

1 SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK  
2 NEW YORK COUNTY: CIVIL TERM : PART 63

3 -----x  
4 PAUL NICHOLS, GAVIN WAX, AND GARY GREENBERG,

INDEX NO.  
154213-2022

5 Petitioners,

6 V.

7 GOVERNOR KATHY HOCHUL; SENATE MAJORITY LEADER  
8 AND PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE OF THE SENATE, ANDREA  
9 STEWART COUSINS; SPEAKER OF THE ASSEMBLY, CARL  
10 HEASTIE; NEW YORK STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS, AND  
11 THE NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON  
12 DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH AND REAPPORTIONMENT,

13 Respondents.

14 -----x  
15 60 Centre Street  
16 New York, New York

17 September 16, 2022

18 B E F O R E: HONORABLE LAURENCE L. LOVE,  
19 J U S T I C E

20 A P P E A R A N C E S:

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24 BY: Timothy Hill, Esq.

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Alecia Hines,  
Senior Court Reporter

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1 COURT OFFICER: Come to order.

2 THE COURT: Good morning. Please be seated.

3 Good morning, all. I see we have a slightly fuller house  
4 than last time which makes sense under the circumstances.  
5 But we're here again in the action of Paul Nichols, et al.,  
6 versus Governor Kathy Hochul, et al., index 154213 of 2022.

7 I just want to again just get clear for the record,  
8 first, counsel for the petitioner, just have your  
9 appearance.

10 MR. DEVLIN: Peter Devlin for Walden, Macht and  
11 Haran.

12 MR. WALDEN: Jim Walden for Walden, Macht and Haran.  
13 Good morning, Judge.

14 THE COURT: Good morning.

15 MR. FOLDENAUER: Aaron Foldenauer. Law office of  
16 Aaron S. Foldenauer for petitioner, Gavin Wax.

17 THE COURT: And on behalf respondents.

18 MR. BUCKI: Yes, good morning, your Honor. Craig  
19 Bucki from Phillips Lyte, LLP, in Buffalo, New York on  
20 behalf of Assembly Speaker Heastie. And I should say that  
21 in the gallery with me today are my co-counsel, also  
22 representing Speaker Heastie, C. Daniel Chill, and Elaine  
23 Reich from the Graubard Miller Law Firm, also on behalf of  
24 the Speaker.

25 MR. FARBER: Good morning, your Honor. Seth Farber

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1 with the Attorney General's Office for Governor Hochul.

2 MR. HECKER: Eric Hecker from Cuti, Hecker, Wang, on  
3 behalf of the senate majority leader.

4 THE COURT: And I know notices of appearance were  
5 uploaded yesterday on behalf of additional respondents  
6 related to the order to show cause that is the subject of  
7 today's appearance.

8 Can I just have counsel who filed the notice of  
9 appearances identify themselves.

10 MR. ERSHOW: Yes, your Honor. My name is Jeremy  
11 Ershow. I'm here on behalf of Commissioners Imamura, Elaine  
12 Frazier and Cuevas-Molina. I've moved for the pro hac  
13 admission of my colleague, Jess Amunson, who's here with me  
14 today. If your Honor would like to correct that motion,  
15 Ms. Amunson is prepared to speak today as the primary  
16 speaker on behalf of those parties.

17 THE COURT: Understood. And, Counsel, I think you  
18 also filed a similar motion on behalf of attorney Samuel  
19 Hirsch, is that accurate?

20 MR. ERSHOW: Yes, your Honor.

21 THE COURT: All right. We'll certainly get to the  
22 that momentarily. I notice, notice of appearance was also  
23 filed on behalf of some of the other commissioners.

24 MR. HILL: That's correct, your Honor. Good  
25 morning.

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1 Timothy Hill for the commissioners Conway, Harris, Nesbit,  
2 Stephens, and Brady.

3 THE COURT: Just to clarify. I know there was one  
4 other commissioner that was listed within the affidavit of  
5 service which was a Eugene Benger. I did not see anyone who  
6 had filed a notice of appearances on behalf of that  
7 commissioner. If you can speak to that?

8 MR. ERSHOW: Yes. I can speak to that, your Honor.  
9 Mr. Benger was previously a member of the commission. He is  
10 no longer a member of the commission as of one or two weeks  
11 ago. His replacement has been named a commissioner,  
12 Mr. Yovan Collado.

13 THE COURT: Do you or your colleague have the  
14 spelling?

15 MR. ERSHOW: Yes, we do. C-O-L-L-A-D-O.

16 THE COURT: All right. Thank you, counselor. All  
17 right, good morning to all counsel. Obviously, we're here  
18 related to the --

19 I'm not going to rehash everything all over again  
20 because we've obviously been through it at prior  
21 appearances. But just a short version.

22 Again, back on June 10th of this year the Appellate  
23 Division modified my earlier decision which went back to  
24 May 27th of this year, essentially, remanding the case back  
25 to me to address the issue of how best to proceed per the

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1 state constitutional requirements in terms of procedurally  
2 redistricting of the assembly lines for the 2024 election  
3 cycle.

4 Based on that, everyone was here before me back on  
5 August 24th, and I received, both, written positions as well  
6 as oral argument from the petitioners and respondents at  
7 that time. The respondents had, as part of that process,  
8 sought --

9 It was their belief that the Court should be adding an  
10 independent redistricting commission as a party to the  
11 action.

12 I heard the views of both sides on that date. I  
13 received proposed language for that order to show cause.  
14 And as both parties are aware, on to following day, on  
15 August 25th, I did sign off on an order to show cause which  
16 kept things, frankly, relatively limited just in terms of  
17 essentially putting before the Court of whether the  
18 independent redistricting commission should be added to  
19 these proceedings. I know everyone was properly served, and  
20 the affidavit of service was appropriately filed on  
21 August 26th.

22 Following that process, I know a number of documents  
23 were uploaded to NYSCEF yesterday. It ran from document  
24 number 122 to 168. So before we get into the substance of  
25 the order to show cause, I know within those filings there

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1 were two separate motions filed by counsel on behalf of  
2 several of the commissioners seeking to have, both, and I  
3 apologize if I mispronounce it. Is it Amunson?

4 MS. AMUNSON: Yes, Amunson.

5 THE COURT: Ms. Amunson, as well as motion sequence  
6 number five to add Mr. Hirsch, both, to serve to be able to  
7 appear pro hac vice in this matter.

8 I know everything was obviously literally just filed  
9 yesterday, but was there any objection from any parties to  
10 the Court granting that.

11 MR. DEVLIN: Your Honor, no objection from  
12 petitioners.

13 THE COURT: And respondents?

14 MR. BUCKI: No objection on behalf of the Speaker.

15 THE COURT: All right. So based on that,  
16 obviously, there will be a written order which will be  
17 uploaded, but I can clarify for the bench here now that the  
18 Court is going to grant pro hac vice status to both of those  
19 individuals.

20 So with that said, Counsel, if you want to put your  
21 appearance on the record, I'll let you.

22 MS. AMUNSON: Thank you, your Honor. Good morning.  
23 Jessica Ring Amunson from Jenner and Block for commissioners  
24 Imamura, Frazier, Cuevas-Molina.

25 Thank you.

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1 THE COURT: All right. Good morning.

2 all right, so let me do this, because we're obviously  
3 kind-of covering several different items here.

4 First, I think --

5 Let me hear first, if I could, from counsel on behalf  
6 of the three commissioners, the Chair and Ms. Frazier and  
7 Cuevas-Molina.

8 So, Counsel, if you can just --

9 I do know what was filed, but if you want to just  
10 share, and clarify what the position is of your client.

11 MS. AMUNSON: Yes, your Honor. My clients do not  
12 oppose the commission being named as a respondent to this  
13 matter, which was the subject of your Honor's order to show  
14 cause. They, additionally, suggest that your Honor also  
15 name as additional respondents the individual commissioners.  
16 And along with our filing, we submitted affidavits from two  
17 commissioners who were not named in your Honor's order to  
18 show cause, but who are members of the commission, and who,  
19 if named as respondents, would intend to retain us as their  
20 counsel, and to join commissioners Imamura, Frazier, and  
21 Cuevas-Molina in position that they have taken before this  
22 Court.

23 THE COURT: All right. And, Counsel, I did see  
24 those affidavits was were uploaded as well. But, again, for  
25 the record, if you can just clarify who those two

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1 individuals are.

2 MS. AMUNSON: Of course, your Honor. It's  
3 Dr. John Flateau, and Yovan Collado.

4 THE COURT: All right.

5 And I know Dr. Flateau was previously a commissioner,  
6 and then was recently appointed by the senate majority on  
7 August 1st, right?

8 MS. AMUNSON: That's correct, your Honor. He served  
9 throughout the 2020 redistricting cycle three, then  
10 resigned, then was reappointed on August 1st.

11 THE COURT: Okay. Thank you, Counsel.

12 All right. And I'll turn next to counsel for the  
13 remaining commissioners. I know that you did file a notice  
14 of appearance on behalf of those individuals. I did not see  
15 anything else that had been filed, so I'll hear from you at  
16 this time.

17 MR. HILL: That's correct. Thank you, your Honor.

18 So on behalf of commissioners, we do not oppose relief  
19 sought by the order to show cause which was to add the  
20 commission as a respondent. If that also means that the  
21 individual commissioners would be added, I think that makes  
22 sense.

23 THE COURT: Yes. I wanted to clarify that, as  
24 well.

25 Would you have any objection if the individual

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1 commissioners were included in that?

2 MR. HILL: No.

3 THE COURT: Thank you. So with that said, I guess  
4 we'll turn back to the petitioner's side.

5 Was there anything from anyone of you? We obviously  
6 went through things in detail in the last appearance in  
7 terms of some substantive matters. But with that said, is  
8 there anything you wanted to add based on today's  
9 proceedings?

10 MR. DEVLIN: Thank you, your Honor.

11 Peter Devlin on behalf of the petitioners. I want to  
12 first note that it does not seem we have the entire IRC  
13 before us today, so it is premature to hear all of their  
14 views. We urge the Court to --

15 THE COURT: Who are we missing?

16 MR. DEVLIN: We're missing two of the members, I  
17 believe. Have they been added now as respondents, and  
18 appear --

19 THE COURT: Well, just to be clear, the order to  
20 show cause that I signed was specifically for the  
21 commission, itself, without listing the specific individual  
22 commissioners as named parties. But, obviously, all of  
23 those commissioners were served for the proceedings at this  
24 time, heard from the two counsels, or between the two of  
25 them represented, you know, indicate that they represent all

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1 of those commissioners, and that they have no objection to  
2 adding individually as well as the commission, itself, being  
3 added as a party.

4 MR. DEVLIN: Understood. And we only urge the  
5 Court to hear their views on the constitutionality of the  
6 remedy that respondents seek here before making a ruling.

7 THE COURT: Well, Counsel, I'm still --  
8 As we discussed last time, I'm following the Appellate  
9 Division's previous order which was for me to issue a new  
10 order to follow what I believe is the constitutional  
11 requirement. So I'm taking it as a given that the  
12 commission, if they're asked to do so, they will follow  
13 their constitutional duties as members of the commission.

14 MR. DEVLIN: I take that as a given, as well.

15 THE COURT: Right.

16 MR. DEVLIN: And with respect to the commission's  
17 positions, I just want to point out that five of the members  
18 have taken a position that the remedy that respondents seek  
19 here for the IRC to convene and redraw the map, and submit  
20 it to the legislature is not a constitutional remedy. So I  
21 want to make that clear for the record. They made this  
22 position up in the Albany case.

23 THE COURT: I was just gonna say, you're referring  
24 to the Albany litigation that I believe the judge issued a  
25 decision on this past Monday, I believe, dismissing that

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1 action.

2 MR. DEVLIN: Yes, your Honor.

3 THE COURT: All right. And that was --

4 Well, you know, obviously, I'm aware of that litigation,  
5 and everything that was filed in it by concluding the  
6 position of some commission members. But, frankly, I don't  
7 see the two cases as related. And they were addressing much  
8 different issues, in that case that the Albany case was  
9 dealing with the congressional and state senate lines that  
10 the Court of Appeals had already clearly spoken to. And,  
11 you know, that process, obviously, was already completed

12 Specifically, for the situation with the assembly  
13 lines, we're dealing with the decision. So thus far of what  
14 the Court of Appeals has said, and Appellate Division are  
15 matters of record at this stage, as well.

16 So but with that said, I'm certainly aware of what  
17 transpired in that case.

18 MR. DEVLIN: Yes, your Honor. I agree that there  
19 are some differences between the cases, but the relevant  
20 similarities apply to the position that this commission has  
21 taken which is that the respondents there asked for the IRC  
22 to reconvene and redraw the map. And what the five  
23 commissioners said, and I'll quote from their brief,  
24 "The arguments suggested by the instant petition have  
25 already been thoroughly foreclosed, not only by the plain

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1 language in the constitution, but by no lesser authority  
2 than the Court of Appeals. The last date that the IRC could  
3 have possibly, and lawfully submitted a second set of maps  
4 the legislature was under the explicit language of the  
5 constitution February 28, 2022, six months ago. This  
6 deadline, as the Court of Appeals emphatically noted, has  
7 long since passed."

8 So we with just want to emphasize that if they take a  
9 contrary position in this Court that there is a  
10 contradiction between the position that they've taken in the  
11 of Hoffman case.

12 THE COURT: Understood, Counsel. Thank you.

13 MR. DEVLIN: Thank you.

14 MR. FOLDENAUER: Aaron Foldenauer on behalf of  
15 petitioner Gavin Wax.

16 Petitioner Gavin Wax objects to the addition of the  
17 IRC and its members as a party as a necessary because  
18 petitioners respectfully submit that the IRC should not  
19 reconvene and draw the maps.

20 Of course, even if they are added as a party, the  
21 question still stands, Should the IRC actually redraw the  
22 maps?

23 And, of course, there was a hearing a month ago, and  
24 we stand on the arguments we submitted on paper, and that  
25 were made by my co-counsel, Mr. Jim Walden. In particular,

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1 Section 4(e) of New York City State constitution which  
2 clearly states that a court-ordered remedy is required at  
3 this juncture. And we believe that Justice Lynch's decision  
4 in the Albany action is highly relevant.

5 What Justice Lynch refers to at the end of his  
6 decision is, quote, stability in the election process,  
7 unquote. And we respectfully submit that having the IRC  
8 reconvene now would undermine stability in the election  
9 process. Because in the future 10 years from now, the IRC  
10 will again be incentivize to punt, not reach an agreement  
11 because they will know that a court is then willing to give  
12 the IRC, quote, unquote, another chance.

13 THE COURT: Counsel, I suspect--although I've been  
14 surprised before--but I suspect that before the next  
15 election cycle post, the next census occurs that there  
16 potentially might be some tweaking to the current  
17 constitutional provisions governing the IRC.

18 I'm obviously not privy to that, and I'm not looking  
19 to be privy to that. But what may occur --  
20 You know, we're dealing with essentially a one-off  
21 situation, and a very clear unique set of facts based on the  
22 decisions that have been made between the Appellate  
23 Division, and Court of Appeals where I'm solely looking at  
24 the election for lines to be drawn for the 2024-election  
25 cycle that would then obviously be in place for the

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1 remainder of this 10-year time period that I guess --  
2 eight-year time period by the time we get to put it  
3 into place. But what may happen in the future redistricting  
4 situations, I suspect some others may have something to say  
5 including, frankly, all of the people of the State of New  
6 York. It would not surprise me if somebody has some  
7 constitutional amendments proposed to that process before we  
8 go through this all again. But with that said, I certainly  
9 understand the concerns if everything does stay exactly as  
10 it is currently constituted.

11 MR. FOLDENAUER: I appreciate that, your Honor. And  
12 of course there may be changes to the constitution. But of  
13 course we have to assume that we have to work with the  
14 constitution that we have today.

15 THE COURT: Agreed.

16 MR. FOLDENAUER: And the process was set up with  
17 five republicans and five democrats where they would be  
18 forced to reach on agreement. I am worried about the  
19 incentives that this would cause for the commission to,  
20 again, kick the can down the road because a Court would  
21 then, okay, say give you another chance. Give them another  
22 chance.

23 And I think there are also practical problems with  
24 reconvening the IRC. The IRC had a hard time getting  
25 funding last year, and ended up with \$4 million in funding

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1 for its staff and other expenses. So for the IRC to  
2 reconvene, that would result in a significant expense to the  
3 taxpayer, a much more significant expense than hiring a  
4 special master like Dr. Cervas who's very familiar with the  
5 state, and the districts as they are, and could readily  
6 redraw the lines.

7 Third, reconvening the IRC would be futile at this  
8 juncture. And that's a point that Justice Lynch made in his  
9 decision. He noted, quote, the record demonstration of the  
10 IRC's inherent ability to reach a consensus on a bipartisan  
11 plan, unquote, then concluding that for the IRC to submit,  
12 quote, a second plan would be futile. Exclamation point.  
13 And, of course, your Honor, I don't see exclamation points  
14 in court decisions very often.

15 And I would remind everyone here, and remind the  
16 Court, moving on to my third point, is that the futility of  
17 reconvening the IRC as demonstrated by an op-ed written by  
18 the chair, Mr. Imamura of IRC, himself.

19 And we'll remember when we were here several months  
20 ago, counsel for the speaker made a lot of hay out of tweets  
21 by my client, Gavin Wax, who is here today in the peach tie,  
22 and also by Gary Greenberg concerning their knowledge of the  
23 litigation. And that was one of the reasons I believe that  
24 the Court initially denied the relief that we requested.

25 So in order to be fair, we also have to look to the

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1 statements of the IRC, itself, as to whether it even makes  
2 sense for IRC to reconvene.

3 And in City and State, which is a prestigious  
4 political publication here in New York, Mr. Imamura, and we  
5 submitted this to the Court last night, made several key  
6 very important statements.

7 He first said that, quote, The new process fails  
8 spectacularly, unquote. He said further, quote, It is the  
9 commission's structure established by the state's  
10 constitution that is actually to blame. Unquote. He  
11 further noted that because there were five democrats and  
12 five republicans on the commission, he said, and I quote,  
13 The commission essentially could not buy pens or paperclips  
14 with all 10 commissioners agreeing, unquote. He said that  
15 the commission had very different views on how a district  
16 should be drawn.

17 And then most critically, and this is towards the  
18 bottom of page two on the copy that was submitted to the  
19 Court yesterday, Mr. Imamura, again, the chair of the IRC  
20 said, and I quote, New York's current redistricting process  
21 is doomed to fail. A politically appointed evenly divided  
22 redistricting commission will never be able to come up with  
23 a single set of maps, unquote.

24 Your Honor, we believe that the constitution is clear  
25 for the reasons previously submitted. And then on top of

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1       that, you have the practical problems, and the admitted  
2       futility of this process by the chair, Mr. Imamura.

3               THE COURT: Counsel, I'm aware of it. I saw the  
4       article that was uploaded with the quotes. I will note, I  
5       believe that article which came out, I think, in early May  
6       of 2022 was referring to all of the maps collectively in  
7       terms of the, at that time, the congressional senate and  
8       assembly.

9               Certainly, whatever may be filed in the future in  
10      this matter, or not, and how things play out, and obviously  
11      I have not issued a written decision yet, and, frankly, I'm  
12      going to be endeavoring to issue a decision as quickly as  
13      possible so that everyone knows how to move forward in this  
14      matter, but the fact that the commission will solely be  
15      potential relief if they are given the job to do again would  
16      only be addressing the assembly maps rather than issues that  
17      they had to deal with the congressional and state senate  
18      maps.

19              I would certainly hope if they are given that task  
20      again, that even five democrats and five republicans will  
21      somehow figure out a way to do what they were charged to do.  
22      And, frankly, if they don't, then as we discussed, you know,  
23      at the prior appearance, if they don't do that, it will at  
24      that point certainly end up back before the Court and, you  
25      know, other remedies will have to come into place if it gets

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1 to that, if that is the way that I ultimately rule.

2 But I certainly appreciate and understand the concerns  
3 that you have with how the process failed to work the first  
4 time around, and, obviously, everything that flowed from  
5 that. But I do understand.

6 MR. FOLDENAUER: I appreciate, your Honor. And it's  
7 a note of caution for the Court because then this Court owns  
8 the process by whatever process this Court launches.

9 And I would note the assembly has more districts than  
10 any of the other state senate and congressional. There is  
11 150 districts to argue.

12 THE COURT: I understand that. I appreciate that.

13 MR. FOLDENAUER: I appreciate that. And two other  
14 points, your Honor, and that might be it subject to the  
15 Court's comments.

16 THE COURT: Hopefully, it will.

17 MR. FOLDENAUER: Yes. Number one, I actually  
18 haven't even heard the actual substantive position of any of  
19 the 10 commissioners as far as whether the commission should  
20 be asked to redraw the lines. I've heard them say today  
21 that they don't object to them being added as parties, but  
22 that's very different than should. And that might be  
23 helpful to the Court particularly in light of this article.  
24 There's no evidence, or even suggestion that they actually  
25 want to take on this task, or would be effective. So

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1 without that, I feel like this, what we see here in black  
2 and white in this article would govern.

3 And then I would urge the Court, in whatever order  
4 that the Court issues to outline what would happen next.  
5 Let's assume--and, again, we argue that special master  
6 should--but what if the IRC --

7 What if the Court orders the IRC to reconvene, and  
8 then they fail to reach an agreement, then it definitely  
9 should be a special master at that point, the petitioner  
10 would submit. Because then you get to the point where  
11 you're giving the legislature a second chance which isn't  
12 outlined anywhere in the constitution.

13 THE COURT: I understand. Thank you.

14 MR. FOLDENAUER: Thank you, your Honor.

15 THE COURT: Thank you.

16 MR. WALDEN: I apologize, your Honor. I swore to  
17 the nice court reporter I was going to do my best to keep  
18 mouth shut. May I just be heard very briefly?

19 THE COURT: Briefly.

20 MR. WALDEN: Very briefly. And may I stay seated,  
21 your Honor? I'm have some back problems. I don't mean any  
22 disrespect to the Court.

23 THE COURT: You may.

24 MR. WALDEN: Three minutes or less, your Honor.

25 The respondents are now taking the position that the

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1 judicial oversight and creation of the new map is  
2 unconstitutional, right. So you have two choices; one, is  
3 clearly all of the parties agree that would be  
4 constitutional. They advise against it. But there's the  
5 second path that you're thinking about, your Honor. And I  
6 just want to be clear that the First Department --

7 What we're gonna do is we're gonna submit the Albany  
8 litigation. It is on all fours, right. The issue that they  
9 conceded in that litigation is on all fours.

10 And so, your Honor, I just can you to do three things  
11 because I think these three things ultimately would be the  
12 procedural reason that First Department sends it back to you  
13 anyway. And so the three things are as follows:

14 Not the attorney general's office, nor the IRC has  
15 opined on the constitutionality of reconvening. We say that  
16 it is not appropriate. We say that the Court, respectfully,  
17 is misreading or is taking out of context the small little  
18 reference in the Appellate Division's order.

19 THE COURT: It's a relatively short order.

20 MR. WALDEN: It is a relatively short order, your  
21 Honor. And, your Honor, I understand that Court's position.  
22 I'm not gonna reargue it. But without the attorney  
23 general's position, and the IRC's position on the  
24 constitutionality of reconvening, the First Department is  
25 just doing to send it back here for that in any event

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1       because that was the whole reason that we, although  
2       maintaining our objections, wanted to participate in this  
3       process because we believed that the IRC would say sorry,  
4       but we can't do this under the constitution, that's number  
5       one;

6               Number two, before your Honor issues an order, I want  
7       to be clear, your Honor, that Mr. Foldenauer's point of  
8       futility is critical. We want Mr. Imamura in a chair. We  
9       want to examine him because it is a waste of the Court's  
10      time, a waste of taxpayer money--

11             All of these people are being paid on the respondents'  
12      side with public money. And it's a waste of time to prolong  
13      this through a process that IRC, itself, has said is doomed  
14      to fail.

15             Third, your Honor, when you eventually get to whatever  
16      your order is, you know, ample finding as Mr. Foldenauer  
17      said, please, your Honor, make sure it's clear who owns the  
18      process because they're trying to be clever by having you  
19      invoke the constitution with the idea that the legislature's  
20      vote is the end of the process. And that can't be right.  
21      That would be an automatic reversal.

22             Even if the Court essentially, the way I'm looking at  
23      this, using the IRC as the first cut, but ultimately, you  
24      have to oversee and approve the map. There has to be  
25      briefing by the parties, and then the decision is gonna come

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1 from you. And ultimately, it's gonna be your map, your  
2 Honor. And if that's not clear in your order, I'd ask that  
3 you make that clear because we think that, that is a  
4 critically important part of the process for everyone.

5 THE COURT: Thank you.

6 MR. WALDEN: Is that short enough, your Honor?

7 THE COURT: You did a good job.

8 MR. WALDEN: Thank you.

9 THE COURT: All right, with that, I'll turn to the  
10 respondent.

11 MR. BUCKI: Yes, your Honor. But with respect to  
12 the process, we would submit the process should be what is  
13 prescribed in Article 3, Sections 4 and 5-b. And in as much  
14 as Mr. Walden may wish this were not the case, there is a  
15 role for the legislature to play.

16 And now we do recognize that once a plan is enacted by  
17 the legislature after the commission does its work, if the  
18 petitioners want to raise a substantive challenge to that  
19 map, they are certainly free to do so. But that should be  
20 hashed out at that time.

21 Right now, rather than doing what Mr. Walden suggests,  
22 the commission should simply be directed to do the work that  
23 is required to do, and that the legislature, likewise,  
24 should react to whatever the commission does in response to  
25 its duties under Article 3, Section 4 of the constitution.

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1 And that would be how I submit the Court should proceed.

2 THE COURT: Counsel, assuming you would concede  
3 that, and assuming I give the commission the opportunity to  
4 essentially get a second bite at the apple to do what they  
5 are charged to do under the constitution, and it follows  
6 through that process with the role of the legislature, if  
7 that process breaks down again, as it obviously did the  
8 first time around, I assume you would concede as per what's  
9 already been laid out from the Court of Appeals, etcetera,  
10 that it would in all likelihood at that juncture come back  
11 to me to in all likelihood utilize the special master, and  
12 do that work on an individual basis rather than the full  
13 commission with going through their roles --

14 MR. BUCKI: What I can say based upon the  
15 Harkenrider decision is that if there were a breakdown in  
16 the process such that there would not be from a procedural  
17 matter two sets of maps issued by the IRC, and further that  
18 there would not be enough time left for the IRC to do its  
19 work, which was precisely the problem with the congressional  
20 map, and senate map, and there was no time for IRC to fix  
21 the procedural issue, then in that instance, because it was  
22 required, given the exigencies of time, then yes, a special  
23 master needed to be appointed in that circumstance. But I  
24 would submit the circumstance in which we find ourselves  
25 with respect to the assembly map is very different.

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1 First of all, your Honor can retain jurisdiction over  
2 this matter and supervise the work of the IRC such that if  
3 there is a break down in the process, you Honor can be  
4 present to try to get all the commissioners in a room and  
5 move the process along to try to get them to be able to  
6 agree upon a map which that was not the case back in January  
7 and February. There was no judge overseeing the process.  
8 And indeed in the Harkenrider decision reference was made by  
9 Judge DiFiore to the fact that mandamus could have been  
10 sought against the commissioners to compel them to issue a  
11 new map here. As long as the Court retains jurisdiction,  
12 the Court can simply continue supervising the process.

13 In addition, in January and February the independent  
14 redistricting commission thought, I think, that the matter  
15 would go back to the legislature if they couldn't agree  
16 because the legislature in the fall of 2021 had enacted a  
17 statute that provided for the legislature to be able to act  
18 if there was, in fact, a breakdown in the commission  
19 structure.

20 And so it was pursuant to that statute that the  
21 legislature acted. That statute was determined later on in  
22 the Harkenrider decision to be invalidated. And so now the  
23 IRC knows the state of play. It isn't so new anymore such  
24 that the IRC knows that if there is a breakdown, the  
25 likelihood goes up that the Court will have to draw the map

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1       instead of the legislature having any role.

2               And further, in January and February, you had three  
3       maps at issue, congress, senate and assembly. Here, we're  
4       only talking about the assembly. And I'm privy to what the  
5       discussions were between and among the commissioners. But  
6       who knows what kind of trading or discussions were taking  
7       place between and among them viewing all of these three maps  
8       together in totality whereas now, pursuant to a new process,  
9       the IRC could simply focus on the assembly map, and the  
10      assembly map only.

11             And so for all those reasons, I would submit that all  
12      of the parade of horrors that Mr. Foldenauer complains  
13      about, that this is going to be a process doomed to fail,  
14      that is not necessarily true. And, in fact, Mr. Foldenauer  
15      knows that it isn't true because in response to the letter  
16      that he filed last night, it's my understanding, first of  
17      all, Commissioner Imamura, Mr. Foldenauer knows what  
18      Commissioner Imamura's position is going to be because on  
19      September 13th which was Tuesday earlier this week, there  
20      was a CLE program sponsored by the Bar Association of the  
21      City of New York. And the title of that CLE program was New  
22      York Redistricting. What happened? What's next? And would  
23      be of the panelists at that CLE was Commissioner Imamura.  
24      And it's my understanding, and we can certainly, I'm sure  
25      because it was that virtual program, get a copy of the video

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1 of that program. And it's my understanding that  
2 Commissioner Imamura said at that CLE that he believes that  
3 there would not be a breakdown in the process if the  
4 commission were charged with considering only the assembly  
5 maps, and that his position with respect to the assembly  
6 maps is very different from the position that he took in the  
7 city and state op-ed article.

8 And you want to know, Judge, Mr. Foldenauer was there  
9 as the CLE. We have friends in many different places. And  
10 so it's disingenuous for Mr. Foldenauer to come before this  
11 Court and misrepresent the position of Commissioner Imamura.

12 THE COURT: Well, what I will say is this,  
13 obviously, something that, you know --

14 quotes in an article what may have been said at a CLE  
15 program or, you know, any other kind of function is much  
16 different than something that may be put in a formal  
17 affidavit, you know, before the Court, or in any proceeding  
18 before the Court.

19 So I understand the descriptions of, you know, that  
20 both sides in terms of some individuals, but I'm obviously  
21 going to stick to what's actually put in appropriate papers  
22 by any of those individuals if it comes to it.

23 MR. BUCKI: And so I would say to the extent that  
24 the Court may choose to give any credence to anything  
25 Mr. Foldenauer represents, we would like an opportunity on a

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1 reasonable time frame to be able to respond in writing, but  
2 of course, we land that to the Court's discretion.

3 What I am prepared to say, though, concerning legal  
4 arguments is that, and I think we would be happy to brief  
5 this as well should the Court find it necessary, but the  
6 Hoffman case and this case are totally different cases.  
7 They're like comparing apples and oranges because in Hoffman  
8 what was requested was to replace a map that had been  
9 drafted by Dr. Cervas, the special master in Steuben County,  
10 and that had been so-ordered by Justice MacAlister. And  
11 petitioners in Hoffman were looking to replace a map that  
12 had already been imposed as a remedy for the constitutional  
13 violation identified in Harkenrider.

14 Here, there is no remedial map on the table because  
15 under the First Department order, it was the First  
16 Department that directed this Court to determine what should  
17 be the proper map remedy consistent with Article 3,  
18 Section 5-b. And as we already argued on August 24th, we  
19 would submit Section 5-b provides for the commission process  
20 whereby then the legislature has the role that it does  
21 constitutionally to approve or disapprove the maps that are  
22 produced by the commission.

23 Second of all, in the Hoffman case, the petitioners  
24 were looking to resume the constitutional process that had  
25 been suspended in the January/February time frame when no

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1 second set of maps was issued.

2 Here, what we're asking for the Court to do is to  
3 begin the process anew because we would submit under the  
4 first sentence of Article 3, Section 5-b of the state  
5 constitution, that is the circumstance that would trigger  
6 the commission's involvement in this instance.

7 And, also, we do have the benefit of time. While not  
8 looking to waste time, and I think that the process should  
9 proceed expeditiously, there is no need for assembly map  
10 until the winter of 2024 because the elections this year are  
11 taking place under the map that was enacted in 2022. Such  
12 that if there is some breakdown in the commission process,  
13 there will be plenty of time for this Court to step in to  
14 get the commission back on track. And if a map is enacted,  
15 say, in the spring of 2023, or sooner, or even a little  
16 later, then if there are substantive challenges to what that  
17 map would happen to be, the petitioners are welcome to bring  
18 those challenges at the appropriate time.

19 So we would submit that this case is very different  
20 from the Hoffman case. And, further, petitioners should not  
21 put words into the mouth of the republican commissioners.  
22 They are represented by counsel. They are here today. And  
23 I have no doubt that their counsel can, in response to your  
24 Honor's questioning, state what their true position is with  
25 respect to this case. And we should not leave it to the

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1 petitioners to prognosticate what their position is, or for  
2 what it should be.

3 And, finally, there is no reason to submit that it  
4 would be premature to have the members of the commission  
5 joined. We have a full compliment of the commissioners.  
6 All 10 have been appointed. Their counsel are here.  
7 They've already demonstrated to your Honor that they do not  
8 have any objection to being named. And with respect to the  
9 two commissioners, Dr. Flateau, and Commissioner Collado,  
10 who were named commissioners very recently but who are not  
11 named in the Court's order to show cause, they have offered  
12 affidavits to this Court stating that they know about to the  
13 proceeding, that they recognize that they are commissioners,  
14 and that they consent to being named as respondents.

15 So we have the positions of all 10 commissioners, all  
16 of whom are willing to be named as respondents in this  
17 proceeding. We submit that they should be named a  
18 respondents in this proceeding. They should be joined. And  
19 that the commission process should proceed as is required by  
20 the constitution.

21 And further, that Mr. Foldenauer talks a lot about  
22 Dr. Cervas, how he would be a good special master, I just  
23 want to highlight the amicus letter, quote, unquote, that  
24 was offered by Susan Lerner from Common Cause, and she had a  
25 lot of criticism for the Dr. Cervas. She said that he was

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1       somebody who only assisted a special master before, and that  
2       he had, quote, no first-hand familiarity with any part of  
3       New York.

4               I would submit that people that do have first-hand  
5       familiarity with New York would be the 10 commissioners who  
6       are New York residents, and then the legislators who are  
7       elected by the constituents to be the voice of the people in  
8       the legislature. And that is the way that the process  
9       should work. And now it can take place with your Honor's  
10      supervision. And that's what we submit should happen here.

11              THE COURT: Thank you, Counsel.

12              With that said, I'll just turn further to counsel for  
13      the various commissioners. Having heard from both sides, I  
14      guess that will start with you based on what you've heard or  
15      can add.

16              MS. AMUNSON: Yes. Thank you, your Honor.

17              I agree with your Honor that the Court should not be  
18      relying on statements in op-eds or CLEs, etcetera.  
19      Mr. Imamura is prepared to submit an affidavit if the Court  
20      so requests. However, his position is already on the record  
21      in what is filed here as well as the positions of  
22      Ms. Frazier, Dr. Cuevas-Molina, Dr. Flateau, and Mr. Collado  
23      that they do not object to being named as respondents, and  
24      further that they do not object to the relief that has been  
25      requested by the speaker, and that they are prepared to

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1 undertake the of redrawing the assembly map in order to do  
2 so by this Court, and that they are prepared to do so  
3 expeditiously.

4 MR. HILL: As a participant in the Hoffman  
5 litigation, the distinction that your Honor and counsel made  
6 are accurate that, that was a Article-75 proceeding  
7 specifically asking for mandate to compel the commissioners  
8 to do a very specific act as a very specific effectively  
9 fictitious time in the past to go back and do something  
10 within a time period in January and February of 2020.

11 In the process that went through the judicial remedy  
12 under the constitution Section 4(e) and completed that  
13 process. So there was a temporal problem, and there was a  
14 constitutional problem that it had fully exhausted that  
15 remedy and what was being sought, a very narrow and specific  
16 mandate of relief that was being sought there was an  
17 impossibility. So there is not an inconsistency in the  
18 positions.

19 As far as this proceeding, if the Court orders it,  
20 that's the only constitutional way we see that the IRC could  
21 be compelled to act.

22 THE COURT: Well, Counsel, just to clarify, because  
23 I know in terms of formal documents had been filed on behalf  
24 of the commissioners you're representing essentially, the  
25 only thing that was filed was a notice of appearance. So

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1 are you in a position at this stage as an officer of the  
2 court to indicate one way or the other if the Court does  
3 issue an order allowing the independent redistricting  
4 commission essentially to get a second bite at the apple  
5 solely related to the assembly maps, do you believe your  
6 clients' views that they believe they could undertake?

7 MR. HILL: Yes, I think the accurate way to phrase  
8 it is that if the Court orders that, that is the road that  
9 they will take. And I'm sure they are all acting in good  
10 faith in executing the Court's directive.

11 I would just say that, you know, the order to show  
12 cause was specifically to the singular commission --

13 THE COURT: Right, which I readily understand. And  
14 I think on a lot of what we're going through is new ground,  
15 frankly, for everyone on all sides of the issue. So on one  
16 side I want to make sure that everything is clarified in  
17 terms of everyone's positions. And, although, we obviously  
18 have what would appear at this point to be a descent amount  
19 of time to get this right for the 2024 election. On the  
20 other hand, two years certainly look like a very short  
21 period of time if things do not go smoothly. So I'd like to  
22 think things would go smoothly. They just rarely seem to.

23 So hopefully that will not be an issue this time  
24 around. But I do appreciate your clarification that those  
25 commissioners, along with the others, will obviously follow

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1 the directives of this Court, and we'll go from there.  
2 Thank you.

3 MR. HILL: Thank you.

4 We also did notice that your Honor struck out the  
5 other two requested relief in the order to show cause. And  
6 so if your Honor were to grant the directive making us  
7 respondents, I don't know at the time that the commission  
8 comes back together collectively it may want to have some  
9 input into the process.

10 THE COURT: Understood. And as I said at the  
11 outset, I am aware that, you know, obviously that I struck  
12 out certain proposed language within the order to show  
13 cause. Frankly, it was my view that at this stage wanted to  
14 keep things as clean and as simple as possible. But,  
15 obviously, if I do, in fact, order that the commission  
16 proceed with the process, I would anticipate that, you know,  
17 I would obviously be retaining jurisdiction over this  
18 matter, and would be getting as involved as necessary to  
19 help things along.

20 So my hope, my very sincere hope would be that if the  
21 commission is given an opportunity to do this again where  
22 it's just on the assembly maps, and with all the knowledge  
23 that they now have of how the Court of Appeals has ruled in  
24 this matter previously, that the commission will be able to  
25 successfully complete their task. I have no idea what the

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1 maps may look like, but hopefully they will follow the  
2 constitutional requirements and things will proceed the way  
3 they were meant to by the last time around. If they don't,  
4 obviously, we'll cross that bridge when we get to it. But  
5 those are all parts of the reason that I did not want to  
6 start with the order to show cause, itself, getting bogged  
7 down too much with specifics of what the commission should  
8 or should not be doing.

9 But I would certainly hope from the proceedings, and  
10 from what --

11 I think there will be a written decision that I intend  
12 to enter relatively soon that will be a clear road map for  
13 all sides on how to proceed, and that we can go from there.

14 All right. With that said, I believe it was addressed  
15 in terms of the earlier statements from both counsel, but  
16 just to be clear, again, I believe --

17 So on behalf of all 10 individual members of the  
18 commission, it's your joining representation that they  
19 consent to being added as parties individually to this  
20 matter, is that correct?

21 MR. HILL: On behalf of the five that I represent,  
22 that's accurate, yes.

23 MS. AMUNSON: And on behalf of the three that I  
24 represent as well as the two who have submitted affidavits,  
25 and who presumably will be certified for representation if

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1           they are added as respondents, I concur, your Honor.

2                   THE COURT: Okay. See, we already have republicans  
3           and democrats agreeing.

4                   MR. WALDEN: Judge, I'm so happy that you made that  
5           segue because I want to make the record clear, because I  
6           didn't hear any opposition to any of the three things. In  
7           fact, I heard consent. So maybe we're heading in the right  
8           direction.

9                   The first was if you're going to add the IRS as a  
10          party, regardless of the individual commissioners, the Court  
11          is owed an opinion from the IRC concerning whether or not  
12          what you propose to do is constitutional. I think that you  
13          won't even get a single submission from them. They won't be  
14          able to agree on the constitutionality of this, and they  
15          though that you probably guessed that they already have  
16          correspondence on this, your Honor.

17                  THE COURT: Counsel, with all due respect --

18                  MR. WALDEN: Yes, sir.

19                  THE COURT: If I issue an order indicating that the  
20          commission is supposed to do something, and the commission  
21          fails to do it, there will be repercussions to that one way  
22          or the other. I'm not gonna predetermine how things may go  
23          forward.

24                  MR. WALDEN: I apologize, your Honor. I must have  
25          not clearly articulated what I meant to be in conveying

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1 which is simply that I humbly suggest, your Honor, that the  
2 first stage in the process is getting what the record lacks  
3 right now which is the attorney general's position, and the  
4 IRC's position on whether or not it is constitutionally  
5 permissible for you to issue the order that you're  
6 contemplating.

7 We've taken the position that, that is not  
8 constitutional. Right. They have not taken a position at  
9 all. The only entity or party that's taken a position is  
10 Mr. Heastie. So given the fact that they are IRC, and that  
11 they --

12 You should know whether or not that 10 commissioners  
13 can come to a single position on whether or not the order  
14 that you anticipate issuing is constitutional. This would  
15 be a really important moment for you to test that, but also  
16 to get the position on the record; that's number one.

17 Number two, your Honor, I heard--I apologize. Your  
18 last name is?

19 MS. AMUNSON: Amunson.

20 MR. WALDEN: Amunson. I just didn't want to  
21 mispronounce it.

22 I heard Ms. Amunson say that Mr. Imamura would  
23 prepared to submit an affidavit. So it sounds like he's  
24 willing to testify. And we believe that, putting aside the  
25 CLE, the op-ed, and the position taken by the republicans

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1 raises a fair question that Mr. Aaron Foldenauer has put  
2 into the record on futility of this whole process. So we  
3 would like a hearing on futility. We're prepared to brief  
4 that if you'd like, your Honor, and submit whatever.

5 To Mr. Bucki's point, there were technical problems on  
6 that CLE, they don't have the audio unfortunately. I asked  
7 for it, and they had technical problems which was why I  
8 couldn't dial in remotely because I was interested in what  
9 Imamura was gonna say.

10 And third, your Honor, and this is super important so  
11 I just want to make sure that we're all on the same page. I  
12 heard Mr. Bucki consent to what I had said was an important  
13 part of any order that your Honor issues even preserving our  
14 objections, and that's, that the map comes from the Court.  
15 Right, so --

16 MR. BUCKI: That is not true, your Honor. I never  
17 said that.

18 MR. WALDEN: That's why I am raising it now so that  
19 I can make sure Mr. Bucki's interruption is not welcome.  
20 my only point, your Honor, was the words he used--I don't  
21 want to be accused of misquoting him--are retain  
22 jurisdiction and supervise the IRC.

23 Now, putting aside whatever questions that might  
24 raise, those were the words that he used. He envisions that  
25 you would be essentially the special master--I know that's a

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1 popular phrase these days--essentially, the IRC, but at the  
2 end of that process, your Honor, if you're in Section 5,  
3 right, if the basis of your jurisdiction here is Section 5,  
4 Section 5 is clearly a judicial remedy. So they can't have  
5 it both ways. Right. Either we're in Section 5, and this  
6 is a judicial process which is what he's now invited because  
7 he said retain jurisdiction and supervise the IRC, or we're  
8 back in Section 3. Right. So that's why I feel like  
9 there's some clever lawyering going on here, your Honor.

10 THE COURT: Counsel, let me be clear. I know  
11 exactly what counsel said on the record; and, obviously, I  
12 have the record to refer back to but, you know, I believe  
13 counsel had indicated that they agreed that this Court would  
14 be retaining jurisdiction on this entire matter.

15 MR. WALDEN: And supervising the IRC.

16 THE COURT: Well, the word supervision brings a lot  
17 of connotations to it in terms of what that might mean on a  
18 legal process. I will just say this, and I think we can  
19 leave it at that, I will be issuing a very, what I believe  
20 will be a very clear written order on what I believe should  
21 be occurring based on the direction I received from the  
22 First Department, and my order will say what it says.

23 And I believe that once that order is issued, and  
24 reviewed by all the parties, my hope would be that everyone  
25 simply says it's a wonderful order and follows through with

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1       it. And if somebody happens to disagree with it, I suspect  
2       that the First Department will be relatively quick to  
3       express their opinion. And if for some reason somebody  
4       disagrees with their views on the matter, and it would not  
5       surprise me if the Court of Appeals may have an opportunity  
6       to share their further views on it.

7               So as well we all know, there's a process. We'll  
8       follow the process, and hopefully the end result one way or  
9       the other--I shouldn't say hopefully--I know the final  
10      result one way or the other, there will be assembly lines in  
11      place for the 2024 election, and life will go on from that  
12      stage.

13             So with that, at this juncture, I'm going to go  
14      ahead --

15             MR. FOLDENAUER: Your Honor, one problem with the  
16      IRC the first time around is that they did not have funding  
17      from the legislature, and they had to coax the legislature  
18      to get adequate funding. I presume right now that there is  
19      no funding available for this next stage of the IRC. And  
20      the legislature does not reconvene until January of next  
21      year. And it would take matters of months for that to  
22      happen.

23             THE COURT: I do not intend, or anticipate getting  
24      into the budgetary process of how, or if the IRC needs  
25      funding to do the things they need to do. I do not believe

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1 that's a role I need to get involved in at this point. And  
2 I'll leave it at that.

3 And with that said, I'm going to go ahead and close  
4 the proceedings at this time. It is my sincere hope that  
5 once I do issue the order, I anticipate issuing that.  
6 Hopefully I do not see any of you again, at least, on this  
7 matter for some time, or maybe not at all.

8 MR. BUCKI: If I may just add, your Honor, my  
9 understanding is that there is funding that's allocated.  
10 And whatever funding the commission needs, I have no doubt  
11 the assembly will take it up.

12 THE COURT: All right. Thank you, all. In  
13 conclusion, I will just ask the parties to order a  
14 transcript of today's proceedings so they are part of the  
15 record, as well.

16 Thank you.

17 \*\*\*\*\*

18 Certified to be a true and accurate transcript of  
19 the stenographic minutes taken within.

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Alecia Hines  
Alecia Hines, RPR  
Senior Court Reporter

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