

NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE SESSION

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1           PRESIDENT HUNT: The Senate will come  
2 to order. The sergeant-at-arms will close the  
3 doors. Members will go to their seats. Members  
4 and guests of the gallery will please silence  
5 all electronic devices.

6           Leading the Senate in prayer is  
7 Senator Eddie Settle of Wilkes county.

8           All members and guests in the gallery  
9 will please stand.

10          SENATOR SETTLE: Thank you.

11          Senator Ford, this is coming from the  
12 new King James version.

13          Let all bitterness, wrath, anger,  
14 clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you,  
15 with all malice. Be kind to one another,  
16 tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as  
17 God in Christ forgave you.

18          If you will pray with me.

19          Lord, thank you, thank you for this day  
20 and the breath of life that we each have, Lord,  
21 that you freely give, Lord, and sound mind that  
22 we have. We ask you to lead us today in all  
23 decisions that are made that will be pleasing to  
24 you. And when we leave this place, we will be  
25 united. We love you and we praise you. We ask

1 it all in Jesus name, amen.

2 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Berger is  
3 recognized for a motion.

4 SENATOR BERGER: Thank you,  
5 Madam President.

6 The journal of September 25, 2025, has  
7 been examined and is found to be correct. I'll  
8 move that we dispense with the reading of the  
9 journal and that it stand approved as written.

10 PRESIDENT HUNT: Without objection, the  
11 journal for September 25, 2025, stands approved  
12 as written.

13 Leaves of absence are requested and,  
14 without objection, are granted for Senators  
15 Britt, Burgin, Lowe, Rabon, and Sawyer.

16 Courtesies of the gallery. Upon motion  
17 of Senator Brent Jackson of Sampson county, the  
18 chair is happy to extend courtesies to Ab and  
19 Stephanie Johnson of Pender county. They're the  
20 parents of Senator Jackson's research assistant  
21 Joe Johnson. Please stand and be recognized.

22 [Applause.]

23 Senator Alexander, for what purpose do  
24 you rise?

25 SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you,

1 Madam President.

2 Point of personal privilege to present  
3 a senatorial statement out of order.

4 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have leave to  
5 proceed.

6 SENATOR ALEXANDER: Thank you,  
7 Madam President.

8 It is truly a privilege and an honor  
9 today for me to be able to rise and recognize a  
10 constituent of mine, a very special constituent,  
11 Ms. Sophia Kellstrom who is the reigning  
12 Miss North Carolina. And she's with us today.  
13 And she is a native, as I mentioned, of  
14 Kings Mountain, North Carolina, a graduate of  
15 the University of North Carolina Charlotte with  
16 a BA in theater and a concentration in  
17 performance.

18 And on June 28th of this year,  
19 Ms. Kellstrom was named the 87th  
20 Miss North Carolina. And for the talent section  
21 of the competition, she performed a vocal of  
22 "At Last." And her talent performance also won  
23 her the preliminary talent award and the overall  
24 vocal talent award.

25 And she has represented several local

1 titles of Miss Metrolina's Outstanding Teen,  
2 Miss Gastonia, Miss Metrolina, Miss Mecklenburg  
3 County, Miss Asheville, and prior to being  
4 Miss North Carolina, Miss Davidson County.

5 She represented us extremely well in  
6 the Miss America contest just recently in  
7 Orlando, Florida, and our entire community and  
8 our state was proud of the way she conducted  
9 herself and did such a great job.

10 She is very active in the community,  
11 and one of her causes is fighting childhood  
12 hunger. And she promotes her community service  
13 initiative Make a Change: Fighting Food  
14 Insecurity.

15 And I will also add that one of her  
16 personal goals is to visit every single 100  
17 counties during between now and the end of June  
18 of next year, through her reign, and with that  
19 she is very open to being requested for coming  
20 to your town. So if you have a school or a  
21 festival or a church function or some other  
22 event, then be sure to get ahold of her. Or if  
23 you want to contact me, I'll direct you toward  
24 her.

25 But she has represented us so very

1 well, and I thought it would be very fitting  
2 today to recognize Sophia Kellstrom.

3 PRESIDENT HUNT: Could Sophia Kellstrom  
4 and her mother Malora Kellstrom please stand and  
5 be recognized, Miss North Carolina.

6 [Applause.]

7 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Murdock, for  
8 what purpose do you rise?

9 SENATOR MURDOCK: For a moment of  
10 personal privilege.

11 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor.

12 SENATOR MURDOCK: On your desk you will  
13 see a senatorial statement that is recognizing  
14 the life and legacy of Ms. Catherine Spearman  
15 Ferrell. Catherine Spearman Ferrell, wait for  
16 it, was born October 10, 1912, in Warsaw,  
17 North Carolina, where she was raised and rooted  
18 in a home based in faith, hard work, and  
19 pursuing education. Financial limitations  
20 prevented her from attending college to pursue  
21 her dream of becoming a teacher, but she  
22 fulfilled that calling by teaching and mentoring  
23 generations.

24 After moving to Durham, North Carolina,  
25 in 1945 in search of better opportunities, she

1 and her husband Maynard Ferrell built a home  
2 grounded in love, service, devotion. And they  
3 have four children that are also here today.

4 She has deep ties to the east end  
5 neighborhood, and she has expressed her decades  
6 of service and her church communities which  
7 include Orange Grove Baptist Church and Mount  
8 Gilead Baptist Church. And Senator Woodard  
9 actually just let me know that she started the  
10 community garden there at Mount Gilead, and  
11 remains active civically and let me know today  
12 she has never missed an election. We are  
13 honored. And when I say has not missed an  
14 election, she does not vote curbside. At  
15 113 years young, she walks in there and votes  
16 every election.

17 Without further ado, she is celebrating  
18 113 years of life and to our knowledge is the  
19 oldest living North Carolinian. We have  
20 Ms. Ferrell here with us on today.

21 PRESIDENT HUNT: So could Mrs. Spearman  
22 please stand.

23 [Applause.]

24 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Daniel, for  
25 what purpose do you rise?

1 SENATOR DANIEL: Motions.

2 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor for  
3 motions.

4 SENATOR DANIEL: I move that all  
5 messages from the Senate today be sent to the  
6 House by special messenger.

7 And Senate Bill 249, Realign  
8 Congressional Districts 2025 was heard in the  
9 elections committee today and is in the rules  
10 committee. I move that the bill be recalled  
11 from rules and placed on today's floor calendar  
12 for immediate consideration.

13 PRESIDENT HUNT: Without objection, so  
14 ordered.

15 Senate Bill 249. The clerk will read.

16 THE CLERK: Senate Bill 249, Realign  
17 Congressional Districts 2025.

18 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Hise is  
19 recognized to explain the bill.

20 SENATOR HISE: Thank you,  
21 Madam President.

22 Members of the committee, Members,  
23 before you is the proposed 2025 congressional  
24 maps. We had a robust discussion from our  
25 members and heard public comments from everyone



1 who signed up to speak earlier today in  
2 committee. I will not repeat everything I said  
3 in committee, but I will say a few things about  
4 the proposed redistricting plan.

5 The motivation behind this draw was to  
6 produce a new map that will bring an additional  
7 Republican seat to North Carolina's  
8 congressional delegation.

9 Republicans hold a razor-thin majority  
10 in the US House of Representatives, and if  
11 Democrats flip four seats in the upcoming  
12 midterm elections, they will take control of the  
13 House and torpedo President Trump's agenda.

14 President Trump has called on  
15 Republican-controlled states across the country  
16 to redraw congressional districts, and this map  
17 answers that call.

18 On the issue of race that several  
19 members have brought up this morning, to be  
20 clear, consistent with practices this decade, in  
21 2023 and 2021, absolutely no racial data was  
22 used in the creation of this map. I explained  
23 in committee about the dangers of using race in  
24 drawing maps. If legislators draw districts  
25 predominantly based on race without a compelling

1 interest, those districts would be declared  
2 illegal racial gerrymanders.

3 As for the Voting Rights Act, in order  
4 for a predominant use of race to be justified  
5 under Section 2, there must be a strong basis in  
6 evidence of three Gingles preconditions. Even  
7 assuming the presence of three Gingles  
8 conditions, the use of race to draw districts  
9 must also be supported by a totality of the  
10 evidence. That was true and it's true now.

11 Past decisions and court records  
12 demonstrate there is no evidence of the three  
13 Gingles preconditions in North Carolina. In  
14 fact, just weeks ago a federal court told us in  
15 a case concerning the senate districts in the  
16 northeastern part of the state that there was no  
17 evidence of legally significant racially  
18 polarized voting that would require a  
19 majority-minority district.

20 In the absence of any evidence of the  
21 three Gingles preconditions, the chairs elected  
22 not to use race in the drawing of these proposed  
23 districts strictly to protect the state from  
24 lawsuits alleging illegal racial gerrymandering.

25 To be clear, the chairs do not believe

1 that the use of racial data would have been  
2 helpful in reaching any political or other  
3 legislative redistricting goal. Any political  
4 considerations in line drawing have been  
5 informed by political data and not racial data.

6 Now, the plan before you. The new  
7 congressional districts makes no changes to 12  
8 of the 14 districts. The only districts that  
9 are changed in the new map are NC 1 and NC 3.

10 The changes in new congressional plan  
11 consist of the following: Greene, Lenoir,  
12 Wayne, and Wilson counties are moved from NC 1  
13 to NC 3.

14 Beaufort, Carteret, Craven, Dare, Hyde,  
15 and Pamlico counties are moved from NC 3 to  
16 NC 1.

17 Following that, to balance the  
18 populations of the two districts, 4,853 people,  
19 according to the 2020 census, in Onslow county,  
20 that's 2.4 percent of the population, are moved  
21 from NC 3 to NC 1. That split occurs in the  
22 Swansboro precinct, leaving as much of the town  
23 in one district NC 1 as possible, minimizing  
24 municipal split.

25 As I stated previously, the motivation

1 behind this new plan is straightforward: The  
2 congressional map improves Republican political  
3 strength in eastern North Carolina. It moves  
4 NC 1 from a district where President Trump  
5 earned 51 percent of the vote in 2024 to one  
6 that would have earned 55 percent of the vote,  
7 an increase of four points.

8 To balance Republican strength, NC 3  
9 loses the same amount as NC 1 gains, four  
10 points, moving it from 60 percent  
11 President Trump performance in the previous map  
12 to 56 percent in the new map.

13 The end result is a congressional map  
14 that should elect 11 Republicans. Not only does  
15 the new congressional map better improve  
16 Republican political strength in eastern  
17 North Carolina giving Republican candidates a  
18 better opportunity to win NC 1, the new map  
19 adheres to all traditional redistricting  
20 principles. You all can remove the compactness  
21 reports, but the bottom line is the map is more  
22 compact than the 2023 map in all recognized  
23 manners.

24 I did also want to state, there may  
25 have been some confusion what I said in the

1 committee this morning, age data was also not  
2 available in the data system. Even though there  
3 was no prohibition from that, it was not  
4 available in the data that was available.

5 And that being said, Members, I would  
6 suggest -- ask for your support for this bill as  
7 we continue to move forward. Thank you.

8 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Grafstein, for  
9 what purpose do you rise?

10 SENATOR GRAFSTEIN: To speak to the  
11 bill.

12 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor to  
13 speak to the bill.

14 SENATOR GRAFSTEIN: Thank you,  
15 Madam President.

16 In elections today, the elections  
17 committee, the bill sponsor said, and said again  
18 today, the motivation behind this redraw is  
19 simple and singular, to deliver another seat to  
20 Republicans. And I do appreciate that  
21 directness. Even as people rub their eyes and  
22 check their ears in disbelief, it's good that  
23 there's no effort to gaslight anyone on this  
24 point. We all understand that this is  
25 gerrymandering or as some people are calling it,

1 DEI for Republicans.

2 The bill sponsor also said "This is a  
3 political arms race" -- this was in elections  
4 today. "This is a political arms race that  
5 Republicans did not start."

6 And I need to correct the record here  
7 because that's not correct. As Senator Mayfield  
8 said in committee, Texas started this dance.

9 On June 9th of this year, the New York  
10 Times reported the following:

11 President Trump's political team is  
12 encouraging Republican leaders in Texas to  
13 examine how House district lines in the state  
14 could be redrawn ahead of next year's midterm  
15 elections to try to save the party's endangered  
16 majority according to people in Texas and  
17 Washington who are familiar with the effort.

18 A person close to the president urged  
19 a, quote, ruthless approach and said Mr. Trump  
20 would welcome any chance to pick up seats in the  
21 midterms. The president would pay close  
22 attention to those in his party who help or hurt  
23 that effort, the person warned.

24 On June 11th, the Texas Tribune  
25 reported the idea, referring to the redraw, is

1 being driven by President Donald Trump's  
2 political advisors who want to draw up new maps  
3 that would give Republicans a better chance to  
4 flip seats currently held by Democrats. That  
5 proposal, which would involve shifting GOP  
6 voters from safely red districts into  
7 neighboring blue ones, is aimed at safeguarding  
8 Republicans thin majority in congress where they  
9 control the lower chamber 220 to 212.

10           Apparently, it took some convincing to  
11 get Texas Republicans on board with the plan  
12 which I think is saying a lot, but by July 9th  
13 of this year, Governor Abbott of Texas called  
14 for redistricting in the announcement of his  
15 agenda for the Texas legislature.

16           According again to the Texas Tribune,  
17 Abbott's call includes redrawing the state's  
18 congressional districts, following through on a  
19 demand from President Donald Trump's advisors  
20 who want to fortify Republican's slim majority  
21 in the US House by carving out more GOP seats in  
22 Texas.

23           In early August, there was an  
24 additional push to grab additional seats for the  
25 GOP through redistricting in Indiana and

1 Missouri, all at the behest of DC Republicans.  
2 Missouri has followed through and DC  
3 Republicans, including the vice president,  
4 continue to pressure Indiana to do the same.

5 On August 14th, more than a month after  
6 Governor Abbott called a special session to  
7 redistrict there, California announced a plan to  
8 counter the open and obvious attack on our  
9 democracy by putting new California maps to a  
10 vote of the people. Because California has  
11 previously changed its system away from partisan  
12 redistricting to a citizen redistricting  
13 commission, the voters of that state will decide  
14 whether to counter the assault from Republicans.

15 In addition to referring to this as a  
16 political arms race, we were also told that this  
17 bill is to fight fire with fire. That's what  
18 was said in committee. It is beyond dispute  
19 that Republicans started the fire. They poured  
20 the gasoline. They lit the match. They ignited  
21 the fire and are watching it burning. They're  
22 bragging about it, openly kowtowing and pleading  
23 with the president to notice how obedient they  
24 are.

25 Pitting states against each other,



1 pitting Americans against each other, pitting  
2 North Carolinians against each other, for what,  
3 to hold power. It's foolish and pathetic to  
4 forfeit your dignity and your morals to cling to  
5 power or to forget your dignity and your morals  
6 to prove you're a good little boy or girl who  
7 will do what they are told even if it violates  
8 their oath to serve the people of this state.

9 It's grasping. It's desperate. If  
10 you're not prepared to lose, don't run, whatever  
11 party you are. Have some self-respect.  
12 Admitting that you can't win without cheating is  
13 truly sad and small. It makes you look foolish.

14 The statement that Republicans did not  
15 start this arms race isn't correct. I believe  
16 it will be appropriate for the bill sponsor or  
17 someone else to retract that statement. Let's  
18 be fully honest about what's happening here.

19 Thank you, Madam President.

20 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Salvador --

21 Sorry, folks. Sorry. No, we cannot  
22 have that. I'm sorry. I know you have strong  
23 feelings, but we've got to keep it quiet.

24 All right. Senator Salvador, for what  
25 purpose do you rise?

1           SENATOR SALVADOR: To speak to the  
2 bill.

3           PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor to  
4 speak to the bill.

5           SENATOR SALVADOR: Thank you,  
6 Madam President.

7           I wish I could say that I was standing  
8 here to debate the bill, but I think it's time  
9 that we be honest, and we're not debating the  
10 map today because the Republicans have made  
11 their decision far and long ago. And this is  
12 the product of a process that was designed to  
13 tilt outcomes before a single ballot is cast, to  
14 weaken competition, and to isolate opposition,  
15 devised to entrench political power at the  
16 expense of meaningful representation.

17           And unfortunately, this bill signals  
18 that to them it is not about fair  
19 representation, and I genuinely think it's time  
20 that we be honest about the damages that this  
21 will cause and we've already seen cause to our  
22 state.

23           This costs us trust, the public trust.  
24 When lines are drawn behind closed doors, rushed  
25 through just days that can impact years, no true

1 public input, people can lose faith that their  
2 voices will be genuinely heard. And witness  
3 throughout time when people stop believing,  
4 unfortunately, they may stop showing up. And  
5 that's not apathy, that is disenfranchisement by  
6 design. That is what we're seeing here through  
7 these very maps today.

8 And we have to think about what this  
9 will cost all the people that we're elected to  
10 serve in our state. Clearer than day, this is a  
11 premeditation meant to silence communities. It  
12 costs us choice. Because when maps are drawn in  
13 a way that predetermine outcomes, they are a  
14 theft of the very choice that we should be  
15 seeing when we go to the ballot box.

16 If the outcome is already baked in,  
17 then fair representation for impacted  
18 communities, especially black and minority  
19 communities, is being effectively erased. No  
20 genuine need to truly try to earn support, not  
21 as much pressure for representatives to step up  
22 for the people that they represent. And in the  
23 very worst case scenarios that we see, elected  
24 officials who are de facto crowned without  
25 having to ever really earn the public's support,

1 and that's just not right. That is just not  
2 just, which we see already can lead to real cost  
3 and impact for our state.

4 While communities across North Carolina  
5 are asking -- no, they are begging us to do  
6 everything we can to have a functioning budget,  
7 to have fully funded public schools, to deliver  
8 everything we got to see real solutions, we are  
9 standing here first and foremost seeing that  
10 this Republican leadership body has chosen to  
11 instead spend time to rush through maps without  
12 public input, without going into the community  
13 to hear additional comments, to silence the  
14 people that we are meant to serve.

15 A recent Duke University study confirms  
16 it: These maps are not responsive to the  
17 public. They are not drawn in a way to reflect  
18 shifting opinions or perhaps the changing needs  
19 of communities that they may face. They are  
20 drawn to lock in power.

21 North Carolina deserves better. We all  
22 deserve better. We deserve representation that  
23 is earned, not stolen; leadership that listens,  
24 not insulates itself. We have a duty to respond  
25 to the people and not form power that will keep

1 us from that very thing.

2 This moment calls for good leadership,  
3 better leadership, not just what you think you  
4 can potentially get away with here, but what's  
5 right for North Carolina and the communities  
6 that we serve.

7 And with that, I urge my colleagues to  
8 vote no.

9 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Meyer, for  
10 what purpose do you rise?

11 SENATOR MEYER: Thank you,  
12 Madam President. I'd like to debate the bill.

13 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor to  
14 debate the bill.

15 SENATOR MEYER: Thank you,  
16 Madam President.

17 I'd like to begin my debate by asking  
18 Senator Berger if he would be willing to answer  
19 three questions.

20 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Berger, do you  
21 yield?

22 SENATOR BERGER: As I was not involved  
23 in the drawing of the map, I had no involvement  
24 at all, and I would suggest that any questions  
25 about the map or about the process employed be

1 directed to Senator Hise. So I do not yield.

2 PRESIDENT HUNT: He does not yield.

3 SENATOR MEYER: Thank you,  
4 Madam President.

5 I'd be happy to direct my questions to  
6 Senator Hise.

7 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Hise, do you  
8 yield?

9 SENATOR HISE: Absolutely.

10 PRESIDENT HUNT: He yields.

11 SENATOR MEYER: Thank you,  
12 Senator Hise.

13 Senator Hise, to the best of your  
14 knowledge, did you, your staff here at the  
15 General Assembly or your political staff or the  
16 General Assembly staff or political staff of any  
17 Republican member of the legislature have  
18 conversations about this redistricting process  
19 with the president of the United States or any  
20 of his White House staff or political staff?

21 SENATOR HISE: I can answer I've had no  
22 conversations with the president or his staff  
23 members or others regarding these maps or  
24 others. I have no awareness of individual  
25 conversations.

1 I am aware of communications over  
2 social media and other things in which there  
3 were general requests of the president to make  
4 draws or his support for this, but I was not  
5 involved in any other direct conversations.

6 SENATOR MEYER: Thank you. I wonder if  
7 Senator Hise will yield to a second question.

8 PRESIDENT HUNT: Do you yield?

9 SENATOR HISE: I yield.

10 PRESIDENT HUNT: He yields.

11 SENATOR MEYER: Thank you,  
12 Senator Hise.

13 During the process of drawing these  
14 maps or planning to draw these maps, were you or  
15 any of your staff or anyone that you know or any  
16 of their staff in communication with Alex  
17 Kincaid or anyone else from the National  
18 Republican Redistricting Trust?

19 SENATOR HISE: I'm actually not aware  
20 of who those individuals are. I have not had  
21 any of those conversations. I'm not aware of  
22 those conversations.

23 SENATOR MEYER: Okay. I wonder if  
24 Senator Hise will yield for a third question,  
25 Madam President.

1 PRESIDENT HUNT: Do you yield?

2 SENATOR HISE: I yield.

3 PRESIDENT HUNT: He yields.

4 SENATOR MEYER: Thank you.

5 Senator Hise, to the best of your  
6 knowledge, was Senator Berger or anyone else  
7 involved in this process participating in order  
8 to receive political support up to and including  
9 endorsement from the president of the  
10 United States in exchange for this  
11 gerrymandering process?

12 SENATOR HISE: I yielded and I would  
13 say up front, I've already stated I had no  
14 knowledge of any conversation. That would be a  
15 very specific conversation, so the answer  
16 remains no.

17 SENATOR MEYER: Okay. Thank you,  
18 Senator Hise.

19 Thank you, Madam President. May I  
20 proceed.

21 PRESIDENT HUNT: Sure. Speak on the  
22 bill.

23 SENATOR MEYER: Thank you.

24 Ladies and gentlemen of North Carolina,  
25 the questions that I have asked I believe



1     deserve to be asked of Senator Berger and every  
2     other Republican in this room so that you have a  
3     full understanding of the way that this public  
4     process of redistricting has very important and  
5     powerful mechanisms moving behind closed doors,  
6     but today, if we take Senator Hise at his word,  
7     what we have learned is that Trump's Republicans  
8     here in North Carolina will do his bidding even  
9     without him bothering to talk to them or beg or  
10    ask of them anything. That's how beholden they  
11    are.

12           In America, we do not have kings, and  
13    the reason we don't have kings is because kings  
14    do not take care of their people. Kings deliver  
15    unto themselves rather than delivering unto the  
16    people that are below them. And one of the  
17    reasons why in America we have legislatures is  
18    to ensure that we have no kings, but this  
19    legislature is granting power not only to the  
20    federal government but to the president of the  
21    United States in order to ensure that they  
22    advance his agenda, as was said on the floor  
23    here today.

24           Power to an infirm 78-year-old man, a  
25    convicted felon, an egomaniac who is so

1       disrespectful to the people of the United States  
2       as to release a video of himself dumping shit on  
3       their heads, so cruel as to advance an agenda  
4       that drives up your prices for groceries, drives  
5       up your housing costs, will double your  
6       healthcare premiums.

7               The level of cruelty coming out of the  
8       presidency is a stunning aberration for the  
9       history of the United States, and this set of  
10      Republicans want to enshrine that through  
11      cheating to enact that cruelty on the people of  
12      North Carolina.

13              We deserve better because we are  
14      Americans and Americans have no kings.

15              PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Chaudhuri, for  
16      what purpose do you rise?

17              SENATOR CHAUDHURI: To debate the bill,  
18      Madam President.

19              PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor to  
20      debate the bill.

21              SENATOR CHAUDHURI: Thank you,  
22      Madam President.

23              Madam President, before I speak on the  
24      bill, I wanted to see if the bill sponsor,  
25      Senator Hise, will be willing to answer a series

1 of questions.

2 PRESIDENT HUNT: Will you yield,  
3 Senator Hise?

4 SENATOR HISE: I will yield.

5 PRESIDENT HUNT: He will yield.

6 SENATOR CHAUDHURI: Senator Hise, thank  
7 you. I know you've answered a number of  
8 questions earlier this morning.

9 To refresh your memory, during the  
10 committee meeting this morning, Leader Batch  
11 actually corrected the record regarding the  
12 statement that Democrats redrew the maps in the  
13 mid decade without court order, and I believe as  
14 now has been introduced into the record, based  
15 on the New York Times article, it's now been  
16 shown that the 1960s maps that were redrawn were  
17 not -- were actually court ordered.

18 Do you agree with that?

19 SENATOR HISE: Senator Chaudhuri, I  
20 have looked no further into -- I don't deny what  
21 Senator Batch says or accepted. I merely took  
22 the article that said Democrats had drawn the  
23 districts in the mid '60s at its face value and  
24 I think presented it as such, that the article  
25 had made that claim.

1 I have taken no further steps to  
2 research that matter or whatever else but do not  
3 deny Senator Batch's claim that there was some  
4 sort of court proceedings that led to that  
5 redraw.

6 SENATOR CHAUDHURI: Thank you,  
7 Senator Hise.

8 So just assuming that the article  
9 introduced in the record is true, could you then  
10 tell us when was the last time we did non-court  
11 ordered mid decade redistricting in the state?

12 SENATOR HISE: And I yield. 2024 there  
13 was no court order for us to redraw the maps.  
14 The maps that the courts had ordered expired  
15 after two years in that process, but there was  
16 no direct order from the court for us to draw  
17 those maps. 2023, I think it was, for 2024.

18 SENATOR CHAUDHURI: The 2024 maps  
19 you're saying were not court ordered?

20 SENATOR HISE: That's correct. The  
21 courts put in their own maps for two years and  
22 that injunction ended following that election,  
23 and we made the choice to draw districts at that  
24 point without being specifically ordered by the  
25 courts to do so.

1           PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Chaudhuri, do  
2     you have another question?

3           SENATOR CHAUDHURI: Yes.

4           PRESIDENT HUNT: Do you yield,  
5     Senator Hise?

6           SENATOR HISE: Yes.

7           PRESIDENT HUNT: He yields.

8           SENATOR CHAUDHURI: Thank you,  
9     Madam President.

10           I mean, regardless, the 2024 maps were  
11     the result of an injunction expiring which were  
12     still the result of a court order, I would  
13     argue.

14           But as a follow-up question,  
15     Senator Hise, why did you choose to draw this  
16     particular map?

17           SENATOR HISE: I think I've been clear  
18     every time I've stated this. We took this map  
19     to draw one additional congressional  
20     representative that would be a Republican to  
21     represent North Carolina in congress.

22           SENATOR CHAUDHURI: Follow-up,  
23     Madam President.

24           PRESIDENT HUNT: Do you yield?

25           SENATOR HISE: I yield.

1 PRESIDENT HUNT: He yields.

2 SENATOR CHAUDHURI: And so obviously,  
3 given the ruling by the United States Supreme  
4 Court, I mean, this map was drawn to pick up one  
5 additional Republican congressional seat,  
6 correct?

7 SENATOR HISE: The Supreme Court  
8 rulings of both the federal and state I think  
9 have been clear, that redistricting is a  
10 political process done by the state  
11 legislatures, and part of that political process  
12 we have taken that opportunity.

13 SENATOR CHAUDHURI: Follow-up,  
14 Madam President.

15 PRESIDENT HUNT: Do you yield?

16 SENATOR HISE: I yield.

17 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Hise yields.

18 SENATOR CHAUDHURI: So given -- I mean,  
19 given the political gain for an additional  
20 congressional Republican seat, I'm curious as to  
21 why you didn't draw a map that had 12  
22 Republicans and 2 Democrats.

23 SENATOR HISE: In we have things that  
24 we call traditional redistricting principles  
25 which requires districts to be contiguous with

1 each other, to create districts that are of  
2 equal population and those type of things, and I  
3 believe that those specific requirements and  
4 others has placed this map at the level at which  
5 I think we can still maintain those traditional  
6 redistricting principles.

7 SENATOR CHAUDHURI: Follow-up,  
8 Madam President.

9 PRESIDENT HUNT: Do you yield,  
10 Senator Hise?

11 SENATOR HISE: I yield.

12 PRESIDENT HUNT: He yields.

13 SENATOR CHAUDHURI: I'm curious why you  
14 didn't draw a congressional map with 13  
15 Republicans and 1 Democrat.

16 SENATOR HISE: Same answer.

17 SENATOR CHAUDHURI: Same answer.  
18 Follow-up, Madam President.

19 PRESIDENT HUNT: Do you yield,  
20 Senator Hise?

21 SENATOR HISE: I yield.

22 PRESIDENT HUNT: He yields.

23 SENATOR CHAUDHURI: Senator Hise, I  
24 believe in 2023 you introduced a map with 11  
25 Democrats and 3 Republicans. I'm kind of

1 testing your memory, but you're pretty good at  
2 redrawing maps here. So why did you not  
3 consider that map at this time? That was  
4 Senate Bill 756.

5 SENATOR HISE: The ability to draw this  
6 map had a disruption of only two congressional  
7 districts which, as I stated earlier, leaves 12  
8 congressional districts unchanged across the  
9 state so that we could do it with minimal  
10 impact.

11 SENATOR CHAUDHURI: Thank you.

12 Follow-up, Madam President.

13 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Hise, do you  
14 yield?

15 SENATOR HISE: I yield.

16 PRESIDENT HUNT: He yields.

17 SENATOR CHAUDHURI: Just a couple more  
18 questions, Senator Hise. I appreciate it.

19 Why did the -- why did the committee  
20 draw Congressman Davis out of his district?

21 SENATOR HISE: I believe congressman --  
22 first of all, in North Carolina, we have no  
23 requirement that any member of congress live in  
24 any particular district within the state.

25 Clearly, Congressman Davis is still



1 residing in North Carolina, still resides in a  
2 congressional district and is free to run for  
3 any of those districts.

4 SENATOR CHAUDHURI: Thank you.

5 Two more follow-ups, Madam President.

6 PRESIDENT HUNT: Do you yield for two  
7 more, Senator Hise?

8 SENATOR HISE: Yes.

9 PRESIDENT HUNT: He yields.

10 SENATOR CHAUDHURI: Thank you,  
11 Senator Hise.

12 Senator Hise, these maps, as we know,  
13 were posted on the legislative website on  
14 Thursday. Did you share this map with anyone in  
15 the congressional delegation, in particular  
16 Congressman Davis or Congressman Murphy?

17 SENATOR HISE: To my knowledge, these  
18 maps, other than when they were made public,  
19 have not been shared with any member of congress  
20 or their staff individually.

21 SENATOR CHAUDHURI: Thank you,  
22 Senator Hise.

23 Madam President, I would speak to the  
24 bill.

25 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor to

1 speak to the bill.

2 SENATOR CHAUDHURI: Madam President,  
3 I'm looking -- I'm looking at this  
4 congressional -- current congressional map, and  
5 I'm reminded of what District 1 in northeastern  
6 part of our state known as the Black Belt  
7 represents. And for more than three decades,  
8 District 1 has represented some of the largest  
9 majority black counties and rural counties.

10 For three decades, this district has  
11 elected trailblazers like Eva Clayton, the first  
12 African American to represent our state in the  
13 United States House of Representatives since  
14 1899 and would go on to represent the  
15 United Nations in Rome.

16 It is the district that represented  
17 Congressman GK Butterfield, the distinguished  
18 civil rights lawyer, a member of the state  
19 Supreme Court who would go on to chair the  
20 Congressional Black Caucus.

21 And today, without any transparency to  
22 drawing maps, with the stroke of a computer key  
23 or two, with this vote today, the Republican  
24 majority will carve up northeastern  
25 North Carolina into two districts and erase the

1 common bonds of history and hope.

2 Today, Republicans will vote to erase  
3 Congressman Don Davis's district, a fifth  
4 generation North Carolinian, a Presbyterian  
5 minister, an Air Force Academy graduate, a  
6 former colleague of ours, and a Democrat with  
7 the most conservative voting record among his  
8 Democrats.

9 Most of you know, Congressman Davis  
10 because you served with him, and you know that  
11 he embodies and reflects eastern North Carolina  
12 conservatism, and he embodies the history and  
13 hope of that congressional district.

14 But today, you'd rather erase the  
15 congressional district of history and hope  
16 because your party hasn't beaten Don Davis in  
17 two election cycles. And so rather than -- so  
18 rather, you draw Republican congressional  
19 district. You'd rather steal one more district  
20 for Republicans in Washington, DC. You've  
21 decided to erase and silence the voices of  
22 hundreds of thousands of black voters in  
23 northeastern North Carolina to satisfy the  
24 request of one Donald Trump.

25 Redrawing this map is like winning --

1 it's like the winning football team deciding in  
2 the second half of the game that it's going to  
3 change the rules again so it can guarantee and  
4 do everything it can not just to win the game  
5 but to run up the score as high as possible.  
6 And for anybody who coaches, we know that's  
7 something that we don't teach our children.

8 This map represents the highest and  
9 most egregious form of unadulterated and  
10 unfettered partisan power grab that I've  
11 witnessed in my nine years serving in the  
12 senate. It's the most egregious because we're  
13 not here drawing maps because of a court order,  
14 we're not here because of the census, we're here  
15 because Donald Trump directed our legislative  
16 leaders to redraw the map.

17 Our legislative leaders decided to  
18 retaliate against the voters of Congressional  
19 District 1 who expressed their political will at  
20 the ballot box during the 2024 election to make  
21 sure they can't make that same choice again.

22 And today, I challenge each and every  
23 one of us to exercise the oath we took, the oath  
24 we took not to Donald Trump but to the  
25 constitution.

1           In 2020, when Donald Trump asked  
2       Georgia legislative leaders to go find him  
3       12,000 votes to overturn the election, they  
4       refused.

5           In 2020, when Donald Trump asked  
6       Republican Michigan legislative leaders to  
7       overturn the elections and name Michigan  
8       electors for Trump, they refused.

9           Will you exercise your oath to Donald  
10      Trump or the constitution like these brave and  
11      courageous leaders in Georgia and Michigan?

12          So let me conclude by saying this: Our  
13      constitution says We the People. The  
14      Gettysburg Address concluded by saying  
15      Government of the people, by the people, for the  
16      people.

17          James Madison wrote that the power in  
18      the people of the -- James Madison wrote that  
19      the power is in the people over the government  
20      and not in the government over the people.

21          Free and fair elections at regular  
22      intervals is a key principle to our democracy.  
23      Today's redrawing of congressional districts  
24      make these congressional elections meaningless  
25      because you've rigged the outcome, and in the

1 process, you haven't given power to the people  
2 over the government, you've given Donald Trump  
3 power over the people. I urge you to vote  
4 against these maps.

5 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Lowe is noted  
6 to be in the chamber.

7 Senator Waddell, for what purpose do  
8 you rise?

9 SENATOR WADDELL: Thank you very much.  
10 To debate the bill.

11 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor to  
12 debate the bill.

13 SENATOR WADDELL: You know, we know a  
14 lot about redistricting, and we also know that  
15 redistricting can be abused. You know there's a  
16 name for that: Gerrymandering. That is why  
17 many states use clear criteria, like equal  
18 population, compactness, respect for communities  
19 of interest, transparency, and a robust public  
20 input to keep the process fair, yet here today,  
21 the majority leadership is redistricting while  
22 failing to pass a state budget. We need to be  
23 thinking more about that budget than  
24 redistricting.

25 That choice has real world

1 consequences, and I'll tell you why. State  
2 employees are left without clarity on pay  
3 raises. Teachers just don't know what to do.  
4 They're waiting for us, and here we are doing  
5 something else. And cost-of-living adjustment,  
6 agencies cannot fill vacancies or plan training.  
7 Schools and universities face hiring and program  
8 uncertainty. And health and human services  
9 partners are forced to pause urgently needed  
10 services, while politics leap to the front of  
11 the line. And you know something else, when  
12 that happens, the budget is left behind.

13 Public servants and the communities  
14 they serve pay the price. So every ten years we  
15 redraw the lines that determine who speaks for  
16 us in congress in our state. At its best,  
17 redistricting is a civic tune-up, an opportunity  
18 to align representation where people actually  
19 live, where they work, and, of course, you know,  
20 where they raise their families.

21 But, you know, sometimes we see it at  
22 its worst. And at its worst, it becomes an  
23 exercise in raw power. That's not what we want.  
24 We're in this state, we're better than that.  
25 When it becomes raw power, where one party uses

1 sophisticated software to lock in advantages and  
2 lock out voters, we don't want to lock out  
3 voters. We need voters, and they expect us to  
4 be fair.

5 That process and that practice, what it  
6 does, it flips the promise of democracy on its  
7 head in a healthy system. Voters choose their  
8 representatives. On the gerrymandering,  
9 representatives choose their voters.

10 And you know something else that  
11 gerrymandering does, it dilutes the weight of  
12 our votes. It fuels polarization and gridlock.  
13 It diminishes the ability of historically  
14 underrepresented communities to elect candidates  
15 of their choice.

16 And we say we are country, we're  
17 legislating of the people, for the people, and  
18 by the people. We must show that in practice.

19 So if gerrymandering is the misuse of  
20 redistricting, how can we use redistricting and  
21 make it a good thing? We can. The answer is  
22 simple: If we want to make it a good thing, set  
23 fair rules, use an open process, and hold  
24 ourselves measurable. And some of those  
25 standards that can be used to be measurable,



1 number one, clear, balanced criteria, a  
2 transparent process where everybody can  
3 participate, everybody, every adult, every voter  
4 needs to be able to participate.

5 Independent checks and expert tools,  
6 protection of communities of interest,  
7 structures that build stability and  
8 accountability.

9 Now, those are some principles.  
10 They're good ones. Why can't we follow them?

11 Redistricting becomes a tool for  
12 representation. It's not to be used any other  
13 way. Good maps, think about them. We need good  
14 maps.

15 So when we think about our outcomes, we  
16 think about the people and good governance,  
17 finishing the people's budget so state employees  
18 have the pay. They keep asking us. I get  
19 letters every day from state employees,  
20 educators, people who work in law enforcement.  
21 They want a budget. They want to know what  
22 their dollars are going to be, and here we are  
23 doing something else.

24 This is not a fantasy. It's standards  
25 we can set. We have the data, the technology,

1 and the public expects us to do the right thing.  
2 And so let's choose a path that invites more  
3 people in that reflects our communities of  
4 dignity and keeps faith and the simple promise  
5 at the heart of self government. And we believe  
6 and we know that every person counts and every  
7 vote should matter and every state employee  
8 deserves a budget that respects their service,  
9 their dignity, their worth.

10 So thank you so much for allowing me to  
11 share this with you.

12 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Smith, for  
13 what purpose do you rise?

14 SENATOR SMITH: I would like to debate  
15 this bill.

16 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor to  
17 debate the bill.

18 SENATOR SMITH: Thank you so much,  
19 Madam Chair.

20 I'm speaking today not just as a  
21 senator but as a black woman and as someone who  
22 represents communities that have far too long  
23 been targeted and harmed by those in power who  
24 fear the voices at the ballot box.

25 Everyone in this chamber knows that

1 this redistricting proposal is not just a map,  
2 it's a message, and that the message is loud  
3 center clear. It says we will divide your  
4 communities, we will dilute your voice, we will  
5 move the lines again and again however we see  
6 fit until your vote and your voice no longer  
7 matters.

8 This -- this is nothing new and to a  
9 degree it's not surprising. It's a continuation  
10 of a strategy we all know too well in  
11 North Carolina, one where power is preserved not  
12 by the will of the people but by the  
13 manipulation of our political maps by cynical,  
14 scared politicians.

15 So let's call this exactly what it is:  
16 This is an attack on black voters. Again, this  
17 is an attack on black voters, and it's one that  
18 goes back decades. Let's remember the record in  
19 the Gingles case in 1984. A federal court found  
20 that North Carolina had officially and  
21 effectively discriminated against black citizens  
22 in matters touching their exercises of the  
23 voting franchise. That was more than 40 years  
24 ago, and yet we're doing the same thing today.

25 In Holmes versus Moore just a few years

1     ago, our own court of appeals reminded us that  
2     state officials continued in their efforts to  
3     restrict or dilute African American voting  
4     strength well after 1980 and up to the present  
5     day.

6             The McCrory case in 2016 exposed  
7     exactly how far this body is willing to go to  
8     suppress the black vote by targeting us with  
9     what the court called surgical precision.

10            And now with these new maps in 2025,  
11    black voters are being targeted again. Counties  
12    in my region, Pitt, Beaufort, Edgecombe, are  
13    being sliced, swapped, and shuffled into two  
14    districts not because it serves the people but  
15    the party in power has decided that it serves  
16    them.

17            The goal here is to undermine the black  
18    electorate, silence rural black voices and  
19    secure seats not by merit but by manipulation.

20            This redistricting move is not about  
21    fairness, it's about fear, fear over the fact  
22    that black voters, working people and eastern  
23    North Carolinians had a voice to demand the  
24    change that we deserve. It's about stealing  
25    elections by design so that the outcomes are

1 predetermined and accountability becomes  
2 optional.

3 I represent people who work two or  
4 three jobs just to make ends meet, folks who are  
5 raising their children, caring for aging  
6 parents, and they still somehow find the time to  
7 vote despite the hurdles that are placed in  
8 their way. Nobody is asking for special  
9 treatment here. Well, I can't say nobody  
10 because we know with these maps who's asking for  
11 special treatment.

12 But what people are asking for is  
13 fairness. They want what the constitution  
14 guarantees, the right to speak their truth to  
15 power. They want what democracy demands, an  
16 equal opportunity to choose their leaders. They  
17 want what our ancestors bled for, a voice and a  
18 vote that counts.

19 So to those who drew this map, I ask  
20 you what are you afraid of? Are you afraid of  
21 more black voters at the polls? I'll answer it.  
22 Absolutely. Are you afraid of more justice and  
23 inclusive North Carolina? I'll answer that for  
24 you too. Absolutely. Are you afraid of voters  
25 who know and truly represent them and those who

1 don't? Because I'll tell you what I'm afraid  
2 of, I'm afraid of the ignorant complicity that  
3 seems to have infected this body and the  
4 willingness of my colleagues to give up any  
5 sense of a fight for what is good and what is  
6 right.

7           So today I speak not just for myself  
8 but for every voter who refuses to be ignored,  
9 every child who deserves to grow up in a  
10 democracy where their voice matters, and every  
11 community that is sick and tired of being used  
12 as a pawn in somebody else's power game. We see  
13 what you're doing, and we will not be silent.

14           And listening to my peer, Senator  
15 Chaudhuri, asking questions about why are we  
16 selecting Congressman Don Davis's seat. He  
17 served with many of you right here on this  
18 Senate floor, worked across aisles. This is  
19 amazing. I just want to know that my dear  
20 friend Congressman Don Davis, he is the first  
21 African American graduate of the US Air Force  
22 Academy in its history that's elected to  
23 congress. He is someone who served on this  
24 floor and fought with you. He is someone who  
25 worked across the aisles. He did not turn his

1 back, a lot of times frustrated others, but  
2 wanted to make sure he was working to serve all  
3 North Carolinians, and this is what we do. This  
4 is the thanks.

5 But I guess if I received a call from  
6 the people of the president or maybe the  
7 president himself, I guess if I wanted to be  
8 endorsed in an election, these are the type  
9 things that I would do. Sad to say the least,  
10 but again, we will not be silent. I urge to  
11 vote against this. Thank you.

12 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Mohammed, for  
13 what purpose do you rise?

14 SENATOR MOHAMMED: To speak on the  
15 bill, Madam President.

16 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor to  
17 speak on the bill.

18 SENATOR MOHAMMED: Thank you,  
19 Madam President.

20 Colleagues, I rise today on behalf of  
21 the people of Senate District 38, the fourth  
22 iteration of such a district since I've been in  
23 the North Carolina senate.

24 From this seat -- and the reason I  
25 bring this seat up is because this seat does not

1 belong to me. Your seat does not belong to you.  
2 It belongs to the people, and that's why I rise  
3 today. The people. And I rise today in the  
4 shadow of a dark, deliberate plot, a plot to  
5 strip black communities and working families  
6 across North Carolina of their right to choose  
7 their own representatives without interference,  
8 intimidation, or deceit.

9 This new congressional map does not  
10 protect our voices. It predetermines an  
11 election outcome. It rigs the outcomes before  
12 the first ballot is even cast and then dares to  
13 call that democracy.

14 For more than a decade, our neighbors  
15 in the east have been pushed to the margins,  
16 forced to live under maps drawn to dilute their  
17 voices and divide their strength.

18 You dared them to vote against you  
19 before when you created a 10/4 map, and  
20 now -- and now you've effectively silenced their  
21 vote altogether with this new shameful  
22 gerrymander. This assembly has become a  
23 machine, not of representation but of control, a  
24 regime of suppression disguised as governance.  
25 And the shameful part is -- the shameful part is



1 you're not even hiding it any more.

2 First, you dismantle public financing  
3 of judicial elections in our state, then you  
4 made judicial races partisan, then you  
5 eliminated district court and superior court  
6 judges that you didn't like, then you crafted a  
7 racist voter ID law so discriminatory that the  
8 federal courts stepped in and said again that  
9 you targeted African Americans with surgical  
10 precision.

11 You -- you did this. You even tried to  
12 stop Souls to the Polls because you couldn't  
13 stand that black North Carolinians exercised  
14 their faith and their freedom on the same day.

15 When that wasn't enough, you ban  
16 out-of-precinct ballots, you force the state's  
17 attorney general to defend your schemes. Now  
18 you hand control of the county board of  
19 elections and tell them to determine what's  
20 going to happen on Sunday voting and pretend  
21 that it's local control. Now anyone can  
22 challenge a neighbor's ballot pretending it's  
23 integrity. Now you've eliminated a once  
24 bipartisan grace period for mail-in absentee  
25 ballots even though you know nothing is

1 delivered by mail on time.

2 You turned a once independently drawn  
3 congressional map 7/7 that fairly represented  
4 all North Carolinians into the current  
5 gerrymandered 10/4 map, silencing and silencing  
6 communities across this state, and still -- and  
7 still that wasn't enough. That wasn't enough.

8 Now you schemed an 11th seat out of a  
9 14 congressional seat delegation just to give  
10 President Trump an extra -- an extra yes man.

11 Let's not pretend this is about policy.  
12 If it were, you would make your case to the  
13 people of North Carolina on the issues that  
14 matter to them, on the merits through honest  
15 debate, but when you can't win on the issues,  
16 when you can't win on the merits, you have to  
17 cheat because this isn't about policy, this is  
18 about power, pure, unrestrained power.

19 Who does this rigged map really  
20 represent? Not the first year teacher eager to  
21 shape young minds in our great state while  
22 struggling to pay rent; not the thousands of  
23 North Carolinians who are on the verge of losing  
24 their access to healthcare because of the  
25 reckless decisions made in Washington and this

1 General Assembly's failure to ensure that access  
2 to care should never be a privilege for the few  
3 but a promise to every single citizen in our  
4 state; not our neighbor driving hours just to  
5 get to work or see a doctor; not the working  
6 families being priced out of their very own  
7 neighborhoods by investors from Texas and  
8 California and New York; and certainly -- and  
9 certainly not the young people working towards  
10 the American dream because this map doesn't  
11 build that dream at all, it buries it. It  
12 buries it. It keeps home ownership a privilege  
13 for the few, another broken promise for the  
14 many. Because those are the real life and  
15 direct consequences of the map before you, a  
16 rigged and gerrymandered map.

17           You brag about North Carolina winning,  
18 but you're deciding who's allowed to win.  
19 You're turning elections into coronations. With  
20 this map, you've already declared victory,  
21 victory for corruption, victory for Donald Trump  
22 and for special interest, not your constituents.

23           But once again, with another rigged  
24 map, this is a crushing defeat for  
25 North Carolinians, our fellow Americans, and,

1 most importantly, self determination.

2 In this moment, in this moment with the  
3 disastrous policies coming out of Washington,  
4 when our nation cries out for examples of  
5 integrity and courage, North Carolina could have  
6 led. We could have chosen transparency, public  
7 hearings across this great state, fair maps,  
8 fair maps drawn in daylight. We could have  
9 listened to millions whose voices now will be  
10 erased.

11 Instead, you chose obedience, obedience  
12 to the president who withheld flood relief; who  
13 stalled funds for education and special needs  
14 for our children; who turned his back on small  
15 businesses, farmers and families still  
16 rebuilding after Hurricane Helene and Tropical  
17 Storm Chantal.

18 And now you reward that neglect with an  
19 extra congressional seat for him, for just  
20 another politician to join the ranks of  
21 spineless politicians in Washington and congress  
22 who have made daily life unbearable for American  
23 small businesses, for family farms and too many  
24 working families and students.

25 With that said, Madam President, I

1 would like to send forth an amendment.

2 PRESIDENT HUNT: Send forth your  
3 amendment.

4 Which amendment, Senator Mohammed?

5 SENATOR MOHAMMED: Madam President, it  
6 would be S 249 ACH 21, Version 5.

7 PRESIDENT HUNT: The clerk will read.

8 THE CLERK: Senator Mohammed moves to  
9 amend the bill.

10 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Mohammed is  
11 recognized to explain the amendment.

12 SENATOR MOHAMMED: Thank you,  
13 Madam President.

14 Colleagues, if you're rethinking what  
15 it means to sit in your seat and you truly want  
16 to be a champion of the people and live by the  
17 principles and the values that you should and  
18 truly represent the people that sent you to sit  
19 in this seat -- and you have a real chance  
20 before you right now -- you can vote on an  
21 independent map that was drawn not by  
22 politicians but a special master that truly  
23 creates competitive races, creates balance and  
24 represents our state fairly by creating, once  
25 again, a 7/7 map for the state of

1 North Carolina. I ask for your support.

2 PRESIDENT HUNT: Is there discussion or  
3 debate on Amendment Number 1?

4 Senator Hise, for what purpose do you  
5 rise?

6 SENATOR HISE: To move that Amendment 1  
7 do lie upon the table.

8 SENATOR DANIEL: Second.

9 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Hise moves  
10 that Amendment Number 1 do lay upon the table,  
11 seconded by Senator Daniel.

12 This is a non-debatable motion. The  
13 question before the body is the motion to lay  
14 Amendment Number 1 to Senate Bill 249 on the  
15 table. All in favor will vote aye, all opposed  
16 will vote no. Five seconds will be allowed for  
17 voting, and the clerk will record the vote.

18 26 having voted in the affirmative, 20  
19 in the negative, Amendment Number 1 will lay  
20 upon the table and we're back on the bill.

21 Senator Mohammed, for what purpose do  
22 you rise?

23 SENATOR MOHAMMED: Madam President, I  
24 send forth a second amendment. This is S 249  
25 AST 35, Version 3.

1 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator  
2 Mohammed -- I'm sorry. The clerk will read.

3 THE CLERK: Senator Mohammed moves to  
4 amend the bill.

5 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Mohammed is  
6 recognized to explain the amendment.

7 SENATOR MOHAMMED: Thank you,  
8 Madam President.

9 With this amendment, maybe we can have  
10 nonpartisan judges. Maybe judges that can  
11 actually make genuine decisions --

12 SENATOR HISE: Point of order.

13 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Hise, state  
14 your point of order.

15 SENATOR HISE: Madam Chairman, the  
16 adjournment resolution that we passed I believe  
17 was Senate Joint Resolution 772 which lays out  
18 the matters which can be considered during this  
19 session. It only includes matters related to  
20 the maps or to redistricting, and this issue  
21 would not be allowed, and I would ask therefore  
22 that it be ruled out of order.

23 SENATOR MOHAMMED: Madam President, if  
24 I may speak to --

25 PRESIDENT HUNT: We're going to stand

1 at ease for one minute.

2 (At ease.)

3 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Hise, please  
4 approach the dais.

5 (At ease.)

6 PRESIDENT HUNT: I find the amendment  
7 eligible.

8 Senator Hise, for what purpose do you  
9 rise?

10 SENATOR HISE: Madam chairman, I rise  
11 to appeal the decision of the chair.

12 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Daniel, for  
13 what purpose do you rise?

14 SENATOR DANIEL: Madam President, to  
15 address the appeal.

16 My reading of the adjournment  
17 resolution is that the items that are eligible  
18 would not include this amendment, and therefore  
19 I rule it out of order.

20 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Mohammed, for  
21 what purpose do you rise?

22 SENATOR MOHAMMED: Madam President, if  
23 you look at our amendment, the statute  
24 is -- it's clearly relevant to what the rules  
25 are. The statute literally that this amendment



1 applies to -- again, Senator Hise, if I may  
2 explain what the amendment was going to do --

3 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Mohammed,  
4 we're past that. So do you want to appeal the  
5 rule -- the rules chair's decision?

6 SENATOR MOHAMMED: Yes,  
7 Madam President, but I need to provide an  
8 explanation so folks understand why I'm  
9 saying -- this is about the three judge panels  
10 that are appointed by the General Assembly only  
11 who sit on the panels that directly impact  
12 redistricting.

13 The statute is clearly outlined  
14 1-261 -- 267.1, it's literally titled  
15 Three-Judge Panel for Action Challenging Plans  
16 Apportions or Redistricting State Legislative or  
17 Congressional Districts. I don't know how much  
18 more relevant it can be to what we're discussing  
19 here today.

20 PRESIDENT HUNT: So we will now have a  
21 vote on the -- on Senator Mohammed's appeal of a  
22 rules chair decision.

23 All in favor will vote aye, all opposed  
24 will vote no. Five seconds will be allowed for  
25 voting.

1 SENATOR BERGER: Madam President.

2 PRESIDENT HUNT: Yes.

3 SENATOR BERGER: Point of inquiry.

4 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Berger.

5 SENATOR BERGER: Is an aye vote to  
6 sustain the rules chair's ruling, or is a no  
7 vote to sustain the rules chair's ruling?

8 PRESIDENT HUNT: The question before  
9 the Senate is a motion to sustain the ruling of  
10 the rules chair. That's exactly -- so if you're  
11 voting aye, you're voting to sustain the motion  
12 of the rules chair, the ruling of the rules  
13 chair, Senator Daniel.

14 So all in favor will vote aye, all  
15 opposed will vote no. Five seconds will be  
16 allowed for voting, and the clerk will record  
17 the vote.

18 26 having voted in the affirmative, 20  
19 in the negative, the ruling by the rules chair  
20 stands. We're back on the vote -- on the bill.

21 Senator Mohammed, for what purpose do  
22 you rise?

23 SENATOR MOHAMMED: Madam President, I  
24 send forth an amendment, S 249 AST 34,  
25 Version 3.

1 PRESIDENT HUNT: The clerk will read.

2 THE CLERK: Senator Mohammed moves to  
3 amend the bill.

4 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Mohammed is  
5 recognized to explain the amendment.

6 SENATOR MOHAMMED: Thank you,  
7 Madam President.

8 And for Senator Hise, this is  
9 absolutely relevant to the bill. This is simply  
10 about giving notice to the congressional voters  
11 in these districts that their district  
12 representation lines are about to change, or the  
13 district numbers. I would think at bare minimum  
14 this body would want to provide notice from the  
15 state board of elections to people who are going  
16 to be directly impacted by these new maps. I'd  
17 appreciate your support.

18 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Hise, for what  
19 purpose do you rise?

20 SENATOR HISE: Move that Amendment 3 do  
21 lie upon the table.

22 SENATOR DANIEL: Second.

23 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Hise moves  
24 that Amendment Number 3 do lay upon the table,  
25 seconded by Senator Daniel. This is a

1 non-debatable motion.

2 The question before the body is the  
3 motion to lay Amendment Number 3 to  
4 Senate Bill 249 on the table.

5 All in favor will vote aye, all opposed  
6 will vote no. Five seconds will be allowed for  
7 voting, and the clerk will record the vote.

8 26 having voted in the affirmative, 20  
9 in the negative, Amendment Number 3 will lay  
10 upon the table and we are back on the bill.

11 Senator Blue, for what purpose do you  
12 rise?

13 SENATOR MOHAMMED: Madam President.

14 Thank you, Senator Blue.

15 Madam President, I'd like to speak on  
16 the bill.

17 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Mohammed, you  
18 have the floor to speak on the bill.

19 SENATOR MOHAMMED: Thank you,  
20 Madam President.

21 Well, here we are. We had an  
22 opportunity to make some changes and provide  
23 fair representation to the people of  
24 North Carolina, and this body chose not to do  
25 that.

1           So I want to make it clear, you can  
2 gerrymander a map, but you cannot gerrymander  
3 morality. You cannot draw crooked lines but  
4 cannot -- but you cannot draw straight with a  
5 crooked heart. You will ram through this  
6 illegitimate map today and feel like you've won  
7 with your vote today, but don't make that  
8 mistake for righteousness. Because one day,  
9 long after the votes are counted and the press  
10 releases are written, we will all have to answer  
11 for what we did with the power that the people  
12 gave us. And when that day comes, when each of  
13 us has to stand before our creator and explain  
14 what did we do with that power, how will you  
15 explain this? How will you explain that when  
16 you had the chance to strengthen democracy, you  
17 chose to weaken it, that when you could have  
18 drawn fair lines, you drew walls, that when you  
19 could have been a voice for the people, you  
20 betrayed their trust.

21           Because leadership is not about  
22 victory, it's about being a good steward. It's  
23 about protecting what is sacred, the people's  
24 trust, the people's voice, and the people's  
25 faith in government.

1           And today you are breaking that trust.  
2           You are betraying that voice. You can pass this  
3           rigged map, but you cannot escape  
4           accountability. You can ignore the cries of  
5           your constituents, but you cannot escape your  
6           conscience. And you can silence the people for  
7           a time, for a time, but you cannot silence the  
8           truth. The truth will find its way to the  
9           ballot box, to our courthouses, to our  
10          classrooms, to the pulpitis and to the streets  
11          in North Carolina because the people of  
12          North Carolina will not forget who stood up for  
13          them today and who stood in their way.

14                 That's because people like me and many  
15          of us still believe in this state. I still  
16          believe that good people, even though sitting  
17          here today, can choose a better path. I still  
18          believe that in the face of impossible odds,  
19          people who love this country like I do can  
20          change it for the better. And I know this much,  
21          that the truth will outlast your maps. The  
22          truth always does.

23                 So to the people -- so to the people of  
24          North Carolina and Americans across this  
25          country, to the people that are in this gallery

1 today, to the people that are watching on your  
2 television or listening in, to the people  
3 shaking their heads and wondering does anybody  
4 still fight for us, hear me now: Do not lose  
5 heart. Do not lose faith. The power is still  
6 yours even when the corrupt try to take it away.  
7 They can gerrymander representation, but they  
8 cannot gerrymander the truth. They can bend the  
9 lines, but they cannot bend the will of you the  
10 people.

11 Together -- together we will right this  
12 wrong, and when we do, the people will say loud  
13 and clearly not in our state, not in our name,  
14 and together we will rise for the people, for  
15 truth, and for the future we promised our  
16 children. I urge you to vote against this map.

17 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Blue, for what  
18 purpose do you rise?

19 SENATOR BLUE: To debate the bill.

20 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor to  
21 debate the bill.

22 SENATOR BLUE: Thank you very much,  
23 Madam President.

24 I just want to make a couple of quick  
25 observations. I'm not going to delay a long

1 time, but as I hear the debate and also as I  
2 consider what we're doing, I'll share two quick  
3 things with you.

4 Number one, I've been studying  
5 redistricting since my first year in law school  
6 half a century ago, and I've never seen -- and  
7 studied it consistently, participated in it, in  
8 the cases as well as drawing maps for that for  
9 40 years, and I've never seen anything  
10 like -- not necessarily like this particular  
11 thing in our legislature today, but what's  
12 happening around the country with redistricting.

13 I think all of us will admit that it's  
14 something that has a deleterious effect on this  
15 thing we call democracy. And I mention that  
16 because next year we celebrate 250 years of the  
17 idea that brought this country into existence.  
18 250 years of honoring a constitution. 250 years  
19 of being wedded to concepts of fairness and  
20 trying to live out what the Declaration of  
21 Independence but more importantly the  
22 United States Constitution laid forth in a way  
23 that no nation had ever laid it forth before.

24 Now, in the 1990s, I took a strange  
25 position. I embraced the concept of states'



1 rights. Emerging from the civil rights era, it  
2 was strange for a black person to take that  
3 position because states' rights was the motto  
4 that was used in so much of the negative stuff  
5 in the '40s, '50s, and '60s, but I embraced that  
6 along with legislators from across the  
7 United States, Democrat and Republican, because  
8 we saw an infringement coming from Washington on  
9 what states could do and what they should do.

10 And as a result of us embracing that,  
11 we changed the laws of this country in the  
12 supreme court and in the congress so that they  
13 stopped overreaching, stopped -- that is, the  
14 national government -- stop trying to preempt  
15 what states could do. We changed the taxes so  
16 that states could collect their fair share of  
17 what was beginning to be a great source of  
18 revenue as people were beginning to do digital  
19 trade.

20 So we made a difference. So that  
21 experience made me even more convinced that this  
22 rare little thing as a last amendment in the  
23 Bill of Rights, the Tenth Amendment to the  
24 United States Constitution which was enacted as  
25 a condition to have this government created in

1 the 1780s.

2 Now, fast forward a little bit, and I  
3 had the privilege of representing all 99  
4 legislative bodies in the United States as well  
5 as those from the territories around this world  
6 as we visited countries, democracies, some not  
7 democracies, trying to point out what the value  
8 of the Tenth Amendment is and why America is so  
9 different than other democracies.

10 You know, we met with people in Italy.  
11 They wanted to know how we could have the  
12 independence that we have, the Tenth Amendment  
13 because we're not just an offshoot of the  
14 federal government. We don't do what congress  
15 tells us to do in 90 percent of the cases  
16 because the Tenth Amendment reserves the right  
17 to do things regarding those to the states.

18 And so it's in that context that I  
19 think we ought to look at what we're doing now.  
20 Because after traveling well over 30 countries,  
21 talking about the rarity and the magic of this  
22 thing called states' rights, giving states the  
23 ability to tell the national government to go  
24 pound sand in so many instances, I then look up  
25 and see exactly what we're doing here, and I'm

1 just trying to figure out why.

2 Because if we look at our -- at our  
3 journey through the last 250 years, so many of  
4 the major battles have been fought in state  
5 legislatures, like the outcome or not, but what  
6 we have here and the reason that we are debating  
7 this bill is because now we're basically giving  
8 all of our power not just -- not just to the  
9 national congress, they have basically decided  
10 that they aren't going to exercise their power.  
11 It's all about checks and balances and us  
12 thinking about what best benefits the people  
13 that we represent as a state. How do we  
14 determine that what we're doing here today  
15 benefits North Carolinians?

16 What surprises me is that so many  
17 really want to take on what all the consequences  
18 are for what these characters are doing in  
19 Washington, whether we really want to take full  
20 credit, as apparently some people in here do, of  
21 the big whatever kind of bill it is that's going  
22 to take insurance coverage away from over a  
23 million North Carolinians, a bill that is going  
24 to help drive up the cost of things to  
25 North Carolinians.

1           Why do you want to accept full credit  
2     for that which is going to be in full bloom next  
3     election? Right now you can stand on the  
4     sideline and say we didn't do it, those guys in  
5     Washington did it. Tell me why you want to take  
6     ownership of what everybody sees coming down the  
7     road, when people understand why their grocery  
8     prices are going up, why all of these other  
9     things -- why their hospitals, many of them are  
10    going to be closing, why they're going to be  
11    losing medical assistance.

12           Heretofore, you could argue that was  
13    those people who just didn't have foresight to  
14    know what's going to happen. All we got to do  
15    is watch the markets, watch what's happening  
16    with the economy.

17           And as we spring the celebration in  
18    July at the 250th anniversary and you look at  
19    your constituents, they're going to give you  
20    some of the credit for what they're experiencing  
21    rather than just blaming the folk in Washington.  
22    And that's why I'm so confused as to why you  
23    would embrace this for an additional  
24    congressperson that's probably going to be all  
25    set.

1           You know, I look at the districts and  
2           the makeup of the districts. A 55 percent,  
3           56 percent district in a tough election and one  
4           that is a change election is not safe whether  
5           it's a 50 percent, 55 percent district in  
6           North Carolina for the legislature or whether  
7           it's a 55 percent for the congressperson that  
8           you are trying to create through this.

9           So maybe I'm just stupid or ignorant or  
10          something like that, but I'm just trying to  
11          figure out why you're doing this in light of the  
12          kind of analysis that we have the power to do  
13          under the Tenth Amendment.

14          We don't bow to kings or wannabe kings.  
15          We don't bow to presidents or wannabe presidents  
16          just because they say do something. And I'm not  
17          saying that's what happened. I just read the  
18          press, but if that's the case, we still owe our  
19          citizens a duty to weigh what this benefits  
20          them.

21          And that's the beauty of the ten  
22          amendments that gave us this country, and I want  
23          you to think about it in that broader context.  
24          All of these other issues that are raised,  
25          nothing you can do about it because the courts

1 have totally moved away from precedent and  
2 everything else. If they really were  
3 originalists, they would understand the  
4 environment in which these amendments were  
5 passed, they would understand the reason these  
6 amendments were passed because they were trying  
7 to get as far away from King George III as they  
8 possibly could.

9 They wanted states and localities to  
10 have the independent ability to make these  
11 decisions. That's why I like celebrating the  
12 Tenth Amendment, that's why I believe in states'  
13 rights, and that's why I traveled around the  
14 world convincing other democracies how we were  
15 different. We don't have to rely on the federal  
16 government to tell us all of the revenue we get.  
17 We're not just their substations.

18 And if you look at it closely and put  
19 it in context, that is what the real debate is,  
20 whether we believe in the Tenth Amendment. As  
21 citizens and representatives in this legislative  
22 body, do we believe that we owe an obligation  
23 and a duty to our people to be independent of  
24 the federal government when we need to be in  
25 their behalf. Thank you.

1           PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Bradley, for  
2 what purpose do you rise?

3           SENATOR BRADLEY: To speak to the bill.

4           PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor to  
5 speak to the bill.

6           SENATOR BRADLEY: Today we're faced  
7 with a decision, and that decision is not which  
8 party we're going to side with. It's whether or  
9 not we're going to side with democracy. We can  
10 either stand up for the people of North Carolina  
11 and their right to have representation that  
12 actually represents them or we can strip them of  
13 that representation to cater to the whims of one  
14 man.

15           Now, that decision should be an obvious  
16 one, but the fact that we're here today with a  
17 rigged map proves otherwise.

18           In a true democracy, good ideas should  
19 be able to stand on their own. And if someone's  
20 ideas are supposedly so great, so wonderful and  
21 so popular, there shouldn't be any need to  
22 cheat, nor steal in order for that person and  
23 those ideas to come out on top. Confident  
24 leaders who are truly working to address the  
25 needs of their communities would not be scared

1 to lose in a fair competition.

2 And above all of that, attempting to  
3 pass this rigged map is profoundly un-American.  
4 This isn't about Republican versus Democrat.  
5 This is about whether we still respect the  
6 principles that our nation was built upon:  
7 Democracy, representation, justice, the power of  
8 the people, We the People.

9 I for one love this country. I love  
10 this state, and that is exactly why I will be  
11 voting against this rigged map. I strongly urge  
12 you to do the same. Thank you.

13 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Murdock, for  
14 what purpose do you rise?

15 SENATOR MURDOCK: To speak on the bill.

16 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor to  
17 speak on the bill.

18 SENATOR MURDOCK: One of the perpetual  
19 black eyes of North Carolina is our history of  
20 racial gerrymandering and targeting black voters  
21 with surgical precision. Our state constitution  
22 unfortunately still references a literacy test  
23 to vote.

24 We are here today because voter  
25 suppression is not as flagrant as it was in the



1 times of Jim Crow, as it was when my ancestors  
2 and many of you fought. The firehoses and  
3 attack dogs have been replaced with complex and  
4 oppressive laws making it harder to vote and  
5 harder for those votes to count even after they  
6 are cast. We now have to fight for those votes  
7 to count.

8 Election conspiracists and those  
9 supporting Donald Trump want a world where I  
10 don't belong. They push outrage culture to  
11 justify legal barriers to voting and actively  
12 eliminate access to economic opportunities to  
13 black and brown people. They are fighting to  
14 erase the stories of my ancestors, your  
15 ancestors and the blood they spilled from our  
16 freedom, from our classroom to legislative  
17 bodies.

18 We are the defenders of our democracy  
19 each and everyday. We will see the dreams and  
20 aspirations of the civil rights movement  
21 through. We will deliver a country better than  
22 the one we inherited because our ancestors all  
23 sacrificed. We have made a covenant with God to  
24 serve and be just and kind.

25 Civil rights is more than a series of

1 laws. It's a quality of life we deliver as  
2 leaders, neighbors and people of god.

3 The federal Voting Rights Act is barely  
4 hanging on by a thread. Gone are the days where  
5 our state cared about having representatives  
6 that look like them. That makes our democracy  
7 better.

8 My aunts and uncles who marched  
9 alongside the A&T Four and led the 1960  
10 Greensboro sit-ins are still marching to this  
11 day for our voting rights. It has been over  
12 60 years, and they are tired. I want to give  
13 them the ability to rest, to bask in knowing  
14 votes will count of their children and their  
15 grandchildren. They have passed the torch on to  
16 all of us.

17 For the past three years, I have  
18 traveled to Selma, Montgomery to honor the life  
19 and legacy of those freedom fighters that almost  
20 died on Bloody Sunday in 1965 for voting rights.  
21 We march arm in arm as we walk across the  
22 Edmund Pettus Bridge. John Lewis and others  
23 never would have imagined that we would still be  
24 fighting for the right for black votes to  
25 actually count.

1           John Lewis once said the vote is  
2 precious. It is the most powerful non-violent  
3 tool we have in a democratic society, and we  
4 must use it. Shame on us.

5           Congresswoman Eva Clayton was the first  
6 black woman elected to congress here in  
7 North Carolina. I can only begin to imagine the  
8 joy and pride she felt that the South, the home  
9 place of Jim Crow, was getting it right, finally  
10 getting it right when we made history by  
11 electing her in 1992.

12           And now in 2025, we are on the verge of  
13 subjecting the people of the first congressional  
14 district to having worse representation than  
15 they did in 1992. I am really sad that in her  
16 91 years she will see us roll backwards, going,  
17 yet again, in the wrong direction.

18           The truth is our democracy is fragile.  
19 It is founded and reestablished daily. We have  
20 to fight for it, and we will on today. That is  
21 why we are speaking out and will continue to do  
22 so. We know we won't win today's battle, but  
23 we're not going down without a fight. History  
24 will be kind to us, showing that the hundreds of  
25 people comments mattered, the hundreds of people

1 that showed up this morning, that dropped their  
2 lives to drive to Raleigh at the ninth hour.

3 They fought for democracy today, and it matters.

4 We must speak out today. The people of  
5 North Carolina's first district deserve that.

6 Just as those who marched in Selma dreamed of a  
7 better democracy as they were bleeding and  
8 running for their lives, being chased by dogs.

9 We will continue to dream for a better tomorrow.

10 People often forget Selma did not send  
11 with that Bloody Sunday when John Lewis almost  
12 died and went unconscious. On March 25, 1965,  
13 they were joined with 25,000 people and then  
14 marched all of them to Montgomery, to the  
15 capital, to continue to fight for voting rights.

16 So today is not the end, it is just the  
17 beginning. And we don't just have 25,000  
18 people, we have millions of voters that will  
19 keep fighting, keep pushing. Some of them are  
20 joining us here today.

21 So again, this is just the beginning.  
22 We will continue to stand up and fight because,  
23 as John Lewis said, the most valuable tool of  
24 our democracy is voting, and we will continue to  
25 fight, even putting our bodies on the line to

1 protect that sacred right. I urge you to vote  
2 against this bill.

3 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Chitlik, for  
4 what purpose do you rise?

5 SENATOR CHITLIK: To speak to the bill.

6 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor to  
7 speak to the bill.

8 SENATOR CHITLIK: Thank you.

9 Today when I was coming to work, I was  
10 saying goodbye to my son, who asked, why are you  
11 so fancy? I said, you know, I'm going to work.  
12 And he said why? You know, like just stay home  
13 with me. And I said, I'm sorry, I can't do  
14 that, but you know when we play Candy Land --  
15 he's four so he's like super excited to know how  
16 to play this game now -- you know there's a set  
17 of rules that we actually don't get to change.  
18 Yes, he said. And I'm going to work to remind  
19 some people about that because I'm afraid that  
20 they've forgotten.

21 Look, we're not playing Candy Land  
22 here. We're not even playing government. I  
23 don't really know what game we're playing, but I  
24 know our country has rules. It has rules  
25 because our founders suffered under a vicious

1 monarchy where one person and one person alone  
2 imposed his decisions on the masses.

3 Almost 250 years ago, we decided that  
4 that was not a good way to run a vibrant nation,  
5 that democracy was the way to have the most  
6 powerful and vibrant nation in the entire world.  
7 An elected despotism was not the government we  
8 fought for but one which should not only be  
9 founded on free principles but in which the  
10 powers of government should be so divided and  
11 balanced among several bodies.

12 That's not just my advice, it's Thomas  
13 Jefferson's. The president is asking state  
14 legislators to give him more seats in congress  
15 because he is scared that voters won't vote for  
16 his wildly unpopular agenda of low taxes for the  
17 rich and high prices and true sacrifice for  
18 literally everyone else, an agenda that  
19 disproportionately harms black people whose  
20 power that this map takes away.

21 By saying, okay, great, sure, actually,  
22 yes, volunteer us, please to that request, this  
23 body would be directly challenging the sacred  
24 American Creeds of separation of powers, of  
25 states' rights just like Senator Blue

1 brilliantly talked about, and of representative  
2 democracy.

3 So I'm genuinely asking today, does  
4 creating our fifth congressional map in six  
5 years at the request of a sitting president  
6 strengthen the principles that we were founded  
7 on or does it degrade them, does it degrade this  
8 very body? Is this aligned with our  
9 constitution and with our founding spirit or is  
10 it an affront to those things?

11 I wasn't in committee today, but I  
12 really wanted to ask what other parts of the  
13 North Carolina law and our American constitution  
14 are you willing to throw out when Donald Trump  
15 asks you to?

16 If he doesn't like the 2026 election  
17 results and he calls you to ask you to overturn  
18 them, just like he did in 2020 in Georgia -- so  
19 it's not that far-fetched, okay -- will you help  
20 him? If President Trump wants to change the  
21 constitution that we all have on our desk that's  
22 really sacred to us, that's gotten us here for  
23 250 years so that he can get a third term or a  
24 fourth term, are you going to ratify that? Is  
25 that okay, too? Is that on the table? What if

1 he agrees to, I don't know, endorse you in  
2 exchange for your help, or is this just the  
3 normal democratic process now?

4 Look, the GOP might be governed like a  
5 monarchy, but North Carolina is still a  
6 democracy, at least for now. Our founders  
7 believed in separation of powers. They believed  
8 in divided government. They believed in  
9 constitutional democracy, and they also believed  
10 in deliberation. That process got us  
11 here -- the process that got us here isn't just  
12 bad by 2025 standards, it's bad by 1775  
13 standards. That's really embarrassing. A bad  
14 process will get you a bad product every time.

15 Look, you and I both know that  
16 I -- that we as Democrats don't have a lot of  
17 power to stop these maps. That's actually why  
18 you put them in front of us, but what we do have  
19 and what I have is a deep and fundamental belief  
20 in our constitution and in the people of this  
21 state. I also believe in the rules. I don't  
22 let my four-year-old cheat at Candy Land, and I  
23 wish with all of my power that I could stop you  
24 from cheating by changing these maps in the  
25 middle of the game.



1 History will not judge favorably those  
2 who defy our founding principles by voting for  
3 these maps. You are bringing great shame to our  
4 republic and, frankly, to your children and  
5 grandchildren to whom you owe a more noble  
6 legacy than the desecration of our democracy and  
7 the idea that cheating is just fine.

8 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Everitt, for  
9 what purpose do you rise?

10 SENATOR EVERITT: To speak on the bill.

11 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor to  
12 speak on the bill.

13 SENATOR EVERITT: Thank you.

14 It is surreal to me that we are here  
15 having this debate about whether we want the  
16 republic to continue. And if you don't think  
17 that that is what this is about, you don't fully  
18 understand what you're about to vote on.

19 This map isn't about representation, it  
20 is about predetermination, drawing districts to  
21 guarantee outcomes and insulate those in power  
22 from accountability. We have redistricted  
23 before, but today we're told we must redistrict  
24 North Carolina to help Republicans secure  
25 congress and move President Trump's agenda

1 forward.

2 We are using state power to fix the  
3 result to protect the president. I still can't  
4 get my head around that. We do not for work  
5 Donald Trump. This is not his field office.  
6 This is the North Carolina Senate. We work for  
7 the people of North Carolina. Was that not  
8 clear in the job description?

9 When a party uses state power to  
10 predetermine elections in an effort to make  
11 opposition meaningless, that's no longer  
12 self-governance. Checks and balances only  
13 function if each branch insists on doing its  
14 job. When a legislature engineers a  
15 congressional delegation to protect the  
16 ambitions of one man, it is not governing any  
17 more. It is surrendering the people's voice for  
18 its own self-interest.

19 This is a betrayal of our office. It  
20 is a betrayal of our country.

21 That being said, I expect every member  
22 of the majority in the Senate and in the House  
23 to vote for this bill anyway, but I know what  
24 history does with moments like this, it will ask  
25 one simple question: When it was your turn, did

1 you defend the republic?

2 History will remember the day fascism  
3 came to North Carolina, and y'all couldn't wait  
4 to get on your knees.

5 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Applewhite,  
6 for what purpose do you rise?

7 SENATOR APPLEWHITE: To speak to the  
8 bill.

9 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor to  
10 speak to the bill.

11 SENATOR APPLEWHITE: Thank you,  
12 Madam President. And thank you to my colleagues  
13 for your words, and a special thanks to everyone  
14 that came out to the committee this morning and  
15 spoke.

16 And I was struck by one of the speakers  
17 who told a story of her son that served in the  
18 Air Force and he got out of the Air Force and he  
19 was going to run for public office, but he  
20 passed away, and she was there speaking about  
21 democracy in his honor and on his behalf.

22 That resonated with me because many of  
23 you know that I have also served in the  
24 Air Force. I represent a district, Fort Bragg,  
25 that serves many active duty members, and we've

1 all, many times, raised our right hand and swore  
2 to protect and defend the constitution of the  
3 United States against all enemies, foreign and  
4 domestic.

5 And by the way, many of the active duty  
6 members who are defending democracy because of  
7 President Trump and what's happening in  
8 Washington may not get a paycheck the first of  
9 November, so process that.

10 So I thought I would talk to you about  
11 democracy. Not only have I served, but my  
12 graduate work is in political science, and I'm  
13 kind of poli-sci wonk. Before there was the  
14 United States Constitution, before there was  
15 even a United States as we know it, there was an  
16 idea, an idea that ordinary people could govern  
17 themselves, but that was a fragile idea.

18 In 1787, as the newly- formed states  
19 debated whether to ratify the constitution,  
20 three men -- and I know you all seen Hamilton --  
21 Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison  
22 wrote a series of essays called The Federalist  
23 Papers. These papers were written to persuade a  
24 skeptical public that this new form of  
25 government, a representative democracy, could

1 actually work. They explored every danger that  
2 could threaten it and every safeguard needed to  
3 preserve it.

4 Of those essays, Federalist Paper  
5 Number 10, written by James Madison, stands as  
6 one of the most prophetic. Madison warned that  
7 the greatest threat to this bold experiment in  
8 democracy would not come from foreign countries  
9 but from factions, groups of citizens bound  
10 together by a common interest who would pursue  
11 power at the expense of justice, fairness, and  
12 the rights of others. He cautioned that these  
13 factions, what we now call political parties,  
14 could one day grow so powerful and so  
15 self-interested that they would put their own  
16 survival above the survival of democracy itself.

17 280 -- 238 years later, Madison's  
18 warning echos through this chamber. What he  
19 feared has come to pass. The two-party system,  
20 once meant to balance ideas, has hardened into a  
21 battlefield where victory itself has become more  
22 important than virtue. And today as we prepare  
23 to vote on these new congressional lines for  
24 political advantage, not for fairness, not for  
25 representation but for partisan power, we stand

1 as living proof that Madison's fears were  
2 justified.

3 Let us not pretend this is new.  
4 North Carolina has been ground zero for voter  
5 suppression for over a decade. We've watched  
6 this state become a testing ground, a testing  
7 lab for every modern tactic designed to make  
8 voting harder: Strict voter ID laws, signature  
9 verification, hurdles, purging voter roles, and  
10 racially gerrymandered maps that courts have  
11 repeatedly struck down as unconstitutional.

12 Yet here we are again using the same  
13 playbook, the same cynical manipulation of  
14 democracy, different decades but same  
15 disrespect. And this morning, during the  
16 elections committee, we saw the playbook on full  
17 display when Senator Hise was asked who drew the  
18 maps, he proudly said I did it. When asked if  
19 other members of the caucus were, you know,  
20 involved in drawing the maps, he said no, a  
21 couple staff members and, you know, him and the  
22 caucus legal team. He even claimed that, quote,  
23 that at no point ever did anyone look at race.  
24 He said it with a straight face. I looked  
25 around the room and not one person believed him,

1 but that didn't stop him. He just kept saying  
2 it like as if he said it enough times it would  
3 somehow become true.

4 Well, Senator, if you didn't look at  
5 race, you sure did manage to find every black  
6 community between here and the coast when it  
7 came to slice up the map.

8 It's hard to be a black voter in  
9 North Carolina. Republicans can't find black  
10 communities for broadband access, for economic  
11 investment, or for healthcare, but when it comes  
12 to redistricting, suddenly they've got the best  
13 GPS in the country and, boy, they are good at  
14 finding us.

15 Let's not kid ourselves, the so-called  
16 Black Belt of North Carolina has long been a  
17 cornerstone of black political power and rural  
18 representation. By dismantling this district,  
19 Republicans aren't just redrawing lines, they  
20 are erasing history, silencing voices, and  
21 turning their backs on decades of progress.

22 But we've seen these fights before, but  
23 back then we could rely on the courts to  
24 deliberate freely and deliver justice. We  
25 believed that when politicians went too far,

1       there were guardrails, a judiciary that would  
2       protect the people when politicians would not.

3               Those times are gone. Our  
4       North Carolina courts have been compromised.  
5       The highest court in our state, once a shield  
6       for fairness and justice, has been overtaken by  
7       partisanship. Even the United States Supreme  
8       Court, once revered as the final defender of  
9       constitutional rights, has become entangled in  
10      ideology and influence and politics.

11             So what do we do now? What do we do as  
12      a state, as a nation when every institution  
13      designed to protect democracy begins to crumble  
14      under political pressure?

15             I'll tell you what we'll do. We will  
16      turn to the only authority left: The people.  
17      The people of North Carolina must now become the  
18      last line of defense because clearly this  
19      legislature will not defend democracy. Clearly,  
20      too many in congress are standing by watching  
21      what has taken 250 years to build begin to  
22      crumble before our very eyes.

23             We are just one year away from this  
24      nation's 250th birthday, a milestone that should  
25      be a celebration of freedom, progress, and



1 justice, but instead we will find ourselves  
2 asking what exactly will we be celebrating? Are  
3 we celebrating democracy or its dismantling?  
4 Are we celebrating liberty or loyalty to one  
5 man?

6 Because let's be clear, this latest  
7 push to redraw congressional maps is not about  
8 North Carolina, it is about Donald Trump. It's  
9 being done at his direction just as we saw in  
10 Texas and Florida and other Republican-  
11 controlled states. It is part of a coordinated  
12 national effort to reshape this country's  
13 political map in his image to guarantee one  
14 thing, that Donald Trump and only Donald Trump  
15 remains in power.

16 Once again, our statements from many of  
17 you point fingers at Democrats as though we are  
18 the problem, but let's tell the truth, the real  
19 danger sits in the White House. This is the man  
20 who refused to accept the results of a free and  
21 fair election, who pressured state officials to  
22 find votes that didn't exist, the same man who  
23 sends federal troops into American cities to  
24 silence protestors, who threaten governors who  
25 refuse to use the national guard against their

1 own citizens. The same man who encouraged armed  
2 extremists to stand back and standby. The same  
3 man who inspired an insurrection against the  
4 very government he swore to protect.

5 And now North Carolina's Republican  
6 majority has decided to follow his lead, to take  
7 direction not from the constitution, not from  
8 the people of the state but from Donald Trump.

9 You can change the lines all you want,  
10 but you cannot change the truth. This  
11 legislature is now carrying out the political  
12 will of a man who has made himself the  
13 single -- single greatest threat to American  
14 democracy in modern history. And when the  
15 history of this moment is written, it will show  
16 that Donald Trump didn't need to destroy  
17 democracy alone. He had willing partners right  
18 here in the North Carolina General Assembly,  
19 partners who followed his orders, who traded the  
20 people's trust for political favor, who forgot  
21 that their loyalty should be their constituents,  
22 not a man. We are witnessing a hostile takeover  
23 of our democracy led not by foreign powers but  
24 by those entrusted to keep it and to protect it.

25 And I say this directly to the people

1 of North Carolina: It is up to you now. The  
2 courts will not save us. The congress will not  
3 save us. Only you, the voters, the citizens,  
4 the communities who still believe in justice,  
5 fairness, and truth can save this democracy.  
6 Your vote, your voice, your vigilance, that is  
7 the last barrier standing between freedom and  
8 the fall of this republic.

9 Almost done. Nothing I say here today  
10 will change the outcome of this vote. I am  
11 under no illusion. The majority will move  
12 forward with this plan not because it is right  
13 but because they can, but history will remember  
14 this moment. It will remember who stood up, who  
15 stayed silent. It will remember who protected  
16 democracy and who traded it away for power.

17 And to my Republican colleagues, I need  
18 to ask -- I mean, he's a nice guy, but do you  
19 trust Senator Hise that much? He told you he  
20 drew the maps. He told you that -- he said you  
21 had no input, no role, no knowledge, and yet you  
22 will still vote for them on something this  
23 critical not just for the future of our state  
24 but for the very survival of our democracy. Are  
25 you willing to risk it all on a map that he

1 wrote behind closed doors and you didn't even  
2 see it, a map drawn at the direction of a man in  
3 the White House traded for political favor. Are  
4 you really going to do that? Your names will go  
5 down in history with this one, not as -- not as  
6 bystanders but as participants, and I can  
7 promise you this history is not going to be  
8 kind.

9 I ask you, is there any line you won't  
10 cross for power? Is there any point where you  
11 stop and say this is too much? I cannot believe  
12 every single one of you sitting here believes  
13 today that this is the right thing to do. Will  
14 there ever come a moment, even once, when your  
15 conscience outweighs your caucus, when your core  
16 values, your sense of morality, your belief in  
17 true democracy outweighs party loyalty? Because  
18 make no mistake, history will remember not just  
19 what you did but why you did it.

20 And there was a time when I envied the  
21 Republican colleagues. I envy how you all stood  
22 together, 30/20, 30/20. You guys would stick  
23 together like glue. No matter how harmful the  
24 policy, you never broke ranks. But I don't  
25 admire that any more, I don't. Because what I

1 once saw as unity, I now see as silence, silence  
2 borne of fear and ambition.

3 At the end of the day when the cameras  
4 are gone and the headlines fade, you live with  
5 yourself. You will live with the choices you  
6 made and the integrity you surrendered. I would  
7 walk away from this seat tomorrow before I would  
8 ever compromise who I am and who I believe in.  
9 The English historian Lord Acton once said power  
10 tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts  
11 absolutely.

12 Thank you.

13 PRESIDENT HUNT: Let me remind the  
14 Senate of Rule 17B, no derogatory remarks  
15 reflecting personally upon any senator shall be  
16 allowed on the floor.

17 Senator Robinson, for what purpose do  
18 you rise?

19 SENATOR ROBINSON: To comment on the  
20 bill.

21 PRESIDENT HUNT: You may speak on the  
22 bill.

23 SENATOR ROBINSON: Thank you. I know  
24 you all are tired of the comments. I hear ya,  
25 but we're tired of the foolishness.

1           Senator Hise reminded us several times  
2           this morning that this map was strictly about  
3           partisan politics, strictly about partisan  
4           politics, but we know that the map is about  
5           race. The map is about race.

6           Never has a president of the  
7           United States of America requested that a  
8           legislature do such. Barack Obama didn't do  
9           that. What he did not say, though, is that this  
10          map would disenfranchise black Americans.

11          This state is 50/50, just about 50/50,  
12          plus or minus a few, but it does not only take  
13          the rights, Senator Hise, from Democrats, it  
14          takes the rights from black voters.

15          You know, I was a part of the  
16          1965 -- well, no, I'm not 65, but I was there in  
17          '67 electing people to vote. I helped elect  
18          Henry Frye, the first African American to this  
19          General Assembly.

20          I never thought that we would get to a  
21          day that you would try to take back the rights  
22          of black people. I'm disappointed. I don't  
23          think all of you are hateful, but out of three  
24          black representatives, you want to pull one away  
25          which takes away the opportunity for black

1 people to elect somebody that represents them,  
2 that understands their needs in congress.

3 We thought that Jim Crow went out with  
4 the Voting Rights Act, but you assured us that  
5 Jim Crow -- the new Jim Crow is back.

6 I also thought that we had made some  
7 progress in North Carolina. You fooled me, but  
8 I can be easily fooled because this map  
9 represents a taking back not only of the rights  
10 but the trust, the trust that we had built in  
11 this General Assembly or in North Carolina, and  
12 the people will not have such a trust.

13 Republicans are rigging elections for a  
14 power grab, and we know that's your angle. You  
15 do that all the time. But instead of that, you  
16 have allowed a convicted felon in the  
17 White House to convince you to make  
18 North Carolina a part of his assault not for  
19 votes but out of an act of allegiance.

20 I'm disappointed. I'm disappointed  
21 where this General Assembly has gone. You don't  
22 represent even your constituents because people  
23 this morning said they've talked to Republicans  
24 as well as Democrats, and the majority of them  
25 don't want this. So who do you represent? I

1 don't know. I ask you to vote no on this map.

2 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Lowe, for what  
3 purpose do you rise?

4 SENATOR LOWE: To speak on the --

5 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor to  
6 speak on the bill.

7 SENATOR LOWE: -- speak on the bill.

8 Thank you. I'm not going to speak very long. I  
9 had dental surgery this morning, and the  
10 Novocain is wearing off so I'm capable of saying  
11 a whole lot of things that you wouldn't want to  
12 hear me say.

13 I rise today as -- not just as a  
14 legislator but as someone that has spent their  
15 whole life fighting injustice. I'm a child of  
16 the civil rights movement. My parents fought in  
17 the civil rights movement. My grandparents  
18 fought in the civil rights movement. And so  
19 many things that we thought we had moved past we  
20 are now seeing all over again. I didn't think I  
21 would see what I'm seeing now and what we're  
22 experiencing now, and I think it's wrong.

23 This is a choice that was calculated to  
24 weaken the African American vote, rural voters,  
25 everyday working families across eastern



1 North Carolina. When you slice through  
2 Greenville, when you unravel Kinston, when you  
3 split Wilson, when you carve up Greene county,  
4 Bertie, and Washington, you are not just  
5 redrawing lines on a map. You are redrawing the  
6 story of our people. You are breaking apart  
7 communities bound by faith, by history, and by  
8 shared struggle. And I tell you it is wrong.  
9 Because I'm a black Baptist preacher, I got to  
10 put scripture somewhere.

11           Isaiah said, woe unto them that decree  
12 unrighteousness and unrighteous decrees.

13           Well, this is unrighteous policy. This  
14 is punishment. This punishes communities who  
15 dare to vote their conscious. It punishes the  
16 citizens who still believes that democracy means  
17 one person, one vote, not one party all the  
18 power.

19           Many of you, I have spent time with and  
20 I would consider friends and would invite you to  
21 my home, and I've been to some of your homes,  
22 but this is wrong, and that's all I can really  
23 say. These maps silence black voices in places  
24 where the church still stands tall and where  
25 families still gather on porches and where folks

1 still believe that their vote ought to count  
2 just as much as anyone else's.

3 So I stand here today to say not this  
4 time, not again. North Carolina, we can do  
5 better. We are called to serve the people, all  
6 the people, not to manipulate them for temporary  
7 gain. And history will remember whether we  
8 stood for what was right or stood by while  
9 others erase the progress that we have made.

10 So for this reason I cannot support  
11 this bill, but I would like to offer an  
12 amendment -- two amendments at this time.

13 PRESIDENT HUNT: Which amendment is  
14 first?

15 SENATOR LOWE: S 249. Do you  
16 have -- do I need to read the rest of these  
17 numbers that you got?

18 PRESIDENT HUNT: Yes, please.

19 SENATOR LOWE: S 249-ACHE-119.

20 PRESIDENT HUNT: Thank you. The clerk  
21 will read.

22 THE CLERK: Senator Lowe moves to amend  
23 the bill.

24 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Lowe is  
25 recognized to explain the amendment.

1           SENATOR LOWE: Okay. This amendment  
2 makes a slight change here. It moves to amend  
3 the bill on page 1, line 2 by deleting districts  
4 and submitting districts and to require four  
5 hours of early voting on at least one Sunday  
6 during the early voting period.

7           This has been a -- I can't say a  
8 long-standing tradition, but it certainly has  
9 been a tradition in the African American  
10 community and has been a tradition that African  
11 American churches have carried out to many  
12 people vote at different times and for some  
13 Sunday is the only time they have to go to the  
14 polls. So it is my hope that you will consider  
15 this amendment that I submit to you.

16           PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Hise, for what  
17 purpose do you rise?

18           SENATOR HISE: To move that Amendment 4  
19 do lie upon the table.

20           SENATOR DANIEL: Second.

21           PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Hise moves  
22 that Amendment Number 4 do lay upon the table,  
23 seconded by Senator Daniel.

24           This is a non-debatable motion. The  
25 question before the body is the motion to lay

1 Amendment Number 4 to Senate Bill 249 on the  
2 table.

3 All in favor will vote aye, all opposed  
4 will vote no. Five seconds will be allowed for  
5 voting, and the clerk will record the vote.

6 Senator Blue, no.

7 Senator Lowe.

8 SENATOR LOWE: No.

9 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Lee. Senator  
10 Lee. Senator Lee.

11 Senator Lazzara. Senator Lazzara.  
12 Senator Lazzara.

13 24 having voted in the affirmative, 20  
14 in the negative, Amendment Number 4 will lay  
15 upon the table.

16 Senator Lowe, for what purpose do you  
17 rise?

18 SENATOR LOWE: To submit an amendment.

19 PRESIDENT HUNT: The clerk will read.

20 THE CLERK: Senator Lowe moves to amend  
21 the bill.

22 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Lowe is  
23 recognized to explain the amendment.

24 SENATOR LOWE: This amendment moves to  
25 amend the bill on page 1, line 2 by deleting

1 districts and -- substituting districts and to  
2 allow for a ten-day grace period for the return  
3 of absentee ballots if postmarked on election  
4 day. I submit to you.

5 PRESIDENT HUNT: A leave of absence is  
6 requested and without objection is granted for  
7 Senator Lee.

8 Senator Hise, for purpose do you rise?

9 SENATOR HISE: Move that Amendment 5 do  
10 lie upon the table.

11 SENATOR DANIEL: Second.

12 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Hise moves  
13 that Amendment Number 5 do lay upon the table,  
14 seconded by Senator Daniel.

15 This is a non-debatable motion. The  
16 question before the body is the motion to lay  
17 Amendment Number 5 to Senate Bill 249 on the  
18 table.

19 All in favor will vote aye, all opposed  
20 will vote no. Five seconds will be allowed for  
21 voting, and the clerk will record the vote.

22 Senator Sawrey, aye.

23 Senator Chaudhuri, no.

24 25 having voted in the affirmative, 20  
25 in the negative, Amendment Number 4 -- Number 5

1 will lay upon the table. We're back on the  
2 bill.

3 Senator Lazzara, for what purpose do  
4 you rise?

5 SENATOR LAZZARA: Thank you,  
6 Madam President. Can I be an aye on  
7 Amendment 4, please.

8 PRESIDENT HUNT: So the final count on  
9 Amendment 4 was 25 aye, 20 no.

10 Senator Garrett, for what purpose do  
11 you rise?

12 SENATOR GARRETT: Thank you,  
13 Madam President. I move that Senate Bill 249 do  
14 lie upon the table.

15 SENATOR BATCH: Second.

16 PRESIDENT HUNT: All right. Senator  
17 Garrett moves that Senate Bill 249 do lay upon  
18 the table, seconded by Senator Batch.

19 This is a non-debatable motion. The  
20 question before the body is the motion to lay  
21 Senate Bill 249 on the table.

22 All in favor will vote aye, all opposed  
23 will vote no. Five seconds will be allowed for  
24 voting, and the clerk will record the vote.

25 19 having voted in the affirmative, 26

1 in the negative, Senate Bill 249 will not lay  
2 upon the table. We're back on the bill.

3 Senator Garrett, for what purpose do  
4 you rise?

5 SENATOR GARRETT: I move that the  
6 Senate do now adjourn.

7 SENATOR BATCH: Second.

8 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Berger, for  
9 what purpose do you rise?

10 SENATOR BERGER: Call for the ayes and  
11 nos.

12 PRESIDENT HUNT: All right. Let's call  
13 for the ayes and nos on this. All in favor will  
14 vote aye, all opposed will vote no to adjourn.

15 All right. This is how we're going to  
16 do this. The question before the body is yes or  
17 no on the motion to adjourn.

18 All in favor will vote aye, all opposed  
19 will vote no. Five seconds will be allowed for  
20 voting, and the clerk will record the vote.

21 20 having voted in the affirmative, 25  
22 in the negative, the motion to adjourn does not  
23 pass. We are back on the bill.

24 Senator Garrett, for what purpose do  
25 you rise?

1           SENATOR GARRETT: I would like to move  
2           that the Senate do now adjourn until March 4th.

3           SENATOR BATCH: Second.

4           PRESIDENT HUNT: Once again, we're  
5           going to take a vote on this. All in favor of  
6           adjourning until March 4th will vote aye, all  
7           against adjourning until March 4th will vote no.  
8           Five seconds will be allowed for voting, and the  
9           clerk will record the vote.

10          Hold on. The question before the body  
11          is the motion to adjourn until March 4th.

12          All in favor will vote aye, all opposed  
13          will vote no. Five seconds will be allowed for  
14          voting, and the clerk will record the vote.

15          18 in the positive -- I'm sorry.

16          SENATOR JACKSON: Madam President.

17          PRESIDENT HUNT: I'm sorry. Yes.  
18          Senator Jackson, you're a no. All right.

19          18 having voted in the affirmative, 27  
20          in the negative, the motion to adjourn to  
21          March 4th does not pass.

22          SENATOR BERGER: Madam President.

23          PRESIDENT HUNT: Yes, Senator Berger,  
24          for what purpose do you rise?

25          SENATOR BERGER: Under Rule 19, I move



1 that we call the question.

2 SENATOR BATCH: Objection.

3 PRESIDENT HUNT: We're at ease for a  
4 minute.

5 (At ease.)

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Madam President.

7 (At ease.)

8 PRESIDENT HUNT: The Senate will come  
9 back to order.

10 Senator Batch, your objection is noted.  
11 There was, however, no second to the motion so  
12 it's not up for --

13 SENATOR BERGER: Madam President.

14 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Berger, for  
15 what purpose do you rise?

16 SENATOR BERGER: I move the previous  
17 question.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Second.

19 PRESIDENT HUNT: Shall the main  
20 question be put now. All in favor will vote  
21 aye, all opposed will vote no. Five seconds  
22 will be allowed for voting, and the clerk will  
23 record the vote.

24 25 having voted in the affirmative, 8  
25 in the negative, we have moved to the previous

1 question, and we are back on the bill.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Objection to  
3 third reading, Madam President.

4 PRESIDENT HUNT: Is there further  
5 discussion or debate?

6 Senator Grafstein.

7 SENATOR GRAFSTEIN: Madam President, if  
8 you would record me as a no on the previous  
9 vote, please. I think there was some uncounted  
10 votes.

11 PRESIDENT HUNT: You'll be a no.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Madam President,  
13 record me as a no.

14 PRESIDENT HUNT: Hold on one second.  
15 All right. Hold on.

16 I've got a list of people who have  
17 their buttons pushed. Did you all wish to vote  
18 no on the previous question?

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

21 PRESIDENT HUNT: I'm going to read the  
22 names. Smith.

23 SENATOR SMITH: Yes.

24 PRESIDENT HUNT: Mayfield, Waddell,  
25 Theodros, Garrett, Salvador.

1           Also, Senator Chaudhuri and  
2           Senator Murdock and Senator Everitt.

3           Just a second.

4           So the final count for the motion for  
5           the previous question was 25 in the positive and  
6           18 negative, so we will still have moved and  
7           there is no debate on that, so we will go  
8           straight to the vote.

9           The question before -- all right.  
10          We're going to have to clear the gallery.

11          SENATOR DANIEL: Madam President.

12          PRESIDENT HUNT: Yes, Senator Daniel.

13          SENATOR DANIEL: Can we stand at ease  
14          for five minutes until the gallery is cleared.

15          PRESIDENT HUNT: Yes.

16          (AT ease.)

17          PRESIDENT HUNT: All right. The  
18          question before the Senate is the passage of  
19          Senate Bill 249 on its second reading.

20          All in favor will vote aye, all opposed  
21          will vote no. Five seconds will be allowed for  
22          voting, and the clerk will record the vote.

23          25 having voted in the affirmative, 20  
24          in the negative, Senate Bill 249 passes its  
25          second reading and will be calendared for

1 tomorrow.

2 All right. Are there any notices or  
3 announcements?

4 SENATOR BATCH: Madam President.

5 PRESIDENT HUNT: Yes. Senator Batch,  
6 for what purpose do you rise?

7 SENATOR BATCH: I'd like to be  
8 recognized for a point of order.

9 PRESIDENT HUNT: You are recognized for  
10 a point of order.

11 SENATOR BATCH: I find it extremely  
12 frustrating and disappointing that my members  
13 were silenced and not everyone had the  
14 opportunity to speak, especially given what is  
15 happening today and especially being the first  
16 black woman to lead a caucus in this state that  
17 my voice was silenced when Senator Berger called  
18 the question.

19 And so at this time, pursuant to  
20 Article 2, Section 18, I would like to send  
21 forth my constitutional protest because I find  
22 this legislation and the actions of the members  
23 in this chamber to be injurious to the public.

24 PRESIDENT HUNT: Bring forward your  
25 protest.

1 Senator Grafstein, for what purpose do  
2 you rise?

3 SENATOR GRAFSTEIN: Madam President,  
4 for the same reasons as Senator Batch, pursuant  
5 to Article 2, Section 18 of North Carolina  
6 Constitution, point of order, I would like to  
7 send forth my constitutional protest because I  
8 want my dissent entered on the journal because  
9 there's no legal justification for this action,  
10 for the silencing of Senator Batch, and the  
11 process that led to this bill which undermines  
12 the very foundations of representative  
13 government.

14 PRESIDENT HUNT: Bring forth your  
15 protest.

16 Senator Applewhite, for what purpose do  
17 you rise?

18 SENATOR APPLEWHITE: To be recognized  
19 for a point of order.

20 PRESIDENT HUNT: You're recognized for  
21 a point of order.

22 SENATOR APPLEWHITE: Pursuant to  
23 Article 2, Section 18 of the North Carolina  
24 Constitution, I would like to send forth my  
25 constitutional protest because I find this

1 legislation is passed in this chamber to be  
2 injurious to the public.

3 PRESIDENT HUNT: Send forth your  
4 protest.

5 Senator Garrett, for what purpose do  
6 you rise?

7 SENATOR GARRETT: For a point of order.

8 PRESIDENT HUNT: You're recognized for  
9 a point of order.

10 SENATOR GARRETT: Pursuant to  
11 Article 2, Section 18 of the North Carolina  
12 Constitution, any member of either house may  
13 dissent from and protest against any act or  
14 resolve which he may think injurious to the  
15 public or to any individual and have the reasons  
16 of his dissent entered upon the journal. I'd  
17 like to send forth my constitutional protest.

18 PRESIDENT HUNT: Send forth your  
19 protest.

20 Senator Salvador, for what purpose do  
21 you rise?

22 SENATOR SALVADOR: Point of order.

23 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor for  
24 a point of order.

25 SENATOR SALVADOR: Pursuant to

1 Article 2, Section 18 of the North Carolina  
2 Constitution, I would like to send forth my  
3 constitutional protest because I find this  
4 legislation to be injurious to the public.

5 PRESIDENT HUNT: Send forth your  
6 protest.

7 Senator Mayfield, for what purpose do  
8 you rise?

9 SENATOR MAYFIELD: To be recognized for  
10 a point of order.

11 PRESIDENT HUNT: You're recognized for  
12 a point of order.

13 SENATOR MAYFIELD: Thank you.

14 Pursuant to Article 2, Section 18 of  
15 the North Carolina Constitution, I would like to  
16 send forth my constitutional protest because I  
17 find this legislation to be injurious to the  
18 public.

19 PRESIDENT HUNT: Send forth your  
20 protest.

21 Senator Bradley, for what purpose do  
22 you rise?

23 SENATOR BRADLEY: A point of order.

24 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor for  
25 a point of order.

1           SENATOR BRADLEY: Thank you,  
2           Madam President.

3           Pursuant to Article 2, Section 18 of  
4           the North Carolina Constitution, I would like to  
5           send forth my constitutional protest because I  
6           find this legislation to be injurious to the  
7           public.

8           PRESIDENT HUNT: Send forth your  
9           protest.

10          Senator Chitlik, for what purpose do  
11          you rise?

12          SENATOR CHITLIK: For a point of order.

13          PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor for  
14          a point of order.

15          SENATOR CHITLIK: Pursuant to  
16          Article 2, Section 18 of the North Carolina  
17          Constitution, which I still believe in, I would  
18          like to send forth my constitutional protest  
19          because I find this legislation to be deeply  
20          injurious to the public.

21          PRESIDENT HUNT: Send forth your  
22          protest.

23          Senator Adcock, for what purpose do you  
24          rise?

25          SENATOR ADCOCK: To be recognized for a



1 point of order.

2 PRESIDENT HUNT: You're recognized for  
3 a point of order.

4 SENATOR ADCOCK: Thank you.

5 Pursuant to Article 2, Section 18 of  
6 the North Carolina Constitution, I would like to  
7 send forth my constitutional protest because I  
8 find this legislation to be injurious to the  
9 public.

10 PRESIDENT HUNT: Send forth your  
11 protest.

12 Senator Murdock, for what purpose do  
13 you rise?

14 SENATOR MURDOCK: To be recognized for  
15 a point of order.

16 PRESIDENT HUNT: You're recognized for  
17 a point of order.

18 SENATOR MURDOCK: Pursuant to  
19 Article 2, Section 18 of the North Carolina  
20 Constitution, I would like to send forth my  
21 constitutional protest because I find this  
22 legislation to be injurious to the public.

23 PRESIDENT HUNT: Send forth your  
24 protest.

25 Senator Everitt, for what purpose do

1       you rise?

2               SENATOR EVERITT: To be recognized for  
3 a point of order.

4               PRESIDENT HUNT: You're recognized for  
5 a point of order.

6               SENATOR EVERITT: Pursuant to  
7 Article 2, Section 18 of the North Carolina  
8 Constitution, I would like to send forth my  
9 constitutional protest because I find this  
10 legislation to be injurious to the public.

11              PRESIDENT HUNT: Send forth your  
12 protest.

13              Senator Waddell, for what purpose do  
14 you rise?

15              SENATOR WADDELL: Point of order.

16              PRESIDENT HUNT: You're recognized for  
17 a point of order.

18              SENATOR WADDELL: Pursuant to  
19 Article 2, Section 18 of the North Carolina  
20 Constitution, I would like to send forth a  
21 protest because I think this is injurious to the  
22 public.

23              PRESIDENT HUNT: Send forth your  
24 protest.

25              Senator Theodros, for what purpose do

1       you rise?

2               SENATOR THEODROS:   Point of order.

3               PRESIDENT HUNT:   You're recognized for  
4       a point of order.

5               SENATOR THEODROS:   Pursuant to  
6       Article 2, Section 18 of the North Carolina  
7       Constitution, I would like to send forth my  
8       constitutional protest because I find this  
9       legislation to be injurious to the public.

10              PRESIDENT HUNT:   Send forth your  
11       protest.

12              Senator Meyer, for what purpose do you  
13       rise?

14              SENATOR MEYER:   Thank you,  
15       Madam President.   I would like to be recognized  
16       for a point of order.

17              PRESIDENT HUNT:   You're recognized for  
18       a point of order.

19              SENATOR MEYER:   Thank you  
20       Madam President.

21              Pursuant to Article 2, Section 18 of  
22       the North Carolina Constitution, I would like to  
23       send forth my constitutional protest because I  
24       find this legislation to be injurious to the  
25       public.

1           PRESIDENT HUNT: Send forth your  
2 protest.

3           Senator Lowe, for what purpose do you  
4 rise?

5           SENATOR LOWE: Point of order.

6           PRESIDENT HUNT: You're recognized for  
7 a point of order.

8           SENATOR LOWE: Pursuant to Article 2,  
9 Section 18 of the North Carolina Constitution,  
10 any member of either house may dissent from  
11 protests against any act or resolve which he  
12 thinks is injurious to the public or  
13 individuals, so I would like to send forth  
14 my --

15           PRESIDENT HUNT: Send forth your  
16 protest.

17           Senator Mohammed, for what purpose do  
18 you rise?

19           SENATOR MOHAMMED: Point of order,  
20 Madam President.

21           PRESIDENT HUNT: You're recognized for  
22 a point of order.

23           SENATOR MOHAMMED: Pursuant to  
24 Article 2, Section 18 of the North Carolina  
25 Constitution, I would like to send forth my

1 constitutional protest because I find this  
2 legislation to be injurious to the public.

3 PRESIDENT HUNT: Send forth your  
4 protest.

5 Senator Robinson, for what purpose do  
6 you rise?

7 SENATOR ROBINSON: Point of order.

8 PRESIDENT HUNT: You're recognized for  
9 a point of order.

10 SENATOR ROBINSON: Pursuant to  
11 Article 2, Section 18 of the North Carolina  
12 Constitution, any member of either house may  
13 dissent from and protest against any act or  
14 resolve which he may think injurious to the  
15 public or to individuals and have reasons of his  
16 dissent entered on the journal.

17 I ask that this dissent be entered on  
18 the journal because this is a calculated move to  
19 weaken black political representation by  
20 splitting and diluting black communities. I  
21 would like to send forth this.

22 PRESIDENT HUNT: Send forth your  
23 protest.

24 Senator Chaudhuri, for what purpose do  
25 you rise?

1           SENATOR CHAUDHURI: To be recognized  
2 for a point of order.

3           PRESIDENT HUNT: You're recognized for  
4 a point of order.

5           SENATOR CHAUDHURI: Madam President,  
6 pursuant to Article 2, Section 18 of the  
7 North Carolina Constitution, I would like to  
8 send forth my constitutional protest because I  
9 find this legislation to be injurious to the  
10 public.

11          PRESIDENT HUNT: Send forth your  
12 protest.

13          Senator Blue, for what purpose do you  
14 rise?

15          SENATOR BLUE: Point of order.

16          PRESIDENT HUNT: You're recognized for  
17 a point of order.

18          SENATOR BLUE: Thank you,  
19 Madam President.

20          Pursuant to Article 2, Section 18 of  
21 the North Carolina Constitution, as a member of  
22 this chamber, I'm dissenting from and a protest  
23 against the specific act, and I would ask that  
24 my dissent be entered on the journal because  
25 there is no legal justification for this action,

1 meaning legislation, and the process that led to  
2 this bill undermines the very foundation of  
3 representative government.

4 PRESIDENT HUNT: Send forth your  
5 protest.

6 Senator Waddell, for what purpose do  
7 you rise?

8 Senator Garrett, for what purpose do  
9 you rise?

10 SENATOR GARRETT: Motion,  
11 Madam President.

12 PRESIDENT HUNT: You have the floor.

13 SENATOR GARRETT: I move that the words  
14 spoken by my colleagues, my Democratic  
15 colleagues and Senator Hise today on the floor  
16 be spread upon the journal.

17 PRESIDENT HUNT: Senator Smith, for  
18 what purpose do you rise?

19 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: To be recognized  
20 for a point of order.

21 PRESIDENT HUNT: You're recognized.

22 REPRESENTATIVE SMITH: Pursuant to  
23 Article 2, Section 18 of the North Carolina  
24 Constitution, I would like to send forth my  
25 constitutional protest because I find this

1 legislation to be injurious to the public  
2 because these maps are political weapon and  
3 black voters are the target. This bill and  
4 these maps are designed to fracture historic  
5 coalitions, diminish voter turnout, and protect  
6 incumbents at the expense of the will of the  
7 people. And I would like for this to make sure  
8 that we are spreading this across the journal as  
9 well. Thank you.

10 PRESIDENT HUNT: Send forth your  
11 protest.

12 Is there further business to come  
13 before the Senate?

14 If not, Senator Berger is recognized  
15 for a motion.

16 SENATOR BERGER: Thank you,  
17 Madam President.

18 I move that Senate do now adjourn to  
19 reconvene tomorrow October 21, 2025, at  
20 9:00 a.m. This will be a voting session.

21 PRESIDENT HUNT: The motion is that the  
22 Senate do now adjourn to reconvene Tuesday,  
23 October 21, 2025, at 9:00 a.m., seconded by  
24 Senator Daniel.

25 All in favor say aye.



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SENATE MEMBERS: Aye.

PRESIDENT HUNT: Opposed no.

The ayes have it and the Senate stands  
adjourned.

(Adjourned.)

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Denise Myers Byrd, CSR 8340