

NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HOUSE CHAMBER

SENATE BILL 249

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1 SPEAKER HALL: Members, we're going to
2 go into our calendar momentarily. I believe the
3 rules chairman majority leader's consulted with
4 the minority leader, and after we take up the
5 realignment of congressional districts 2025,
6 Senate Bill 249, we will adjourn for no more
7 than an hour for the rules committee to meet to
8 take up two or three other bills that the chairs
9 talked to the minority leader about, and I think
10 the rules chair is doing that as well, to give
11 everyone a heads up on those. And then we'll
12 come back in for what should be a very quick
13 session after the rules committee meets, and we
14 will have session quickly as possible after
15 that, but part of the delay is it just takes
16 some time for staff to be able to read a bill in
17 that comes from rules.

18 So again, we'll do Senate Bill 249 now.
19 When we're done with that, we will then go into
20 recess for probably an hour to have rules and
21 get those bills that are coming from rules read
22 in and then we'll come back into session and
23 have again what the chair expects to be a very
24 quick session.

25 With that said, Mr. Clerk,

1 Senate Bill 249. The clerk will read.

2 THE CLERK: Senators Alexander, Daniel,
3 and Galey, Senate Bill 249, a bill to be
4 entitled Realign Congressional Districts 2025,
5 the General Assembly of North Carolina enacts.

6 SPEAKER HALL: The gentleman from
7 Columbus, Representative Jones, is recognized to
8 debate the bill.

9 REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Thank you,
10 Mr. Speaker.

11 Members, today you will see a
12 transparent and accountable process, one that is
13 both constitutional and fundamental to
14 representative government, congressional
15 redistricting.

16 We're here today because California and
17 the radical left launched a full-fledged,
18 coordinated attack not only --

19 SPEAKER HALL: One second,
20 Representative Jones.

21 All right. The chair should have
22 addressed this before. The chair understands
23 that folks are here in the gallery today and
24 they got an opinion on certain bills that are
25 being heard, but if you're in the gallery, you

1 can't make noise, you can't clap, you can't
2 celebrate.

3 There 120 members of this body elected.
4 They each represent 90,000 people. As I often
5 say, when you try to shout over them or make
6 noise, you're not muffling them out, you're
7 muffling out the 90,000 people who they
8 represent.

9 So with that said, if you can stay in
10 here and be -- and stay silent and listen to the
11 debate, people on both sides are going to debate
12 it, then you can stay in here. If not, the
13 chair will just simply clear the gallery. The
14 chair doesn't want to do that. I don't think
15 I've had to do that all session long, but again,
16 it's up to you. So please remain silent during
17 the debate.

18 Representative Jones, the gentleman has
19 the floor.

20 REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Thank you,
21 Mr. Speaker.

22 Once again, we're here today because
23 California and the radical left launched a
24 full-fledged, coordinated attack not only on
25 North Carolina but the integrity of democracy

1 itself. And I've got bad news for Gavin Newsom
2 and the radical left: North Carolina will not
3 stand by while they try to undermine the will of
4 our voters and stack the decks in Washington.

5 Sadly, this isn't new. Just look
6 around the country. In Massachusetts,
7 New Mexico, and Connecticut, Republicans hold
8 zero congressional seats due to Democrat
9 congressional map gerrymanders. It's the same
10 playbook over and over.

11 Well, enough is enough. We have been
12 called to fight back, and that's exactly what
13 this body intends to do. The motivation behind
14 this new redistricting plan is straightforward:
15 The new congressional map improves Republican
16 political strength in eastern North Carolina and
17 will bring an additional Republican seat to
18 North Carolina's congressional delegation.

19 Let's talk about the process by which
20 we did this.

21 As I mentioned in committee yesterday,
22 the House worked with consultant Blake
23 Springhetti. He's from Ohio. From Day one, we
24 established clear, written standards for how
25 this map would be drawn. We instructed our

1 consultant to follow these guidelines exactly.
2 I'm going to share those with you for those who
3 were not in committee.

4 Number 1. Data identifying the race of
5 individuals or voters shall not be used in the
6 construction or consideration of districts in
7 the 2025 congressional plan.

8 Draw Congressional District 1, known as
9 CD 1, to increase the Republican vote share of
10 CD 1 in the 2023 congressional plan codified by
11 Senate Bill 757 on October 25, 2023. Unless
12 otherwise directed, you may consider any of the
13 election results referenced in Number 8 below,
14 but you may only adjust the boundaries of CD 1
15 and Congressional District 3 known as CD 3.

16 Number 3. Draw congressional districts
17 to comply with federal standards for equal
18 population.

19 Number 4. Draw congressional districts
20 that are contiguous. Contiguity by point is not
21 permitted but by water is permissible.

22 Number 5. To the extent feasible, draw
23 districts that are visually reasonably compact.
24 No mathematical tests are required.

25 Number 6. Take reasonable measures to

1 draw districts that represent and follow
2 contiguous municipal boundaries.

3 Number 7. Take reasonable measures to
4 draw districts that do not split VTDs.

5 Number 8. Political data should be
6 considered. You may use any election or
7 political data that is loaded onto a computer
8 provided by the North Carolina General Assembly.

9 Number 9. An incumbent state member's
10 knowledge of communities of interest may be
11 considered.

12 Number 10. All work to be
13 completed -- is to be completed at the
14 legislative complex here in Raleigh on equipment
15 provided by the General Assembly.

16 The election contest data in the stat
17 pack for Senate Bill 249 -- and that data will
18 also be available in the House Select Committee
19 of Redistricting's website -- was considered in
20 the creation of the plan, but the primary focus
21 on this election contest data from 2024
22 presidential race.

23 Our consultant followed our
24 instructions, and the result is a process that
25 has been transparent, has been lawful, and

1 accountable to the people of this state.

2 Again, let me emphasize, racial data
3 was not used in the creation of this map.

4 While we considered several variations
5 of the congressional plan with our consultant,
6 ultimately, we decided to proceed with the map
7 put forward by Senator Ralph Hise whose members
8 of this General Assembly have heard speak
9 multiple times regarding the details of that
10 map.

11 While our consultant offered input to
12 members regarding the plan, the map before you
13 is the map that was drawn by Senator Hise.

14 To briefly summarize the plan before
15 you, the new map makes no changes to 12 of the
16 14 districts. Only the districts that are
17 changed in the new map are NC 1 and NC 3.

18 As I stated previously, the motivation
19 behind this plan is straightforward. It moves
20 NC 1 from a district where President Trump
21 earned 51 percent of the vote in 2024 to
22 55 percent of the vote, an increase of 4 points.
23 The end result is a congressional map that
24 should perform to elect 11 Republicans.

25 Not only does the new congressional map

1 better improve Republican political strength in
2 eastern North Carolina, the new map adheres to
3 traditional redistricting principles and is more
4 compact than the current math by Reock and
5 Polsby-Popper measures of compactness.

6 Now, I know what's coming next. The
7 same national organizations that are talking
8 heads who praise the blue state maps will
9 continue attacking ours not because of the
10 process but because of the outcome. But the
11 people of North Carolina didn't elect us to
12 surrender our responsibilities. They elected us
13 to lead.

14 So to the national left, I'm sorry,
15 your favorite governor in Sacramento
16 miscalculated. Proposition 50 has backfired.
17 Republican-led states are here to make sure that
18 one man does not predetermine the controls of
19 congress. North Carolina will not be lectured,
20 will not be bullied, and will not be sued into
21 submission. We will not let outsiders tell us
22 how to govern, and we will never apologize for
23 doing exactly what the people of this state has
24 elected us to do.

25 We did our job transparently, lawfully,

1 and unapologetically. And if that offends the
2 left, so be it because what we're defending here
3 today is not just a map, it's the principle that
4 stops the deck from being stacked against us.
5 It's the principle that our delegation in
6 congress will advocate for the true beliefs of
7 North Carolinians, and it is a fact that we will
8 send one more Republican from congress from this
9 great state.

10 You can be mad about redistricting all
11 you want to, but you need to look in the mirror
12 and ask yourself what got us here, and I think
13 then you will begin to realize just how bad the
14 left messed up. So thanks for poking that bear,
15 giving us the playbook, and for that we will be
16 sending another strong conservative to
17 Washington to represent this great state.

18 Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

19 SPEAKER HALL: For what purpose does
20 the gentleman from Wilson, Representative
21 Pittman, rise?

22 REPRESENTATIVE PITTMAN: Mr. Speaker,
23 to speak to the bill.

24 SPEAKER HALL: The gentleman is
25 recognized to debate the bill.

1 REPRESENTATIVE PITTMAN: Mr. Speaker,
2 in my region of eastern North Carolina, we know
3 how to work together. We work together to bring
4 economic development and good jobs, to support
5 our community schools, and to step in to help
6 our neighbors. What helps us to do that is by
7 focusing on our community and its people, not
8 being thrust in the middle of a national
9 partisan power grab.

10 Wilson county is a competitive county,
11 and the first congressional district is a
12 competitive district. I know this because
13 Congressman Davis won the first congressional
14 district, and President Trump won the first
15 congressional district. I won North Carolina
16 House District 24, and President Trump won
17 North Carolina House District 24.

18 What I can tell you is when you are in
19 a 50/50 district, you don't waste your time
20 figuring out who is in what political party.
21 You work together to move your community
22 forward, and we need more of that in politics.

23 But here we are, what started as a
24 political power play in Texas has turned into a
25 national redistricting war, and my home and my

1 people have been drug into the middle of it.
2 This action is further dividing a deeply divided
3 nation, but more acutely, it unnecessarily
4 divides communities when we should be focusing
5 on lowering costs and expanding economic
6 opportunities in North Carolina.

7 My hometown is not just a place on a
8 map to be conquered. It is a community that is
9 home to good people that must deal with the
10 divisions drawn by power hungry politicians who
11 attempt to tell us who our voice in Washington
12 is going to be.

13 This map weaponizes my community. I
14 oppose it, and I resent it.

15 SPEAKER HALL: For what purpose does
16 the gentleman from Halifax, Representative
17 Pierce, rise?

18 REPRESENTATIVE PIERCE: To speak to the
19 bill.

20 SPEAKER HALL: The gentleman is
21 recognized to debate the bill.

22 REPRESENTATIVE PIERCE: Thank you,
23 Mr. Speaker.

24 Now, I understand that this debate will
25 be framed in a lot of different ways about maps,

1 numbers, and lines on a page, but to me and to
2 the people of House District 27, this is about
3 something much deeper, about the soul and the
4 shared destiny of eastern North Carolina.

5 This bill redraws Congressional
6 District 1 in a way that doesn't just shift
7 boundaries, it fractures communities. It pulls
8 together counties that have little in common in
9 geography, economy, and daily life. It ties our
10 inland agricultural communities where families
11 are working generations deep in the soil, to
12 coastal areas driven by tourism, property, and
13 development. These are different economies,
14 different priorities, different needs.

15 When you do that, you dilute the voice
16 of people who have long toiled together toward a
17 common good, working people, small farmers, and
18 those in rural communities who have already been
19 struggling to be heard.

20 As we approach America's 250th
21 anniversary, our semiquincentennial, and
22 District 27 is home to the Halifax Resolves, I
23 can't help but think about the people who
24 contributed to the revolutionary cause, men and
25 women, white, black, indigenous, Asian, and

1 Hispanic. They fought for a shared cause,
2 liberty and justice, a vision of one nation
3 united for the common good.

4 Yet today, instead of working together
5 on that shared purpose, instead of passing a
6 budget to fund our public schools, strengthen
7 public health, and keep our communities safe, we
8 are fighting over maps that divide us even more.

9 While families are struggling, we are
10 playing politics with people's lives. Folks
11 don't know what's coming next. Federal workers
12 don't know if they'll get paid. Teachers and
13 state employees don't know if a raise will even
14 matter once their insurance premiums go up.
15 County commissioners don't know if the federal
16 government is going to come through, and all the
17 while we're told that certain programs are being
18 targeted as if they only help certain people.

19 So I ask who are you serving? The
20 people back home who sent you here or someone
21 else's agenda because it seems to me that while
22 you refuse to compromise on a budget, on a fair
23 budget, you have no problem rushing to grab
24 power. We don't have to say it because people
25 already see it. They know what's happening.

1 Our duty as members of this General
2 Assembly is to the people of North Carolina, all
3 of them. Let's stop dividing them, and let's
4 start delivering for them.

5 SPEAKER HALL: For what purpose does
6 the gentleman from Duplin, Representative Dixon,
7 rise?

8 REPRESENTATIVE DIXON: To speak to the
9 bill, Mr. Speaker.

10 SPEAKER HALL: The gentleman is
11 recognized to debate the bill.

12 REPRESENTATIVE DIXON: Thank you,
13 Mr. Speaker.

14 Early this morning, Members, I awakened
15 thinking about the public comments yesterday, so
16 I turn today my source of solace and read, but
17 the tongue can no man tame; out of the same
18 mouth proceeded blessings and cursings.

19 Yesterday, I was told what I should not
20 do. I was told what my motives are. None of
21 those who called my cellphone and left hateful
22 and vulgar messages asked me what my motives
23 were. They just told me over and over again how
24 right they were and how much they hated Donald
25 Trump.

1 I respect and sustain their right to
2 say that, but I'm left to observe how some folks
3 who demand tolerance do it so intolerantly.

4 I will now exercise my elected
5 responsibility to speak for myself.

6 I love President Trump, and I sustain
7 him as the leader of our nation. I support and
8 sustain him as the current leader of the
9 Republican Party. In my opinion, he's the
10 greatest president of my lifetime.

11 He's not my king, and I don't think he
12 wants to be your king. I've witnessed divine
13 intervention in preserving his life. He is
14 divinely changed man who loves this nation.

15 I support the constitutional authority
16 of this legislature to legally redraw our
17 congressional districts.

18 I would implore us to remember this
19 sage advice: Anger never persuades. Hostility
20 never heals. Contention never leads to lasting
21 solutions.

22 Please support this legal proposal to
23 help North Carolina help President Donald Trump
24 make America great again.

25 Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

1 SPEAKER HALL: For what purpose does
2 the lady from Pitt, Representative Brown, rise?

3 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: To debate the
4 bill.

5 SPEAKER HALL: The lady is recognized
6 to debate the bill.

7 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Thank you,
8 Mr. Speaker.

9 I rise today to speak to you on behalf
10 of my community. Although I represent the
11 northern half of Pitt county, my community
12 extends beyond the line of my district, and I
13 too know the feeling of being pulled from one
14 district to another because I was in District 1,
15 Pitt county was, and then we got pulled into
16 District 3, not having any input, not knowing
17 what was going on, and we still have citizens
18 still not realizing what district they're in.

19 I was born and raised in Martin county,
20 started my family in Bethel, and my grand babies
21 live in Lenoir. Eastern North Carolina is my
22 home, but I did not have a seat at the table.
23 Myself and my Democratic colleagues have been
24 left out of the discussion and the drawing of
25 these maps. Our constituents and our

1 communities did not have a say in the process.

2 In the past six days, my office has
3 fielded many emails and phone calls from not
4 just my constituents but people all over the
5 state extremely frustrated with the legislature.

6 I will be remiss if I did not relay
7 their concerns which are: Why are we redrawing
8 these maps again? How far are you willing to go
9 to bend the knee to this administration? Are
10 you listening to the concerns of your
11 constituents? Why are we focused on
12 unnecessarily redrawing congressional maps mid
13 decade instead of passing a budget for our
14 state? Why are we not having public hearings in
15 the community that will be impacted by this
16 legislation?

17 These are the questions that we may
18 never get answers for. It often feels like we
19 are yelling into the abyss while this body
20 continues to pass harmful, unpopular, and
21 dangerous legislation like this despite the
22 overwhelming evidence that this is not what our
23 constituents want.

24 You claimed that racial data was not
25 used. You didn't need to use racial data

1 because every single member of this body knows
2 about the black population in the northeastern
3 part of this state.

4 Yesterday in the redistricting
5 committee, an Air Force veteran said you don't
6 need to use racial data to see racial impact.

7 Redrawing Districts 1 and 3 is
8 purposefully dilutions of black votes.

9 North Carolina is the testing ground
10 for the new era of Jim Crow laws, going after
11 Souls to the Polls, restricting early voting
12 dates, hours, and locations, and now breaking up
13 the Black Belt that has been electing black
14 Democrats for the -- for three decades now.

15 You are silencing black voices and are
16 going against the will of your constituents. We
17 will remember.

18 And in closing, I like to leave this
19 with you Proverbs 11:21. Though hand join in
20 hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished, but
21 the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.

22 Thank you.

23 SPEAKER HALL: For what purpose -- the
24 sergeant-at-arms will clear the gallery of the
25 folks who have self selected for themselves to

1 be removed, who believe their voices are more
2 important than everyone else's.

3 We'll put you down as a maybe.

4 For what purpose does the gentleman
5 from Granville, Representative Cohn, rise?

6 REPRESENTATIVE COHN: To debate the
7 bill, Mr. Speaker.

8 SPEAKER HALL: The gentleman is
9 recognized to debate the bill.

10 REPRESENTATIVE COHN: Mr. Speaker, I
11 rise today in strong opposition of
12 Senate Bill 249 on behalf of the voters of Vance
13 and Granville county who deserve fair maps and
14 representation, not political manipulation.

15 This bill is a partisan weapon designed
16 to silence voices and protect power, not people.

17 This bill is not a reaction to Governor
18 Gavin Newsom and what they intend on doing in
19 the state of California. This is a reaction at
20 the behest of the president of the United States
21 and Governor Greg Abbott of Texas, make no
22 mistake about that.

23 The leadership in the General Assembly
24 has saw fit to basically follow their lead and
25 do as they're told.

1 Our democracy deserves better. The
2 people of North Carolina deserve better. The
3 folks of our district of eastern North Carolina
4 deserve better.

5 I urge my colleagues today to reject
6 this disgraceful bill and vote no.

7 Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

8 SPEAKER HALL: For what purpose does
9 the lady from Mecklenburg, Representative
10 Helfrich, rise?

11 REPRESENTATIVE HELFRICH: To speak to
12 the bill.

13 SPEAKER HALL: The lady is recognized
14 to debate the bill.

15 REPRESENTATIVE HELFRICH: Thank you,
16 Mr. Speaker.

17 As a former English teacher, I pay
18 close attention to words and to phrases, and one
19 phrase I've heard a lot over the past several
20 days is answering the call.

21 A sitting president has asked states to
22 rig their voting districts in order to avoid
23 accountability in the midterms, and here we are
24 answering the call.

25 But in forcing this bill through today,

1 you know whose calls we are refusing to answer?
2 Yours. Yours. Yours. And the tens of
3 thousands of other people across this state from
4 each of our districts who have been calling us,
5 emailing us, writing us, submitting public
6 comments, traveling here by bus and by carpool
7 asking us to simply say no. No, we will not
8 further rig our voting districts at the request
9 of one person.

10 But answering the call, of course, is
11 not just about picking up the phone. It's about
12 responding to challenge out of a sense of duty.
13 I thought our duty was to the constitution and
14 to the people of North Carolina. And they are
15 overwhelmingly opposed to this bill.

16 And to that end, Mr. Speaker, I have
17 concluded my remarks on the bill and would like
18 to be recognized for a question of privilege
19 under Rule 8.

20 SPEAKER HALL: The lady may state her
21 question of privilege.

22 REPRESENTATIVE HELFRICH: I understand
23 that Rule 8 concerns the rights of the House
24 collectively, its safety and dignity and the
25 integrity of its proceedings.

1 Members of the House, we asked the
2 public to submit comment on this proposed map.
3 They answered the call. As of 10:30 this
4 morning, we had received 12,280 comments. I
5 have them printed right here.

6 At no point in these proceedings have
7 their input -- has their input been meaningfully
8 considered, and I believe this calls into
9 question the integrity of the House and these
10 proceedings.

11 SPEAKER HALL: For what purpose does
12 the lady from Durham, Representative Morey,
13 rise?

14 REPRESENTATIVE MOREY: To speak to the
15 bill.

16 SPEAKER HALL: The lady is recognized
17 to debate the bill.

18 REPRESENTATIVE MOREY: We are here
19 today because simply it's map warfare that was
20 started unquestionably on the record by the
21 president of the United States when he demanded
22 the governor of Texas, Greg Abbott, to redraw
23 the Texas congressional maps so there would be
24 at least five more Republicans representing the
25 MAGA agenda in congress and the nation. This is

1 on record. It is in writing.

2 In response, California has a
3 referendum to their voters to counteract Texas
4 redistricting, and now here we are in
5 North Carolina doing a fifth redistricting in
6 five years. And it's not because of the census,
7 it's not because of a court order, it's because
8 of a command from a president, unprecedented in
9 American history.

10 Let's look at what the Tenth Amendment
11 of our US Constitution says. All powers not
12 given to the federal government are reserved to
13 the states.

14 Election laws are reserved to the
15 states, not the federal government. What we are
16 doing here upon the direction of the president
17 is allowing the federal government to overstep
18 its authority.

19 Even worse, as my colleague said, we
20 are targeting Congressional District 1 known as
21 the eastern Black Belt of North Carolina. We
22 are dividing and diluting historically black and
23 Latino voters, exactly what they did in Texas.
24 The lawsuit has been filed. They diluted and
25 they divided black, Hispanic voters in Dallas,

1 in Houston, drew two incumbent congressional
2 Democrats in one district. It's the same
3 playbook. All of this while the president's
4 polling is at historical low and people are
5 rejecting the cruelty of the MAGA agenda.

6 And I thought, foolishly, Republicans
7 stood for less government and states' rights.
8 Could have fooled us, but you have not fooled
9 the voters. And rather than have robust public
10 hearings, we had two committee hearings where
11 people from all over the state came to Raleigh
12 to have one minute to speak, and their voices
13 need to be amplified.

14 One of them, I proudly served for two
15 decades in the United States Air Force. I
16 defended freedom, and you don't need to use
17 racial data to see racial impact. That's not
18 balance, that's silence. And I did not fight
19 for my country for selective freedom.

20 Another, you are redistricting the
21 state to finagle more power and money for
22 yourselves. And if you truly cared about what
23 your constituents think, then put a referendum
24 on the ballot and ask them across the state, let
25 them decide.

1 Another who teaches civics in
2 District 3, my seniors can tell you why
3 gerrymandering, while legal, is unethical and
4 wrong. We will be District 1 not because of a
5 census redistricting but because of fear from
6 Republican leadership over potentially losing a
7 seat in the midterm.

8 The thousands of students I have taught
9 in my 28-year career is far more fair-minded and
10 constitutionally aligned than our current
11 General Assembly. And, yes, I taught
12 gerrymandering was wrong when the Democrats did
13 it. Shame on every member who allows their
14 party to take dominance over what's right. Feel
15 free, come to my civics class, you may learn
16 something.

17 And finally, a former Republican who
18 says, I am a former Republican. I say former
19 because I can no longer believe in, trust or
20 endorse the Republican Party. They only care
21 about one thing, accumulating power and profits
22 at the expense of everyone and everything. If
23 this redistricting passes, it's a violation of
24 American decency and a blatant power grab. It
25 sends a signal that the Republican Party no

1 longer cares about free and fair election. This
2 is how democracy dies.

3 Those are just four of the public
4 comments senators and representatives heard this
5 week when they had one minute to speak.

6 So this body has outlawed in a bill
7 that's up for a veto, DEI, diversity, equity,
8 and inclusion, in state government, in our
9 universities, and now we're doing it with
10 voting. It's shameful.

11 SPEAKER HALL: Members, just what --
12 administration rules chair I think respecting
13 the minority leader, we will vote on this bill
14 by 12:30. The chair will continue with those
15 folks who have their lights on until that time.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker,
17 excuse me, I'd like to send forth an amendment.

18 SPEAKER HALL: So I think the
19 amendments have been put forth but not into the
20 dashboard yet. So we'll deal with your
21 amendments before 12:30.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

23 SPEAKER HALL: For what purpose does
24 the gentleman from Guilford,
25 Representative Quick, rise?

1 REPRESENTATIVE QUICK: Thank you,
2 Mr. Speaker. To debate the bill.

3 SPEAKER HALL: The gentleman is
4 recognized to debate the bill.

5 REPRESENTATIVE QUICK: Thank you, sir.

6 Having been given complete control of
7 the federal government, Republicans have managed
8 to shut down the government during the present
9 Trump administration after seeing the previous
10 Trump administration shut down the government
11 for a record 35 days, and now North Carolina
12 Republicans have the illogical nerve to ask for
13 more Republicans through a rigged system.

14 Speaking of illogical, it's also been
15 said that this is being done because
16 President Trump has a mandate from voters, but
17 not North Carolina voters because if voters were
18 set to give a mandate, that would mean Governor
19 Josh Stein has a mandate for he won more votes
20 than President Trump did by about 172,000.

21 So instead of pressing President
22 Trump's agenda in North Carolina, we ought to be
23 voting for Governor Stein's budget if we're
24 using votes as indication of a mandate.

25 It was also alluded to about

1 California's redistricting efforts, but there's
2 a very clear and distinct difference
3 between what we're doing in North Carolina and
4 what's happening in California. Because in
5 California, the referendum goes to the voters.
6 In North Carolina, a few people get behind a
7 closed door and decide that we need a new map.

8 Finally, it's very ironic in this body
9 that we've done two things which seem to be
10 opposed to each other. First, we have funded
11 the Cheatham-White Scholarship which is a great
12 scholarship program that helps deserving
13 students at North Carolina A&T and
14 North Carolina Central University.

15 The irony of the Cheatham-White
16 scholarship is that the White part of it comes
17 from a gentleman by the name of George Henry
18 White who was pushed out of congress in 1901 by
19 a very similar system as what we're using right
20 now. But I want to quote George Henry white as
21 I conclude my remarks.

22 He said, you may push the African
23 American out of congress by these ill-gotten
24 means, but some day the African American
25 congressional representative will rise up some

1 day and come again.

2 So you may push the African American
3 voters out of District 1, the representation of
4 African American voters out of District 1, but
5 this is wrong, and wrong never stands. Wrong
6 never stands. And some day, when Democrats are
7 back in control and when by your help doing
8 things like this, it will be sooner rather than
9 later that Democrats will be back in control.
10 We will recognize the power of the African
11 American voter in what's previously known as the
12 Black Belt.

13 I ask that you would vote no. Thank
14 you.

15 SPEAKER HALL: For what purpose does
16 the lady from Guilford, Representative Harrison,
17 rise?

18 REPRESENTATIVE HARRISON: To debate the
19 bill.

20 SPEAKER HALL: The lady is recognized
21 to debate the bill.

22 REPRESENTATIVE HARRISON: Thank you,
23 Mr. Speaker.

24 So much to say, ladies and gentlemen of
25 the House, about all of this, but I'm going to

1 start with the process because I don't think
2 that's seen a lot of attention yet.

3 This is highly irregular. We have had
4 a very truncated schedule, with less than
5 24 hours between publication of the map and the
6 beginning of the discussion and debate in the
7 Senate. The public has had very little time to
8 process and understand what we are doing here
9 today. And we could have done it earlier
10 because, as Representative Morey pointed out,
11 this was started by the president, a directive
12 to Texas. Texas started in June or July, and so
13 we've had plenty of time to get an earlier start
14 on this, but I'm not going to go deep into that.

15 But I do want to point out -- so thank
16 you, Representative Helfrich, for pointing out
17 that since yesterday and today we had another
18 thousand comments totaling 12,215. I want to
19 compare that to 2021 and -- where we had
20 10,000 -- I'm sorry -- 1,000 in 2021 and 600 in
21 2023. And out of those 12,215 -- and deep
22 gratitude to my legislative assistant for going
23 through most of them -- she's found three in
24 favor of these maps. Three.

25 I want to talk about the public

1 hearings. As was mentioned, there was just two
2 here, both in Raleigh. And back in 2011, we had
3 65. In 2021, we had 14 in each congressional
4 district. And then when we redrew in 2023, we
5 did have three geographically spread out in the
6 state. So folks have not had an opportunity to
7 present in person, and you know how much of a
8 difference that makes if you attend these. I'll
9 just say there's been inadequate time for the
10 legislators and the public to review.

11 In those comments, I'll just highlight
12 the most common mentioned teams. Process,
13 request for a nonpartisan independent
14 redistricting process.

15 No to gerrymandering. That's the high
16 point.

17 Lots of comments about race and the
18 racist nature of the maps.

19 The fact that we should be working on a
20 budget and other state high priorities.

21 And a big chunk of folks who talk about
22 the current president.

23 I want to remind you that this map we
24 are considering today in a state with a history
25 of the most gerrymandered maps in the country,

1 we now have the most gerrymandered and least
2 responsive map in the state's history before
3 you. 84 percent of the public has expressed
4 objections to the partisan nature of our
5 redistricting process.

6 I also want to talk on the substance or
7 talk to you about the fact that we still have a
8 Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. We don't
9 know for how long, but it was recently
10 reaffirmed in the Allen v Milligan case that
11 took place in Alabama two years ago.

12 This requires an opportunity to draw
13 districts for black voters to elect a candidate
14 of their choice. As has been mentioned, this
15 map clearly carves out the Black Belt and
16 whether -- and has been mentioned whether the
17 sponsor used racial data or not, he knows the
18 districts well enough to know that he was
19 splitting up the Black Belt.

20 And I'm saying he, I mean Senator Hise
21 because he's the one that drew the map. No
22 personal attack, just observing the process.

23 He continued to claim throughout the
24 process in the Senate and in yesterday's
25 committee that we have no evidence of racially

1 polarized voting in our state, but it's been
2 some time since the last racially polarized
3 voting analysis has been performed. And it was
4 repeated in the Allen v Milligan case that that
5 needs to be performed to understand localized
6 racially polarized voting.

7 So y'all remember, those of you who
8 were here back in 2023 redraw, we did have one
9 racially polarized voting analysis performed by
10 the Southern Coalition for Social Justice, and
11 they only had a week to do it so it was very
12 truncated, but that was in response to the fact
13 that the lack of our performing our own. That
14 found significant racially polarized voting in
15 this very area where we are getting ready to
16 carve up the black voters into two different
17 districts.

18 They also -- Senator Hise also stated
19 that there was no need to prove the Gingles
20 criteria because those weren't present either,
21 but I want to repeat to you all what the Gingles
22 criteria are because the Southern Coalition for
23 Social Justice says that that area of the state
24 actually meets the Gingles criteria.

25 And I'm sorry, I'm not going to take up

1 much of your time. I just think these are
2 important points to make and to be considered as
3 we get ready to approve this map.

4 So the first is a minority group must
5 be able to demonstrate that it's sufficiently
6 large and compact to constitute a majority of a
7 single-member district.

8 Second, it must be able to show that
9 it's politically cohesive.

10 Third, it must be able to demonstrate
11 that the white majority votes significantly as a
12 bloc to enable it to defeat the minority's
13 preferred candidate.

14 And that -- those criteria have been
15 met, and we probably could have proved it
16 ourselves if we had taken the time to go through
17 the racially polarized analysis that was needed.

18 So I will just, sorry, move along here
19 to the next point and has been stated this
20 particular district that's being -- these two
21 congressional districts that are being -- that
22 are being redrawn have the longest legacy of
23 black leadership in the state's history and the
24 highest concentration of black voters.

25 Representative Alma Adams said that

1 yesterday in committee, and the former
2 Representative Eva Clayton who spoke at the
3 committee also pointed this out. This is really
4 important to take into consideration.

5 Representative Clayton, former
6 Representative Clayton was the first black woman
7 to represent North Carolina in our history in
8 congress, and she was the first black elected to
9 congress from North Carolina since 1901.

10 So as has been pointed out by
11 Representative Pierce and others, we have strong
12 black leadership fighting for the causes and the
13 values that that area of the state cares about
14 the most and are going to be most affected by
15 the current leadership.

16 So I just want to say that we are in
17 clear violation of the Voting Rights Act and
18 likely are going to engage in litigation.

19 So why is that important? Because this
20 state -- when the majority party, again, with
21 all due respect, started drawing maps in 2011,
22 we've spent \$22,512,000 on redistricting
23 litigation, and probably more, but that's
24 related to outside counsel.

25 Article 1, Section 2, Sovereignty of

1 the people. All political power is vested in
2 and derived from the people. All government of
3 right originates from the people, is founded
4 upon their will only, and is instituted solely
5 for the good of the whole.

6 Is this map for the good of the whole?
7 I contend that it is not. We're clearly carving
8 up an area that is going to lose a long legacy
9 of terrific leadership.

10 We have a 12/2 map with zero
11 competitive districts in a 50/50 state. Nope,
12 it's not for the good of the whole. I encourage
13 my colleagues to vote no on this map. Thank
14 you.

15 SPEAKER HALL: For what purpose does
16 the lady from orange, Representative Price,
17 rise?

18 REPRESENTATIVE PRICE: To debate the
19 bill.

20 SPEAKER HALL: The lady is recognized
21 to debate the bill.

22 REPRESENTATIVE PRICE: 250 years
23 ago -- sorry. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

24 250 years ago, no taxation without
25 representation was the rallying cry that

1 prompted the American Revolution and the
2 founding of this country. Colonial Americans
3 refused to be dominated by people who failed to
4 represent them fairly.

5 Manipulating the boundaries of
6 electoral constituencies in order to favor one
7 party or class or creating legislative districts
8 that minimize the voices of the people that live
9 therein is therefore a direct assault on the
10 very foundation of American democracy.

11 This bill and this map are the epitome
12 of gerrymandering which are an assault on the
13 spirit of democracy. The map denies people,
14 particularly African Americans and Native
15 Americans, of their right to fair elections. It
16 is a violation of the United States Constitution
17 and therefore an intentional violation against
18 our basic rights as United States citizens and
19 furthermore an egregious assault on the people
20 of North Carolina, our constituents.

21 This anxiousness to gerrymander a new
22 congressional district appears to arise from a
23 fear of losing elections. One could also
24 surmise that the proponents of this map may be
25 haunted by the fear that historically

1 marginalized people will take their rightful
2 places of influence and power.

3 I therefore implore this body to reject
4 this brazen act to redraw a map that
5 intentionally disenfranchises thousands of
6 people and that purposefully denies them the
7 potential to elect leaders that truly represent
8 their interests.

9 The proposed map is unconstitutional,
10 unjust, and immoral, and I ask you to please
11 vote no on Senate Bill 249.

12 SPEAKER HALL: Members, we'll go ahead
13 and take up Representative Morey's amendments.
14 The first one on the dashboard. The Amendment
15 S249 ACM 23B3. The clerk will read.

16 THE CLERK: Representative Morey moves
17 to amend the bill.

18 SPEAKER HALL: The lady from Durham,
19 Representative Morey, is recognized to debate
20 the amendment.

21 REPRESENTATIVE MOREY: Thank you,
22 Mr. Speaker.

23 I'm presenting a map, and this map goes
24 exactly like we had the congressional maps in
25 2022. It reflects the state of North Carolina,

1 and it would give probably equal seven
2 Republican, seven Democrat district. I ask you
3 to approve this amendment.

4 SPEAKER HALL: The gentleman from
5 Columbus, Representative Jones, is recognized to
6 debate the amendment.

7 REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Thank you,
8 Mr. Speaker.

9 Representative Morey, thank you for the
10 amendment. We appreciate you putting the input
11 in, but as you said, I guess if we're
12 redistricting your way, it's okay, but if we're
13 doing it to help the Republicans, it's not.

14 So, Members, I ask that you vote this
15 down, please. Thank you.

16 SPEAKER HALL: The question before the
17 House is the adoption of the amendment. All
18 those in favor will vote aye, all those opposed
19 will vote no. The clerk will open the vote.

20 The clerk will lock the machine and
21 record the vote.

22 46 having voted in the affirmative and
23 67 in the negative, the amendment fails.

24 Members, moving to the next amendment,
25 Representative Morey, bill changes the title so

1 therefore not germane, so the amendment will be
2 returned to the lady.

3 We're now back on debate on the bill.

4 For what purpose does the gentleman
5 from Wake, Representative Rubin, rise?

6 REPRESENTATIVE RUBIN: To debate the
7 bill.

8 SPEAKER HALL: The gentleman is
9 recognized to debate the bill.

10 REPRESENTATIVE RUBIN: Thank you,
11 Mr. Speaker.

12 Colleagues, at the end of the day and
13 at the end of our lives, each of us should
14 strive to be people who overcome the darkness
15 and never to be the people that create the
16 darkness that the others in our society are
17 forced to overcome.

18 Today's latest attack by Republicans on
19 self-governance in North Carolina follows the
20 attack on our board of elections, it follows a
21 brazen attempt to steal Supreme Court election,
22 and it all adds up to a sense that there are
23 those in our government that think only the
24 right people may ever hold power and that the
25 rules must be rigged to make sure the people can

1 never disagree with those choices.

2 And now we're here today. The
3 Republican Party holding a vote of no confidence
4 on our self-government in North Carolina to make
5 our already rigged maps even worse.

6 But it's not just the maps themselves.
7 Behold the process that led to today.
8 Secretive, dismissive, six days long from end to
9 end, and frankly, disrespectful of the people of
10 North Carolina, dismissive of the people of
11 North Carolina. You have treated them as
12 obstacles to be managed, even talked down to
13 here in this debate today, not citizens to be
14 heard. And it would be bad enough if they were
15 simply ignored, and they were ignored. No one
16 looked at those comments. We all know that. No
17 one looked at that. No one tried to take their
18 feedback into consideration. And why even have
19 a public comment period if you're going to
20 dismiss all of their comments when they're
21 clearly one direction.

22 But the fact is that's treating them
23 with contempt. And I would say this, if you're
24 wondering how it could get to that point, I
25 mean, in politics you would think that elected

1 officials would never want to treat the voters
2 of their state with disrespect. That would lead
3 to them being ousted, but the fact is, we're not
4 just rigging the districts today.

5 This House is the product of rigged
6 districts, and everything that you see happening
7 is a product of what happens when politicians
8 pick their voters. It is a General Assembly who
9 despite rigging every district to make sure
10 Republicans control their body regardless of
11 what the people think still can't pass a budget.

12 Ruined healthcare in this state. It is
13 now the worst in the country for healthcare
14 costs. 48th in the country for school funding,
15 and rural schools in particular are being hit by
16 that, the very districts many members of the
17 Republican Party represent.

18 This is the result of rigging electoral
19 districts to isolate the members of the
20 legislature and now our members of congress even
21 more from ever having to answer to the people.
22 It is the opposite of what democracy is meant to
23 be, and it is the opposite of our founding
24 principles, that we are accountable to the
25 people, and that when they get mad at the way

1 we're running things, they can remove us and
2 they can pick somebody else who they think will
3 do it better, and we get better and we get
4 better over time.

5 The people in North Carolina are crying
6 out for something real in their leaders,
7 something selfless, and yet with acts like this,
8 you show them the worst of our politics, the
9 absolute worst of it. Selfish power grabs
10 designed to exclude the public from the process
11 to exalt and protect your own power and real
12 people suffer for the wanting.

13 My message to the people of
14 North Carolina is simple: It doesn't have to be
15 like this. Your state legislature does not have
16 to be an utter mess. You deserve a legislature
17 that works together on driving down the highest
18 healthcare costs in the country. You deserve
19 one that funds your schools. You deserve a
20 budget that gets passed, roads that get built,
21 and a DMV that functions.

22 All of that is possible, but these
23 rigged maps, state and federal, are why you
24 can't have it, but in all of this, I have faith
25 in one thing, and it's the people of

1 North Carolina. They should not have to
2 overcome you. They shouldn't have to overcome
3 maps rigged against them. They shouldn't have
4 to overcome their representatives consistently
5 working to exclude the public from every aspect
6 of participation.

7 But I have faith that they will
8 overcome it. And when they do, instead of petty
9 revenge and a different set of bad maps that go
10 the other way, we will put forth a
11 constitutional amendment to end this absolute
12 corruption once and for all, to make crystal
13 clear that legislators serve the people. And
14 for all the complaining about Democrats in other
15 far-off states doing what you don't like, let's
16 make it a federal constitutional amendment.
17 I'll sign it. I'll tour the country with you.
18 If you don't like it in Illinois, we can end it
19 there too.

20 At the end of the day and at the end of
21 our lives, each of us should strive to be people
22 who help others overcome the darkness, and we
23 all have to check ourselves to make sure that
24 we're not becoming it.

25 SPEAKER HALL: The gentleman from

1 Wayne, Representative Bell, is recognized for a
2 motion.

3 REPRESENTATIVE BELL: Thank you,
4 Mr. Speaker. I move the previous question.

5 SPEAKER HALL: Sergeant-at-arms will
6 clear the gallery.

7 Now, back to the motion.

8 The gentleman from Wayne,
9 Representative Bell, has moved the previous
10 question. The motion is not debatable.

11 The question before the House is
12 representative -- the approval of
13 Representative Bell's motion of the previous
14 question.

15 All those in favor of the motion will
16 vote aye, all those opposed will vote no. The
17 clerk will open the vote.

18 The clerk will lock the machine and
19 record the vote.

20 65 having voted in the affirmative and
21 49 in the negative, the motion carries.

22 The majority and minority leaders each
23 get three minutes to speak. Majority leader is
24 waiving their three minutes.

25 Representative Reives, who's the chair,

1 want to have recognized for the three minutes.

2 REPRESENTATIVE REIVES: I will do the
3 speaking. Thank you.

4 SPEAKER HALL: The gentleman from
5 Chatham, Representative Reives, is recognized to
6 debate the bill.

7 REPRESENTATIVE REIVES: Okay. And what
8 I will say is this so. I know I've got to be
9 quick.

10 10:30 we were here ready to do
11 business, and we start at 11:30. 11:30 we were
12 thinking we have a little time to debate. We
13 don't. I want to express on behalf of the
14 caucus, that's pretty frustrating. This is
15 serious. So I will try to be as concise as
16 possible.

17 I will tell you what I told you in
18 committee yesterday. I'm not getting into
19 fairness. I'm not getting into what should or
20 shouldn't happen. I'm not getting into process.
21 We've decided to be who we're going to be.

22 Here's what I am telling you. One day
23 it's you. I'm scared. I'm not angry. I am
24 frightened.

25 Indiana Senate Republicans say they do

1 not have votes to pass midcycle redistricting
2 despite a pressure campaign from the
3 White House, according to a spokesperson for
4 Senate President Pro Tem Rodric Bray. How was
5 he answered? An immediate answer from a
6 campaign manager -- campaign manager, not an
7 elected official, who said, oh, yeah, now the
8 real fun begins.

9 I don't know any other way to interpret
10 that if I'm the president pro tem of that senate
11 expect I just got threatened.

12 It feels good when you're doing it for
13 somebody that you like, but everything we do in
14 this building has to be done based on what
15 happens when it's a guy I don't like. And I'm
16 going to tell you guys a secret. I'm lucky
17 enough to be in the Democratic Party so I know
18 full well how much people can dislike you, even
19 in your own party.

20 Don Davis is getting drawn out for one
21 simple reason. There may be other reasons, and
22 that's for other people to discuss. Do you know
23 why Don Davis is going home? Because he had the
24 nerve to say northeastern North Carolina can't
25 survive with these Medicaid cuts. Northeastern

1 North Carolina cannot survive with these
2 education cuts. I have got to put my
3 constituents first.

4 And you know the sad thing, Don Davis
5 was always called one of the good ones by a lot
6 of people in this chamber. He was a good one,
7 and he's going home. Don Davis busted his
8 behind when he was here to work both sides. He
9 busted his behind to compromise, and he's going
10 home.

11 And I can go ahead and tell you, Rodric
12 Bray can go ahead and count his days. He's
13 getting primaried and he's going home.

14 I said yesterday John Bolton is under
15 indictment. James Comey is under indictment.
16 And I know that's not a big deal to anybody now
17 because you're like, look, I'm going to stay on
18 the good side, but what happens when it's your
19 district. What happens when the people who put
20 you up here say we can't do what they're asking
21 us to do.

22 You're right, it's been transparent,
23 but I'm not going to get into why we're doing
24 this because I'm not in the room. I know what
25 the news has reported. I know what the quid pro

1 quo is supposed to be for this, and what I know
2 is the House didn't draw this map, the House
3 wasn't asked their opinion, and the House is
4 getting nothing out of this except for to be
5 able to say that we are doing what we've been
6 asked to do.

7 What I can say candidly is this -- and
8 I remember this as clear as day. My eight years
9 out of 11 were spent with Roy Cooper. And I
10 can't tell you how many times I sat there and
11 listened to somebody say don't you just do what
12 Roy Cooper says, he's not your boss, you're in
13 the legislature. I mean, I think I heard that
14 every week.

15 And I replied, I like Roy Cooper a lot,
16 but he doesn't tell me what to do. I do what I
17 think is best for my folks back home. Because
18 ultimately whatever he feels about me, there's
19 going to be another governor. Whatever he feels
20 about me, there's going to be other people I
21 have to answer to. And whatever he feels about
22 me, the most important people in my life need to
23 be able to look me in the face and then look
24 their friends and family in the face and say
25 whether you agree with them or not, he did what

1 he thought was going to help you guys out. And
2 that's done. That ends today.

3 Because you can't tell me that out of
4 71 members there's not one district that's
5 getting hurt right now by the present agenda.
6 This isn't about how you feel about this person.
7 There's always going to be another person.
8 We've had members serve for 40 years up here.
9 Do you know how many presidents and governors
10 those members go through? But this body stays
11 because we are the last line of defense for this
12 state. We are the last line of defense for the
13 people who got us here.

14 Do you know how hard -- all of you have
15 been through this that have been in rural
16 counties. Do you know how hard it is to lift
17 yourself up when everything is lined up against
18 you? Do you know how many good benefits, lucky
19 breaks you've got to get to end up -- how you
20 end up here? And do you know how many times one
21 thing going bad, one bit of government money not
22 showing up, one program, one service not being
23 there and you're back home and you're working
24 somewhere, you're making \$7.40 an hour because
25 you didn't know the right people at the right

1 time.

2 And that's not what this country was
3 built on, and it is shocking to me, it is
4 shocking to me where we are right now.

5 This is easy. If you are Republican in
6 this state and in this country, you can run
7 anything. Every last one of you can stand up
8 and say, nah, I'm not doing this. And you know
9 what can happen to you? Nothing. You've got a
10 working supermajority according to the
11 newspapers. You can pass any bill at any time,
12 do anything you want. And we're passing a bill
13 right now for somebody that won't even sit in
14 the room and talk to you about the budget which
15 is the only job we've got.

16 And I don't know why and I don't care
17 why and it's not my business, but at some point
18 in time, I'm not telling anybody they're going
19 to lose office. I'm not telling you that the
20 voters are going to make you pay. I don't know
21 what the voters are going to do. I never know.

22 What I do know is this: There is
23 somebody you care about back home who is going
24 to suffer with these cuts. There's somebody who
25 is going to die because of these cuts. There is

1 some brilliant child at home whose chances are
2 now cut off because they're just not going to
3 have the money for a school, they're just not
4 going to have the ability to go to a university,
5 they're just not going to have the ability
6 because their ability is in science and there's
7 no science jobs at home and they can't leave.
8 And I can't feel good about that.

9 So I appreciate Don Davis. I
10 appreciate Tom Tillis who is being sent home who
11 used to be right up there. Tom Tillis is the
12 reason half of the Republican caucus is here
13 right now. Tom Tillis is one of five people who
14 created the supermajority, and he's having to go
15 home because he's like my people can't take
16 this.

17 So this isn't about how you feel about
18 this president. I'm not getting into that. The
19 last president everybody felt like was a great
20 president was George Washington, and even George
21 Washington said, I could stay in this office for
22 the rest of my life, but I'm not because that's
23 not what's good for this country. We have won
24 the war for independence, and we're going to be
25 better than England.

1 Think about that. We talk about blood,
2 sweat, and tears. He actually bled. He
3 actually sweated. He actually risked execution.
4 And then he had an entire country in his hands,
5 and he said, I am stepping away because it's the
6 right thing to do because just because I have
7 the power to do something doesn't mean that I
8 should do that.

9 And we're completely the opposite now.
10 We have taken the position that we got the power
11 to do, we can do whatever the hell we want now.

12 And Representative Quick made a great
13 point that, you know, this switches and stuff.
14 I don't even care about that any more. I don't
15 know if this ever switches. I don't know if
16 this ever changes. I don't even know if we're
17 going to have elections in four years. But what
18 I know is as long as I'm allowed to serve the
19 people of my district --

20 SPEAKER HALL: Representative Reives,
21 the gentleman is beyond eight minutes. I don't
22 think I've ever cut you off, but I would ask you
23 to wrap up your comments.

24 REPRESENTATIVE REIVES: And I
25 understand, and I am expressing a lot of points

1 that would have been made by a lot of people on
2 this side because they're angry and upset. The
3 Senate debated for hours. And I appreciate
4 where you're coming from, Mr. Speaker. It is
5 just -- I can't watch it die like this, but it
6 seems like I'm going to have to.

7 But what I would ask -- what I would
8 ask is you mark this day, mark this day because
9 one day they're coming to you and they're going
10 to ask you to do something that you just can't
11 do, and because we have set the precedent that
12 only one person in the party matters, you're
13 going home.

14 You've got a chance to vote no. Be
15 like Indiana. Be like all these other states
16 that just say, nah, we're just not doing this or
17 we've got a chance to do what we're told and
18 then one day look up and say, God, I wish that
19 hadn't have happened. I wish I had taken that
20 moment. Thank you.

21 SPEAKER HALL: The question before the
22 House is the passage of Senate Bill Substitute
23 Senate Bill 249 on second reading.

24 All those in favor will vote aye, all
25 those opposed will vote no. The clerk will open

1 the vote.

2 The clerk will lock the machine and
3 record the vote.

4 66 having voted in the affirmative and
5 48 in the negative, the Senate Committee
6 Substitute Senate Bill 249 having passed its
7 second reading. It will be read a third time.

8 THE CLERK: The General Assembly of
9 North Carolina enacts.

10 SPEAKER HALL: The question before the
11 House is the passage of Senate Committee
12 Substitute Senate Bill 249 on its third reading.

13 All those in favor will say aye.

14 All those opposed no.

15 The ayes have it. The Senate Committee
16 Substitute Senate Bill 249 having passed its
17 third reading will be ordered enrolled.

18 Members, the rules committee is going
19 to meet immediately upon us going into recess,
20 which we are about to do. It's 12:41, so chair
21 intends to begin session at 1:40 --

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker.

23 SPEAKER HALL: Just one second. I may
24 answer your question. Give me one second.

25 So we will back in at 1:40. And the

1 chair will just ask staff as quickly as you can
2 to get those bills back up here, but I don't
3 anticipate that 1:40 session lasting more than
4 20 minutes or so.

5 And, of course, Representative Reives
6 will have all those bills ahead of time to the
7 extent he doesn't have them now.

8 For what purpose does the gentleman
9 from Halifax, Representative Pierce, rise?

10 REPRESENTATIVE PIERCE: Mr. Speaker, I
11 rise to state a protest on Article 2, Section 18
12 of the North Carolina Constitution.

13 SPEAKER HALL: So noted.

14 For what purpose does the gentleman
15 from Durham, Representative Hawkins, rise?

16 For what purpose does the lady from
17 New Hanover, Representative Butler, rise?

18 REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER: I likewise rise
19 to raise a constitutional challenge, sir, under
20 Article 2, Section 18.

21 SPEAKER HALL: Noted.

22 For what purpose does the lady from
23 Mecklenburg, Representative Bell, rise?

24 REPRESENTATIVE BELL: Mr. Speaker, I do
25 too rise to make a protest under the -- pursuant

1 to Article 2, Section 18, of the North Carolina
2 Constitution.

3 SPEAKER HALL: The chair presumes all
4 the lights on right now have constitutional
5 arguments they wish to make, and those will be
6 so noted.

7 Does anybody have any concerns that are
8 not constitutional in nature?

9 Seeing none, the House will now be in
10 recess until 1:40 p.m.

11 (Recess.)
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STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA)
) C E R T I F I C A T E
COUNTY OF WAKE)

I, DENISE MYERS BYRD, Stenographic Court Reporter, CSR 8340, do hereby certify that the transcription of the recorded House Chamber related to Senate Bill 249, held on October 22, 2025, was taken down by me stenographically to the best of my ability and thereafter transcribed under my supervision; and that the foregoing pages, inclusive, constitute a true and accurate transcription of said recording.

Signed this the 4th day of November
2025.

Denise Myers Byrd, CSR 8340