Morgan. I currently serve as the
9 vice chair for civic engagement in voter
10 participation with the Democratic National
11 Committee, but most importantly I am a
12 North Carolina resident.

13 We need to tell the truth that this
14 started when President Trump asked the governor
15 of Texas to find seats. Republicans in Texas
16 indicated they hadn't used race in their maps
17 previously but changed their story, lied under
18 oath when they were asked to find these extra
19 seats.

20 And also for California context, this
21 referendum is for voters to decide whether to
22 give legislators the ability to redraw those
23 maps. They are not drawing them on their own.
24 Voters are very much involved in the process in
25 California, unlike what's happened here in

1 North Carolina.

2 This map in North Carolina puts
3 Washington, DC, over the people of
4 North Carolina.

5 There was a study recently that -- a
6 survey recently that found that 84 percent of
7 North Carolinians do not think it's acceptable
8 for politicians to draw districts to give their
9 party more power. We need to do more to protect
10 the voters of North Carolina. Thank you very
11 much.

12 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you.

13 Next will be Karen Ziegler, and then
14 next would then be Angela Floyd.

15 PUBLIC SPEAKER: Karen Ziegler,
16 Democracy Out Loud.

17 You all took an oath, all of you
18 legislators, to support and defend the
19 constitution of the United States, and you swore
20 your allegiance to the state of North Carolina.

21 You are doing this for a president who
22 is shredding the constitution and the rule of
23 law every single day, a president who put on an
24 AI-generated image of himself flying over the
25 country, wearing a crown, dropping excrement on

1 the United States, on people in the
2 United States, and that is what he's doing every
3 single day.

4 Immigrants and United States citizens
5 are being brutally assaulted by ICE. The troops
6 that he is sending in our teargassing families,
7 children, peaceful protestors. That is what is
8 happening here.

9 And if you pass this, your legacy will
10 be shredding the constitution, destroying
11 democracy, the last shred of democracy that is
12 allowed in North Carolina.

13 We should have seven Republicans and
14 seven Democrats in the congress representing us,
15 and we're letting Donald Trump decide who
16 represents the people of North Carolina, and
17 that's why we're going to have 307,000 people in
18 North Carolina lose Medicaid and 375,000 people
19 in North Carolina lose food aid.

20 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Next is Angela Floyd
21 and then Kathy Martin.

22 PUBLIC SPEAKER: My name is Angela
23 Floyd, and I am a North Carolina citizen.

24 As a North Carolina voter, I ask that
25 you refrain from introducing any mid-decade

1 redistricting in 2025. That would further
2 distort North Carolina's federal voting maps and
3 erode North Carolina's power to elect candidates
4 of their choice.

5 A September 2025 survey of
6 North Carolina voters conducted by a Republican
7 polling firm found that 84 percent of
8 North Carolinians oppose gerrymandering under
9 any circumstances, including 78 percent
10 Republicans.

11 Just because you think you can redraw
12 North Carolina's congressional voting maps to
13 manipulate our upcoming 2026 election does not
14 mean you should.

15 Please represent all North Carolinians
16 and refrain from further gerrymandering of
17 voting maps. Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Kathy Martin will be
19 next, followed by Hanna Gibbs.

20 PUBLIC SPEAKER: My name is Kathy
21 Martin, and obviously I'm here again to talk
22 against redistricting effort.

23 First of all, the people of
24 North Carolina elected you to serve
25 North Carolina. We don't have a budget. Where

1 is our budget? When are you going to do your
2 job for North Carolina?

3 Instead, you're talking about, on the
4 behest of a would-be dictator, to rig our
5 election maps yet again.

6 I've already been the victim of
7 redistricting twice. It was one time the
8 redistricting came after I voted; therefore my
9 vote was negated. As a citizen, as a voting
10 citizen of North Carolina, I am angry. And
11 you're going to do it again. I don't think so.
12 Show some courage. Stand up to the tyrant.
13 Vote no.

14 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you.

15 Next is Hanna Gibbs.

16 And just to remind the speakers, tell
17 us who you're with before you speak.

18 PUBLIC SPEAKER: Hi. I'm Hanna Gibbs,
19 and I'm here as a citizen of North Carolina.

20 I just want to say that North Carolina
21 already has a sordid history of gerrymandering.
22 This bill continues that history and takes away
23 people's ability to peacefully express their
24 political will.

25 I implore the legislature to do better

1 by their citizens and give us the opportunity to
2 practice democracy peacefully via the ballot.

3 Voting in favor of gerrymandering is a
4 vote against citizens, against North Carolina,
5 and against a peaceful democracy. Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you.

7 I forgot to tell who the next speaker
8 is. I think Khalil D. Thomas, and then after
9 that would be Caitlin Metzguer, I think.

10 PUBLIC SPEAKER: My friend sitting next
11 to me, her name was before mine on the list.
12 Elena Ceberio. Should I wait for her to speak?

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: No. I'm not
14 necessarily going in order of signing.

15 PUBLIC SPEAKER: Okay. I just didn't
16 want to intrude.

17 My name is Khalil D. Thomas. I am with
18 Democracy Out Loud. And I want to ask, have
19 public comments been considered when you're
20 looking at this map? Are you going to consider
21 the public comments that were released a short
22 time ago? I know I commented.

23 The bill sponsor said the majority of
24 the land mass in North Carolina contains red
25 voters and Democrats are concentrated in small

1 areas, and I want to point out that if this were
2 true, all of these gerrymandered maps, all of
3 these districts would be the same size. They're
4 not. You see little tiny districts in Wake and
5 Mecklenburg.

6 I want to say it's disingenuous to
7 claim that race was not considered when computer
8 crunching multitudes of data can easily
9 manipulate data to address race without race
10 being a unique category.

11 Let's say the quiet part out loud:
12 This is the southern agenda. History will
13 remember these votes. This is a racist map. Do
14 Republicans believe that you all will continue
15 to be electable when you don't listen to
16 constituents? Be brave.

17 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Next will be Caitlin
18 Metzguer and then Robert Uhl.

19 PUBLIC SPEAKER: Good morning. I'm
20 Caitlin Metzguer of You Can Vote, and we are a
21 nonpartisan organization that works year-round
22 to make sure that voters know their rights.

23 I'm here today to speak out against
24 this process for a new congressional map.
25 Generally, redistricting only is to happen in

1 North Carolina for two reasons: a new census or
2 a court order. Neither of those things is true
3 today, and so I want to make sure that everyone
4 understands that what we're doing is not normal
5 and this is not a normal activity for us to be
6 doing in 2025.

7 I also want to use the rest of my time
8 to talk about what we're actually talking about
9 which is people, right. We're talking about
10 congressional representation or the lack
11 thereof. We're talking about people who need
12 access to services, families who need access to
13 clean air, clean water, good nutrition, good
14 schools. What we're talking about is
15 North Carolinians and people who want to rely on
16 their representatives.

17 2025 is an election year. We're
18 talking about municipal government, and my role
19 at You Can Vote we talk to students about what
20 we're voting for. 2025 is when we vote for
21 mayor and city council. This process should not
22 be happening right now. Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Robert Uhl, then next
24 would be Greg Flynn.

25 PUBLIC SPEAKER: Good morning. My name

1 is Robert Uhl. I am from Raleigh and a resident
2 of Wake county.

3 I stand before you today vehemently
4 against this redistricting plan. And based on
5 what I've heard today, the scheme seems to have
6 been put together by one elected official and
7 some staff members without any consultation from
8 other -- from any of his colleagues in the House
9 or the Senate. That doesn't sound very
10 Democratic to me.

11 Redistricting cheats the people of
12 North Carolina out of anything that resembles
13 fair representation. The plan would further
14 erode North Carolinians' power to elect
15 candidates of their choice. It flagrantly
16 violates core principles of accountability and
17 throws out the constitutional promise of equal
18 representation, and it is another tool that is
19 being applied to accomplish voter suppression as
20 it would help to keep the powerful in power at
21 the expense of those with the least power.

22 It makes more sense to me for the
23 legislature to do what the people elected it to
24 do, and that is to conduct business for the
25 people and not conduct activities as ordered by

1 a convicted felon.

2 This partisan gerrymandering should be
3 illegal, and it cheats the people, and I stand
4 firmly against it. Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Next is Greg Flynn
6 and then Cheryl Tung.

7 PUBLIC SPEAKER: Greg Flynn, citizen,
8 voter.

9 This weekend, the president circulated
10 a video of himself dropping excrement on
11 American people. This is the God you worship,
12 the dictator you appease, the king you would
13 pander to, while thousands of North Carolina
14 citizens are on track to lose health insurance,
15 while civil rights guaranteed by the
16 constitution are now daily trampled on. No one
17 is safe from his retributions, not even you.

18 I pledge allegiance to the flag of the
19 United States of America and to the Republic for
20 which it stands, a republic if you can keep it,
21 not to a felonious monarch in a gilded house on
22 Pennsylvania Avenue.

23 Are you monarchists? Are you not
24 Republicans? Absolute power is corroding the
25 Republic. Just because you can legally eat

1 everything at a buffet doesn't mean it's a good
2 idea.

3 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Next is Cheryl Tung,
4 followed by Ron Osborn.

5 PUBLIC SPEAKER: Good afternoon,
6 members of the Senate Elections Committee. My
7 name is Cheryl Tung, and I am speaking today on
8 behalf of the League of Women Voters of
9 North Carolina.

10 84 percent of North Carolinians across
11 political parties say it's unacceptable for
12 politicians to draw districts to help their own
13 side win more seats. Yet here we are again
14 facing another partisan redraw.

15 The League of Women Voters has long
16 opposed mid-decade redistricting unless required
17 by court order because it undermines stability,
18 it confuses the voters and erodes trust in our
19 elections. Voters deserve consistency and
20 fairness, not political manipulation.

21 Instead of passing a budget or meeting
22 the state's constitutional duty to provide every
23 child with a sound, basic education, this
24 legislature has focused on protecting power.
25 That is not serving constituents. It's serving

1 a party.

2 I urge you to restore transparency,
3 fairness, integrity to redistricting and put
4 voters, not politicians, first.

5 North Carolinians deserve a democracy worthy of
6 their trust. Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Ron Osborn, followed
8 next will be Elena Ceberio.

9 PUBLIC SPEAKER: My name is Ron Osborn.
10 I'm from Alamance county. I'm a 13th generation
11 North Carolinian.

12 I came from my farm this morning, fed
13 the animals and was hoping to work on my barn,
14 but it was more important to be here and,
15 frankly the manure is deeper here than in my
16 barnyard.

17 The non-answers, the half truths, and
18 the outright lies about the intent of this bill
19 is disgusting. You can do what you want to do,
20 but it's the same effect as poll taxes,
21 grandfathered laws, and literacy tests on the
22 population.

23 We're a 50/50 state, and it hurts
24 Republicans too because it takes away the
25 competitiveness and nobody has a real choice in

1 voting.

2 In 2022, the data showed that
3 30 percent of North Carolinians didn't have a
4 choice because it was such a skewed electorate.
5 We can be 50/50 where everybody has a choice and
6 we have moderate representatives and not we have
7 today. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Elena Ceberio and
9 then Marc Lavarin.

10 PUBLIC SPEAKER: My name is Elena
11 Ceberio. I am with Democracy Out Loud.

12 I believe the statistics to others, and
13 I will speak from my heart which is breaking
14 today. I am dressed in black to match my
15 mourning and to replicate the hearts of the
16 legislators that decided to disenfranchise the
17 black voters of District 1 with this proposed
18 racist map which is being submitted outside of
19 the established norm timing and only undermines
20 the people's belief in free and fair impartial
21 elections.

22 As per your description, Senator Hise,
23 the current resident of the White House approves
24 of these changes, so it is clear and unambiguous
25 that this map is bending the knee to an

1 authoritarian leader who is a convicted felon,
2 and you, sir, are on the wrong side of history.

3 I can never fully understand the impact
4 of what it is like being a black person in
5 America. However, I do know I made a commitment
6 to use my white privilege to stand in the gap
7 and stop any harm I am able to as I am doing
8 here today.

9 It is a clear manipulation of this
10 voting district in the middle of what you agreed
11 is a heavily populated black vote area. So I
12 clearly call these changes as purely racial
13 disenfranchisement, depriving people who have
14 historically been stepped on by white domination
15 of their chance to be heard.

16 You are rigging the maps to hurt black
17 people. It is shameful, undemocratic, and
18 immoral, and there are no other words to
19 describe it. Shame on you and your lack of
20 humanity.

21 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Next will be
22 Marc Lavarin and then Libby Johnson.

23 PUBLIC SPEAKER: My name is Reverend
24 Marc Lavarin. I am the senior pastor of the
25 First Calvary Baptist Church in Durham.

1 As a man of the cloth, I have not come
2 to ask you to do anything for you all have shown
3 that you are not going to listen to the people
4 of North Carolina, so today I've come to issue a
5 warning.

6 Whoa unto you who do evil and call evil
7 good. Whoa unto you who enrich the wealthy at
8 the expense of the poor. Whoa unto you who use
9 the name of Jesus and hate justice. For the
10 prophet Micah told us what the Lord requires of
11 us, and that is to do justice, to love mercy,
12 and to walk humbly with our God.

13 And I've come merely as a person of the
14 cloth to ask you to remember that you will not
15 have to stand before Trump, but you will have to
16 stand before a greater throne. And I pray --
17 and what tragedy that would be, rather, to gain
18 Trump's approval and lose your own soul.

19 May God bless you and may God have
20 mercy on your souls.

21 Whatever time I have, I yield it for a
22 moment of silence for death of democracy in the
23 state of North Carolina.

24 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Next is Libby
25 Johnson, followed by Joseph Lazar.

1 PUBLIC SPEAKER: I'm Libby Johnson,
2 Democracy Out Loud representative.

3 Today is about a tale of two sides that
4 begs the question which side are you on? On one
5 side there are those that seek to deny the power
6 to hold collections of people across
7 North Carolina the right to determine their
8 future. I stand on the side of justice and love
9 that strengthens the right of being
10 representative shaping futures.

11 We the people here and across
12 North Carolina are not blind to what's happening
13 here, the weaponizing of the redistricting.
14 Redistricting has always been about keeping the
15 powerful in power at the expense of those with
16 the least power, the people of color, the
17 marginalized. This is about racism.

18 Stop messing with our maps. Stop
19 creating racist maps. Let the people decide.

20 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Joseph Lazar,
21 followed by Amy Van Wyk.

22 PUBLIC SPEAKER: Hello. Joseph Lazar.
23 I'm not here with any organization.

24 I am well aware that there is probably
25 nothing that I can say or that anyone else here

1 can say to change your minds and to convince you
2 not to pass this map -- to pass these maps, but
3 let me remind you that we still don't have a
4 budget, our teachers and law enforcement are
5 still not getting paid what they're supposed to,
6 yet you find time to redraw these maps to steal
7 more seats from us again.

8 How can you feel so shameless in doing
9 this? You may feel invincible, but let me tell
10 you something: We are coming for you.

11 When Democrats held the majority on the
12 North Carolina Supreme Court, partisan
13 gerrymandering was ruled illegal. And we're
14 going to reelect Anita Earls to the supreme
15 court in 2026, and in 2028 we're going to kick
16 your partisan hacks off the supreme court,
17 including Phil Berger's son. And when we do,
18 you all are going to be out on your ass because
19 you know that you can't win when you play fair.

20 You wouldn't be cheating if you could
21 win if you played fair. So heed this warning:
22 When we're back in power, we're going to
23 remember how you treated us.

24 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Amy Van Wyk, followed
25 by Matt Bullard.

1 PUBLIC SPEAKER: Amy Van Wyk, and I am
2 a public resident of North Carolina and a voter
3 of Cumberland county. I am going to have a very
4 simple message and a very short one. It's on
5 our state seal. Esse Quam Videri. To be rather
6 than to seem.

7 Are we a democracy? Are we a
8 democratic representative or are we not? Those
9 are the only two questions you have to ask
10 yourself. If you vote for this map, we are not.

11 Are you representing the people or one
12 in power? Which are you going to choose, the
13 many or the one?

14 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Matt Bullard,
15 followed by Dr. Tanneshia Dukes.

16 PUBLIC SPEAKER: I'm Matt Bullard, a
17 resident of Raleigh, born and raised in this
18 state. My parents were, their parents were and
19 so on.

20 I have enjoyed feeling rise in me the
21 admiration for my fellow citizens who have spoke
22 earlier, and I recognize in light of their
23 comments the gross understatement in what I'm
24 about to say. Nevertheless, Senator Robinson
25 has already said, and others of the citizens

1 have acknowledged, that this is a 50/50 state.
2 The action you consider now is for the purpose
3 of lynching our congressional delegation around
4 to 80/20. It is for the purpose of stripping
5 effectively voting rights from citizens.

6 Compliance with the law is not the same
7 thing as being right. What you are doing is not
8 right. It is not for the people of
9 North Carolina. It is fealty to a wannabe
10 dictator president.

11 I ask you to reject the action that
12 you're considering today. Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Dr. Tanneshia Dukes,
14 and then next will be Cynthia Morrison.

15 PUBLIC SPEAKER: Good morning. I'm
16 Dr. Tanneshia Dukes from Guilford county.

17 And although I would love to stand
18 before you today as an educator to talk about
19 the budget or the lack thereof one, I am here
20 discussing the state of our democracy.

21 What you are proposing is unethical and
22 an assault on the fair representation we deserve
23 in our state. It is impossible to talk
24 redistricting without the mention of race and
25 socioeconomic demographics.

1 You're not protecting people. You're
2 protecting power. Let's call it what it is, a
3 calculated effort to silence communities and
4 erase affluence which is voter suppression.

5 This map strips the fair representation
6 of the black and brown communities not for
7 fairness but for control.

8 We know that your oath is forgotten
9 when power becomes the prize. We will remember
10 that you sought this out. Silence is not
11 neutrality, it's complicity, and we refuse to be
12 complicit. Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Cynthia Morrison, and
14 then next would be Rebecca Warren.

15 PUBLIC SPEAKER: Good morning. My name
16 is Cynthia Morrison. I'm a citizen of
17 North Carolina. I've lived here for 56 years.
18 I'm a taxpayer, a voter, a mother, and a
19 grandmother.

20 I'm also the proud mother of a 2016
21 United States Air Force Academy graduate who
22 proudly served this nation. He defended our
23 constitutional freedoms that allow every citizen
24 to have a voice in their government. He didn't
25 serve to protect a party. He served to protect

1 the principles of our constitution.

2 He honorably separated last year to
3 pursue his next mission and serve us in a
4 different way. He planned to run for public
5 office and hoped to make a positive impact. I'm
6 beyond devastated to share that he tragically
7 passed away from a very rare and extremely
8 aggressive bile duct cancer in July after a
9 short but valiant battle.

10 A week before he left us, he asked me
11 and our family to continue with his mission
12 since he would not be able to, so today I stand
13 before you honoring my son and the oath he took
14 and the promise I made to him.

15 Drawing voting maps behind closed doors
16 undermines the rights of all North Carolinians.
17 A bipartisan poll shows overwhelmingly that
18 87 percent of Democrats, 78 percent of
19 Republicans in North Carolina opposed
20 gerrymandering. That means the people have
21 already spoken. This is not a Republican issue,
22 it's not a Democrat issue, it's a moral issue,
23 it's a constitutional issue, it's a
24 North Carolina issue.

25 Fair maps are the foundations of fair

1 elections. Gerrymandering is unfair. I urge
2 you to honor your oath, protect transparency and
3 put the people first with fair and equal
4 representation. Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Rebecca Warren,
6 followed by Liz Barber.

7 PUBLIC SPEAKER: Hi. Thank you. I'm
8 Rebecca Warren, born in Raleigh, voter from
9 eastern North Carolina, from Wilson,
10 North Carolina.

11 Thank you to everyone and the senators
12 here of sound mind who are asking questions and
13 are speaking up against this crazy,
14 unconstitutional request to redistrict
15 North Carolina.

16 Senator Hines is racist and his purpose
17 is clear, to silence our voices. Redistricting
18 is taking away our -- the voices of hardworking
19 minorities for the racist Republican agenda.
20 And I'm here asking you to stop giving
21 Republicans seats that mathematically do not
22 represent the people.

23 Senator Hines -- Hise, you are racist.
24 You are harming the hardworking people of
25 North Carolina. Senator Hines, I dare you to

1 actually request the public to vote on your
2 ridiculous and stupid attempt to silence our
3 voices. We will not be silenced. Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Next is Liz Barber,
5 and then it will be Gay Williams.

6 PUBLIC SPEAKER: Good morning. Liz
7 Barber, ACLU of North Carolina. I'm going to be
8 very short because I think this is really
9 straightforward.

10 Voting is the cornerstone of our
11 democracy, and when the party in power tries to
12 take all of the power of the voters, give all of
13 the power to the people who agree with them and
14 take it away from the people who disagree with
15 them, they erode that. Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Gay Williams is next,
17 followed by Anne Hemingway Favor.

18 PUBLIC SPEAKER: Good morning, members
19 of the committee. My name is Gay Williams. I
20 am president of the League of Women Voters of
21 Wake county and redistricting lead for the
22 League of Women Voters of North Carolina.

23 I am here to express our deep concern
24 for your decision to re-prioritize the work of
25 the General Assembly to focus on achieving

1 political gains rather than serving the many
2 needs of our state.

3 I love North Carolina. My family roots
4 run deep here. The people of our state have
5 many challenges, among them nearly a million
6 North Carolinians, about 10 percent of our
7 population, are about to receive notices that
8 their healthcare costs are increasing by
9 staggering amounts in some cases. They will
10 soon have a very short window to make their
11 choices for health insurance or decide to go
12 without.

13 You could be focused on that, dealing
14 with that reality. Instead, we are here yet
15 again to observe the accumulation of power being
16 prioritized over service to the people.

17 Please reconsider the needs of the
18 people within our state instead of serving the
19 needs of those outside of it.

20 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Anne Hemingway Favor,
21 followed by Shannon Halbur.

22 PUBLIC SPEAKER: It's Anne Hemingway
23 Feuer, and I'm with Democracy Out Loud as well
24 as I'm a raging grannie. I'm a grandmother.
25 And I've only lived in North Carolina a short

1 while, but let me assure you that I really am
2 opposed to people acting like other people don't
3 count. I'm not opposed to Republicans in
4 general. I'm not opposed to Democrats or
5 independents. I am simply opposed to the filthy
6 rich, excuse my French, but those folks stepping
7 on the rest of us, and that happens a lot, I've
8 noticed recently, anyway.

9 And I feel that North Carolina
10 supporting this felon in the White House in
11 doing that and in sending out ICE troops to pull
12 parents away from their children and zip tie
13 people and the craziness that's going on. I'm
14 opposed to all that. Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Shannon Halbur,
16 followed by Cindy Finan.

17 PUBLIC SPEAKER: Hi. My name is
18 Shannon Halbur. I'm a resident of Clayton,
19 North Carolina, and a United States Air Force
20 veteran. I was born an American citizen, but
21 I'm a North Carolina resident by choice.

22 Really, 11 Republican seats out of 14,
23 is that what democracy looks like to you? That
24 is not what democracy looks like to me. And
25 I've been trying to understand why this

1 honorable legislative body wants to take away
2 the voice from North Carolinians. The only
3 reason that I can think of, that makes sense to
4 me, is that you're afraid because make no
5 mistake, this bullying legislation comes from
6 fear.

7 First, you fear the people of
8 North Carolina. And I don't know why. I love
9 the people of North Carolina. In fact, I just
10 met up with 900 of my besties in Clayton town
11 green on Saturday.

12 Second, you are afraid of
13 President Trump, afraid of the US president just
14 when we need you to be brave.

15 I ask you now to please don't do this
16 to our people. You have nothing to fear but
17 fear itself.

18 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Cindy Finan and then
19 Eric Willoughby.

20 PUBLIC SPEAKER: I'm Cindy Finan, and
21 I'm here to give comment from the North Carolina
22 Red, Wine and Blue. We are a community of
23 nearly 40,000 women in all 100 counties here in
24 North Carolina. We are nonpartisan, grassroots
25 organization with members from both parties and

1 many unaffiliated voters.

2 We know that you are redrawing maps to
3 protect President Trump's agenda, and it is an
4 offense to the women in our network. No elected
5 official should be manipulating political maps
6 to draw safe seats for themselves or their
7 party. Voters in North Carolina should choose
8 their representatives in congress. You should
9 not be choosing your voters.

10 The women in our community are
11 watching, and we will be mobilizing our friends,
12 family, and acquaintances to go to the polls to
13 help vote out any candidate who continues to try
14 to take away our rights and disenfranchise
15 voters. We are in all 100 counties, and we will
16 remember what you do today and the rest of the
17 week. Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Eric Willoughby, and
19 then it would be Todd Belcose.

20 PUBLIC SPEAKER: My name is Eric
21 Willoughby. I'm 19 years old and a sophomore at
22 UNC Charlotte.

23 Today is a dark day for North Carolina.
24 People who dare to call themselves public
25 servants are showing us who they really serve,

1 not the people but Donald Trump. Republicans
2 here in Raleigh are preparing to pass a new
3 congressional map that is designed to hand
4 Donald Trump another MAGA congressional
5 district. And they are doing this while
6 North Carolina has not had a state budget for
7 100 days. Rather than fully funding Medicaid,
8 rather than raising teacher pay or doing their
9 jobs, they're wasting precious time and taxpayer
10 dollars bending the knee to Donald Trump and
11 ripping away the voice of the voters.

12 It is shameful. It the pathetic. You
13 are shameful. You are pathetic. I call on
14 anyone listening to this right now, please
15 register to vote, get involved and vote these
16 clowns out of office.

17 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Todd Belcose,
18 followed by Alexander Lafond.

19 PUBLIC SPEAKER: Belcore, R-E, Social
20 Change.

21 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Sorry.

22 PUBLIC SPEAKER: No worries. No
23 worries. It's my penmanship, not your reading.

24 It's a privilege to be here, but it's
25 an awful circumstance to be here. Democracy is

1 to be ruling by the people for the people, and
2 there's nothing based in this closed-door
3 legislation, where no one had a chance to buy
4 in. There's nothing about the process which no
5 matter what people says today that will change
6 anything you do or don't do. There's nothing
7 about the process where the people impacted
8 directly can speak up and you still won't change
9 an aspect of this that gives even a hint towards
10 what democracy is supposed to be like.

11 Democracy is supposed to be ruled by
12 the people, but if you're ignoring the people at
13 every stage in this process, if you're ignoring
14 the people at every stage even after this
15 process to impact the pain, that is not
16 democracy. That is what authoritarianism looks
17 like. And that is why we are here, not because
18 we want to be here on a Monday, not because we
19 all have other things to do, it's because we are
20 nervous, we are worried, we are concerned about
21 the soul of this country, the soul of this
22 democracy and all the things that are
23 underpinned in this bill.

24 So please, please take a moment to
25 consider what public comment means. The public

1 says they don't want this. 84 percent of people
2 vote against this in general say they don't want
3 this, and the people here say they don't want
4 this. And if you want to invite public comment,
5 actually make sure it matters and do something
6 differently based on what that comment
7 represents. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Alexander Lafond and
9 then Kyle Brazil.

10 PUBLIC SPEAKER: Hello and good
11 morning. My name is Alexander Lafond. I'm a
12 constituent in House District 38 and Senate
13 District 15.

14 Let me start off by saying I don't mean
15 any disrespect to my fellow Americans. However,
16 I do not care what's happening in Texas, and I
17 do not care what's happening in California.
18 What I care about is what's happening here in
19 North Carolina and how our state legislators and
20 senators are representing the people of
21 North Carolina.

22 It's been 112 days since North Carolina
23 was supposed to have a budget, and instead of
24 coming here and talking about that, we are here
25 speaking out against redistricting that which

1 will negatively impact every single voter in
2 North Carolina. It doesn't matter if you're
3 Democrat, it doesn't matter if you're
4 Republican.

5 The attack by the federal government on
6 the states by cutting funding -- western
7 North Carolina still has funding withheld to
8 rebuild from Hurricane Helene. Where is the
9 representation for western North Carolina?

10 Instead, we are here talking about
11 redistricting and putting party over country.
12 Instead of coming here and speaking to the
13 General Assembly about how the cost of everyday
14 essentials and the cost of housing continues to
15 rise and asking what your plan is to subsidize
16 this, we're here to decry the attempt by one
17 party to hold control of power rather than
18 governing and representing the voices of its
19 constituents. Shame on Republicans. It's a
20 stain on this establishment.

21 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Kyle Brazil. Is Kyle
22 Brazil here?

23 All right. That concludes our public
24 speaking segment of the committee hearing.

25 Are there any other comments from the

1 members of the committee?

2 Senator Batch.

3 SENATOR BATCH: Thank you, Chair.

4 I just wanted to correct one thing.

5 And I don't believe Senator Hise was quoting it
6 inaccurately because it's what WRAL said.

7 However, the article that he referenced with
8 regard to Democrats in the 1960s redrawing
9 outside of a court order is actually not
10 accurate.

11 Interestingly enough, the New York
12 Times article that's been archived was on
13 July 4th of 1967, interestingly, about our
14 independence.

15 And what that article said is that they
16 ordered the General Assembly to rebalance
17 population among districts because districts
18 under that plan had a population variance of
19 173 percent which the court said was too much.
20 However, the court agreed to let the plan stand
21 for the 1966 elections, that the General
22 Assembly would revamp the lines again by
23 July 1st of 1967.

24 And they also go on to say that
25 tonight's actions came two days after the

1 deadline, but legislative leaders said that they
2 believe the court would approve their new
3 districts that only varied 4 percent per
4 population.

5 And so I just want to make a note that,
6 again, not to Senator Hise but correcting the
7 record, that the WRAL article was incorrect in
8 that it was actually court ordered for those
9 changes in the 1960s.

10 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you.

11 Senator Robinson.

12 SENATOR ROBINSON: Yes. Thank you,
13 Mr. Chair, just to make a comment.

14 You know, it is disingenuous to invite
15 the people of North Carolina to their house in
16 the state and not to consider what they have to
17 say. It is very disingenuous to receive public
18 comment, 200 pages, I believe, and not even
19 consider what the citizens have to say. You
20 know, I am appalled that we who represent the
21 citizens of this state don't represent them. We
22 really don't represent them.

23 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Any other comments
24 from the committee?

25 Seeing none, is there a motion from the

1 committee members?

2 Senator Todd Johnson moves for adoption
3 of the -- the committee will stand at ease for a
4 moment until order is restored.

5 (At ease.)

6 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right. We have a
7 motion before the committee from Senator Todd
8 Johnson which is favorable report to
9 Senate Bill 249, unfavorable to the original
10 bill. There's no referral to an additional
11 committee.

12 So all in favor of the motion, please
13 indicate by saying aye.

14 COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Aye.

15 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All opposed nay.

16 COMMITTEE MEMBERS: No.

17 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: The ayes have it and
18 the bill passes out of committee.

19 And thank you very much today for your
20 work, committee.

21 (Adjourned.)
22
23
24
25

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA)
) C E R T I F I C A T E
COUNTY OF WAKE)

I, DENISE MYERS BYRD, Stenographic Court Reporter, CSR 8340, do hereby certify that the transcription of the recorded Senate Elections Committee, held on October 20, 2025, was taken down by me stenographically to the best of my ability and thereafter transcribed under my supervision; and that the foregoing pages, inclusive, constitute a true and accurate transcription of said recording.

Signed this the 31st day of October
2025.

Denise Myers Byrd, CSR 8340