

**State Defendants' Response to Brooks, LULAC, and
MALC Plaintiffs' Joint Motion for Preliminary Injunction**

Exhibit AM

Texas House Committee on Congressional Redistricting Monday, July 28, 2025,
Transcript.

THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING, SELECT
89TH LEGISLATURE

PUBLIC HEARING

July 28, 2025

5:00 p.m.

Arlington, Texas

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 REP. VASUT: The House Select Committee
3 on Congressional Redistricting will come to order. The
4 Clerk will call the roll.

5 THE CLERK: Chair Vasut?

6 REP. VASUT: Here.

7 THE CLERK: Vice Chair Rosenthal?

8 REP. ROSENTHAL: Here.

9 THE CLERK: Representative Garcia?
10 Representative Geren?

11 REP. GEREN: Here.

12 THE CLERK: Representative Gervin-
13 Hawkins?

14 Representative Guerra?

15 Representative Guillen?

16 REP. GUILLEN: Here.

17 THE CLERK: Representative Hefner?

18 REP. HEFNER: Here.

19 THE CLERK: Representative Hickland?

20 REP. HICKLAND: Here.

21 THE CLERK: Representative Hunter?

22 REP. HUNTER: Here.

23 THE CLERK: Representative Manuel?

24 Representative McQueeney?

25 REP. MCQUEENEY: Here.

1 THE CLERK: Representative Metcalf?

2 REP. METCALF: Here.

3 THE CLERK: Representative Moody?

4 REP. MOODY: Here.

5 THE CLERK: Representative Pierson?

6 REP. PIERSON: Here.

7 THE CLERK: Representative Spiller?

8 REP. SPILLER: Here.

9 THE CLERK: Representative Teppner?

10 REP. TEPPER: Here.

11 THE CLERK: Dean Thompson?

12 REP. THOMPSON: Here.

13 THE CLERK: Representative Turner?

14 REP. TURNER: Here.

15 THE CLERK: Representative Wilson?

16 Representative Wu?

17 REP. WU: Here.

18 REP. VASUT: Quorum present?

19 THE CLERK: Yes.

20 REP. VASUT: Quorum is present. The

21 Chair will recognize on the dais with us as well, and

22 forgive me, members, I want to make sure I get

23 everybody. Representative Collier. Representative

24 Garcia Hernandez. Representative Plesa.

25 Representative Rose. Representative Garcia.

1 Representative Meza. And Representative Bhojani. All
2 right. Did I miss anybody that's up here on the dais?
3 And in the audience, we have Representative Bowers.
4 So, okay.

5 I've been told I need to eat the
6 microphone, so let me adjust that briefly momentarily.
7 Before we begin here and I go through the opening
8 remarks, the Chair is, of course, pleased to welcome
9 our guests attending today's hearing. I want to remind
10 the audience that the House rules prohibit signs,
11 placards, and verbal expressions of support or
12 disapproval during the hearing. So if you have a sign,
13 if you would lower it down. I'm not going to ask you
14 to remove it from the room, but please do not raise it,
15 under the House rules. So, if you'll please lower your
16 signs.

17 Okay. Now, the audience will come to
18 order. I do want to reiterate this. This -- this --
19 this committee is going to be governed by the House
20 rules and must be governed by the House rules. We
21 don't have power to suspend them. So, everyone in here
22 is a guest in that sense. I do not want to ask anyone
23 to leave. So please lower your signs. The Chair --
24 thank you. Please lower your signs, sir. We follow
25 the rules. We're going to follow the rules.

1 [Shouting from the gallery]

2 REP. VASUT: Come to order. Come to
3 order. All right. Come to order. All right. Sir, if
4 you don't remove the sign, I'm going to have to ask you
5 to leave. I do not want to do that. But we have --
6 the rules are going to be followed, as far as I am
7 concerned, at all times. All right.

8 Now, I want us to get through these
9 opening remarks swiftly so that we can get to your
10 testimony here today. That's why we're here. I
11 understand that there may be some outside. And so, if
12 you're outside, I want to remind you that you can watch
13 today's hearing online at capitol.texas.gov. There's
14 an audio and video stream online. If you'll be
15 watching that and we call your name, we'll give you
16 time to make sure you can make your way into the room.
17 When we have people come up here in a little while,
18 when you're done testifying, if you would be so kind as
19 to leave the room so that somebody outside can come and
20 have that seat. We want to make sure that we're giving
21 everybody the opportunity to come in here that wants to
22 be here.

23 So, the purpose of today's hearing, of
24 course, is to have a public hearing on proposed
25 revisions of congressional redistricting. Before we

1 take that up or discuss a plan amongst ourselves, we
2 want to hear from the public about what revisions
3 should occur, if any. That's the purpose of today's
4 hearing. As set out in the notice, we will take public
5 testimony regarding a Revised Congressional
6 Redistricting Plan, pursuant to the Governor's July 9,
7 2025 proclamation calling a special session of the 89th
8 Legislature. This hearing will focus on those counties
9 of the State lying wholly or partly within
10 congressional districts 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 12, 13, 19, 24,
11 25, 26, 30, 32, and 33 for the 119th Congress. But the
12 committee will hear testimony about any region of the
13 state. So if you're here and you want to testify about
14 any region of the state, you're more than welcome to.

15 Today's hearing will feature in-person
16 public testimony. For everyone in the audience, thank
17 you for being here today. In order to testify, you
18 must register. There's a registration table right
19 outside those doors at the back, and fill out one of
20 those green forms and sign it and turn it in. We'd be
21 happy to have you. If you have any questions or
22 encounter any difficulties, please confer with our
23 committee staff. I know we have two right outside
24 there. They'd be happy to answer any questions that
25 you have. We're going to be closing registration for

1 in-person testimony today at 6:30 p.m. I'll give --
2 I'll try to give about a 15-minute reminder of that
3 well in advance so that you know.

4 For everyone wishing to testify as set
5 out in the notice, testimony will be limited to two
6 minutes per witness. We'll have a timer up here at the
7 dais, and there is a timer, I believe, right there.
8 And so the witnesses are going to come up and testify
9 at either one of these podiums when you're called.
10 You'll just be paying attention to that right there.
11 You'll get a warning, I believe, at 15 seconds with a
12 yellow light, and then we'll do red, and then we'll ask
13 you to complete your testimony. Of course, you may
14 receive some questions from the members on the dais.
15 That's not a general invitation to testify open-ended,
16 right? But they may have specific questions for you,
17 and you're welcome to answer those if you so wish.

18 The reason that we have this two-minute
19 timer is we want to be fair to everybody, and we don't
20 want to -- we want to make sure that we hear from as
21 many people as possible today. So in order to ensure a
22 balance of public testimony across three public
23 hearings -- we've already had one in Austin and one in
24 Houston -- public testimony today is going to be
25 limited to five hours. Now, we have a rough time that

1 we're trying to get out of here around 10:30 or 11:00
2 because they need to prepare this room in the morning
3 for, I believe, another event. But we're going to stay
4 here until we finish that five hours of testimony, but
5 I want to give you that up front. So we're going to
6 try to move expeditiously here.

7 This time, though, today, at this
8 hearing, is not the only time that you have to make
9 your voice heard. There are several other ways that
10 you can provide feedback to the committee. I want to
11 make sure that you know all of them and that you're
12 free to exercise any or all of them at any time.
13 First, if you have more to say than time allows, or if
14 we unfortunately don't reach you today, as the hearing
15 notice mentioned, we welcome you to submit a written
16 copy of your testimony to the committee. This written
17 testimony will be provided to all the members of this
18 committee, so they're all going to hear it if you run
19 out of time. So if you'll just bring that up, we'll
20 have the time at the end, I'll announce, and you can
21 turn that in to committee staff. We'd love to receive
22 it.

23 Second, if you have any handouts with
24 you, as the notice mentions, please bring the handouts
25 up front before your testimony, and they'll be passed

1 out to the members of the committee. We ask for 22
2 copies, one for the record and 21 for the members of
3 the committee.

4 Third, anyone is welcome to submit an
5 electronic comment without testifying. You can do that
6 online. There's an electronic portal linked in today's
7 hearing notice. It can be found at
8 comments.house.texas.gov. That's
9 comments.house.texas.gov. Information can be uploaded
10 to the portal for today's hearing through the end of
11 today's hearing. You can also upload information to
12 the portal for any future hearings that are announced,
13 and you'll see those in notices.

14 The Texas Legislative Council also hosts
15 a website for redistricting at
16 redistricting.capitol.texas.gov. That's capitol with
17 an O at the end, by the way. On that website, you can
18 find information about submitting proposed maps for
19 consideration. If you click, I believe, 2020s in the
20 top and go down to Public Participation, there will be
21 some information there. If you have a map that you
22 want us to consider, I'd be happy to look at that, and
23 you can upload that there.

24 Finally, every member of the public is
25 always welcome to email, contact, or call any member of

1 the Legislature at any time, and we welcome you to do
2 so. In fact, not only -- I don't have this in these
3 notes here, but there is another committee in the
4 Senate taking up this issue, and they're having virtual
5 testimony. You can register, I believe, for an
6 upcoming hearing they're going to have tomorrow, up to
7 12 hours before that hearing. So at the Senate
8 website, you can find details there. So a lot of
9 opportunities to get your feedback here.

10 Finally, let's talk about logistics.
11 Normally I would -- and I think I will call up people
12 in groups of four, but the way we're going to do this
13 is, if the first two, first come, first served, will
14 take these two podiums, and the next two that I call
15 will be right behind them, we'll take your testimony
16 that way. So it'll be from these two podiums.
17 Normally we would have a little table with four chairs,
18 but we couldn't fit it down there, and I wouldn't be
19 able to see. So we're going to have these two podiums
20 here for you to testify. And just make sure that you
21 speak directly into that microphone. If your name is
22 called, just be ready. If you happen to be outside and
23 you're listening in, you hear your name called, feel
24 free to make your way into the room. Just let the
25 doorkeepers know that you've been called to testify,

1 and they'll let you in and let you come down front.

2 Finally, since we have no bill before us,
3 and we will have no bill before us at this hearing, the
4 last of our three public hearings before any bill, all
5 testimony today will be neutral or on. You might have
6 seen that on the form. I understand people have
7 different views on one way or the other on this, and
8 you're free to testify whatever you think. Feel free
9 to say whatever you'd like to say. It's just required
10 to be "on" for the minutes. I wanted to make sure that
11 you knew that. Just because the form says neutral and
12 I say that you're neutral, doesn't mean you have to be
13 neutral.

14 Okay. With that, that's the opening
15 comments that I had for our logistics for today's
16 hearing. Before we get started, I know some members
17 had some comments they'd like to make. I'd like to
18 come to them one at a time.

19 Dean Thompson, for what purpose?

20 REP. THOMPSON: I'd just like to ask a
21 question.

22 REP. VASUT: Gentleman yields for
23 questions.

24 REP. THOMPSON: Since the people are
25 going to be testifying neutral, that means we don't

1 have a map, right?

2 REP. VASUT: That is correct.

3 REP. THOMPSON: And we have not seen a
4 map?

5 REP. VASUT: That is correct.

6 REP. THOMPSON: And we don't know what
7 the map looks like?

8 REP. VASUT: That's correct. The only
9 map referenced --

10 REP. THOMPSON: Thank you.

11 REP. VASUT: -- for purpose of this
12 hearing is the current map.

13 [Clapping from the gallery]

14 REP. VASUT: And as the Chair has
15 previously indicated, before any action is taken on any
16 map, if at all, by this committee, there will be
17 another public hearing. So thank you, Dean.

18 Vice Chair Rosenthal, for what purpose?

19 REP. ROSENTHAL: I'd like to make a
20 statement.

21 REP. VASUT: Chair recognizes Vice Chair
22 Rosenthal for --

23 REP. ROSENTHAL: Thank you, Mr.
24 Chairman. Can y'all hear me okay? All right, good.
25 My name is Jon Rosenthal, like you can see from the

1 little sign, and I represent House District 135 in
2 Northwest Houston. And I have the either fortunate or
3 unfortunate task of being named the Vice Chair of this
4 committee. I'm a mechanical engineer by trade, 30
5 years in industry, seeking practical solutions to real-
6 world problems. And listen, this is anything but
7 practical to me. It's -- while it's an incredible
8 responsibility for me to serve as this Vice Chair
9 position, I've done some big stuff in oil field work,
10 but I have never been asked to take a responsibility
11 like this, and I feel the gravity of it. And I'm glad
12 that you are here today to join us in this fight,
13 because it will be a fight. I'm here to fight. My
14 colleagues are here to fight.

15 We saw the letter that the Department of
16 Justice sent to the Governor. The districts that were
17 specifically mentioned in that letter were District 9,
18 18, 29, and 33, right here. Curious to me that these
19 are only communities of color being targeted. Mid-
20 decade redistricting is unusual. It's unnecessary. We
21 are required to redraw the district boundaries every
22 ten years following the census, but that's not what
23 this is, y'all. This process isn't -- we redraw after
24 the census to make things fair, because as people move
25 around, we want to make sure you're properly

1 represented, that everyone, you know, all these
2 districts have the same number, and everyone has a fair
3 chance to elect someone to choose who serves you,
4 right? To choose your elected employees.

5 This right here is a racist attack on
6 congressional districts of color. It's about taking
7 power away from black and brown communities. It's
8 about erasing your voices. This effort to change the
9 districts again has nothing to do with representing
10 people better. It's the opposite of that. It's a
11 power grab at the expense of black and brown
12 communities.

13 So, Texas is growing. Most new -- most
14 of the new people that have come into the state in the
15 last ten years are communities of color, and I went
16 through all the numbers. Engineer, I do a lot of math.
17 Between 2010 and 2020, our population grew by 3,999,994
18 people. Let's call it 4 million, okay? Of that
19 growth, 187,252 were white. 557,000 [audio cut out]
20 because we had so much population coming in, all black
21 and brown, mind you, the two new districts were drawn
22 what? Majority white. I live in one of them. It's
23 crazy, y'all. And now they're going to go after more
24 communities of color?

25 So just know we're here with you. I'm

1 acutely aware of being white. I don't know if any of
2 you noticed. But in all seriousness, those of you that
3 look like me, it's super important that the community
4 see you speaking out. An injustice against any of us
5 is an injustice against all of us. And all I'm going
6 to say is what Desmond Tutu said. If you are neutral
7 in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of
8 the oppressor. So while Donald Trump and MAGA
9 Republicans are pushing for redistricting, they have --
10 in doing so, they are repeatedly attacking communities
11 of color. We on this -- the Democrats on this panel,
12 will be fighting that with everything we have. Thank
13 you for being here today. And Mr. Chairman, thank you
14 for letting me speak.

15 REP. VASUT: Thank you, Vice Chairman.

16 Mr. Turner, for what purpose?

17 Oh, I'm sorry, before I do that, the
18 Chair will show that Representative Barbara Gervin-
19 Hawkins is present.

20 Representative Turner, for what purpose?

21 REP. TURNER: Mr. Chairman, a brief
22 opening statement, if I may.

23 REP. VASUT: Chair recognizes
24 Representative Turner for a brief opening statement.

25 REP. TURNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 I want to begin by welcoming you and all
2 the members of the committee to House District 101 and
3 the University of Texas at Arlington. And just to give
4 you a 30-second infomercial on UT Arlington, you're
5 right now at a designated R1 research institution, the
6 largest university in North Texas, the second largest
7 in the UT system, the sixth most diverse school in the
8 United States, a designated Hispanic-serving
9 institution, and a designated AAPI-serving institution.
10 And we are -- those of us here in North Texas, we are
11 proud of UT Arlington. I want to personally thank
12 President Jennifer Cowley and her staff for making this
13 facility and parking available to the Texas House and
14 to the public this evening. But most of all, I want to
15 thank the hundreds of North Texas residents, you, who
16 are here this evening to make your voices heard on
17 congressional redistricting.

18 And as Vice Chair Rosenthal stated, we
19 are here today because President Trump has ordered
20 Governor Abbott to redraw our state's congressional
21 districts in the middle of the decade, with no new
22 census data to consider. Now, the flimsy pretext for
23 this unnecessary process is a letter from Trump's DOJ,
24 Department of Justice, that says the Legislature needs
25 to go out and identify majority-minority districts and

1 dismantle them, including Congressional District 33
2 right here in Tarrant and Dallas counties. The voting
3 rights experts who testified at our first hearing in
4 Austin last week thoroughly debunked the DOJ's
5 position. And, of course, DOJ has not made itself
6 available to this committee so we can understand where
7 they're coming from.

8 It is essential that we hear from the
9 Department of Justice because their position is
10 completely at odds with the sworn testimony state
11 Republican leaders recently gave in federal court.
12 Their testimony was that the current map was drawn
13 "blind to race." So, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate that
14 you have now formally invited DOJ to receive the copy
15 of that letter. I appreciate that in response to our
16 requests in the first two hearings. Mr. Chairman, if I
17 may -- that's the end of my statement.

18 If I may, may I ask, has the Department
19 of Justice responded to your invitation yet?

20 REP. VASUT: I have not received a formal
21 response. I received an out-of-office notification, so
22 I know the e-mail went through.

23 REP. TURNER: Okay. Well, Mr. Chairman,
24 I would hope the Department of Justice will respond in
25 a serious manner to the Chairman of the House

1 Redistricting Committee promptly if -- as I say, it is
2 essential we hear from DOJ in this process before we
3 consider any maps. And so, if we do not hear quickly,
4 I would hope the committee would entertain a subpoena
5 process. My understanding is that there is a process
6 in the District of Columbia where they can domesticate
7 a subpoena from out of the District of Columbia. So
8 I'd like the committee to pursue that process, if need
9 be, to get DOJ before this committee so we can ask them
10 questions.

11 REP. VASUT: Happy to take a look at
12 that.

13 REP. TURNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14 REP. VASUT: Members, any other
15 questions?

16 Okay. With that, we're here to the main
17 event for today, the public testimony. Chair's open to
18 public testimony. I'm going to call up our first four
19 witnesses. If you'll kind of amongst yourselves divide
20 amongst these two microphones, I'd appreciate it.
21 We'll get through it kind of as we go. And I see my
22 colleague, Representative Johnson, or Congresswoman
23 Johnson here, so glad to have you. And let's go ahead
24 and I want to make sure I get my stopwatch going here.
25 Okay.

1 Chair calls Sylvia Garcia, Julie Johnson,
2 Casey Thomas, and Roman Palomares. Now, if those four
3 will make their way to the two microphones. The next
4 four after them, if you'll just kind of be ready to get
5 up once they're done, Royce West, Elsie Cooke-Holmes,
6 Alisa Simmons, and Jeff -- well, I'm going to come back
7 to you, Jeff. We'll come back to Jeff in a second.
8 Okay. But those other three, if you'll be on standby.

9 Okay. Chair calls Sylvia Garcia. I show
10 you registered to testify as Sylvia Garcia, on behalf
11 of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting
12 Plan. Is that correct?

13 SYLVIA GARCIA: That's correct.

14 REP. VASUT: Good to have you with us
15 again, Congresswoman. Please give us your testimony.

16 SYLVIA GARCIA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman
17 and members of the committee. As I said in Austin and
18 Houston, we should not be here today. You should be
19 back in Austin passing legislation to support families
20 in the Hill Country after the devastating flooding.
21 Instead, we are today playing political games to
22 appease the felon in the White House and his lust for
23 power. We are pretending that the Governor did not
24 approve the very maps he now is insisting on changing.

25 So as we begin the last of the scheduled

1 hearings, have we really learned anything different?
2 No. The Chair was emphatic in Austin that you all did
3 not vote on an unconstitutional map, and that it did
4 comply fully with the Voting Rights Act. In Houston,
5 the Chair was equally emphatic that these hearings are
6 about whether to redraw the lines, not how. At both
7 hearings, we established that no maps have been
8 released and that this panel has not seen any proposed
9 maps. Also established was that there is no new census
10 population to consider and that this is indeed an
11 unusual mid-decade redrawing.

12 The DOJ letter targets four minority
13 urban districts, including mine in Houston, to create
14 five new Republican districts at the request of the
15 felon in the White House. The deadline for draft maps
16 per that letter is August 7th, about ten days away. My
17 district is a target. It's a majority-minority
18 district. At nearly 75 percent Latino, this district
19 was created to comply with the Voting Rights Act, and
20 any suggestion otherwise by DOJ is simply false.

21 We are tied by communities of interest
22 that values faith, family, culture, language, hard
23 work, and service. We believe in a democracy and the
24 principle of one person, one vote. The American dream
25 is not just a slogan for us, it's something we live

1 every single day. And frankly, Mr. Chairman, we would
2 never, ever let a conman from New York tell us Texans
3 what to do.

4 REP. VASUT: Thank you for your
5 testimony.

6 SYLVIA GARCIA: Mr. Chairman, I want to
7 go on record as being against any changes to the maps.
8 I realize that you're going to record me as neutral.
9 But I fear that what will happen is that the White
10 House will brag --

11 REP. VASUT: Please complete your
12 testimony.

13 SYLVIA GARCIA: -- that everybody was
14 neutral in Texas. Let's make sure that the message is
15 clear that we could not register a "hell no."

16 REP. VASUT: Understood. All right.
17 Members, any questions for that witness? I hear none.

18 Chair recognizes Mr. Thomas at the mic.
19 I show you registered to testify as Casey Thomas, on
20 behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional
21 Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

22 CASEY THOMAS: Yes.

23 REP. VASUT: Understood. Please give us
24 your testimony.

25 CASEY THOMAS: Well, she's a hard act to

1 follow. To the House Select Committee on
2 Redistricting, thank you Chair and Vice Chair and
3 members of the House Select Committee on Redistricting
4 for hosting this important in-person hearing in the
5 Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, in the House District of
6 the Honorable Chris Turner. And yes, I was watching.
7 That's an inside joke.

8 How did you get here? Nobody's supposed
9 to be here. These are the words from a popular song
10 from the 1990s sung by Deborah Cox. However, these are
11 the same words that many Texans ask of themselves as it
12 relates to this effort of mid-decade redistricting. I
13 served as the Chair of the City of Dallas Complete
14 Count Committee on the 2000 Census during my time on
15 the Dallas City Council. We led the city through the
16 process of completing the U.S. Census during the
17 pandemic. We didn't begin our redistricting process
18 for the City of Dallas until after we received the
19 results from the 2020 Census, and that is traditionally
20 when this process takes place.

21 In the state of Texas, the black, brown,
22 and Asian population each individually outgrew that of
23 the white population over the last decade. But out of
24 the two new congressional seats awarded, they both went
25 to white voters. Make no mistake, this is about race

1 and not about party. Let me say that again. This is
2 about race and not about party. If it's not about
3 race, why are the four congressional districts targeted
4 by the Department of Justice letter represented by
5 three black congressmembers and one Latino
6 congressmember? Currently, the population of Texas is
7 only 40 percent white, but white voters control 28 out
8 of the 38 congressional seats, which is over 73
9 percent. If the current resident in the White House,
10 that's what I call him, gets his wish, which is an
11 additional four or five congressional seats, that would
12 increase to 84 or 87 percent. That's modern-day
13 apartheid.

14 This should not be happening in the state
15 of Texas. We shouldn't even be having this hearing. I
16 ask that each of you think about what's in the best
17 interest of your constituents and the people who live
18 in the state of Texas. How did you get here? Nobody's
19 supposed to be here.

20 REP. VASUT: Please complete your
21 testimony.

22 CASEY THOMAS: Thank you for your time,
23 and may God bless you and the State of Texas.

24 REP. VASUT: Thank you for your
25 testimony.

1 Representative Gervin-Hawkins, for what
2 purpose?

3 REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: Mr. Thomas --

4 REP. VASUT: Once you're done testifying,
5 if you'll wait, there might be a question for you. And
6 going forward, what I'm going to do, just to be
7 courteous, I don't want you to have to sit up there for
8 too long. I'm just going to call you all two at a
9 time, and once you're done, I'll call the next person
10 for that mic and so on, that way you don't have to
11 stand up for too long.

12 Ms. Gervin-Hawkins, you're recognized to
13 question the witness.

14 REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: Thank you. Mr.
15 Thomas.

16 CASEY THOMAS: Yes, ma'am.

17 REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: When we talk about
18 the three African-American districts, they're iconic.
19 Would you agree with that?

20 CASEY THOMAS: I would agree 100 percent.

21 REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: And when we talk
22 about those seats, they represent who?

23 CASEY THOMAS: They represent -- those
24 particular three seats represent the late Sylvester
25 Turner, who held that seat. Unfortunately, the

1 Governor chose to wait until November, almost a year
2 after his death, to fill that seat. Second seat, by
3 the Honorable Al Green, who has stood in the face of
4 terror and death threats. And the third, my brother
5 right here, Councilman Marc Veasey. Thank you for your
6 service and representing the Metroplex.

7 REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: So, Mr. Thomas, if
8 we look at trying to destroy those districts, we're
9 also trying to destroy iconic, historical African-
10 American history. Would you agree with that?

11 CASEY THOMAS: I agree 100 percent.

12 REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: So when we look at
13 the NAACP and your work and Brother Bledsoe's work, it
14 appears that work is trying to be unraveled. Would you
15 agree with that?

16 CASEY THOMAS: Absolutely. We're seeing
17 decades, decades of progress being unraveled in
18 approximately six months.

19 REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: And also, would you
20 agree it's disrespectful to our iconic Sylvester
21 Turner, Sheila Jackson Lee, Barbara Jordan, Mickey
22 Leland? Would you agree with that?

23 CASEY THOMAS: I agree 100 percent.

24 REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: So my final
25 question is this. Are we going to let this happen?

1 CASEY THOMAS: Absolutely not.

2 REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: What did
3 Congresswoman Garcia say? Hell no. And I would say to
4 my colleagues here on the dais, let's not let D.C.
5 destroy Texas. And I think it's important that
6 everybody in this room stay engaged all the way through
7 to this process, so that my colleagues could understand
8 this is unnecessary, it should not be occurring, and
9 we're not going to stand by idly to let it happen.
10 Thank you.

11 REP. VASUT: Members, any other questions
12 for this witness? Chair hears none.

13 Thank you for your testimony. The
14 witness is excused.

15 Chair calls Julie Johnson. I show you
16 registered to testify as Julie Johnson, on behalf of
17 yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting
18 Plan. Is that correct?

19 JULIE JOHNSON: Yes, sir.

20 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
21 testimony.

22 JULIE JOHNSON: Thank you, Chairman
23 Vasut, Vice Chair Rosenthal, Ms. T, the committee, so
24 many friends. It's so good to see you all again. I
25 have to say, Republicans in D.C. are just as crazy as

1 you guys, so it's good to see you here. I would like
2 to thank the committee for hosting this field hearing
3 in Arlington and allowing me to testify, address you
4 today.

5 Everyone here already knows this, but
6 I'll say it anyway. Texas is a large, diverse state,
7 not just in terms of population, but also in terms of
8 geography. We have urban, suburban, and rural
9 communities. We have plains, hills, mountains,
10 prairies, and the Piney Woods, the Gulf Coast, and
11 more. Each member of this committee represents a part
12 of Texas that is completely unique from the colleague
13 sitting next to you, and that is the same truth for the
14 congressional delegation as well.

15 In Texas 32 -- and I want to shout out
16 all my 32 folks that are here to defend our seat. I
17 represent an urban and suburban area in DFW with a
18 majority-minority constituency. My constituents need a
19 representative who will fight for affordable housing,
20 public transportation, and economic growth across
21 diverse neighborhoods. And these needs differ from
22 rural districts, who priorities might include
23 agricultural needs, water infrastructure, rural
24 broadband, and rural hospitals.

25 Part of my job in Congress is to secure

1 funding for the district's local needs and projects.
2 This is only achieved when my district lines provide a
3 cohesive priorities across these communities. If the
4 committee considers and passes a map where 32 becomes a
5 suburban and rural district, that will no longer be
6 possible. This would pit communities against one
7 another, leaving many communities' needs ignored. By
8 lumping rural and suburban and urban communities
9 together, Texas will weaken their voices and ensure
10 that no one receives the fair representation that they
11 deserve.

12 The administration's demand to Governor
13 Abbott to redistrict mid-decade after claiming the
14 current map was not drawn with racial intent is
15 disingenuous, clearly political, and outrageous. Now
16 you are being told to target districts based on their
17 racial composition. This is wrong, it's
18 unconstitutional, and violates the Voting Rights Act.
19 Texans already suffer from one of the most racially
20 gerrymandered congressional maps in the country. After
21 the 2020 census documented the most population growth
22 over the last decade came from people of color, Texas
23 chose to increase the number of majority white
24 districts during --

25 REP. VASUT: Please complete your

1 testimony.

2 JULIE JOHNSON: -- the 2021
3 redistricting. And now, apparently it was not enough.
4 Basically, Mr. Chairman, this process is wrong. You
5 guys have the power to stop it. I hope you will use
6 your power for the benefit of the people of Texas.

7 REP. VASUT: Thank you for your
8 testimony.

9 Members, any questions for this witness?
10 The Chair hears none. The witness is excused. Thank
11 you.

12 On this microphone, in just a little bit,
13 if Elsie Cooke-Holmes will come to this microphone,
14 we'll come to you in just a little bit.

15 Chair calls Roman Palomares. I show you
16 registered to testify as Roman Palomares, on behalf of
17 LULAC, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan.
18 Is that correct, sir?

19 ROMAN PALOMARES: That's correct.

20 REP. VASUT: Chair will show that
21 Representative Manuel is present, time 5:34.

22 Please give us your testimony, sir.

23 ROMAN PALOMARES: Thank you very much.
24 Good afternoon, Chairman Vasut and Select Committee. I
25 represent the largest Latino organization in the United

1 States, LULAC, the League of United Latin American
2 Citizens. LULAC recognizes that Latino communities
3 have fueled the state's rapid population growth for
4 decades. And as the Rep. Rosenthal mentioned, between
5 2010 and 2020, 4 million people, 2 million Hispanic
6 Latinos, 50 percent growth. These numbers are more
7 than statistics. They represent a mandate for equal
8 representation and political empowerment.

9 LULAC strongly asserts that fair
10 representation is not up for debate. The Voting Rights
11 Act requires equal opportunity to elect candidates of
12 our choice and create electoral maps that reflect true
13 demographic shifts. Yet, certain Texas lawmakers have
14 a history of suppressing Latino voting strength. They
15 have repeatedly drawn boundaries which increase
16 majority white districts. This cannot continue. It is
17 illegal and unjust. LULAC proudly stands with
18 coalitions of Latino, black, Asian-American
19 organizations which have consistently led legal efforts
20 to secure fair redistricting. This fight is not new
21 and it is far from over.

22 As we approach the 2025 special session,
23 our movement is prepared to stand resolute against any
24 efforts to dilute the electoral power of communities of
25 color. Texas belongs to all its residents, and so must

1 its -- and so must its political maps.

2 [Lights turned off]

3 REP. VASUT: The House Select Committee
4 on Congressional Redistricting will stand at ease for
5 one minute. Now we get to all be friends for a minute
6 while we wait. I apologize, sir, I'm going to let you
7 continue. We're going to reset that. Technically,
8 I've got to wait a minute. I stopped the timer,
9 though. If somebody could just not hit that button
10 again, we'd greatly appreciate it. You know, mood
11 lighting is fine, but maybe not that kind of mood
12 lighting.

13 Let me ask this real quickly while we're
14 waiting. Is Domingo Garcia, Jay Nam (phonetic) or Ben
15 Whitman (phonetic) here? Any of those three here? If
16 I called your name and you heard it, if you could alert
17 a member of committee staff, we understood that you
18 might want to testify, and we had some forms for you,
19 but we hadn't seen you.

20 Okay. With that, without objection from
21 members of the committee, the House Select Committee on
22 Congressional Redistricting will come back to order.

23 The Chair will recognize Mr. Palomares to
24 complete his testimony. I'll give you another 30
25 seconds, sir.

1 ROMAN PALOMARES: Thank you, sir. Texans
2 deserve the chance to weigh in before final lines are
3 drawn. A rushed, closed-door process only breeds more
4 distress and disenfranchisement. This is unacceptable
5 in a modern democracy. The people of Texas must not
6 allow their voices to be stolen through partisan
7 gerrymandering. LULAC's stance is complete opposition
8 to any redistricting effort that undermines the will
9 and the voice of the Latino community and any community
10 of color. We will not allow decades of growth, civic
11 participation, and sacrifice to be erased by political
12 gamesmanship. Fair maps are the foundation of a
13 functioning democracy. Thank you, sir.

14 REP. VASUT: Thank you for your
15 testimony.

16 Members, any questions for this witness?

17 The Chair hears none. Thank you for your
18 testimony. The witness is excused.

19 Chair calls Elsie-Cooke Holmes. I show
20 you registered to testify as Elsie Cooke-Holmes, on
21 behalf of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, on
22 a Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that
23 correct?

24 ELSIE COOKE-HOLMES: Thank you.

25 REP. VASUT: Please give us your

1 testimony.

2 ELSIE COOKE-HOLMES: Thank you, Chairman,
3 Vice Chair, and other members of the committee. I am a
4 proud resident of Texas and the immediate past
5 international president of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority,
6 Incorporated. For over 100 years, members of our
7 organization have fought for civil rights and voting
8 rights, and I'm representing over 350,000 members,
9 including thousands of Texans, to oppose this rushed
10 mid-decade redistricting process that threatens to
11 silence communities of color and risks further harm to
12 black and brown Texans' ability to elect their
13 preferred representatives.

14 Despite a 30-day special session, we're a
15 week into it. No maps or other data have been shared
16 with the public for meaningful consideration, review,
17 and debate. Yet you're asking us, your constituents,
18 to engage in a rushed, non-transparent process that
19 could further minimize the power of black and brown
20 Texan voters. That's not democracy, that's
21 disenfranchisement. We know that the current maps
22 already harm black and brown communities, issues so
23 severe that they've gone to federal court. And this
24 special session is doing nothing. It's only
25 exacerbating it. It's doing nothing to fix the

1 injustices in Texas' congressional map.

2 So we encourage you, we encourage you to
3 consider the fact that Texans deserve a congressional
4 map that allows them the opportunity to choose their
5 leaders. They do not deserve a map crafted behind
6 closed doors where officials choose their constituents.
7 So I urge this committee to halt this process until it
8 can be carried out with transparency, fairness, and
9 integrity. As our member, Texans' own, the late
10 Congresswoman Barbara Jordan said, if the society today
11 allows wrongs to go unchallenged, the impression is
12 created that those wrongs have the approval of the
13 majority. And I do not believe the majority of Texans
14 are for this. We have a right to our voice in
15 Congress. And so we demand --

16 REP. VASUT: Please complete your
17 testimony.

18 ELSIE COOKE-HOLMES: I'm sorry?

19 REP. VASUT: Please complete your
20 testimony. I'll let you get another sentence.

21 ELSIE COOKE-HOLMES: Okay. So we are
22 watching, we are organized, and we are demanding better
23 for our state and our democracy. Thank you.

24 REP. VASUT: Thank you.

25 Members, any questions for this witness?

1 Mr. Manuel, for what purpose?

2 And, ma'am, my chief's going to bring you
3 a form. If you could sign that form.

4 Mr. Manuel, no question? Okay.

5 All right. If you could sign your
6 affirmation form.

7 Members, any other questions for this
8 witness? Chair hears none. Thank you for your
9 testimony, ma'am. You are excused.

10 Chair is going to call Royce West. I
11 show you registered to testify as Royce West, on behalf
12 of yourself, on Revised Congressional Redistricting
13 Plan. Senator, thank you. You're recognized. Please
14 give us your -- is that correct, Senator? Did I get
15 your registration correct, Senator?

16 ROYCE WEST: With all due respect to the
17 Chairman and the members of this august body, I want
18 you to look out here. This is Texas. This is Texas.
19 This is Texas. I know that I'm in the other body. And
20 I had some equivocation about whether or not I should
21 come and testify. That equivocation lasted one second,
22 because I wanted to make certain that I had the
23 opportunity to talk to my colleagues in the House.

24 Each and every one of the Republicans
25 that was here in 2021 voted for that man. You voted

1 for it. The Governor signed it. Yes, it's being
2 contested in federal court right now. The Chair of the
3 Senate Redistricting Committee testified under oath
4 that it was race-blind. Not once, but twice.
5 Testified in federal court. And I know I've got some
6 lawyers up here. Under oath that it was race-blind.
7 The Attorney General of the State of Texas, who spent
8 much of his time during the Biden administration suing
9 the federal government, based on laws passed in the
10 State of Texas.

11 The Governor signed this particular map
12 that we're under right now. He put in a letter to the
13 Department of Justice, as you well know, saying that
14 the race -- that the map was race-blind. Your Attorney
15 General. But where is he today? Is he suing the Trump
16 administration? No. Ask yourself why. Members, I'm
17 not going to be long. I know that my colleagues in the
18 Senate Democratic Caucus are supportive of the House
19 Democratic Caucus and asking you to just consider what
20 the Governor is asking you to do. But you don't have
21 to vote for it. You do not have to vote for it.

22 You know, I'm going to say this in
23 closing. I'm kind of an historian, and I read a lot of
24 books. And I think about some of the lynchings that
25 occurred, and a group of people that were standing

1 there during the lynching. They just stood there and
2 did nothing. Don't be one of those members as we deal
3 with issues of redistricting. Thank you.

4 REP. VASUT: Thank you for your
5 testimony.

6 [Loud clapping from gallery]

7 Members, any questions for this witness?

8 Chair recognizes Mr. Moody to question the witness.

9 REP. MOODY: Senator, I want to -
10 there's a lot of us up here. No, Senator, I want to
11 thank you for being here, and I appreciate your voice
12 in this process. I've been trying to dig into where
13 these maps are, and I've had a number of members of
14 Congress come before this committee and testify. I've
15 asked several of them. This is the first time I've had
16 a member of the Senate come over, so I'd be remiss if I
17 didn't ask. Have you seen these maps yet? Are they
18 available to y'all in the Senate and just maybe not to
19 us in the House?

20 ROYCE WEST: No, they're not. And let me
21 say this. The reality is, is that I've been reassured
22 that there will be hearings once the maps come out.
23 But check this out. Will there be regional meetings
24 like this so everyone won't have to come to Austin to
25 see the maps? And probably not.

1 REP. MOODY: Well, so let me ask you
2 about that. I want to drill down into that. Why --
3 why is that? I mean, we can all stand up here and talk
4 about what we'd like to see or not see. But without a
5 bill in front of us, there's not something that's drawn
6 right. A map comes in the form of a bill in the
7 Legislature, right? It's the same in the Senate?

8 ROYCE WEST: That's exactly right.

9 REP. MOODY: I've got to check because we
10 do things different in the House than you all do. But
11 that's the way it works.

12 ROYCE WEST: Exactly.

13 REP. MOODY: So because we have nothing
14 here, I don't know what these boundaries look like. I
15 don't know what Congressman Veasey [audio cut out]
16 about this. What is -- and I agree with you, what is
17 the value of us seeing it, seeing the proposal, and
18 being able to let folks, like the folks that are here
19 tonight -- and as I walked in, hundreds more outside
20 those doors -- comment on the actual bill? What's the
21 difference between that and what we're doing here
22 today?

23 ROYCE WEST: That's true engagement by
24 the public in terms of looking at maps and making
25 comments about whether or not they fully represent

1 communities of interest, as an example.

2 REP. MOODY: I appreciate that. I'm
3 going to ask you one last question. I want to make
4 sure the other members have an opportunity. My
5 understanding is, pursuant to the Constitution, the
6 Governor can put anything on the call that we are
7 supposed to undertake --

8 ROYCE WEST: That's correct.

9 REP. MOODY: -- during a special session?
10 You've been in the Legislature longer than me. You
11 know how that goes. And as far as I can find, as far
12 as I can look into the House rules, there's nothing
13 that says we have to take up, consider, or pass
14 anything the Governor puts on the call.

15 ROYCE WEST: That's exactly right.

16 REP. MOODY: Is there anything different
17 -- do you all operate under any different rules in the
18 Senate? Do you have to do what the governor says over
19 there?

20 ROYCE WEST: You said rules?

21 REP. MOODY: Is there anything -- is
22 there any --

23 ROYCE WEST: There's nothing that I --

24 REP. MOODY: -- anything in the
25 Constitution --

1 ROYCE WEST: No --

2 REP. MOODY: -- or the Senate rules --

3 ROYCE WEST: -- not at all.

4 REP. MOODY: --that say that you have to
5 do what's on the call?

6 ROYCE WEST: No.

7 REP. MOODY: Is there anything that says
8 you even have to hold hearings on it?

9 ROYCE WESTS: No.

10 REP. MOODY: Thank you, sir.

11 ROYCE WEST: Let me just say this, Mr.
12 Chairman, if I may. There are people outside that
13 can't get in. And it's my understanding, because I've
14 talked with the general counsel or the legislative
15 liaison for the university, and I'm being told that
16 they were instructed not to provide any additional
17 space for people that couldn't come in here. I would
18 hope -- and that it came from the committee. I would
19 hope that you would ask UT Arlington to just open up
20 the space across the hall. Okay? And allow people to
21 sit in there.

22 [Loud clapping from gallery]

23 REP. VASUT: Certainly, Senator. I'd be
24 certainly happy if UT Arlington would open up that
25 space. Before we -- before we -- Senator, just a

1 couple more questions.

2 [Cheering and clapping from gallery]

3 REP. VASUT: I would remind the audience,
4 just because it takes time. Before we go to the next
5 few questions for you, Senator, if Alisa Simmons and
6 Marc Veasey could be ready to go to these mics next,
7 I'd appreciate it. Want to make sure we're efficient
8 there.

9 Any other questions for the witness?
10 Chair recognizes Mr. Turner to question the panel.

11 REP. TURNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
12 Senator West, thank you for being here tonight. I
13 think you were in the hearing room earlier when I spoke
14 about the Department of Justice and thanked the
15 Chairman for sending a letter inviting the DOJ and
16 suggested that the committee should consider a subpoena
17 if need be, because we need to hear from the DOJ in
18 this process. I know in the Senate, Senator King, the
19 Chairman of your redistricting committee, sent a letter
20 inviting the DOJ to testify, I believe, on Friday. Do
21 you happen to know, are there plans being made for the
22 DOJ to testify before the Senate Redistricting
23 Committee?

24 ROYCE WEST: Other than knowing that a
25 request has been made, I don't know whether or not.

1 They may be out of the office.

2 REP. TURNER: Okay. Understood. I
3 wonder where they are. But I would hope -- I would
4 hope, Senator, that for the House and the Senate to be
5 able to fully understand the implications of what DOJ
6 is asking Texas to do, that the DOJ will appear before
7 the Senate Redistricting Committee and the House
8 Redistricting Committee, and I hope both committees
9 will pursue a subpoena process, if need be, to secure
10 their testimony.

11 ROYCE WEST: And I'd also hope that this
12 committee would take into consideration that the law
13 that is being depended upon by the Department of
14 Justice is not settled law, by the way. There are
15 other circuits that don't follow what the Fifth Circuit
16 has prescribed, and that they would allow the Supreme
17 Court to at least opine on whether or not that ends up
18 being the law of the country.

19 REP. TURNER: Absolutely. Thank you.

20 REP. VASUT: Chair will show
21 Representative Bowers and Representative Davis present
22 on the dais.

23 Members, any other questions? Chair
24 recognizes Representative Gervin-Hawkins to question
25 the witness.

1 REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr.
2 Chair.

3 Senator, you've been around a long time.

4 ROYCE WEST: Hey, come on now.

5 [Talking and clapping from gallery]

6 REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: Senator, you know,
7 one of the things as we go through this journey
8 together that I think is so important, and I know you
9 have this knowledge, what recommendation would you make
10 to our House colleagues in terms of allowing someone to
11 come in and destroy Texas, through racial lines,
12 through many other lines, and then leave and go home,
13 and we're left with the aftermath? What recommendation
14 would you give our colleagues? Because, you know,
15 everybody needs cover, and we know that when the man in
16 the White House speaks, everybody does what? They jump
17 and they listen. So, Senator, words of wisdom to my
18 colleagues, don't let this man destroy Texas. What
19 advice would you give them?

20 ROYCE WEST: My advice to my Republican
21 colleagues is to kind of look within. Look within. We
22 all profess to be Christians. And the analogy I gave
23 you a few minutes ago, where black men were being
24 lynched, there were probably Christians at those
25 lynchings. And they engaged in that type of behavior,

1 knowing in their heart and their soul that it was
2 wrong. Wrong.

3 So the question is, is whether or not
4 you're going to go down that path and say, well, it's
5 just about politics, or it's whether about making
6 certain people in this room get an opportunity to sit
7 at the same table that you're sitting at, have
8 discussions, give their perspective concerning the
9 issues, allow a vote to be taken, and let it be a
10 reflection of the majority of your body and my body.
11 We have a right to sit with you, if elected, duly
12 elected by our constituents, and come up with policies
13 that reflect the sentiment of the State. I'd ask you
14 not to destroy what has already happened as it relates
15 to representation by Hispanics and African-Americans,
16 because that's what your president is asking you to do.
17 Not your God, but your president.

18 REP. VASUT: Members, any other
19 questions? Chair hears done. Thank you for your
20 testimony, Senator. You're excused.

21 ROYCE WEST: Thank you.

22 [Loud clapping from gallery]

23 REP. VASUT: Now, forgive me if I read
24 this form wrong. Is it Alisa Simmons?

25 ALISA SIMMONS: Alisa.

1 REP. VASUT: Alisa Simmons.

2 ALISA SIMMONS: Yes.

3 REP. VASUT: I show you're registered to
4 testify on behalf of yourself on the Revised
5 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

6 ALISA SIMMONS: Yes.

7 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
8 testimony.

9 ALISA SIMMONS: Thank you, sir. My name
10 is Alisa Simmons. I'm the Tarrant County Commissioner
11 that represents the precinct -- I represent the
12 precinct that you are currently sitting in, meeting in.
13 This is my precinct. Welcome to ground zero of
14 redistricting. Tarrant County, Texas, home of the Tea
15 Party and MAGA Republicans, MAGA Republican county
16 judge, DA, sheriff, all of them.

17 I am here to urge the members of the
18 Texas Legislature to say no to racism and the racially
19 discriminatory redraw of congressional maps. What
20 you've done is planned and calculated a racist attack
21 on the fundamental voting rights of people of color. I
22 should know. MAGA County Judge Tim O'Hare used a
23 racist law firm and a racist map drawer to attack,
24 pack, and crack African-American and Hispanic
25 neighborhoods here, just like you are trying to do to

1 our congressional maps.

2 With the mid-decade redistricting of
3 Tarrant County Commissioner's precincts, the
4 Republicans came for me and my seat just last month.
5 On June 3rd, my constituents lost their representation
6 due to intentional, racial, gerrymandered MAGA
7 politics. And what happened when my colleagues voted
8 to redistrict? When they voted to go after my Precinct
9 2 seat, a damn lawsuit. So hopefully you all are
10 prepared for that. They redrew our lines not because
11 the population shifted, not because our communities
12 changed, but because they wanted to silence our voices.

13 Like you, Texas legislative Republicans,
14 my MAGA colleagues wanted more power than they already
15 have. Tarrant County has been in existence since 1849
16 and has always been Republican-led. What more do you
17 want? They didn't give a damn who they had to
18 disenfranchise --

19 REP. VASUT: Please complete your
20 testimony.

21 ALISA SIMMONS: -- to do it. Is my time
22 up?

23 REP. VASUT: Please -- yeah, I'll let you
24 complete your sentence.

25 ALISA SIMMONS: All right. That wasn't

1 fair. That wasn't democratic. It was designed to rig
2 the game before the whistle even blew. And now Texas
3 Republican leadership is behind closed doors, haven't
4 seen a map or a redistricting proposal from you guys,
5 doing the same thing. But we are here today to say no
6 to racism and racially discriminatory redrawing of
7 congressional maps. Thank you all.

8 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
9 this witness? Representative Manuel is recognized to
10 question the witness.

11 Commissioner, Commissioner, we might --
12 just -- it's okay. Just remember to stay at that
13 microphone till we -- we might have some questions for
14 you.

15 Representative Manuel is recognized to
16 question the witness.

17 REP. MANUEL: I had a quick question. I
18 know you were saying that because of this, it's going
19 to cause a lawsuit. Is your county right now flush
20 with cash or do you all have an over surplus of cash?
21 I'm asking for an intent. So I'm asking --

22 ALISA SIMMONS: No, sir, we are not flush
23 with cash.

24 REP. MANUEL: Okay. So you're not.
25 Second thing is, obviously you wouldn't know, but as of

1 right now, since this will possibly be going to
2 litigation, do you know how much the county is already
3 having to spend to try to, you know, affirm what
4 they've already done to the seat with redistricting?

5 ALISA SIMMONS: Yes. We have hired the
6 racist -- the firm that drew the racist map. We pay
7 them to draw the racist map, \$30,000. And now we've
8 hired them to defend the damn racist map at 250,000.

9 REP. MANUEL: Okay. So --

10 ALISA SIMMONS: That's just -- that's
11 just the beginning.

12 REP. MANUEL: That's just the beginning.

13 ALISA SIMMONS: Yes.

14 REP. MANUEL: So we're already well
15 above, what, \$300,000?

16 ALISA SIMMONS: Yes. In less than a
17 month.

18 REP. MANUEL: Okay. And then how is that
19 end up going to be paid back? I mean, I know the
20 county is going to do it, but where is that --

21 ALISA SIMMONS: Their money. It's
22 taxpayer dollars.

23 REP. MANUEL: So this is going to come
24 from the taxpayers --

25 ALISA SIMMONS: Yes.

1 REP. VASUT: -- who are already
2 disenfranchised, as well as people who are not
3 disenfranchised.

4 ALISA SIMMONS: Correct.

5 REP. VASUT: So this is going to increase
6 taxes in your county?

7 ALISA SIMMONS: It probably will.

8 REP. MANUEL: Okay. I just wanted to
9 confirm that. Thank you.

10 ALISA SIMMONS: Thank you, sir.

11 REP. TURNER: Mr. Chairman.

12 REP. VASUT: Mr. Turner is recognized to
13 question the witness.

14 REP. TURNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15 Commissioner Simmons, thank you for being
16 here, and thank you for your leadership for our county
17 and for our precinct. You talked about the Tarrant
18 County mid-decade redistricting. And I'd like you just
19 to inform the committee how your Republican colleagues
20 on the Commissioner's Court went about achieving it.
21 Just correct me if I'm wrong, but they took heavily
22 minority neighborhoods from Precinct 2, which you were
23 elected to represent, and packed them into Precinct 1,
24 which is an existing majority-minority commissioner's
25 precinct. Is that -- do I have that basically correct?

1 ALISA SIMMONS: That's correct. So,
2 Precinct 2, as politicians, you know, is a competitive
3 district. Precinct 1 is decidedly Democratic.
4 Precincts 3 and 4 are decidedly Republican. So, hey,
5 if the Republicans run a good race, they maybe could
6 have beat me, but they didn't. So it's a
7 competitive -- it's a competitive district. And so,
8 yes, they -- my precinct, the CVAP, voting age
9 population, was 48.9 percent black and brown. And with
10 redistricting, it's now 38 percent black and brown. So
11 they decimated Precinct 2.

12 REP. TURNER: Okay. And basically, when
13 they do these racial gerrymanders, like we're about to
14 see in this congressional map, there's basically two
15 ways to do it, right? You can crack the minority
16 community and thereby dilute votes across several
17 districts, and/or pack minority voters into as little
18 geography as possible, but the net effect is the same,
19 reducing the overall representation that minority
20 voters have in their ability to elect the candidates of
21 their choice.

22 ALISA SIMMONS: That's correct. So they
23 took, for example, the Tarrant County portion of Grand
24 Prairie, which was in Precinct 2, and votes decidedly
25 Democratic. That's your district.

1 REP. TURNER: Yes.

2 ALISA SIMMONS: And took it right around
3 Arlington and placed it in Precinct 1. So, you know,
4 they cracked Precinct 2 very well and put them into
5 Precinct 1.

6 REP. TURNER: All right. Thank you
7 for -- thank you for walking us through that. Thank
8 you, Commissioner.

9 ALISA SIMMONS: Thank you, sir.

10 REP. VASUT: Representative Barbara
11 Gervin-Hawkins for what purpose?

12 REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: Mr. Chair, there's
13 still requests for us to open up that room across the
14 hall. So could we ask the whole site to have that room
15 open? We've got a lot of elderly people there, people
16 on walkers, wheelchairs.

17 REP. VASUT: Happy to make that request.

18 REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: Please. Thank you.

19 REP. VASUT: Chair Rosenthal, for what
20 purpose? Vice Chair Rosenthal.

21 REP. ROSENTHAL: Question for the
22 Chairman.

23 REP. VASUT: Yield for question.

24 REP. ROSENTHAL: When you make that
25 request, can you please remind the folks at UT

1 Arlington that this is a publicly-funded university?

2 REP. VASUT: Members -- and just so you
3 know, I stop the timer anytime there's a question of
4 the Chair, just so you know. Members, any other
5 questions for this witness?

6 Commissioner, thank you for having us
7 here today.

8 ALISA SIMMONS: Thank you, Chair.

9 REP. VASUT: Thank you for being here.
10 Thank you for your testimony. You're excused.

11 Chair calls Marc Veasey.

12 Now, while I call up Mr. Veasey,
13 Congressman, if Leon Holeman could make your way to
14 this other microphone, we'd love to come to you next.
15 So Leon Holeman to this microphone.

16 I show you registered to testify as Marc
17 Veasey, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised
18 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct,
19 sir?

20 MARC VEASEY: Yes.

21 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
22 testimony.

23 MARC VEASEY: Thank you very much. Hi,
24 my name is Marc Veasey, Congressman for the 33rd
25 Congressional District. Born and reared in Tarrant

1 County with proud roots in the Lake Como and Stop 6
2 communities. The district that I represent is born of
3 struggle, built by hope, and defined by diverse voices
4 of both Tarrant and Dallas Counties. From historic
5 African-American and Hispanic communities in southeast
6 Fort Worth and Forest Hill, to the vibrant
7 neighborhoods of Arlington, Grand Prairie, and North
8 Oak Cliff, and to the diverse neighborhoods in the
9 Valley Ranch area of Irving, this district represents
10 the very soul of Texas. And it's been the honor of my
11 life to serve these communities, to fight for every
12 person, regardless of race, party or ideology. But
13 today I come before you not as a congressman but as a
14 witness, because the very communities that I serve and
15 that I love are under threat.

16 In Texas, the right to vote, a right paid
17 for in blood and sweat and lives, is once again under
18 siege. Only now the weapon is not a billy club or a
19 literacy test, but a partisan pen wielded by those who
20 would rig the system to preserve power rather than earn
21 it. Donald Trump is demanding loyalty maps, maps drawn
22 not to represent but to erase, erase. And these maps
23 would strip away the voices of black and brown Texans
24 who built this state and fueled its growth. District
25 33 has a combined voting age population of over 84

1 percent, a minority voting age population to be
2 specific. And it was created as part of a court-
3 ordered map in 2011 to remedy deliberate racial
4 gerrymandering. And since then, minority voters have
5 consistently and reliably elected the candidate of
6 their choice.

7 I have been humbled to earn that trust in
8 every election. And yet, this district now faces a
9 threat of being dismantled, not for fairness, not for
10 compliance, but to serve the raw, hungry power of one
11 man, Donald Trump.

12 REP. VASUT: Please complete your
13 testimony.

14 MARC VEASEY: Just a few years ago,
15 Governor Abbott and Republican lawmakers stood in the
16 federal court and swore under oath that their map was
17 legal because it was drawn "race blind." Now Trump is
18 claiming that the map they drew is illegal because it
19 was drawn with racial intent. Now those very
20 Republican -- now those very Republican lawmakers claim
21 that the map they drew is illegal because it was drawn
22 with enough racial intent. So what is it? Were they
23 lying then or are they lying now? Either way --

24 REP. VASUT: Please, if you could please
25 complete your testimony.

1 MARC VEASEY: -- one truth is clear.
2 They have shown that they cannot be trusted with the
3 power to draw the lines that define our democracy. And
4 the facts don't lie. Ninety-five percent of Texas
5 population growth came from minority residents in
6 Dallas and Tarrant counties. All the growth came from
7 communities of color. And yet, out of 38 congressional
8 districts in Texas, only 13 have consistently enabled
9 minority voters to elect the candidate of their choice.
10 And in all 13, they have chosen Democrats. Now 13 of
11 those districts are in the crosshairs. And make no
12 mistake, redrawing these lines to dilute minority power
13 would not be a neutral act. It would be an act of
14 intentional racial discrimination that violates the
15 law.

16 REP. VASUT: Thank you for your
17 testimony.

18 Members, any questions for this witness?
19 Representative Gervin-Hawkins is recognized to question
20 the witness.

21 REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: Congressman, will
22 your district land on the, what I call in the bullseye,
23 in the target?

24 MARC VEASEY: It was listed in the sham
25 DOJ memo that was provided. But like everybody else, I

1 have not seen a map.

2 REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: So if indeed a map
3 was passed, which we haven't seen, we're talking about
4 destroying your district?

5 MARC VEASEY: Right.

6 REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: How does it feel
7 really to be under attack like that when you've been a
8 legislator, a congressional person for a number of
9 years?

10 MARC VEASEY: It's not really about how I
11 feel. What really bothers me is the communities that I
12 represent. That's really what bothers me. You know,
13 consistently in the Dallas-Fort Worth area -- and
14 again, I'm proud to be from Fort Worth. I was born
15 here. My grandparents came here and moved to Como with
16 nothing. And I'm very proud to be from Fort Worth and
17 to be from Tarrant County. I will tell you that.

18 But what I'll also tell you is that I've
19 watched this area grow. I've watched areas that used
20 to be cow pastures that were 1A and 2A schools that now
21 have 15 high schools. And all of that growth was
22 because of black, brown and South Asian, mainly,
23 growth. And for them to keep drawing these seats to
24 not reflect that growth is wrong.

25 REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: So, Congressman,

1 have you stated all the things you needed to state to
2 this community today?

3 MARC VEASEY: Yes, ma'am.

4 REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: Thank you.

5 REP. VASUT: Members, any other questions
6 for this witness? Chair hears none. Thank you,
7 Congressman, you're excused.

8 At this right microphone, if Janet
9 Mattern could make her way down to this microphone.

10 REP. TURNER: Mr. Chairman?

11 REP. VASUT: Mr. Turner, for what
12 purpose?

13 REP. TURNER: If the Chairman will yield
14 for a question.

15 REP. VASUT: Chairman yields for some
16 questions.

17 REP. TURNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
18 With respect to the overflow crowd outside, it's my
19 understanding there's still not a TV hooked up or any
20 audio/video to where people waiting to testify and
21 wanting to observe the hearing can actually hear the
22 hearing. And my concern specifically is people who are
23 maybe registered and won't hear their name when called.
24 And my understanding is the university has the
25 capability of doing this if they receive the direction

1 from the committee to do so.

2 REP. VASUT: Happy to pass along that
3 request. We will certainly do so to hook up an
4 audio/visual there. In the meantime, I would just
5 encourage everyone that's outside, on your cell phone,
6 if you'll go to house.texas.gov, there's a link to
7 audio visual there, and you'll be able to watch it on
8 your phone. In the meantime, we will request that of
9 the university. Thank you, Representative Turner.

10 REP. TURNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 REP. VASUT: Members, we're going to go
12 to our next witness. I'll start the clock again.

13 I show you registered to testify as Leon
14 Holeman, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised
15 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct,
16 sir?

17 LEON HOLEMAN: Yes, it is.

18 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
19 testimony.

20 LEON HOLEMAN: Yes. I'm glad you
21 introduced me as Leon Holeman because I am not Anthony
22 Davis, although I wish I was. This redistricting
23 process is, as I should say, bigotry, racism, and
24 fascism disguised, camouflaged, and masquerading as
25 politics. If you read the New York Times article, "How

1 Texas Plans to Make Its House Districts Redder," all
2 five districts that are slated for redistricting are
3 primarily black and/or Latino. This is a different
4 candy coating on the old-fashioned, chocolate-covered
5 M&M peanut of racial supremacy. This is tantamount to
6 Heinrich Himmler taking order from the Fuhrer. It's
7 taking representation from the people who built this
8 country, died for this country, and are now essential
9 workers that keep this country alive during a pandemic
10 and to this present day.

11 What the State of Texas -- what the State
12 of Texas should be doing, should be figuring out, is
13 why a flood warning to Kerr County a day before the
14 flood was ignored. Why millions of dollars in SNAP
15 benefits were stolen from the most vulnerable in the
16 state. Why did \$60 million for summer school lunches
17 for children was vetoed, even though the State of Texas
18 has a \$21.2 billion surplus. Those of you --

19 [Clapping from gallery]

20 LEON HOLEMAN: Please, please, please, I
21 can't get my statement in. Those of you who that
22 support this immoral, unjust, and racist process are
23 immoral, unjust, and racist. There is no -- there is
24 no room for negotiating wrong or right. It's either
25 one or the other. There's no in-between or other

1 calculus. If you say you have morals, a conscience,
2 are Christian, etc., you should be against this process
3 and that's it, that's all. What would Jesus do?
4 Saying that you're doing the right thing, then voting
5 the wrong way is lying, hypocrisy, and pretense. It's
6 fakery.

7 REP. VASUT: Please complete your
8 testimony.

9 LEON HOLEMAN: Then if one says one
10 thing, then lines up in lockstep behind the Fuhrer,
11 sending him ultimate -- ceding him ultimate power,
12 rather, those who do this will be responsible for the
13 results.

14 REP. VASUT: Thank you. Wait right
15 there, Mr. Holeman. Mr. Holeman, we might -- we might
16 have some -- I just want to make sure. Members, any
17 questions for this witness?

18 LEON HOLEMAN: Sorry about that.

19 REP. VASUT: Chair hears none. Thank you
20 for your testimony. You're excused. Thank you, Mr.
21 Holeman.

22 At this microphone behind him, if we
23 could have John Van Compernelle come up for this one.

24 Chair is going to call Janet Mattern. I
25 show you registered to testify as Janet Mattern, on

1 behalf of the League of Women Voters of Tarrant County,
2 on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is
3 that correct?

4 JANET MATTERN: Hello. Thank you for the
5 opportunity --

6 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
7 testimony.

8 JANET MATTERN: I'm sorry?

9 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
10 testimony.

11 JANET MATTERN: Thank you for the
12 opportunity to speak today. My name is Janet Mattern,
13 President of the League of Women Voters of Tarrant
14 County. I oppose the mid-census redistricting of
15 congressional districts. Texans have the right to fair
16 and equal representation achieved through a thoughtful,
17 transparent process that allows meaningful public
18 input. The process should establish criteria necessary
19 to create legally-compliant district maps, protect
20 minority voting rights, and respect county lines, city
21 boundaries, and communities of interest.

22 Rushing the process can result in
23 intentional voter disenfranchisement. Any proposal to
24 remove minority representation from districts that have
25 a history of electing people of color is a direct and

1 intentional act of voter disenfranchisement. Do not
2 silence communities of color by preventing them from
3 having a voice in their government. Any map created
4 that intentionally prohibits people of color from
5 electing a representative who looks like them violates
6 the Voting Rights Act. Rushing the process limits
7 public input, erodes transparency, as well as public
8 trust.

9 Why are we here? Your constituents did
10 not put redistricting on the special session agenda,
11 did they? Redistricting should empower voters, not
12 politicians. Reject any maps that disenfranchise
13 voters and undermine democracy. Thank you.

14 REP. VASUT: Thank you for your
15 testimony.

16 Members, any questions for this witness?
17 Chair hears none. Thank you, ma'am. You're excused.

18 At this microphone, if we could have
19 Chaplain Rich Stoglin come up to this microphone here.
20 We'll come to you next, sir.

21 Chair calls John Van Compernelle. I show
22 you registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on
23 the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan? Is that
24 correct?

25 JOHN VAN COMPERNOLLE: That's correct.

1 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
2 testimony.

3 JOHN VAN COMPERNOLLE: All right. For
4 those members of the committee that know me, you know
5 that I am the last person that will show up here and
6 support the federal government telling Texas what to
7 do. You know that for a fact if you know me. The next
8 thing, I think, is to understand the essence of, the
9 coming of age of the word gerrymandering.

10 In 1812, Eldridge Gerry structured a
11 Massachusetts state senate district to ensure his
12 election to that seat. It was in the shape of a
13 salamander, hence gerrymander. If you look at today's
14 congressional maps, they don't look like salamanders at
15 all. They look like a Salvador Dali drawing.

16 Because the governor has put this on a
17 special session, you have an opportunity. You have an
18 opportunity to draw 38 boxes, each of which contains
19 758,000 people of any color, of any political
20 persuasion. You should not disregard that opportunity.
21 You should take this opportunity to draw a map that is
22 colorblind, party blind, and simply has 38 boxes with
23 758,000 people in each box. Don't pay attention to the
24 hyperbole. Don't pay attention to the nonsense. Pay
25 attention to the opportunity that you have and grasp

1 it. Grasp it with every being, every part of your
2 being. Thank you for this opp- [audio cut out].

3 REP. ROSENTHAL: [Inaudible].

4 JOHN VAN COMPERNOLLE: I am.

5 REP. ROSENTHAL: So, for those in the
6 audience, we are mandated to collect communities of
7 common interest along geographic boundaries. Is that
8 what you're advocating for today?

9 JOHN VAN COMPERNOLLE: I'm advocating for
10 fairness in drawing boundaries.

11 REP. ROSENTHAL: Sure. So basically --

12 JOHN VAN COMPERNOLLE: If you have an
13 opportunity -- now, I understand that the Constitution
14 says you do it with every census. If in fact these
15 districts as they're drawn aren't -- are gerrymandered,
16 which many people have said they are, then you have an
17 opportunity to un-gerrymander them. Why not take
18 advantage of that opportunity?

19 REP. ROSENTHAL: And it's a very good
20 point, and I back you on that 100 percent. If we were
21 to undertake that, do you think that that should be
22 informed with updated data and careful consideration,
23 plenty of thought? And then if we were to draw some
24 new maps, roll them out and let folks like this all
25 over the state weigh in on what those maps look like?

1 JOHN VAN COMPERNOLLE: No, I think --

2 REP. ROSENTHAL: Every affected district
3 should have an opportunity to come speak before us. Do
4 you think that's accurate?

5 JOHN VAN COMPERNOLLE: Oh, no, I think
6 once you have -- I couldn't quite hear everything
7 because of the applause. I think that the opportunity
8 you have is to fix what's wrong.

9 REP. ROSENTHAL: I wish we would do that.

10 JOHN VAN COMPERNOLLE: And if you take
11 the census data from 2020, then use that data. But fix
12 the shape so that you have something. Let's say that
13 we can only reach shapes of a salamander. That's a
14 whole lot better than the dallymander that we have.

15 REP. ROSENTHAL: Thank you, sir.

16 REP. VASUT: Members, any other questions
17 for this witness? Seeing none, thank you for your
18 testimony. The witness is excused.

19 If Lauren Pena can make her way down to
20 this microphone. Lauren Pena, this microphone here.

21 Chair calls Chaplain Rich Stoglin. I
22 show you registered to testify, on behalf of yourself,
23 on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is
24 that correct, sir?

25 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: I'm here to

1 represent the Frederick Douglass Republicans of Tarrant
2 County.

3 REP. VASUT: Let me -- do I have
4 permission to change your --

5 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: Yes, sir, you do.

6 REP. VASUT: -- registration to say --
7 and what was that again?

8 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: The Frederick
9 Douglass Republicans of Tarrant County. I'm the
10 president.

11 REP. VASUT: Frederick Douglass
12 Republicans of Tarrant County.

13 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: And I am the
14 president.

15 REP. VASUT: Gallery will come to order.
16 Please give us your testimony, sir.

17 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: My name is
18 Chaplain Rich Stoglin. I'm a native Texan currently
19 residing in Arlington, Texas, and I'm the president of
20 the Frederick Douglass Republicans of Tarrant County.
21 The renowned economist Dr. Thomas Sowell stated, one of
22 the sad signs of our times is that we have demonized
23 those who produce, subsidized those who refuse to
24 produce, and canonized those who complain. While the
25 founder of the Frederick Douglass Republicans of

1 Tarrant County, the late Honorable Reby Cary stated to
2 black and brown Americans, be an informed, intelligent
3 voter. Make your vote count. Remember, freedom isn't
4 free. Someone has to pay the price.

5 Historically, Texas has elected 40
6 Democrats, one independent, one unionist, and six
7 Republican governors. We must read and evaluate the
8 prosperity of our great state under each party. On 4
9 through 6, 1867 in Houston, Texas, the Republican Party
10 of Texas was created by 150 colored men and 20 white
11 men. They did this in the name of justice then, and
12 we're requesting redistricting in the name of justice
13 now. I echo their clarion call to have Republican
14 leadership in the great State of Texas. As a black
15 American, Afghanistan veteran, a retired department
16 head of the U.S. Department of Justice, I strongly
17 support the Republican redistricting. I do not want,
18 nor does the great State of Texas --

19 [Loud booing and shouting from gallery]

20 CHAPLIN RICH STOGLIN: -- or this
21 magnificent nation deserve to continue --

22 REP. VASUT: The gentleman will yield.
23 The gentleman will be accorded the same respect that
24 everyone testifying receives.

25 [Shouting from gallery.]

1 REP. VASUT: We will come to order.
2 Everyone, regardless of your belief, political
3 persuasion, or age, or whoever you are, you are an
4 American and you're entitled to be heard, and you will
5 be heard in this committee. The audience will come to
6 order. The gentleman is recognized to continue his
7 testimony.

8 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: I do not want the
9 great State of Texas or this magnificent nation deserve
10 to continue seeing systemic gang and street violence, a
11 plummeting educational system, communities
12 deteriorating, men in women's sports, etc., while
13 Democrats sit quietly and fail to condemn or
14 acknowledge the systemic moral decay, screaming
15 systemic racism for anything that does not fit the
16 narrative. These acts of evil must stop. We need
17 Republican leadership for such a time as this.
18 Republicans have a larger story.

19 Echoing the words of the American icon,
20 Mr. Frederick Douglass, you will not be judged by the
21 heights you have risen, but from the depths you have
22 climbed. I am a Republican, a black dyed-in-the-wool
23 Republican, and I never intend to belong to any other
24 party but the party of freedom and progress, Frederick
25 Douglass. We need and must have increased Republican

1 leadership in the great State of Texas to remain great.
2 As President of the Frederick Douglass Republicans of
3 Tarrant County, I stand behind this statement. Semper
4 fi.

5 REP. VASUT: Thank you for your
6 testimony.

7 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: Any questions for
8 me?

9 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
10 this witness?

11 [Shouting from gallery]

12 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: And Mr. Chairman?

13 REP. VASUT: Hold, yield. Hey, this is
14 America. We hear from everyone whether we agree with
15 them or not. And the audience will come to order and
16 extend the common courtesy of hearing every witness
17 regardless of their political persuasion.

18 Now, with that basis, Mr. Manuel, for
19 what purpose?

20 REP. MANUEL: To ask the gentleman a
21 question.

22 REP. VASUT: The gentleman yields for
23 questions. Mr. Manuel is recognized to question the
24 witness.

25 REP. MANUEL: You made a statement when

1 you were speaking, and I just want to kind of get the
2 understanding of it. So you don't think that redlining
3 in communities throughout the nation had anything to do
4 with the decay that happened with communities as they
5 were rising and as they were trying to form?

6 [Clapping in the gallery]

7 REP. MANUEL: If you all could not, it
8 would -- because we need to move.

9 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: Let me ask you a
10 question, sir. The Democratic --

11 [Shouting from the gallery]

12 REP. VASUT: Hold. The gentleman will
13 yield.

14 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: The Democratic
15 Party created --

16 REP. VASUT: The gentleman will yield.
17 Gentleman, yield for one moment. Just so it's clear,
18 questions only come from the dais. It's just in order
19 for this process. So if the gentleman would be happy
20 to answer Mr. Manuel's question.

21 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: The Democratic
22 Party created the redlining just like they created the
23 Jim Crow laws. That was the Democratic Party.

24 [Crosstalk]

25 REP. MANUEL: Okay. So --

1 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: And people talked
2 about --

3 REP. MANUEL: No, no, no, sir.

4 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: -- the litany --

5 REP. MANUEL: That's not what I asked
6 you. I asked you, did you think that that redlining
7 had anything to do with that? And also your -- your --

8 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: I think
9 redlining, yes, sir, to answer your question, had
10 something to do with it.

11 REP. MANUEL: Okay. And you're also
12 being just a little disingenuous because the parties
13 had two different platforms at that time.

14 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: No, sir.

15 REP. MANUEL: It was a very different
16 party. It was a very different platform.

17 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: I can hard- -- I
18 can hardly hear what you --

19 REP. MANUEL: I know. If you all
20 would -- I know some people are excited, but we really
21 can't get to the answers --

22 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: No, sir, we
23 can't. I cannot hear you. I'm sorry.

24 REP. MANUEL: What I'm saying is, you're
25 being a little disingenuous because at that time, the

1 party had two different platforms --

2 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: At what time,
3 sir? Which party?

4 REP. MANUEL: -- than what they are
5 today.

6 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: What timeline are
7 we talking about?

8 REP. MANUEL: The party that you're
9 talking about when it came to redlining, when --
10 whenever people say Republicans, I don't care if you're
11 Republican, Democrat, Independent. I'm a Democrat.
12 The point of it is, as someone who loves and adores
13 history --

14 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: So do I.

15 REP. MANUEL: -- the party had two
16 different platforms. It wasn't the same platform.

17 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: And I'm a
18 historian.

19 REP. MANUEL: Wait one second. The party
20 had -- the parties had two different platforms. So
21 you're being a little disingenuous to people when you
22 try to say that it's Democrats. Yes, it was Southern
23 Democrats with a very different platform than what
24 Democrats currently have today, because in 1965 there
25 was not an LGBTQ movement, and neither Republican nor

1 Democrat had it. That doesn't mean that it's the same
2 party. So we can't say that because they also had
3 Dixiecrats. You had other Democrats. You had black
4 Republicans. Yes, but it was a very different time.
5 So we -- I think it's best that we don't conflate that.

6 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: May I?

7 REP. MANUEL: No, you can't ask
8 questions. I ask the questions.

9 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: I m going to
10 answer you. No, sir. Mr. Chair, I'm trying to answer
11 -- I'm trying to answer your question, because --

12 REP. MANUEL: You answered --

13 [Crosstalk]

14 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: -- what you said
15 was not factually true.

16 REP. MANUEL: You answered the question.
17 I asked you about redlining. You agreed with that, and
18 I appreciate you.

19 REP. VASUT: The gentleman may respond to
20 the question.

21 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: Thank you. But
22 in all fair- -- I'm trying to have a conversation, but
23 I can hardly hear you.

24 [Shouting from the gallery]

25 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: In 19- --

1 REP. VASUT: Gentleman, yield for a
2 moment. Gentleman, yield for a moment. It's important
3 to remain a little quiet because -- so they can hear.
4 Right? We want them to both be able to hear each other
5 so that they can ask the question and answer it. If
6 the gentleman will gladly answer Mr. Manuel's
7 questions, but the questions cannot be asked from the
8 front mic, just so it's clear.

9 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: Thank you, Mr.
10 Chairman.

11 REP. VASUT: The gentleman is recognized
12 to answer the question.

13 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: Thank you, Mr.
14 Chairman. In 1965, what you're talking about, which
15 the Voting Rights Act was passed, it was signed by
16 Lyndon B. Johnson, but it was voted primarily by
17 Republicans in 1965. That's a fact. That's
18 documented.

19 REP. VASUT: Members, any other questions
20 for the witness? Okay. Thank you for your testimony.
21 The gentleman is excused.

22 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: And Mr. Chair?

23 REP. VASUT: If Mr. John Gardner can come
24 down. I apologize, sir. I've excused you. I
25 apologize. But technically, since I've excused you,

1 the gentleman is not recognized. If Mr. John Gardner
2 could come down --

3 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: Thank you, sir.

4 REP. VASUT: Thank you, sir.

5 -- to this front mic. We're going to
6 recognize Lauren --

7 [Shouting from the gallery]

8 REP. VASUT: No, we're not.

9 All right. Chair recognizes Lauren Pena.
10 I show you registered to testify as Lauren Pena, on
11 behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional
12 Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

13 LAUREN PENA: Yes, sir. Thank you.

14 REP. VASUT: If the gallery will come to
15 order so that the lady can be afforded the respect due
16 her as a testifying witness.

17 Please give us your testimony. Thank
18 you.

19 LAUREN PENA: Hi. Thank you guys so much
20 for letting me be here today. My name is Lauren Pena.
21 I currently reside in one of the first housing projects
22 ever implemented in the United States right now. All
23 of our civil rights are being severely violated. I
24 have reached out to every single elected official on my
25 state, federal, and local level to try to get

1 assistance for elderly and disabled that are trapped on
2 the second-, third-, and fourth-story floors that can't
3 even leave to go get groceries because the elevator is
4 broken and they're in wheelchairs. None of my elected
5 officials have been willing to help me. So, yes, I am
6 a Republican running for United States Congress, living
7 in federal housing projects.

8 Now, I would like to get over here and
9 speak about some things that I would like to improve.
10 I think that when John had brought up that there are,
11 you know, about 700,000 people, if they could each be
12 in a district like that, there are about 700,000 people
13 that are in a HUD property right now in Texas, and we
14 have absolutely no representation. So as far as this
15 redistricting, I have two suggestions. One, we could
16 go and we could let there be an at-large person,
17 someone who is receiving these benefits, that could go
18 and possibly just serve two terms, train up the next
19 generation so that we can keep having people that are
20 actually in poverty having a voice in our government,
21 or we can simply just take every major city and put a
22 district inside the inner city, because that is the
23 problem. We do not have representation inside the
24 inner cities.

25 And I can tell you all right now that it

1 is not good. The conditions are not good. Your
2 taxpayer dollars are being weaponized against me, my
3 family, and all of the other people there. There are
4 elderly, there are disabled, there are veterans. Their
5 rights are being severely violated, and this is not a
6 party thing. This should not be about who's a
7 Republican or who's a Democrat. This is about human
8 dignity. This is about people being harmed by these
9 policies, and we have no representation. So I beg you
10 guys, give my community, the poor community, people
11 living in poverty, actual poverty, to have a voice in
12 this nation. And thank you. I'd be happy to answer
13 any questions.

14 REP. VASUT: Thank you for your
15 testimony.

16 Members, any questions for this witness?

17 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
18 testimony. The witness is excused.

19 I forgot to give an alert earlier about
20 the closing of registration, so I'm going to extend it
21 another ten minutes. Registration will close at 6:40
22 p.m., 6:40 p.m. right out there out front. If you
23 haven't registered to testify, we'd love for you to do
24 that right out front.

25 At this time, the Chair -- if I could get

1 down to this microphone, and I apologize if I ever
2 butcher your name here, but Kim Batchelor, I believe,
3 if you'll come down here to this front microphone.
4 Love to have you here in a second.

5 But I'm going to go to Mr. John Gardner.
6 I show you registered to testify as John Gardner, on
7 behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional
8 Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

9 JOHN GARDNER: That is correct.

10 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
11 testimony. You might want to come a little closer to
12 that microphone. There you go. Perfect. Thank you,
13 sir.

14 JOHN GARDNER: Thank you. Good evening,
15 Chair and members of the committee. My name is John
16 Gardner. I'm with the Transport Workers Union. We
17 represent flight attendants, baggage handlers, ramp
18 agents, mechanics, and other ground service employees
19 at major airlines in the DFW Metroplex and throughout
20 the state. I am here today not just as a union leader,
21 but as a proud Texan and a community advocate who has
22 been on the ground walking through these neighborhoods,
23 and organizing workers, and standing with working
24 families in the city of Fort Worth.

25 Today, I speak out against this dangerous

1 redistricting process that threatens to divide our
2 communities and divide us -- deny us our voice. In
3 2021, redistricting was done after the 2020 census.
4 Texas gained two million residents. Roughly 90 percent
5 of that growth were from communities of color. Two new
6 congressional districts were created. You would expect
7 that the two new districts created would be
8 representing communities of color, but instead, two
9 majority white districts were created, even though they
10 said that race was not a deciding factor in drawing the
11 maps.

12 Why are we doing this and why now? There
13 has not been a new census showing a change in
14 population of the current districts that would create
15 the need to redistrict again. President Trump told
16 Governor Abbott, get me five new Republican seats.
17 Then they targeted five majority black and brown
18 districts, and their voices are being attempted to be
19 silenced. District 18 has been without a
20 representative since Sylvester Turner's death in March.
21 An election should have been scheduled right away, but
22 instead, it is not until November, and runoffs are
23 likely with the potential of more than a year without
24 representation.

25 Residents in a district should have

1 common interests. Rural areas had the interest in the
2 farm bill, urban areas in mass transit and jobs.
3 Districts need to have a representative who lives in
4 their district, who knows their district, what their
5 district needs. Representative Marc Veasey lives in
6 District 33. He knows what his constituents need and
7 he gets things done --

8 REP. VASUT: If the gentleman will
9 complete his testimony.

10 JOHN GARDNER: -- and he has been a great
11 advocate for workers. When a district with a community
12 of color is gerrymandered, it often is stretched out
13 more than 100 miles in a rural area, and urban voices
14 are rarely heard in such a large rural district. Do
15 not silence the voice of communities of color with
16 unnecessary redistricting. Please vote against
17 redistricting in the middle of a decade. So I ask you,
18 stand with Texans, stand for fair maps, and put Texans
19 first, not Trump politics. Thank you.

20 REP. VASUT: Thank you for your
21 testimony.

22 Members, any questions for the --

23 If the gentleman will wait just a moment.

24 Members, any questions for this witness?

25 Chair hears none.

1 Thank you for your testimony. The
2 witness is excused.

3 The Chair is pleased to announce that we
4 do have the overflow room now open across the hall with
5 streaming video. I appreciate the University of Texas
6 at Arlington accommodating us with that, and I
7 appreciate if everybody -- just make sure that we
8 maintain order here so we get through these witnesses.

9 I'm going to come to you in just a
10 moment, ma'am. If I could have Jeff Archer come to
11 this microphone over here, we're going to come to him
12 next. Thank you very much.

13 Chair calls Kim Batchelor. I show you
14 registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the
15 Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that
16 correct, ma'am?

17 KIM BATCHELOR: That is correct.

18 REP. VASUT: Thank you. Please give us
19 your testimony. And you have some handouts?

20 KIM BATCHELOR: I do have handouts.

21 REP. VASUT: Representative Bhojani,
22 could you maybe grab that from her? Thank you so much.
23 We'll gladly pass those out for you. And we'll reset
24 your testimony time and let you start now. Thank you,
25 ma'am.

1 KIM BATCHELOR: Thank you. I'd like to
2 thank the committee for giving me the opportunity to
3 speak on this very important issue. I'm a native-born
4 Texan and a Christian, and I really want to direct my
5 remarks to Christian legislators who are inclined to
6 support this redistricting effort. In Matthew 20 and
7 Luke 19, Jesus said, "You know the rulers of the
8 Gentiles are lorded over them, and their great ones are
9 tyrants over them. It will not be so among you, but
10 whoever wishes to be first among you must be your
11 slave, just as the Son of Man came not to be served but
12 to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
13 Jesus modeled this for us who would be disciples by
14 taking off his tunic, wrapping a cloth around his
15 waist, and washing people's feet.

16 The State of Texas gained three new seats
17 after the last census count because of growth in the
18 Latino-Hispanic population, but crafted two of those
19 seats to benefit people with my skin color. To
20 redistrict now to produce similar districts is more
21 lording over and certainly not Christ-like. I am
22 blessed to live in District 33 amongst a diverse group
23 of neighbors, all of us made in the image of God. For
24 some reason you have provided us no maps, all of us --
25 but I can foresee one that slices through our southern

1 Dallas neighborhood to create a district from Brownwood
2 to Gun Barrel City. Or maybe the Legislature and the
3 Governor will create a district that resembles a beast
4 with seven heads and ten horns that combines us with
5 Amarillo.

6 A word of caution. I work with some
7 really good people in Amarillo to defeat a pit neighbor
8 against neighbor travel ban by 20 points, so you never
9 know what brings people together. To those who support
10 this unjust redistricting, I call on you to instead,
11 please remove your tunic of power, wrap a towel around
12 your waist, and serve all the people of this state, not
13 the power-hungry tyrant in Washington, D.C., and please
14 reject this effort.

15 REP. VASUT: Thank you. Thank you for
16 your testimony, ma'am. If you'll hold up, we might
17 have a question for you, ma'am.

18 Members, any questions for the departing
19 witness? Chair hears none. The lady is excused.

20 I'm going to make a brief request here.
21 I'll pause our timer here for a moment. Is Freddie
22 Haynes here? Did you -- Mr. Haynes, did you already
23 register? You already registered? Do we -- do we have
24 your permission -- hang on. I've got to be able to
25 hear him, guys. Do we have your permission to delete

1 the old registration and anoint thee a new one? Okay.
2 We're going to bring that to you. If you could fill
3 out another one. I apologize. The Vice Chair has
4 requested you to testify, and we want to make sure we
5 do that, but I have honestly no idea where you are in
6 that stack, and that would take a long time to find
7 you. So we're going to do you a new registration.

8 All right. Now, Chair calls Jeff Archer.
9 I show you registered to testify as Jeff Archer with
10 the Texas Legislative Council. And, as always, you are
11 neutral. Is that correct? And on the Revised
12 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Did I get that
13 right, Jeff?

14 JEFF ARCHER: That's correct.

15 REP. VASUT: All right. Now, members, we
16 have brought Mr. Archer here. I believe that a member
17 of the committee had a question. I just note for the
18 committee that legislative council enjoys a privilege
19 with members, so don't go into anything privileged.
20 Representative Manuel, for what purpose?

21 REP. MANUEL: A few questions, please.

22 REP. VASUT: Please, you're recognized to
23 question the witness.

24 REP. MANUEL: Thank you. Just had a few
25 questions about the RedAppl app. What were the dates

1 that that app was down? There was a technical error on
2 the computers throughout our software.

3 JEFF ARCHER: I'm not aware of any
4 technical error with RedAppl that took it down. There
5 was routine -- I say routine. There was important data
6 center maintenance done --

7 REP. MANUEL: Okay.

8 JEFF ARCHER: -- on Sunday morning,
9 the -- I believe that's the 28th or 9th of --

10 REP. MANUEL: 28th of June, I'm assuming?

11 JEFF ARCHER: Of June, the last Sunday in
12 June.

13 REP. MANUEL: Okay. And was --

14 JEFF ARCHER: And it was planned.

15 REP. MANUEL: It was planned. Was a
16 notice sent out about that?

17 JEFF ARCHER: Yes.

18 REP. MANUEL: Okay.

19 JEFF ARCHER: Every member of the
20 Legislature and every staffer in the legislative
21 community received notice. In addition, we notified
22 all the registered users on RedAppl, so those private
23 groups --

24 REP. MANUEL: Okay.

25 JEFF ARCHER: -- the sponsored groups

1 that use RedAppl.

2 REP. MANUEL: And when was that
3 completed?

4 JEFF ARCHER: Probably by noon on that
5 Sunday morning.

6 REP. MANUEL: Okay. Noon on that Sunday
7 morning, okay.

8 JEFF ARCHER: I can give you copies of
9 the notices.

10 REP. MANUEL: Yes, because my office
11 reached out because it was removed from our computers,
12 from my district to my capitol office. And we had to
13 have it basically re-put back in by council. And so we
14 were -- I'm trying to see why it was removed on that
15 date, because when we tried to get into it, it just
16 wouldn't show up on any of our applications. And
17 again, I'm not trying to see you all are doing anything
18 nefarious. I'm just wondering why --

19 JEFF ARCHER: Absolutely.

20 REP. MANUEL: -- it was removed once
21 right before it was called by the Governor. So you
22 said it was only from the 28th in the morning to --

23 JEFF ARCHER: It was the same day, all
24 just --

25 REP. MANUEL: The same day.

1 JEFF ARCHER: -- one Sunday morning.

2 REP. MANUEL: And there's not a reason
3 that it was removed from computers at two different
4 locations?

5 JEFF ARCHER: That shouldn't be related.

6 REP. MANUEL: It happened. If you look
7 at the ticket from my office, you'll see that --

8 JEFF ARCHER: Absolutely.

9 REP. MANUEL: -- it was removed --

10 JEFF ARCHER: I have not seen that.

11 REP. MANUEL: -- and in about an hour or
12 so, they were called back and said it was put back on,
13 and it was for technical reasons.

14 JEFF ARCHER: Yeah, and I'm not aware
15 what that was.

16 REP. MANUEL: Okay. And is there a way
17 that we can get a request of what those technical
18 reasons were?

19 JEFF ARCHER: Yeah, I can look into why,
20 what may have happened --

21 REP. MANUEL: And what changes were made
22 to it?

23 JEFF ARCHER: Yes, right.

24 REP. MANUEL: Okay. That's all I really
25 wanted to know. Thank you so much.

1 JEFF ARCHER: Thank you very much.

2 REP. VASUT: Members, any other questions
3 of the resource witness?

4 REP. TURNER: Mr. Chairman?

5 REP. VASUT: Mr. Turner, for what
6 purpose? Question the witness?

7 REP. TURNER: Question the witness.

8 REP. VASUT: Recognized.

9 REP. TURNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 Mr. Archer, thank you for being here
11 today. If memory serves from the last redistricting in
12 2021, one of the functions of Leg Council is to receive
13 the data file from the United States Census Bureau,
14 input it into the RedAppl application that you were
15 just discussing with Representative Manuel, so then
16 legislators have that data, and others have that data
17 in order to draw maps. Do I have that roughly correct?

18 JEFF ARCHER: That's correct. State
19 leadership designates several recipients of the census
20 data, including the State Demographer, I'm not sure who
21 else, and the Legislative Council, excuse me, on behalf
22 of the Legislature.

23 REP. TURNER: Okay. And Texas
24 Legislative Council received that data from the Census
25 Bureau in 2021; is that right?

1 JEFF ARCHER: Yes. As you recall, it was
2 late. It was in early September --

3 REP. TURNER: Because of the pandemic.

4 JEFF ARCHER: -- late August.

5 REP. TURNER: Right, okay. Has
6 Legislative Council received any new data from the
7 Census Bureau since 2021?

8 JEFF ARCHER: We receive annual American
9 Community Survey data.

10 REP. TURNER: Right, but in terms of
11 actual, an actual census count as you would receive
12 after the decennial census, there's been no new census
13 conducted?

14 JEFF ARCHER: There's been no new census
15 data. That -- the American Community Survey has
16 estimates of geographic areas, but not block level.

17 REP. TURNER: Not block level, right.
18 So, if the Legislature does embark on this mid-decade
19 redistricting, as the Chair has stated, there is no map
20 yet that we've seen. But if there was to be a map
21 drawn, it would be based upon census data that is now
22 five years old; is that right?

23 JEFF ARCHER: If it's based on census
24 data, it would be five-year-old census data.

25 REP. TURNER: Is there a way to draw a

1 map that's not based on census data?

2 JEFF ARCHER: As you know, there have
3 been advocates to use registered voters or other
4 databases for that, so, obviously you can -- the data
5 for electors isn't necessarily on the same schedule.
6 There are election databases for every general
7 election.

8 REP. TURNER: Sure. I understood that
9 the Legislature could look at more recent election data
10 as it's drawing maps. But for purposes of drawing
11 districts that are balanced by population, the only
12 population data the Legislature would have to work with
13 is the 2020 census, correct?

14 JEFF ARCHER: That's correct.

15 REP. TURNER: There's no 2024 census or
16 2025 census to work with, right?

17 JEFF ARCHER: No.

18 REP. TURNER: Okay. Thank you very much.

19 REP. VASUT: Members, any other questions
20 of this witness? Thank you, Mr. Archer. You are
21 excused.

22 The time has come to close witness
23 registration. Is there anyone else in this room
24 wishing to testify on the revisions to the
25 Congressional Redistricting Plan?

1 Ms. Rose, did you have a question of that
2 witness?

3 REP. ROSE: No, I did not, but I do
4 have --

5 REP. VASUT: Okay. I'm going to
6 recognize you here in just a moment.

7 Anyone in this room wishing to register
8 that hasn't? Seeing and hearing none, the witness
9 closes -- one in the back. Ma'am, if you could come
10 up, get a witness registration form. Anyone else?
11 Chair hears none. Aside from the lady coming down in
12 the black shirt, registration is closed.

13 All right. Ms. Rose, for what purpose?

14 REP. ROSE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
15 just wanted to make sure that you added to Elsie Cooke-
16 Holmes' registration form that she is the 27th
17 International President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority,
18 Incorporated.

19 REP. VASUT: I think I would technically
20 have to have her give me permission to do so. Is she
21 still in this room?

22 REP. ROSE: She is.

23 REP. VASUT: If you could come up to that
24 microphone, ma'am.

25 REP. ROSE: Is it the 28th? 28th

1 National President.

2 REP. VASUT: Well, wait a minute. Did
3 you tell me something wrong? All right. If she could
4 come up to that microphone real quick, I'm happy to
5 correct your registration.

6 REP. ROSE: If y'all would not have me
7 running to these hearings and watching hearings all
8 night long, I could probably get some --

9 REP. VASUT: All right.

10 REP. ROSE: She's here.

11 REP. VASUT: There we go. Ms. Cooke-
12 Holmes, now, tell me what we need to correct on here.

13 REP. ROSE: She's the 28th National
14 President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority --

15 REP. VASUT: She's the --

16 REP. ROSE: -- Incorporated.

17 REP. VASUT: So you're going to -- I have
18 your permission to change your registration to say
19 you're testifying on behalf of Delta Sigma Theta
20 Sorority, Inc. and that you are the 28th --

21 ELSIE COOKE-HOLMES: The 28th.

22 REP. VASUT: 28th President?

23 ELSIE COOKE-HOLMES: Yes.

24 REP. ROSE: International.

25 ELSIE COOKE-HOLMES: International

1 President.

2 REP. VASUT: All right. 28th

3 International --

4 ELSIE COOKE-HOLMES: I'm not sure what it
5 has on there now. It might say -- does it say --

6 REP. VASUT: All right. I have written
7 down --

8 ELSIE COOKE-HOLMES: I'm the Immediate
9 Past International President and also the 28th.

10 REP. VASUT: All right. Easy there. We
11 added a little bit. I went to A&M. Y'all bear with me
12 for a second. Immediate past president?

13 ELSIE COOKE-HOLMES: Past International
14 President.

15 REP. VASUT: Immediate Past International
16 President -- I appreciate the crowd's participation.
17 Y'all are doing great.

18 [Cheering and clapping from gallery]

19 REP. VASUT: All right. Now, I have this
20 form. It says that you are the --

21 ELSIE COOKE-HOLMES: That will be
22 sufficient. Thank you.

23 REP. VASUT: -- Immediate Past
24 International President and the 28th International
25 President. Is that correct?

1 ELSIE COOKE-HOLMES: That's correct.

2 REP. VASUT: All right. Your witness
3 registration has been updated. Thank you, ma'am.
4 Thank you, Ms. Rose.

5 REP. ROSE: I'm so glad to be a Delta.

6 REP. VASUT: All right. Okay. I always
7 love injecting a little levity.

8 If I could have -- ma'am, we're going to
9 have to -- we're going to take you in order, but we --
10 did you just register?

11 FEMALE: Yes, I just filled out the form.

12 REP. VASUT: Okay. We're going to take
13 you in order in just a second.

14 FEMALE: Okay.

15 REP. VASUT: Yeah, but it may be a while.
16 Yeah, sorry. I apologize. We're taking them in the
17 order received.

18 Chair's going to call up to this
19 microphone Richard Howe, and to this microphone
20 Frederick Haynes. Frederick Haynes, Richard Howe. And
21 if -- and if Maria Garza could be ready.

22 REP. HUNTER: Frederick, where do you
23 want Frederick?

24 REP. VASUT: Frederick, if you could come
25 down to this microphone, and Richard to that one. All

1 right. Okay.

2 I show you registered to testify as
3 Richard Howe, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised
4 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

5 RICHARD HOWE: Yes, that's correct.

6 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
7 testimony, sir.

8 RICHARD HOWE: Okay. My name is Richard
9 Howe. I live in Plano, Texas. I'm a native Texan,
10 born in San Antonio, and I'm here on behalf of myself.
11 And I'm a very concerned Texas -- Texan. And I want to
12 thank you for the opportunity for providing comments.

13 I'm currently represented in the State
14 Legislature by Jeff Leach, State House, District 67,
15 Angela Paxton in the State Senate, District 8, and in
16 the U.S. House, I'm represented by Pat Fallon in
17 Congressional District 4. I'm here to oppose this out-
18 of-cycle redistricting push during this special
19 session, which has been dictated by outside of Texas.
20 Instead, I urge this Redistricting Committee to maybe
21 take this opportunity to implement a more fair and
22 rational redistricting policy by putting forward a
23 joint resolution for a ballot referendum to establish
24 an independent, nonpartisan commission to be
25 responsible for future redistricting, which wouldn't

1 happen until after 2030.

2 We [audio cuts out] of those that are not
3 undermines the principles of fair representation. They
4 defy logic and geographical coherence, and they
5 compromise the integrity of the democratic processes.
6 Frankly, it's embarrassing. Let's stop letting the
7 majority pick their voters and get back to voters
8 picking their elected officials. Thank you.

9 REP. VASUT: Thank you for your
10 testimony.

11 Members, any questions for this witness?

12 The Chair hears none. Thank you, sir.

13 You're excused.

14 At this microphone next, if I could have
15 Maria Garza come down to this microphone right over
16 here, if you don't mind.

17 I show you registered to testify as
18 Frederick Haynes. Now, I believe -- was doctor
19 mentioned? You want me to update -- your witness
20 registration form didn't say doctor. You want me to
21 add that to it?

22 DR. FREDERICK HAYNES: If you'd like.

23 REP. VASUT: All right. I have your
24 permission to add doctor. Okay. I show you registered
25 to testify as Dr. Frederick Haynes, on behalf of the

1 Friendship West Baptist Church, on the Revised
2 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

3 DR. FREDERICK HAYNES: Thank you very
4 much.

5 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
6 testimony, sir.

7 DR. FREDERICK HAYNES: Thank you, Mr.
8 Chair. My name is Frederick Douglass Haynes, and that
9 name has been used earlier. I want to commend you
10 because there are two governing principles that have
11 informed how you have presided today. Number one, you
12 said that we are going to follow the rules. Number
13 two, you also mentioned that every American deserves to
14 be heard. It is my prayer that that would govern how
15 we respond to the wannabe king's dictate -- the wannabe
16 king from Washington, D.C. dictating that we redistrict
17 at this inopportune time already districts that have
18 been well gerrymandered.

19 And so I'm asking, number one, that we
20 follow the rules of justice, justice, according to
21 Michael Eric Dyson, is what love sounds like when it
22 speaks in public. Justice means that all of us, your
23 number two principle, deserve to have our voices heard.
24 With this particular dictate coming down from
25 Washington, D.C., our voices will not be heard. I'm

1 asking, Mr. Chair, that indeed this committee reject
2 what's coming from Washington, D.C. and ensure that our
3 voices are heard. And not only that our voices are
4 heard, but that we follow the rules of justice.

5 I basically say with what has been said
6 before, most if not all on this committee have some
7 kind of religious affiliation. According to my
8 understanding of Christianity and most religions, there
9 is a belief in justice. If there is a belief in
10 justice, it especially is concerned with ensuring that
11 the voiceless have a voice. Please do not rob the
12 voiceless of a voice with a racist redistricting that
13 follows the dictates of someone who wants to be the
14 king and not the president of the United States of
15 America.

16 In a few months, in a few months, many of
17 us are going to celebrate what happened 70 years ago
18 when Rosa Parks decided that she would stand for
19 justice by not giving up her seat. I've always
20 wondered about all the other folk on the bus that
21 December 1st day. What did they do? Rosa Parks, we
22 agree, was on the right side of history because she
23 took a stand for what was right and just. The others
24 were on the wrong side of history because they did not
25 take a stand at all or they went along with what was

1 wrong.

2 I'm asking you this day, please stand
3 with Rosa Parks in that spirit, meaning that history
4 will record that you were on the right side of history
5 because you stood for justice. You were on the right
6 side of history because you followed the rules of
7 justice. You were on the right side of history because
8 you made sure that everybody in Texas has a voice, and
9 not just voices of those who look like the occupant of
10 the White House. I am begging you, please stand on the
11 right side of history as opposed to the wrong side of
12 history, which will hurt all of us and is against
13 everything that is moral and everything that is just.
14 Thank you for your time.

15 [Cheering and clapping from gallery]

16 REP. VASUT: Thank you, sir. Members,
17 any questions for this witness? Representative Bowers
18 is recognized to question the witness. The gallery
19 will come to order so that the witness can answer
20 questions. The Chair recognizes Ms. Bowers to question
21 the witness.

22 REP. BOWERS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
23 don't really have a question, but I would just like to
24 thank Dr. Frederick Douglass Haynes for his statement
25 and remarks and let the church say amen.

1 REP. VASUT: Ms. Bowers?

2 REP. BOWERS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
3 do have a correction that is being asked. If Roman
4 Palomares' registration can be changed to the National
5 President of LULAC?

6 REP. VASUT: If she is so present --

7 ["He" from the gallery]

8 REP. VASUT: He, he. I apologize. Thank
9 you for correcting me. If he could come down, I'd be
10 happy to correct it. I need to have you into the
11 microphone, though, sir, if you don't mind.

12 Before you do that, any other questions
13 for the witness at the bar? Representative Barbara
14 Gervin-Hawkins, you're recognized to question the
15 witness.

16 REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: Thank you. Thank
17 you.

18 Pastor? As you well know, this is a time
19 right now, such as this, that we've got to call on our
20 higher power. I believe that my Republican colleagues
21 may feel threatened or have that fear of dealing with
22 the man in the White House. What words of wisdom could
23 you give them so that, indeed, they not do this? I'm
24 saying just don't do it. Let's be big.

25 DR. FREDERICK HAYNES: Yeah.

1 REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: What would you give
2 us from your wisdom, your knowledge of the Holy Spirit?

3 DR. FREDERICK HAYNES: Thank you so much.
4 Thank you. I would just say to all of us, especially
5 our Republican sisters and brothers, that there is a
6 king of kings who gives us a moral compass, and may
7 that moral compass make you a thermostat and not a
8 thermometer. A thermometer basically goes along with
9 the environment. A thermostat regulates the
10 environment. You have the power from the king of kings
11 to be a thermostat and not a thermometer.

12 REP. VASUT: Members, any other questions
13 for this witness? Chair hears none. Thank you for
14 your time. The gentleman's excused.

15 Mr. Palomares, if you'll please come up
16 to this microphone. I think a question was raised
17 about correcting your witness information form. I
18 showed you registered to testify as Roman Palomares on
19 behalf of LULAC. Was that correct, or what needed to
20 be edited there?

21 ROMAN PALOMARES: I'm sorry. Could you
22 repeat that?

23 REP. VASUT: I showed you registered to
24 testify as Roman Palomares on behalf of LULAC.

25 ROMAN PALOMARES: Yes.

1 REP. VASUT: Was that correct?

2 ROMAN PALOMARES: That's correct.

3 REP. VASUT: Was there something that
4 needed to be corrected?

5 ROMAN PALOMARES: No.

6 REP. VASUT: I want to make sure that --

7 ROMAN PALOMARES: I'm the national
8 president, and I live in District 33.

9 REP. VASUT: That is indeed reflected on
10 your witness affirmation form.

11 ROMAN PALOMARES: Very good.

12 REP. VASUT: Thank you, sir.

13 ROMAN PALOMARES: Thank you.

14 REP. VASUT: I'm going to -- Ms. Garza,
15 one moment.

16 If I could have Laura Walters come down
17 to this microphone. Now, Ms. Garza, I show you
18 registered to testify as Maria Garza, on behalf of the
19 Workers Defense Action Fund, on the Revised
20 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

21 MARIA GARZA: Yes.

22 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
23 testimony.

24 MARIA GARZA: Thank you. I'm an
25 organizer with Workers Defense Action Fund. My name is

1 Maria de Jesus Garza. I'm also a proud wife of a U.S.
2 Marine veteran. I'm a proud union member, and I work
3 at Workers Defense, and we organize people,
4 predominantly Latino folks, Latino workers and their
5 families here in Texas.

6 Today, I'm testifying in response to the
7 Legislature that's attempting to redistrict our
8 congressional districts mid-census. I oppose this, and
9 so does every single Dallas County person I've spoken
10 to since the Governor decided to ask to do this. It
11 doesn't take a demographer -- and I think someone up
12 there said that they're an engineer -- to know that
13 squeezing five more districts out of Texas can only be
14 done if you drag us back into an era of racial
15 segregation, poll tax, and adopting what would be the
16 most racially discriminatory maps in our state has seen
17 in ages.

18 There are still people missing in Kerr
19 County. Millions of Texans are on the verge of losing
20 their healthcare. Three days ago, we had a heat-
21 related death here in Dallas County. Well, in Dallas
22 County. We're not in Dallas County right now. We are
23 -- in June, we had a postal worker die from heat-
24 related issues. At this time, when our people are
25 being subject to low pay, skyrocketing costs for

1 groceries, ridiculous electric bills, and on top of
2 that, attacks based on the color of our skin, our
3 parents are being hunted and deported. The last thing
4 we need is to worry about their congressional
5 representatives being taken away, taking away their
6 voice, because by taking away their voice, they're
7 taking away their humanity. Texans are dying and
8 suffering and hurting, and now you're choosing to spend
9 this time doing this instead of actually helping the
10 community.

11 We need to do what's right for Texans.
12 We need to stop what's happening here and actually
13 focus on what people need. There are so many needs
14 here in Texas, and I know that people that look like me
15 might not have the courage to step in here and have
16 this moment to tell you that this is not important, but
17 I'm telling you on behalf of those people that this
18 hearing, this moment, this work that you guys are
19 choosing to do is not important.

20 REP. VASUT: Please complete your
21 testimony.

22 MARIA GARZA: There are people that are
23 dying. Thank you.

24 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
25 this witness?

1 The Chair hears none. Thank you, ma'am.
2 You are excused. We're going to take one more witness,
3 and then we'll take a brief break, and I emphasize
4 brief so everybody understands. Not a Texas Leg brief
5 break, but an actual brief break.

6 All right. Chair calls Laura Walters. I
7 show you registered to testify, on behalf of yourself,
8 on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan? Is
9 that correct?

10 LAURA WALTERS: That is correct.

11 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
12 testimony.

13 LAURA WALTERS: My name is the Reverend
14 Laura Walters. I'm an ordained pastor in the
15 Presbyterian Church. I am speaking against current
16 redistricting. I speak today from a Christian
17 perspective, not because Christianity should be
18 prioritized. We are stronger with a plurality in our
19 state, but because we do not hear enough about Jesus's
20 command to love our neighbors and prioritize the
21 marginalized. You see, in our faith stories, Jesus
22 always goes to the edge of society to listen to folks.
23 And he does not leave them there. He brings people
24 back into community so that all voices are heard.
25 Jesus builds up communities. He does not carve them

1 apart.

2 While we have not seen any maps making
3 this process inherently unjust, the DOJ's letter
4 targets districts that are historically black and brown
5 neighborhoods, breaking apart communities, targeting
6 black and Hispanic peoples will result in large groups
7 of Texans being underrepresented, replaced by officials
8 who do not know or understand the needs of their
9 constituency. That is unjust. That is not Christian.
10 Redistricting mid-census is unnecessary. Texans
11 haven't asked for this. This wasn't part of the
12 regular session. The state has claimed in court that
13 current maps are racially neutral.

14 This is about power, not need, not
15 justice, not love. This is unjust. This is not
16 Christian. People of color make up more than 95
17 percent of the state's growth. Women of color
18 represent the majority of Texas's females. Texas is
19 home to over 4 million black residents. And yet these
20 folks are not equitably represented in our government.

21 Voices are being silenced. This is
22 unjust. This is not Christian. I'm asking you to be a
23 little bit more like Jesus. Listen. Don't tear apart
24 Texas communities. Work so all Texans can be heard and
25 represented.

1 REP. VASUT: Thank you for your
2 testimony.

3 Members, any questions for this witness?

4 The Chair hears none. Thank you, ma'am.
5 You're excused.

6 At this time, we're going to take a brief
7 break. The House Select Committee on Congressional
8 Redistricting will stand at ease for five minutes.

9 [Committee Stands at Ease.]

10 REP. VASUT: The Select Committee on
11 Congressional Redistricting will come back to order.
12 I've noticed this gavel up here doesn't make quite as
13 much noise as the one on the dais of the House. But if
14 y'all will come back to order, if everyone can find
15 their way to their seats. Appreciate you hanging in
16 there with us. We had worked on a technical issue, and
17 I think we've solved it. Come back in here.

18 Chair at this time is going to call up
19 two witnesses. If you'll take separate microphones.
20 Chair is going to call Roderick Miles, and Chair is
21 going to call Sergio Deleon. Roderick Miles and Sergio
22 Deleon, if you'll make your way up to separate
23 microphones. Once you're there, we'll go ahead and get
24 started.

25 Roderick Miles? All right. I show you

1 registered to testify as Roderick Miles, on behalf of
2 yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting
3 Plan. Is that correct?

4 Roderick Miles: That is correct.

5 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
6 testimony.

7 Roderick Miles: Good evening. My name
8 is Roderick Miles, and I have the privilege of
9 representing the residents of Tarrant County Precinct 1
10 as their County Commissioner. I rise to stand in
11 opposition to this congressional redistricting. This
12 is not just about Republicans versus Democrats. This
13 is about right versus wrong, about power versus
14 principle. What we are witnessing is not simply
15 politics. It is a deliberate effort to undermine the
16 rights of people. That is a moral failure, my friends,
17 and that is an ethical failure.

18 When government redraws lines with the
19 intent to silence specific communities, it does more
20 than violate laws. It violates trust. It strips
21 people of their dignity. We tell our children that
22 every vote matters, that every vote counts. But what
23 does it say when those in power erase voices they do
24 not want to hear? Proverbs 11:1 tells us that, "The
25 Lord detests dishonest scales, but accurate weights

1 find favor with him." When we rig the system to
2 benefit the powerful, we are using dishonest scales.
3 This is not just unconstitutional, it is unjust.

4 We just went through this in Tarrant
5 County. Maps were drawn in a way that made communities
6 feel invincible. That was not representation. That
7 was erasure. Now voters across Texas are seeing the
8 same naked power grab, just at a larger scale. Once
9 again, lines are being drawn not to bring people in but
10 to push people out.

11 District 33 was created through a court
12 order to repair harm done to communities of color. It
13 was meant to ensure that we would no longer crack apart
14 neighborhoods just because they vote differently. This
15 mid-decade redistricting would not just reverse
16 progress, it would deepen the harm and dishonor the
17 courts, the people, and the principle of equal
18 representation. It is especially shameful that this is
19 being done during a special session meant to prepare
20 for disasters. Let us not forget.

21 REP. VASUT: Please complete your
22 testimony.

23 RODERICK MILES: One more sentence.

24 REP. VASUT: One more sentence, you bet.

25 RODERICK MILES: Let us not forget, it is

1 the very communities being targeted that suffer the
2 [audio cuts out].

3 REP. VASUT: -- of this witness? Chair
4 hears none.

5 Thank you. The witness is excused.

6 At this microphone down here, if we can
7 next get Britni Cuington. Cuington, I apologize. If
8 you'll come down here.

9 And I go back to Mr. Deleon. I show you
10 registered to testify as Sergio Deleon, on behalf of
11 yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting
12 Plan. Is that correct?

13 SERGIO DELEON: That is correct, sir.

14 REP. VASUT: And I have a duplicate
15 registration from you. You registered twice. Is it
16 okay if we delete the duplicate registration?

17 SERGIO DELEON: Yes, it is.

18 REP. VASUT: Okay. Please give us your
19 testimony.

20 SERGIO DELEON: Thank you. Good evening,
21 Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is
22 Sergio Deleon, and I have the honor of representing
23 Tarrant County, Precinct 5 as the duly-elected Justice
24 of the Peace. I am here today to object to this mid-
25 decade redistricting by the Texas Legislature and your

1 attempt to silence minority voters across the Lone Star
2 State. I can recall a time period when Republicans in
3 the Texas Legislature wanted nothing to do with
4 Washington, D.C. Now -- now you are taking your cues
5 directly from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue rather than the
6 people you represent.

7 You all are engaged in a game of Simon
8 Says, and Simon is about to run you off the cliff. The
9 people of Texas want their elected officials to do what
10 is right and what is just. And this mid-decade attempt
11 to redraw the lines in order to favor the president is
12 just wrong. And it is an injustice to racially
13 discriminate against Hispanic and black voters by
14 presumably, because we haven't seen the maps, by
15 cracking and packing and diluting minority voting
16 strength.

17 Your power grab does nothing more than
18 contribute to the distrust that people have of their
19 government and their elected officials. They
20 believe -- they believe no matter who is in power,
21 their station in life does not advance, and they give
22 up and refuse to participate in the system. The lost
23 hope stains our democracy, and it is something that we
24 all must work towards to avoid. I hope this moment
25 serves as a wake-up call to everyone watching this

1 debacle, to re-engage and to reaffirm their commitment
2 to citizen engagement and voting at every level of
3 government.

4 Additionally, the Trump Justice
5 Department is a farce, and they are focused on
6 dismantling minority voting rights. The letter sent by
7 the Trump DOJ is a fig leaf to simply rip apart
8 Hispanic and African-American communities of interest.

9 REP. VASUT: Please complete your
10 testimony.

11 SERGIO DELEON: These are communities
12 with similar socioeconomics who come together in
13 support of candidates in their choice. Republicans in
14 this state are trying to silence the voice of minority
15 voters, and it's not going to fly. Thank you very much
16 for your attention today.

17 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
18 the witness? Chair hears none.

19 Thank you for your testimony. The
20 witness is excused.

21 SERGIO DELEON: Thank you.

22 REP. VASUT: At this microphone over
23 here, if I could get Samuel Garcia to come down next
24 for this one, Samuel Garcia.

25 Okay. Now, I said this wrong earlier. I

1 show you registered to testify as Britni Cuington?

2 BRITNI CUINGTON: Cuington.

3 REP. VASUT: Cuington. That's an awesome
4 name. Britni Cuington, on behalf of the Texas AFL-CIO,
5 on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is
6 that correct?

7 BRITNI CUINGTON: That is correct.

8 REP. VASUT: All right. Please give us
9 your testimony.

10 BRITNI CUINGTON: Good evening. My name
11 is Britni Cuington. I'm an Air Force veteran, a proud
12 union member, if it's not already obvious, a working-
13 class organizer, and a black woman who has always
14 called North Texas home. I currently live in Collin
15 County, but home for me is South Dallas, not to be
16 confused with Southern Dallas.

17 I didn't just serve my country. I came
18 back home and kept serving my community. And I know
19 firsthand, when you break up districts haphazardly,
20 when you buy or bury urban, suburban, working class,
21 veteran-heavy neighborhoods into mostly rural
22 congressional maps, you're not just redrawing lines,
23 you're erasing people. People like me. But I'm
24 assuming that's the point. Although I live in a
25 neighboring county, what happens to the one next door

1 affects us all. We work together, we worship together,
2 our kids ride the same school buses. You can't
3 surgically remove us from each other and then pretend
4 like we're not connected.

5 Veterans, especially minority veterans,
6 already face barriers when it comes to accessing the
7 healthcare benefits and economic opportunities that we
8 were told we earned. We can't afford to have our
9 voices watered down in the districts that don't reflect
10 our lives or our needs. We deserve more than
11 performative representation. We deserve leaders who
12 live among us. Leaders who show up when there's no
13 photo op and who know our struggle because, hell, they
14 lived it too.

15 Let me be clear, this isn't about left or
16 right, it's about right and wrong. And what is
17 happening right here is wrong. If you're going to
18 thank us as veterans for our service, then respect the
19 communities that we come home to. If you're going to
20 say our skilled labor is essential, respect the access
21 to equitable resources for those workers and their
22 families. Keep our districts whole as much as
23 possible, keep our voices intact, and stop playing
24 politics with our lives. Thank you.

25 REP. VASUT: Thank you. Members, any

1 questions for this witness? Chair hears none.

2 Thank you for your testimony. The
3 witness is excused.

4 If I could get up to this microphone over
5 here Anaiah Turner. Anaiah Turner, if you could come
6 down to this microphone, we'll get to you in just a
7 moment.

8 All right, Chair calls Samuel Garcia. I
9 show you registered to testify, on behalf of yourself,
10 on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan? Is
11 that correct?

12 SAMUEL GARCIA: Yes, sir, it is.

13 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
14 testimony.

15 SAMUEL GARCIA: I drove here three hours
16 to get here. I came from Abilene, Texas. And I'm
17 going to -- if I'm willing to drive three hours to come
18 here and talk, I'm going to ask you to get off your
19 phone and listen to what I have to say. Whenever I
20 found out, when you address somebody from the State
21 Legislature, you're supposed to call them the Honorable
22 this or the Honorable that. Well, the word honorable
23 means that you bring honor. And when you're elected,
24 you're given that title. You should earn that title.
25 Being honorable means that you do the right thing.

1 Being honorable means that you will look at yourself in
2 the mirror every day and say, why am I doing this?

3 You got a call from Donald Trump. He
4 told you to go find five seats. No, he got asked, how
5 many seats? He said five. He was asked on the news.
6 You say we don't have any maps. Well, then how in the
7 hell does Donald Trump know he's going to get five
8 seats? I bet you anything there's maps that are there.
9 Those maps are there, and they're sitting on his desk,
10 and he's waiting for you to do it. This is ridiculous.

11 A man a few days ago was arrested because
12 he spoke too long at this -- at the lectern. He spoke
13 too long and y'all said, oh, he had to be arrested
14 because he broke the rules. How many of you are going
15 to get arrested for breaking the rules of mistreating
16 the citizens of this state? You're breaking the rules.
17 We are the citizens of this -- we're the ones. It's
18 supposed to be bottom up, not top down.

19 I'm going to say this one thing to you.
20 You know it's wrong. In your heart, you know it's
21 wrong. And here's what I'm going to ask you. When
22 your kids or your grandkids ask you one day, as a state
23 representative, did you always do the right thing? You
24 got two answers that you can choose from. You're
25 either going to have to admit to them that, no,

1 sometimes I did things just for power. Sometimes I did
2 that. Or you're going to have to lie to your kids and
3 lie to your grandkids and tell them you did it because
4 you believed it, because you know this is wrong. This
5 is wrong. I grew up --

6 REP. VASUT: Please complete your
7 testimony.

8 SAMUEL GARCIA: I'm an Aggie and I bleed
9 Aggie maroon. And Aggies, we say -- Aggies, we don't
10 lie, steal or cheat. And we don't tolerate those who
11 do. But the other thing is, soy Mexicano. And my
12 mother would look at you today, my mother would look at
13 you today and say, si me duensa (phonetic).

14 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
15 this witness?

16 You're fine, sir. Chair hears none.
17 Thank you. The witness is excused.

18 If I could have Ebony Turner come down to
19 this microphone. We'll come to you next.

20 All right. I show you registered to
21 testify as Anaiah Turner.

22 ANAIAH TURNER: Anaiah.

23 REP. VASUT: Anaiah Turner. Thank you
24 for that. On behalf of the Barbara Jordan Leadership
25 Institute, on Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan.

1 Is that correct? Thank you. Please give us your
2 testimony.

3 ANAIAH TURNER: Thank you. Good evening.
4 My name is Anaiah Turner. I am a resident of
5 Congressional District 18, a student at Texas Southern
6 University, and a fellow of the Barbara Jordan
7 Leadership Institute. I'm deeply concerned about the
8 proposed mid-decade redistricting, especially
9 considering CD18 will be without representation for
10 eight to ten months, which effectively -- which is
11 effectively taxation without representation for our
12 community.

13 I believe initiating redistricting now is
14 unnecessary. There is no compelling evidence to
15 justify disrupting our electoral landscape further.
16 Our focus should be on addressing immediate community
17 needs, not unwarranted changes that compound our
18 existing lack of representation. Texas's scale demands
19 more than three hearings. This is racially driven,
20 limiting discussion, risk, excluding money, Texans,
21 especially marginalized communities. This revision
22 leaves people out of selecting their representation.
23 We must ensure every citizen can influence their
24 representation and stand against undermining democratic
25 principles and reducing public participation.

1 I urge you to reject mid-decade
2 redistricting. Wait for the 2030 census and give CD18
3 voters a real chance to be heard and represented.
4 Please honor Barbara Jordan's legacy and fair
5 representation for all Texans. Thank you.

6 REP. VASUT: Thank you for your
7 testimony.

8 Chair recognizes Vice Chair Rosenthal to
9 question the witness.

10 REP. ROSENTHAL: Ms. Turner.

11 ANAIAH TURNER: Yes.

12 REP. ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much for
13 coming today. All the way from Congressional 18. How
14 many hours did you drive to be here today?

15 ANAIAH TURNER: I'm sorry?

16 REP. ROSENTHAL: How long did it take you
17 to get here?

18 ANAIAH TURNER: Oh, it was -- well, I'm
19 from here, so it only took me a few minutes, but it's
20 four hours.

21 REP. ROSENTHAL: So let me ask you about
22 Congressional 18. Would you say that's -- no, no, no,
23 don't speed on the road. Congressional 18 is an
24 historic, iconic district, would you say?

25 ANAIAH TURNER: Yes.

1 REP. ROSENTHAL: That brought us Barbara
2 Jordan, Mickey Leland, Craig Washington, and Sylvester
3 Turner.

4 ANAIAH TURNER: Yes.

5 REP. ROSENTHAL: So your testimony today
6 is that you believe that 800,000 or so residents of
7 Congressional 18 deserve a voice in their federal
8 government?

9 ANAIAH TURNER: I believe they do.

10 REP. ROSENTHAL: Thank you ma'am.

11 REP. VASUT: Members, any other questions
12 for this witness?

13 Seeing none, thank you for your
14 testimony. Members -- witness is excused.

15 At this side over here, if I could get
16 Ernest Lineberger to come down and be ready at that
17 microphone.

18 All right, ma'am, I show you registered
19 to testify as Ebony Turner, on behalf of the Black
20 Mansfield Moms Group and yourself, on the Revised
21 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

22 EBONY TURNER: That is correct.

23 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
24 testimony.

25 EBONY TURNER: Thank you. Hello. My

1 name is Ebony Turner. I am a resident of CDC 6, SD 22,
2 a former candidate for House District 96 and resident
3 of 96, and still barely a resident of Tarrant County
4 Commissioner Precinct 2. My daughter is a presidential
5 scholar at Texas Southern University, so my money
6 resides in CD 18. I just heard from her. I am the
7 founder of the 3400-member Black Mansfield Moms Group
8 and also the Hispanic Women Network of Texas, Arlington
9 Chapter, and a proud member of the Delta Sigma Theta
10 Sorority Incorporated.

11 So first, I want to give my condolences
12 and prayers to go out to the recent victims and
13 families -- recent victims' families and survivors of
14 the flood earlier this month, because preventing future
15 tragedies is where our focus should be instead of on
16 this redistricting nonsense. As an attorney, I know,
17 and I know that you all know, illegal racial
18 gerrymandering violates Section 2 of the Voting Rights
19 Act of 1965 and the 14th Amendment to the U.S.
20 Constitution. As such, I oppose this mid-census
21 redistricting plan. I oppose targeting black and brown
22 districts to accomplish Trump's goal of gaining five
23 new seats. I oppose racial gerrymandering and any
24 cracking and packing that will surely be the center of
25 this effort.

1 Texans do not want or need this.

2 California and other Democratic-led states have vowed

3 to redistrict in such a way as to neutralize any

4 Republican seats that might be gained. So what is the

5 point? Why set a precedent that redistricting can

6 occur whenever any leader in power says so on a whim?

7 Tarrant County is already spending taxpayer dollars to

8 defend an illegal racial gerrymandering lawsuit of its

9 County Commission of Precincts, especially mine. Any

10 passage of illegally racially gerrymandered bills will

11 result in the same fate at the state level.

12 As I close, it is you state legislators

13 who will suffer the biggest fallout. Congressional

14 seats might be gained, but many more of you will lose

15 yours. So here's to hoping permanent out-of-state

16 notifications for Abbott and any proponents of this

17 mid-census illegal racist power grab. I oppose.

18 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for

19 this witness?

20 Chair hears none. Thank you for your

21 testimony. The witness is excused.

22 EBONY TURNER: Thank you.

23 REP. VASUT: At this microphone, if I

24 could have next come down Amanda McLaughlin. Amanda

25 McLaughlin.

1 All right. I show you registered to
2 testify as Ernest Lineberger, on behalf of yourself, on
3 the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that
4 correct?

5 ERNEST LINEBERGER: Yes, sir.

6 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
7 testimony.

8 ERNEST LINEBERGER: I'd like to thank all
9 of you for being here and putting in these long hours,
10 and this great group for being here and sharing their
11 thoughts. I am Ernest Lineberger. I am a candidate
12 for U.S. House for Texas Congressional District 26, a
13 retired naval officer, a veteran, an engineer with 29
14 years at Texas Instruments in Dallas, a believer in
15 love your neighbor, and we are all neighbors.

16 I ran for the open seat in 2024 and got
17 36 percent of the vote. Since then, Representative
18 Brandon Gill and I have been working to convince the
19 voters that I am the better choice. Mr. Gill is new to
20 public service. Mr. Gill is new to public service and
21 seems aligned to serve the wealthy and take from those
22 in need, while my approach is putting the people's
23 needs first.

24 This redistricting plan -- and I have
25 seen one called C2201, may not be applicable, but

1 that's the one I'm referring to -- has elongated
2 districts with tiny tails in urban areas and distant
3 massive amount of rural that make it very difficult for
4 House members to stay in touch and correctly represent;
5 equally difficult for constituents to seek support.
6 Old districts are divided up. End-to-end distance is
7 dramatically increased. These seats might as well be
8 Texas at large rather than district-specific.

9 This proposal is wrong and harmful to our
10 representative government. The changes to CD26 are
11 extreme. This will set me back in name recognition and
12 voter outreach. I'm eager to represent the voters of
13 CD26 and be a statesman of stewardship who will look
14 after their needs and those of the nation: water,
15 hospitals, Medicare, SNAP, VA, FAA, NOAA, FEMA, and any
16 other assistance needed to help everyone to reach their
17 full potential. I'm Ernest Lineberger of Denton
18 County. I oppose this mid-decade redistricting but
19 will serve my district and America regardless. Thank
20 you so much for this opportunity to speak.

21 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
22 this witness?

23 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
24 testimony. The gentleman is excused.

25 At this microphone next, if I could get

1 Denaja Jones, Denaja Jones. Denaja Jones, if you
2 please come to that microphone next. Thank you for
3 that.

4 Chair calls Amanda McLaughlin. I show
5 you registered to testify as Amanda McLaughlin, on
6 behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional
7 Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

8 AMANDA MCLAUGHLIN: That is correct.

9 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
10 testimony.

11 AMANDA MCLAUGHLIN: Okay. I am Amanda
12 McLaughlin and I'm representing myself. Why is there
13 an effort to redistrict? For years, any bias in the
14 last redistricting was denied, and that is the basis
15 for redistricting. There has already been a great deal
16 of gerrymandering. The purpose of this redistricting
17 is not to correct any past bias, just the opposite. It
18 is an attempt to seize more power that does not
19 represent the people.

20 Legislators should serve the people they
21 represent, but now many legislators are there to serve
22 themselves and a president who bullies them in
23 demanding five more Republican seats. The new maps are
24 not available. I believe that they are being hidden
25 from us because it would be obvious how biased and

1 unfair they are. We should have hearings after the
2 maps are released. This redistricting will
3 discriminate even more against many people in very
4 diverse state for the benefit of one group.

5 White conservatives represent a small
6 portion of the population but want to control everyone.
7 This control includes forcing Christian nationalisms on
8 everyone. While we are denying children school
9 lunches, we are forcing classes to display the Ten
10 Commandments. Immigrants are being disappeared without
11 any due process. And as a transgender woman, my basic
12 rights are being denied. We are already bullied. We
13 don't need a stronger bully. This is abusing power to
14 gain more power and should not be allowed. Thank you
15 for the opportunity to speak.

16 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
17 this witness?

18 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
19 testimony. You are excused.

20 If I could get at this microphone next,
21 Kathleen Turner. Kathleen Turner at that microphone.

22 I show you registered to testify as
23 Denaja Jones, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised
24 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

25 DENAJA JONES: Correct.

1 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
2 testimony.

3 DENAJA JONES: Good afternoon, members of
4 the committee and fellow Texans. My name is Denaja
5 Jones. I'm a junior prelaw political science major at
6 UT Arlington. I'm here today voicing my concerns about
7 the proposed mid-cycle redistricting effort.
8 Redistricting is a process meant to ensure fair and
9 equal representation based on population changes
10 reflected in the ten-year census.

11 We are witnessing a political motivated
12 and deviation from that demographic justification.
13 Attempting to redraw congressional maps in the middle
14 of the decade just years after the census is not just
15 irregular but also a strategic partisan power. I find
16 it deeply troubling that this process appears to
17 prioritize political control over community
18 representation, especially in a state as diverse and
19 rapidly growing as Texas. Communities of color, black,
20 Latino, and Asian have historically been
21 underrepresented. The proposed changes threaten to
22 dismantle their voting strength through tactics like
23 crackling -- like cracking and packing, making it
24 harder for these communities to elect candidates of
25 their choice.

1 While the legal standard prohibits race
2 as a predominant factor in redistricting, we must
3 acknowledge race and party are often closely
4 intertwined, especially in Texas. The courts may
5 struggle to separate racial intent from partisan
6 motive, but the lived consequences are always clear.
7 These maps risk disenfranchising millions of voters
8 under the guise of political strategy. I want to
9 sincerely just thank my Commissioner Lisa Simpson,
10 State Rep Chris Turner, and everyone who appeared today
11 to practice and present today, and affirm that demand
12 that still matters in Texas. Thank you for your time.

13 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
14 this witness?

15 The Chair hears none. Thank you for your
16 testimony. The witness is excused.

17 If I could get at that microphone on this
18 side next, Mirian Spencer Morrison. If you would come
19 down right there. I show you registered to testify as
20 Kathleen Turner, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised
21 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

22 KATHLEEN TURNER: That is correct.

23 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
24 testimony.

25 KATHLEEN TURNER: Good evening, Chair and

1 members of the committee. My name is Kathleen Turner,
2 and I live in the Hulen Bend Estate community of Fort
3 Worth, Tarrant County, in Congressional District 12. I
4 am here today to speak with a heavy heart and a clear
5 voice in opposition to the mid-decade redistricting
6 effort. What's happening is not just political, it's
7 deeply personal for communities like mine.

8 Right here in Dallas-Fort Worth area CD
9 33, a district built by black, Latino, and Asian
10 Americans, voters working together to finally have a
11 voice, is under attack. Without a new census, in the
12 middle of the decade, you're opposing to dismantle a
13 community we fought decades to build. Why? What
14 changed other than a political power and racism?
15 Tarrant County voters have already lost representation
16 at the county level. Now this plan risks erasing our
17 voices in Congress as well?

18 For many of us, it feels like we are
19 being told once again that we don't count. We are not
20 invisible. Communities of color are the very reason
21 DFW is growing. We built this district. We show up.
22 We vote. And yet in a state where nearly 60 percent of
23 the population are people of color, only about a third
24 of our congressional delegation reflects that reality.
25 That's not fair representation. That's deliberate

1 manipulation.

2 I urge you, do not silence us. Wait
3 until the 2030 census to draw new maps. And if changes
4 must be made, give the people a real voice in that
5 process before any decisions become final. Please
6 don't take away the representation we've worked so hard
7 to build. We matter. We are watching, and we will not
8 stop speaking out. Thank you.

9 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
10 this witness?

11 Thank you for your testimony. The
12 witness is excused.

13 At this microphone, if I could next get
14 Mindy Tackett. All right. I show you registered to
15 testify as Mirian Spencer Morrison, on behalf of
16 yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting
17 Plan. Is that correct?

18 MIRIAN SPENCER MORRISON: That is
19 correct. That is correct.

20 REP. VASUT: All right, perfect. Please
21 give us your testimony.

22 MIRIAN SPENCER MORRISON: Hi, I am Mirian
23 Spencer Morrison. I am currently the State Democratic
24 Executive Committeewoman for Congressional District 25.
25 I am speaking on behalf of myself as a lifetime Texan,

1 voter, and currently a rural constituent of District
2 25.

3 Good evening, Mr. Chair and members of
4 committee. I oppose redistricting due to the limited
5 opportunities for voters of the 254 counties in Texas
6 to have reasonable input on maps that will affect them
7 for the next six years. My congressional district
8 begins in Callahan County and goes east to Eastland,
9 Stephens, Young, Jack, Comanche, Palo Pinto, Parker,
10 Erath, Somervell, Hood, Johnson, and ends in Tarrant
11 County, including UT Arlington, which we are here
12 today. The maps online for the 2025 proposed
13 redistricting are unofficial, so I won't waste times on
14 proposals for 25, which include some increasing the
15 county total from 13 to 28 and spanning from Amarillo
16 to Austin.

17 The boundaries were approved, the current
18 ones, were approved during the 2021 session. There
19 were maps and opportunities for Texans to review,
20 comment, and bring meaningful input to the Legislature.
21 While the current districts don't appease most people,
22 there was dialogue and, as usually occurs, lawsuits.
23 Texas is currently in court fighting while entertaining
24 new maps.

25 In my occupation as a city planner, I

1 have worked on redistricting within the agencies and
2 departments that I work. Most recently, our agency
3 took on one city. It took us six months to draw
4 service boundaries that will serve our six divisions to
5 be balanced for calls for service and response times
6 and projected population through 2030. Another entity
7 took a year to do that. I am certain none of the
8 background done in my professional capacity has been
9 done and there is zero chance the level of diligence
10 will be done.

11 It is ridiculous that we are entertaining
12 this process now as candidates for the '26 election
13 have announced and started working. If this is going
14 to be an effect for the '26 maps, it's only going to
15 cause confusion. And if this can wait to 2028, this
16 should be -- this drawn-out process should be expanded
17 through the '27 Legislature. We deserve better as
18 Texans.

19 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
20 this witness?

21 Thank you for your testimony. The
22 witness is excused.

23 Next at this microphone, if I could get
24 Chris Tackett. I'm going to go out on a limb and say
25 that y'all might be related.

1 MENDI TACKETT: Yeah.

2 REP. VASUT: All right.

3 MENDI TACKETT: You get us both.

4 REP. VASUT: Okay. Chair calls Mendi
5 Tackett. I show you registered to testify, on behalf
6 of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting
7 Plan. Is that correct?

8 MENDI TACKETT: Correct.

9 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
10 testimony.

11 MENDI TACKETT: So I am here to tell all
12 of you exactly what I told the Texas Senate, word for
13 word. Texans do not want this. Trump wants this.
14 Mid-decade redistricting is a blatant, racist power
15 grab. It undermines fair representation and rigs the
16 rules to erase the voices of black and brown
17 communities in order to keep politicians who support
18 white Christian nationalism in power.

19 This is no different than what we have
20 been fighting here in Tarrant County. Just like the
21 Tarrant County commissioners were afraid they might
22 lose power here, Trump and national-level Republicans
23 are afraid they might lose some power. So they're
24 turning to states like Texas to try and ensure they
25 have enough Republican seats. And you're going to

1 squash black and brown voices to do it.

2 There's no polite way to say this.

3 Republicans, we see you. We see who you are, and we
4 see what you're doing. You're shameless, power-hungry
5 bootlickers for Trump -- [Audio cut out]

6 REP. VASUT: Next up at this microphone,
7 if I can get Ernesto Moran. Ernesto Moran at that
8 microphone.

9 Chair calls Chris Tackett. I show you
10 registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the
11 Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that
12 correct?

13 CHRIS TACKETT: That is correct.

14 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
15 testimony.

16 CHRIST TACKETT: It's asinine that we're
17 here talking about this today when we know the State of
18 Texas has argued in court that the maps drawn after the
19 2020 census weren't based on race. And yet the DOJ
20 justification is that these maps were drawn based on
21 race. You can't have it make sense unless you are
22 willing to acknowledge that this is nothing more than a
23 step toward authoritarianism. The current
24 administration is scared to death that the people won't
25 vote for them in 2026. They needed to find a place led

1 by those who will kiss the ring and do their bidding to
2 carve out a handful of seats.

3 Enter Texas. The administration has
4 embarked on a Christian nationalist agenda to destroy
5 the things that have made this country great. We know
6 that if they have two more years controlling all levers
7 of power, our country will be unrecognizable. That's
8 what they're banking on. Authoritarianism doesn't
9 arrive with trumpets. It creeps in and thrives on our
10 hesitation to speak out, our unwillingness -- our
11 willingness to compromise with injustice. You look at
12 this room, we are saying no more. Thank you.

13 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
14 this witness? Chair hears none. Thank you for your
15 time. You are excused.

16 If I could get -- if I could get Lori, I
17 believe Stelljes, Stelljes. If you could come down to
18 this microphone. I apologize if I mispronounced that
19 last name.

20 I show you registered to testify as
21 Ernesto Moran, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised
22 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

23 ERNESTO MORAN: That is correct.

24 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
25 testimony.

1 ERNESTO MORAN: I want to acknowledge
2 that we're in land ceded and shared by the Jumanos,
3 Tawakoni, Kickapoo, Wichita and Comanche Nations. My
4 name is Ernie Moran. I'm the proud son of immigrants
5 from South America. I am a native-born U.S. citizen.
6 I am a 30-year resident of Fort Worth. And I'm the
7 father of three public school students. My oldest just
8 graduated high school, and I'm kind of worried about
9 him. And with the dismantling of the Department of
10 Education, I'm worried how we're going to pay for his
11 college. I've got a daughter in high school and a
12 daughter in middle school, and I'm worried about the
13 creep towards Christian nationalism in our schools in
14 Texas. And I'm also a public-school teacher, so I'm
15 doubly worried about that.

16 But actually, I'm here and I'm kind of --
17 respectfully, Mr. Chair, it's ironic and kind of sad to
18 me that we're here because I've watched two hearings
19 already where your colleagues have asked you about the
20 existence of this committee, and you've simply passed
21 the buck and said, because there's a letter, this is
22 what we have to do. And you said at the start of this
23 meeting that we had to follow the rules. Your response
24 to the Governor when he put this on the agenda should
25 have been four words, because this is Texas, right?

1 This is the land of Six Flags. This is the land of
2 Whataburger. This is the land of Shiner Bock. You
3 should have said four words to the Governor, "Don't
4 mess with Texas."

5 And your answer to the Department of
6 Justice -- your answer to the Department of Justice,
7 instead of asking the Department of Justice to come
8 testify, your answer to the Department of Justice
9 should have been four words about our maps, "Come and
10 take them." So I hope you'll do as others have said
11 here and simply do nothing until the 2030 census and
12 then we'll get to the business of the people. Thank
13 you.

14 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
15 this witness?

16 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
17 testimony. The witness is excused.

18 At this next -- at this microphone, if I
19 can next have Karen Horgan come down. Karen Horgan.

20 All right. I show you registered to
21 testify as Lori Stelljes?

22 LAURIE STELLJES: Stelljes.

23 REP. VASUT: Stelljes. On behalf of
24 yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting
25 Plan. Is that correct?

1 LAURIE STELLJES: That is correct.

2 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
3 testimony.

4 LAURIE STELLJES: Thank you. My name is
5 Laurie Stelljes, and I'm a resident of Fort Worth,
6 which is located in Congressional District 97. I would
7 like to be on the record against the State's
8 redistricting efforts. Do not submit to Trump's
9 request. You should be spending our tax dollars on
10 worthwhile efforts, like how to salvage lives after
11 natural disasters, or how to better financially support
12 our public schools.

13 This effort to racially gerrymander our
14 state is unjust and discriminatory. Cracking and
15 packing by race is an intentional effort to discourage
16 and weaken the black and brown voice, and worse yet,
17 discourages them from voting -- from bothering to vote.
18 Texas just redrew the maps in 2021, making this process
19 rushed, without transparency, heavily partisan, and one
20 that excludes public input. These few meetings hastily
21 scheduled do not fit the intent of gathering public
22 input. It only checks a box.

23 You should have -- you haven't even shown
24 us the new maps. It's absolutely unacceptable for both
25 the House and Senate Redistricting Committees to be

1 holding hearings without having maps visible to the
2 public. Without a doubt, there will be lawsuits if
3 this passes, and that is a further waste of our tax
4 dollars. Texas is already the worst gerrymandered
5 state in the nation and has a long history of passing
6 discriminatory election laws. If you are intent on
7 moving forward with redistricting, this committee must
8 commit to holding public hearings after the maps have
9 been drawn but before they pass through committee. You
10 must give the public time to review the maps before the
11 hearings. Legislators who drew the maps must also
12 explain why they chose to draw them the way they did.

13 If the only way to get ahead is to cheat
14 by redrawing boundaries that discriminate by race to
15 benefit one party, take a hard look in the mirror and
16 ask yourself about your level of integrity. A
17 tarnished reputation is a shameful legacy to leave
18 those who follow you. You were elected to represent
19 all of your constituents, not just a subset that
20 belongs to your political party. Vote no.

21 REP. VASUT: Members, questions for the
22 witness? Chair recognizes Vice Chair Rosenthal to
23 question the witness.

24 REP. ROSENTHAL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
25 Thank you, Ms. Stelljes?

1 LAURIE STELLJES: Stelljes, yes.

2 REP. ROSENTHAL: Stelljes. Sorry. You
3 made a couple of really good points that I don't want
4 to spend a lot of time, but I want to make sure that
5 this gets a little bit of attention. So, is it your
6 contention that this Legislature, being called in an
7 emergency session, should focus on the emergency, that
8 hand in the Hill Country?

9 LAURIE STELLJES: Yes, yes.

10 REP. ROSENTHAL: While families are still
11 suffering and we're up here with this political
12 charade. The second thing that you brought up was
13 about how Texas is already a gerrymandered state. Are
14 you aware that every, every redistricting by this
15 legislature for the past 30 years has ended up in
16 federal court?

17 LAURIE STELLJES: Yes.

18 REP. ROSENTHAL: And did you also know
19 that we literally are just -- we are awaiting the
20 decision on a current court case for the 2021
21 redistricting? You just heard that trial in El Paso.
22 Is that right?

23 LAURIE STELLJES: Yes.

24 REP. ROSENTHAL: Here's a fun fact for
25 everyone in the room. The last time Texas redistricted

1 outside of the census was 2003. And those maps were
2 struck down by the United States Supreme Court as being
3 unconstitutional. I want to thank you for highlighting
4 those issues. Thanks for coming here today.

5 LAURIE STELLJES: Thank you.

6 REP. VASUT: Members, any other questions
7 for this witness?

8 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
9 testimony. Witness is excused.

10 Next up at this microphone is going to be
11 Warren Horgan, if you'll make your way down.

12 I show you registered to testify as Karen
13 Horgan, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised
14 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

15 KAREN HORGAN: Correct.

16 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
17 testimony.

18 KAREN HORGAN: Hi. My name is Karen
19 Horgan. I live in Fort Worth, Congressional District
20 12. I'm a lifelong Texan, so I know that our state is
21 pretty much gerrymandered to death already. I strongly
22 oppose this attempt to redistrict. This is a brazen
23 move by the governor, pressured by the president, to
24 gain five new Republican seats in the House.

25 The four districts in Texas being

1 targeted are all represented by people of color. It is
2 clearly an effort to undermine the voting strength of
3 minority Texans. This is blatant racial
4 discrimination. Communities of color are intentionally
5 being split up, diluting their voting power and
6 representation. No proposed maps are even available.
7 There's no justification for this congressional
8 redistricting. Texas maps were drawn in 2021. Doing
9 it again now, mid-decade, is not normal. We don't even
10 have any new census data to support these maps. Racial
11 data must be taken into consideration, according to the
12 Voting Rights Act.

13 This special session should be used to
14 help people impacted by the devastating floods, relief
15 efforts, rebuilding efforts, planning better emergency
16 preparedness systems. Helping Texans should be your
17 priority. So, stop this racial gerrymander power grab
18 and do something constructive for the people of Texas.

19 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
20 this witness?

21 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
22 testimony. Witness is excused.

23 Next witness at this microphone is going
24 to be Ryan Davenport.

25 I show you registered to testify as

1 Warren Horgan, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised
2 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

3 WARREN HORGAN: That's correct.

4 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
5 testimony.

6 WARREN HORGAN: Hello, my name is Warren
7 Horgan. I live in Fort Worth. I'm a retired veteran,
8 Congressional District 12. I oppose this redistricting
9 proposal. Texas has a long history of passing
10 discriminatory election laws and racially gerrymandered
11 maps. This pattern continues.

12 As I thought about this, I remembered a
13 song from my youth called Fortunate Son by John Fogarty
14 of Creedence Clearwater Revival. The song written in
15 1969 at the height of the Vietnam War, while I was
16 stationed at Nakhon Phanom, was more than a protest of
17 the war. It was an anthem against inequality and the
18 idea that the rich make the decisions while the poor
19 have no say in the matter, and yet they bear the
20 consequences. The song's theme of social injustice and
21 unequalled burdens continues to resonate today. The
22 chorus says, "I ain't no millionaire's son, no, no. It
23 ain't me, it ain't me. I ain't no fortunate one, no.
24 It ain't me, it ain't me."

25 The reference in the song can be applied

1 to the racial discrimination we see today in these
2 gerrymandered maps. These maps give the privileged few
3 control over the working class and people of color
4 whose votes are diluted and suppressed. We need
5 fairly-chosen representatives who will be responsive to
6 the needs of all people, not just to billionaires and
7 special interests. This is why we need districts that
8 reflect the diversity of our state.

9 REP. VASUT: Members, questions for this
10 witness?

11 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
12 testimony. The witness is excused.

13 The next witness at this microphone is
14 going to be Cindy Rocha. If you'll please come down
15 front.

16 Chair calls Ryan Davenport. I show you
17 registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the
18 Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan? Is that
19 correct?

20 RYAN DAVENPORT: Appreciate you having
21 me.

22 REP. VASUT: All right. Give us your
23 testimony.

24 RYAN DAVENPORT: Mr. Chairman and
25 members, my name is Ryan Davenport. I used to work for

1 the Republican Party of Texas in 2010. I was a field
2 director whenever President Obama was in his midterms.
3 I worked for Congressman Bill Flores. I was a delegate
4 to the Republican National Conventions of 2012 and
5 2016. I worked for Dan Patrick in the 83rd legislative
6 session and staffed the Committee on Education. I was
7 a government teacher and an economics teacher and a
8 school leader in Dallas ISD at North Dallas High School
9 for almost 11 years.

10 And I'm here to tell you, you've lost me.
11 You've lost me because the State of Texas isn't Burger
12 King. Donald Trump doesn't get to have it his way.
13 You don't get to walk up and say, I need five more
14 seats because I don't want to pay the consequences for
15 bad governance. You don't get to ask for five more
16 seats to make government less responsive. And this is
17 happening again on the backs of black and brown Texans
18 who already have fewer seats than they should in
19 Congress. Nine fewer seats than they should.

20 I don't know how, in good conscience, we
21 can do this to our fellow Texans. How did I get here,
22 right? How did I change my mind? If you would have
23 talked to me when I was a senior in high school, I
24 would have told you I would rather die than vote for a
25 Democrat. But I tell you, I've done it twice. But

1 it's because I've sat at the tables of my students who
2 will lose their representation. We know this to be
3 wrong.

4 I was raised in Brazoria County, only
5 about 10 miles away from the Chairman. And I tell you,
6 I know the values we were raised on. And I know that
7 this is not doing right by Texans. We know in our
8 hearts that this is not okay. I know, I know that you
9 are receiving pressure from the White House to do this.
10 I know you are. And it has to be scary to stand up and
11 say no. But I'm going to trust you to do the right
12 thing because I know you to be men of good character
13 and women of good character.

14 REP. VASUT: Members, questions for this
15 witness?

16 RYAN DAVENPNORT: But if Barack Obama had
17 done this in 2010, we would have had pitchforks and
18 torches. But because it's the orange man in the White
19 House, that's okay. If you get in bed with Donald
20 Trump, you can scrub all you want, but you're never
21 going to get the orange off.

22 REP. VASUT: Members, questions for this
23 witness? Chair hears none. Thank you for your
24 testimony. Thank you, Ryan. You're excused.

25 At this next -- at this next microphone,

1 I almost said podium -- that wouldn't make any sense.

2 I've got Celena Vasquez. Celena Vasquez, if you could
3 come down to that one.

4 I'm going to come back over to you here.

5 I've got you registered to testify as Cindy Rocha?

6 CINDY ROCHA: Cindy Rocha.

7 REP. VASUT: Rocha. On behalf of
8 yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting
9 Plan. Is that correct?

10 CINDY ROCHA: That's correct.

11 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
12 testimony.

13 CINDY ROCHA: I am a proud member of the
14 Communication Workers of America and the Texas AFL-CIO.
15 Thank you for the opportunity to hear our voices.
16 Thank you to those who have come and taken their time
17 and shared their voices with you. I was born and
18 raised in Fort Worth, and, as an adult, I moved out to
19 a rural area in CD25. North Texas is growing, and our
20 cities continue to expand outward. As a member of
21 organized labor, as well as a retiree and a resident of
22 a rural community in the great State of Texas, I'm
23 fortunate to hear many stories and opinions from a
24 great cross-section of our citizens.

25 I testify to you that not one of us is in

1 favor of this redistricting scheme. There's certainly
2 a reason that we only have to do it every ten years.
3 The confusion that it causes isn't bearable for more
4 than one time, or more than that often. As an election
5 worker, I've witnessed this on more than one occasion,
6 and not only after the maps are drawn. From, where do
7 I go to vote? Why can't I vote where I've always
8 voted? To downright disgust at the process, and they
9 just don't want to vote at all. These situations cause
10 disenfranchisement. Please tell us that
11 disenfranchisement is not the point. Texas is already
12 one of the hardest places in the nation to register to
13 vote and then to vote. Please, help qualified Texas
14 voters vote, and please do not add additional confusion
15 by redrawing districts that are already in litigation.

16 We must get better at serving others. We
17 have an obligation to serve. The heart of Texas beats
18 in unity, and we have always cared for each other.
19 There are so many other issues of concern that should
20 be addressed in this special session. Our safety and
21 preparedness, our health, and the well-being of fellow
22 Texans. Don't fall prey to those that try to divide
23 us. We are Texas. We are the Lone Star. I leave from
24 this podium with the saying that you can see in the
25 rising sun east of the Capitol. All political power is

1 inherent in the people, and all free governments are
2 founded on their authority and instituted for their
3 benefit. Thank you.

4 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
5 this witness?

6 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
7 testimony. The witness is excused.

8 Next up at this microphone is going to be
9 Deborah Spell, if you'll make your way down.

10 I show you registered to testify as
11 Celena Vasquez?

12 CELENA VASQUEZ: Celena Vasquez.

13 REP. VASUT: Celena, I apologize. It
14 looked like an O. I got you. Celena Vasquez, on
15 behalf of yourself, on the Revised Congressional
16 Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

17 CELENA VASQUEZ: Yes, that is correct.

18 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
19 testimony.

20 CELENA VASQUEZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
21 Good evening, Chairman Vasut, Vice Chairman Rosenthal,
22 and all of our state representatives and committee
23 members on this Redistricting Committee. My name is
24 Celena Vasquez. I am a resident of the city of
25 Arlington, the American Dream city. My family and I

1 work, go to school, and worship right here in
2 Arlington, Texas.

3 My family is a regular family. I have a
4 17-year-old son, Diego, who plays in the marching band
5 in Arlington ISD schools. I'm a teacher by training.
6 I'm also on the Democratic National Committee. My
7 husband, Fernando, works in higher education. And
8 we're here -- I'm here because they cannot be here this
9 evening. I'm here for all of the regular working-class
10 families that go to church at St. Matthew's Catholic
11 Church in East Arlington, where my family worships.

12 We're here because -- I'm here to express
13 on their behalf a huge disappointment and huge
14 opposition to drawing of any maps that are going to
15 crack and pack the Latino voters of this county. I am
16 here to let you know that families like mine who live,
17 work, and worship here oppose any effort to
18 disenfranchise and disempower the Latino community.
19 We're opposed to the changes on any of these maps. I
20 adamantly oppose changes to CD 33, a minority
21 opportunity district created to represent African-
22 Americans, Latinos, senior citizens, and young people
23 because our voices will no longer be heard.

24 Latino families like mine reject Donald
25 Trump and the Republican elected officials' attempts to

1 redraw the maps here in Texas. In the Latino
2 community, we have a saying that "su voto es su voz,"
3 but y'all are threatening to take away our voice in the
4 Latino community. We will not stand by and allow that
5 to happen any longer here in Texas. We ask that you
6 not disenfranchise us. We ask that you not crack and
7 pack us into districts, and we ask that you please vote
8 against these mid-decade redistricting efforts. Thank
9 you.

10 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
11 this witness?

12 Thank you for your testimony. The
13 witness is excused.

14 Next up at this microphone is going to be
15 Erik Wilson.

16 I show you registered to testify as
17 Deborah Spell, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised
18 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

19 DEBORAH SPELL: That is correct.

20 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
21 testimony.

22 DEBORAH SPELL: We the people, not we the
23 politicians. Black, brown, and Asians have endured
24 voter suppression and the inability to select
25 representation since Section 5 preclearance was gutted.

1 Your maps, that haven't been published, will be
2 racially biased to guarantee that minorities aren't
3 represented and are voiceless. The criteria when
4 drafting maps should be the contiguous geographical
5 regions, preserving racial communities, existing
6 values, interests, and issues. The 2020 census showed
7 redistricting wasn't necessary.

8 As a taxpaying citizen, my input on
9 issues such as infrastructure, education, health, and
10 voting regulations, my voice should be represented by
11 someone familiar with the district. Racism is the
12 reason for gerrymandering ethnic minority districts,
13 leaving us without representation. Texas is a
14 minority-majority state, but it doesn't reflect
15 representation in government. Gerrymandering is
16 similar to redlining, which is racist. I vehemently
17 oppose packing and cracking our districts. Electoral
18 districts should be drawn as a minority district or a
19 coalition district to achieve representation. I
20 advocate for state electoral maps to be drawn by
21 unbiased teams to ensure fairness and prevent
22 gerrymandering, to accurately reflect the diversity of
23 the population and not split, dilute, or pack and crack
24 our communities.

25 We are the people. We, the people,

1 demand to elect our own candidates. There have been
2 several lawsuits --

3 REP. VASUT: Please complete your
4 testimony. I'm sorry, I'll give you another sentence
5 if you don't mind.

6 DEBORAH SPELL: Oh, okay, okay.

7 REP. VASUT: Yes, ma'am.

8 DEBORAH SPELL: I will just say that we
9 are prepared to litigate because Texas likes
10 litigation.

11 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
12 this witness?

13 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
14 testimony. The witness is excused.

15 Next up at this microphone is going to be
16 Cheryl Smith, if you could make your way down. Cheryl
17 Smith.

18 I show you registered to testify as Erik
19 Wilson on behalf of FWBC Social Justice, Southern
20 Sector Rising, Alpha Sigma Lambda, and Alpha Phi Alpha
21 Fraternity Incorporated. Is that correct? Alpha Phi
22 Alpha Fraternity Incorporated. That was hard. Is that
23 correct?

24 ERIK WILSON: Correct.

25 REP. VASUT: And on the Revised

1 Congressional Redistricting Plan?

2 ERIK WILSON: Yes.

3 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
4 testimony. Thank you for being here.

5 ERIK WILSON: Good evening, committee
6 members. My name is Erik Wilson. I am a former deputy
7 mayor pro tem for the City of Dallas, the ninth largest
8 city in the United States. I am a resident of Dallas,
9 Texas, specifically Oak Cliff. I am a voter. Above
10 all, I am a concerned citizen.

11 I'm here to speak out against the
12 governor's redistricting proposal, because let's call
13 it what it really is, a power grab, plain and simple.
14 And that ain't right. This plan isn't about fairness
15 or balance. It's about carving out five new Republican
16 districts to keep power locked away mid-decade without
17 the public's consent and without real justification.
18 And that ain't right.

19 This proposal goes straight at the
20 coalition districts, Texas Districts 9, 18, 29, and 33,
21 districts that have long given black and Latino
22 communities a seat at the table. Redrawing these lines
23 wouldn't just move boundaries on paper, it would
24 silence real voices, undermine real representation, and
25 trample on the Voting Rights Act. And that ain't

1 right. Districts 28, 34, and 7 are also under attack,
2 not because people demanded change, but because some
3 politicians fear losing control. And that ain't right.

4 This isn't what democracy is supposed to
5 look like. This is what fear looks like. Fear of
6 diversity. Fear of new voices. Fear of people they
7 claim to serve. But let me be clear. We see exactly
8 what's happening, and we won't stand quietly. We're
9 not pawns you can shuffle around on maps. We're your
10 constituents. We're your neighbors. We're fellow
11 Texans. And we deserve districts that are fair, legal,
12 and truly represent who we are. I urge you to do the
13 right thing. Reject this plan and protect the
14 integrity of our elections, because that is what's
15 right.

16 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
17 this witness?

18 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
19 testimony. Witness is excused.

20 Next up at this microphone is going to
21 be, I believe, Tara Butler or Jara Butler. If you'll
22 come down.

23 I show you registered to testify as
24 Cheryl Smith, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised
25 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

1 CHERYL SMITH: That is correct.

2 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
3 testimony.

4 CHERYL SMITH: Good evening. My name is
5 Cheryl Smith. I am a retired, proud resident with the
6 Honorable Chris Turner as my state representative. And
7 I'm here to speak not only for myself but for the
8 generations who came before me and those who will come
9 after me. My grandparents lived in a time when they
10 couldn't vote freely. They marched, they organized,
11 and they fought so I could stand here today and speak
12 into a system that once tried to silence them. And
13 now, in 2025, we're back here again fighting a
14 different version of the same battle.

15 The Governor's redistricting plan is a
16 betrayal of everything our democracy is supposed to
17 stand for. It's a modern-day attempt to turn back the
18 clock on voter representation. By creating five new
19 districts, the state is not responding to population
20 growth, it's responding to fear, fear of change, fear
21 of equity, fear of rising multiracial electorate. But
22 here's the thing, we're not going anywhere. We are the
23 future, and we're watching. And we will not allow our
24 communities to be cracked, packed, or erased.

25 I ask you, when your children look back

1 at this moment, will they say you stood for justice or
2 that you stood silent? Reject the plan. Defend our
3 future. And do what's right, not what's political.
4 Thank you for hearing my voice. And don't ignore the
5 people you were elected to serve.

6 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
7 this witness?

8 Hearing none, thank you for your
9 testimony, ma'am. You're excused.

10 Next up at this microphone is going to
11 be, I believe it's Khanay Turner?

12 Okay. And I show you registered to
13 testify -- is it Jara?

14 JARA BUTLER: Jara, J-A-R-A.

15 REP. VASUT: Got it. Jara Butler, on
16 behalf of Supermajority and yourself, on the Revised
17 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

18 JARA BUTLER: That is correct.

19 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
20 testimony.

21 JARA BUTLER: Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair,
22 I know you all are tired. You know, try being a black
23 [audio cuts out] and we are here because we see exactly
24 what this redistricting plan is all about, a direct
25 attack on our voices and the voices of women who are

1 changing this state. This is not about fair
2 representation. It's about fear. Fear of a Texas
3 that's younger, a Texas that's more diverse and more
4 powerful than it's ever been, and an attempt to rig the
5 rules before we even get a chance to get to the
6 starting line.

7 So let me be clear. Women are not just
8 voting in record numbers. We are organizing. We are
9 running. We are leading. We are building. And we,
10 the women, are the future of this state. But instead,
11 instead of honoring that, some of you are drawing maps
12 in back rooms to silence us. You're not protecting
13 democracy. You're protecting your own power. And as
14 Fannie Lou Hamer once said, I'm sick and tired of being
15 sick and tired.

16 And I'm going to add this. The young
17 women of Texas are sick and tired of being
18 underestimated, of being locked out of the decisions
19 that affect our bodies, that affect our community, and
20 affect our lives. We refuse to be cracked, packed, or
21 carved out of our communities. And we are not a
22 political inconvenience. We are the majority.

23 Now, I come from a family, and I'm
24 standing here today because of my grandmother, who was
25 born with Jim Crow, and that survived generations of

1 disenfranchisements, folks who paid poll taxes, were
2 chased from ballot boxes, and lived through Jim Crow.
3 Today --

4 REP. VASUT: Please complete your
5 testimony.

6 JARA BUTLER: -- you may not use dogs,
7 you may not use fire hoses, but the intention is still
8 the same. So let me just say, this is not governance,
9 this is cheating. So for every one of you, every
10 official who has a hand in this scam, in this scheme, I
11 say to you, you are either on the side of democracy, or
12 you are standing in the way with it. Either way, we
13 are going to remember this. Thank you.

14 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
15 this witness?

16 Hearing none, thank you for your
17 testimony. You're excused.

18 Next up at this microphone will be Mary
19 Trotty. If you'll make your way up to this microphone,
20 Mary Trotty.

21 All right. I show you registered to
22 testify as -- is it Khanay?

23 KHANAY TURNER: Khanay.

24 REP. VASUT: Khanay Turner.

25 KHANAY TURNER: Yes.

1 REP. VASUT: On behalf of yourself, on
2 the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that
3 correct?

4 KHANAY TURNER: That is correct.

5 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
6 testimony.

7 KHANAY TURNER: Okay. Good evening,
8 members of the committee. My name is Khanay Turner.
9 I'm a proud Fort Worthian and the Executive Director of
10 the Barbara Jordan Leadership Institute, a resident of
11 House District 97, Senate District 10, and
12 Congressional District 12. I am here to strongly
13 oppose this mid-decade redistricting.

14 Since my representatives serve on this
15 committee, hello, Representative McQueeney, I must
16 express my deep disappointment if, in the case that you
17 and Senator Phil King, who's chairing the Senate
18 committee, would go into this process and participate
19 in any amount of gerrymandering, silencing my voice and
20 that of countless North Texans who already feel unheard
21 and unseen by our conservative representation in
22 Congress. Regardless of my zip code, I know there are
23 members of the Texas delegation fighting for me,
24 representing what I stand for, and protecting the needs
25 of all Texans. But I cannot say much for the majority

1 of the Texas delegation who voted to cut \$1 trillion
2 from federal programs, ensuring Texas remains the most
3 uninsured state for health care. Many of those same
4 leaders refuse to invest in public education, and push
5 policies that disenfranchise hundreds and thousands of
6 women simply because their marital status and many
7 more, because they do not have the white, I mean right,
8 surname.

9 And we do not need five more
10 congressional members who will continue to ignore the
11 survival and voices of Texans because of our skin
12 colors or our economic status. We need more
13 representation that reflects the true values and growth
14 of Texas, like members representing CD9, 18, 29, 30,
15 33. And I urge this committee to leave our current
16 districts intact until 2031 redistricting cycle, when
17 we have updated census data available, or, at the very
18 least, until the current maps that we're dealing with
19 right now has exhausted all of its legal challenges
20 since it's in court.

21 REP. VASUT: Please complete your
22 testimony.

23 KHANAY TURNER: Yes. Texans deserve fair
24 representation, not more silencing of our voices.
25 Thank you.

1 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
2 this witness?

3 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
4 testimony. Witness is excused.

5 KHANAY TURNER: Thank you.

6 REP. VASUT: Next up at this microphone,
7 if you could make your way down, is going to be
8 Lorraine Rogson.

9 I show you registered to testify as Mary
10 Trotty, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised
11 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

12 MARY TROTTY: I would like to say good
13 evening to the members of the committee.

14 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
15 testimony.

16 MARY TROTTY: My name is Mary Trotty. I
17 am 97 years old. I am proud to be a Houstonian. I
18 live in Sunnyside Community in Harris County, a part of
19 CD9. I have lived through Jim Crow and civil rights
20 movement. Now I'm waiting and trying to live for the
21 promise that Texas made for equality and justice.

22 Now, I remember we had one black member
23 of Congress, the Honorable Barbara Jordan. Then came
24 Mickey Leland. We fought long and hard for our
25 representative. And my representative today is Al

1 Green, C9. But C18 where Barbara Jordan, Craig
2 Washington, Jackson Lee are all represented with Al
3 Green in C9. C18 was the only place where we was
4 represented as black people.

5 Now, I do not agree with the
6 redistricting because it does nothing but put us
7 farther back. We are not put together. I do not want
8 it. I will have a voice in Sunnyside where each of us
9 will not vote for it. And I am 97 years old, but I am
10 not going to be silent. Thank you.

11 REP. VASUT: Ms. Trotty, we thank you for
12 coming to testify tonight. We appreciate it. We wish
13 you well. That's a testament, I think, to all of us.
14 And no matter how old you are, you've got a lot to say.
15 And we thank you for being here. The witness is
16 excused.

17 Next one up at this microphone is going
18 to be Yaseen Tasnif.

19 Is Lorraine Rogson here? Lorraine
20 Rogson. Chair calls Lorraine Rogson. Chair will show
21 Lorraine Rogson registered to testify, on behalf of
22 herself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting
23 Plan, but not testifying.

24 Chair calls Yaseen Tasnif.

25 YASEEN TASNIF: Yes.

1 REP. VASUT: I show you registered to
2 testify, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised
3 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

4 YASEEN TASNIF: That is correct.

5 REP. VASUT: Before you start, next one
6 to come down over here will be Larry Killion. Larry
7 Killion at this microphone.

8 Please give us your testimony, Mr.
9 Tasnif.

10 YASEEN TASNIF: All right. As we speak
11 about deciding how to divide the land that we stand on,
12 I begin by honoring the original stewards of this land,
13 the Caddo, the Wichita, Comanche, Coahuiltecan, Apache,
14 and so many others who lived on this land before us,
15 the indigenous people whose sovereignty and presence
16 continues today. So, Chairman and members, it is
17 wonderful to be here today. I was a former House
18 staffer, so I welcome you to my school as you all
19 welcomed me to the Capitol this past session. I really
20 appreciate it.

21 So, yes, my name is Yaseen Tasnif. I am
22 a proud queer South Asian Muslim Texan, born in
23 Houston, raised in McAllen, and now entering my senior
24 year at the University of Texas at Arlington. Mav up!
25 I spent nearly all my adult life organizing young

1 people, registering voters, and serving as an election
2 judge. I was elected to our student government and
3 served two years as a senator and one as a committee
4 chair. During the 89th session, I had the privilege of
5 working in the Texas Legislature, and it's really good
6 to see some familiar faces. I've missed it a lot.

7 But, you know, this process just, it
8 feels wrong, unfamiliar. This is not what I'm used to,
9 and I know y'all get up to some crazy stuff in that
10 building, but this is something else. See, our maps,
11 especially districts like Texas 15, have been
12 manipulated beyond recognition. Texas 15 no longer
13 reflects the Rio Grande Valley community I grew up in.
14 I mean, the valley looks like this, not like this,
15 right? So, you know, it was taken, stolen, to serve
16 partisan interests, and I strongly believe that, not
17 the people. That is not just undemocratic or
18 unconstitutional, it's personal, and now it's being
19 stolen again.

20 Right now, my university, UT Arlington,
21 one of the most diverse campuses in Texas -- I believe
22 it's actually the most, but I could be wrong -- is
23 actually diluted, tucked into a mostly rural district,
24 Texas 25, represented by Congressman Roger Williams.
25 Is he here today? No. Right, exactly. And he hasn't

1 been this whole time since I've been here. This
2 shouldn't happen to any more Texans, and if this
3 continues, it will, because of how the lines are drawn.
4 So, to the Republicans, I ask you, do you choose Trump
5 or do you choose Texas? Thank you. And to the
6 Democrats, please don't be polite. Please, quorum
7 break, again, if necessary. Do not lend legitimacy to
8 a process that disrespects us.

9 As I said, I'm proud to be a Muslim. The
10 Quran says, stand firm for justice as witnesses to God,
11 even if it is against yourselves, your parents, or your
12 kin. And as a Muslim, I can say that both the Quran
13 and the Bible demand the same. Proverbs 11:1 says that
14 the Lord detests dishonest scales, but accurate weights
15 find favor with him. Together, they remind us that
16 unjust systems, rigged scales, are not neutral. They
17 are a betrayal of the right to equity and democratic
18 values, values which I actually hope to bring to the
19 House floor with y'all someday.

20 REP. VASUT: Please complete your
21 testimony.

22 YASEEN TASNIF: I just have one more
23 sentence, if that's okay.

24 REP. VASUT: You got it. Absolutely.

25 YASEEN TASNIF: All right. So, you know

1 what's being done here. Choose to stop it. I hope
2 this process backfires. I hope California, New York,
3 and Illinois gerrymander right back. Maybe then we'll
4 learn. And last but not least, I say, as a South
5 Asian, lazim hai ke hum bhi dekhenge, verily we too
6 shall see. Thank you. I'm open for any questions.

7 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
8 this witness?

9 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
10 testimony. Witness is excused.

11 The next witness at this microphone will
12 be Emery Callaway. Emery Callaway, if you'll make your
13 way down.

14 Chair calls Larry Killion. I show you
15 registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the
16 Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that
17 correct?

18 LARRY KILLION: That is correct. I have
19 some handouts.

20 REP. VASUT: You bet. We'll receive
21 those.

22 LARRY KILLION: I'll go ahead and start.
23 I thank the committee for allowing me to speak today.
24 My name is Larry Killion. Me llamo es Larry Killion,
25 Lorenzo o abuelo. I was born in Amarillo, Texas. I'm

1 a registered voter in Harris County, Texas. Go
2 Rangers.

3 I vote by mail, as you can tell by the
4 color of my hair. I respectfully request the
5 redistricting voter map process, if it progresses,
6 adhere to the following objectives. Subscribe to the
7 democratic principle of one person, one vote, and not
8 one person, one party. And for the benefit of my
9 fellow engineer, Representative Rosenthal, I subscribe
10 to that the redistricting maps must be independently
11 assessed by Data and DemocracyLab or PlanScore, and the
12 review results published for public access and provided
13 the public access to uploadable district plan maps in
14 the geospatial file containing polygon or multipolygon.
15 That's science speak that I know how to read RedAppl
16 and I know how to look at maps.

17 Okay. More important than anything,
18 committee, I'm a grandpa, correct? Abuelo? Doing the
19 right thing is never wrong. I have consulted with my
20 representative and senator in Houston. Quorum breaking
21 is okay. If you've got to go that route to shut down
22 this farce, then do it. My last word is mi voto
23 cuenta. My vote counts.

24 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
25 this witness?

1 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
2 testimony. The witness is excused.

3 The next witness at this microphone is
4 going to be Nikki Chriesman-Green, if you could make
5 your way down.

6 Chair calls Emeri Callaway. I show you
7 registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the
8 Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that
9 correct?

10 EMERI CALLAWAY: Yes, it is correct.

11 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
12 testimony.

13 EMERI CALLAWAY: Good evening, Chair,
14 Vice Chair, members of the committee. My name is Emeri
15 Callaway. I am the Vice President of the Tarrant
16 County Young Democrats and the state democratic
17 executive committee member for Congressional District
18 24. But today I am speaking to you as a resident, a
19 proud resident of Tarrant County. Just weeks ago, we
20 went through the sham and sham mid-sentence
21 redistricting process locally right here in Tarrant
22 County, a process that was rushed, dismissive of the
23 public's concerns, wholly lacking in transparency, and
24 designed to divide, silence, and dilute the voices of
25 majority minority communities.

1 And now here again, we are being
2 subjected to the same immoral agenda at the state level
3 because you are beholden to one man, and that man is
4 Donald Trump, rather than to the people that elected
5 you to represent them. But why? But isn't it that why
6 we, the people, are always up here and end up having to
7 do your jobs for you? Because it is clear to me that a
8 lot of you on this committee tonight do not have the
9 interest of Texans at heart. Redistricting mid-census
10 is not about fair maps or good governance. It's about
11 control. It's about political power. And it is about
12 finding any loophole to rig elections before people can
13 hold their representatives to account.

14 And while you may argue that
15 gerrymandering is legal, let me remind you, just
16 because it is legal does not mean it's right. We live
17 in America. We clearly do not have a perfect history.
18 Slavery was once legal. Segregation was legal. That
19 didn't make them right. If we set this as the bar by
20 which we hold our values, then do we really hold the
21 promises of America up to its highest potentials?

22 Democracy is not a game of who can twist
23 the rules the furthest. It is a sacred trust. The law
24 shouldn't be used -- the law should be a pedestal for
25 justice, not a low bar to crawl under for political

1 expediency, especially when the cost is borne by
2 everyday Texans whose votes are diluted and whose
3 voices will be ignored. Texans deserve fair maps. The
4 people of Tarrant County saw it firsthand. Our county
5 was enraged. Now Texas is enraged, as you can see here
6 tonight. We are tired of being treated like political
7 pawns instead of the very people you are meant to
8 serve.

9 REP. VASUT: Please complete your
10 testimony.

11 EMERI CALLAWAY: We, the people, are
12 watching, and we, the people, will remember this.
13 Thank you.

14 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
15 this witness?

16 Chair hears none. This witness is
17 excused.

18 The next witness at this microphone will
19 be Tayhlor Coleman. Please make your way down, Tayhlor
20 Coleman.

21 I show you registered to testify as
22 Nikki, is it --

23 NIKKI CHRIESMAN-GREEN: It's Chriesman
24 like Christmas with an N.

25 REP. VASUT: Chriesman-Green. Nikki

1 Chriesman-Green, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised
2 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

3 NIKKI CHRIESMAN-GREEN: That is correct.

4 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
5 testimony.

6 NIKKI CHRIESMAN-GREEN: Okay. Greetings,
7 committee members. My name is Nikki Chriesman-Green,
8 and I am a resident of Crowley, Texas in Texas Senate
9 District 10, represented by Senator Phil King, and
10 House District 97, represented by John McQueeney.
11 Hello again.

12 I am testifying today to voice my strong
13 opposition to the proposed mid-decade redistricting
14 plan. As someone who thrives on competition as a
15 lawyer and as an avid fan of sports, I understand the
16 value of fair play. Whether you're building a
17 business, you're coaching a team, or you're coming up
18 with a legal strategy, there's something deeply
19 satisfying about a hard-earned win. But when someone
20 changes the rules in the middle of the game to secure a
21 specific outcome, it cheapens the victory, and it
22 erodes the trust. That is what this redistricting
23 feels like at this point. I'm not opposed to
24 redistricting as a concept when it's done at the right
25 time and with the right data. It's an essential part

1 of our democracy.

2 However, this isn't that. The current
3 maps that were from 2021 are actually still under
4 litigation. They're still under federal review, as
5 you've heard today. Multiple lawsuits challenging the
6 2021 redistricting maps in Texas are still pending,
7 including LULAC v. Abbott, the United States v. Texas,
8 and Gutierrez v. Abbott. Launching a redistricting
9 process now, without any new census data and multiple
10 unresolved lawsuits, raises serious questions about
11 motivation and also fairness.

12 And let's be honest, this isn't just
13 political gerrymandering. This is racial
14 gerrymandering. The targeting of districts like
15 Congressional District 9, 18, 29, and 33, which are
16 built on diverse minority coalitions, is not
17 coincidental. It is a direct attempt to diminish the
18 electoral power of communities of color. And that's
19 not just wrong, it's illegal. As a taxpayer, I don't
20 want my dollars tied up in yet another legal battle
21 defending unconstitutional maps. Texas has been
22 repeatedly found to have violated the Voting Rights
23 Act. We do not need to relive this history. We need
24 leadership that respects the rule of law and the value
25 of every voter's voice.

1 To my elected officials, Representative
2 McQuenney, I ask that you understand that voting has
3 consequences. So the decisions that you're making
4 today while in office affect all of your constituents
5 in your district. And we are watching. And the people
6 of your district will not forget who stood for what and
7 who stood for fairness.

8 REP. VASUT: Please complete your
9 testimony.

10 NIKKI CHRIESMAN-GREEN: So I ask that you
11 do the right thing. And I also want to say today that,
12 as a Christian and a God-fearing woman, there is no
13 weapon informed against God's children that will
14 prosper. So it doesn't matter what y'all do. We will
15 still rise.

16 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
17 this witness?

18 Chair hears none. The witness is
19 excused.

20 Next witness at this microphone will be
21 Joshua Worthey.

22 Chair calls Tayhlor Coleman. I show you
23 registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the
24 Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that
25 correct?

1 TAYHLOR COLEMAN: That's correct.

2 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
3 testimony.

4 TAYHLOR COLEMAN: Thank you. I'm Tayhlor
5 Coleman, a seven-generation Texan here from Chappell
6 Hill, Washington County. That's the birthplace of
7 Texas. Four years ago, I moved into a van to register
8 voters all across this great state, and what I heard
9 most on these travels is that Texans feel like their
10 vote doesn't matter, and the political system is rigged
11 against them.

12 Today, I'm here as a candidate for
13 Congress in the 10th Congressional District that is
14 already heavily gerrymandered from Houston to Austin.
15 And I can empathize with all those Texans who feel
16 unheard, because this is my third time trying to
17 testify in front of this body, from Houston to Austin
18 to now in Arlington. I made it. What's been made
19 clear by the fact that y'all are only holding five
20 hours of testimony across three hearings to reach 30
21 million Texans, when we don't even have any maps to
22 look at, it's clear that y'all aren't actually
23 interested in hearing from us. It lays bare that this
24 redistricting scheme is nothing more than a scam on the
25 voters of Texas to rig our maps, demanded by D.C.

1 politicians who are hungry for more power. Since I
2 know that some of y'all aren't from Texas, I don't know
3 how y'all do things in Kansas, but in Texas, we don't
4 roll over and play dead for politicians in D.C.

5 In closing, I'd like to address the
6 Democrats on this committee. Since Republicans have
7 made it clear that they're just following orders, y'all
8 have the opportunity to show up not just for every
9 Texan, but for every American who deserves equal and
10 fair representation in Washington, D.C. Republicans
11 may be in power, but Texas Democrats are not powerless.
12 You can show up for us by not showing up for this sham
13 redistricting hearing. And I know that that is asking
14 a lot from y'all, and I know that that requires y'all
15 to put a lot on the line. But as Reverend Haynes said
16 earlier, maybe consider that y'all have been elected
17 for a time such as this.

18 REP. VASUT: Please complete your
19 testimony.

20 TAYHLOR COLEMAN: Thank you. So if y'all
21 break quorum and stand up for all of us by walking out,
22 you'll have our support, you'll have our respect,
23 you'll have our donations, and I hope that you all can
24 stand up for all of us and walk out. Thank you.

25 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for

1 this witness?

2 Chair hears none. This witness is
3 excused.

4 Next witness at this microphone will be
5 Price Warwick, Price Warwick.

6 I show you registered to testify as
7 Joshua Worthey, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised
8 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

9 JOSHUA WORTHEY: That is correct.

10 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
11 testimony.

12 JOSHUA WORTHEY: Good afternoon, Mr.
13 Chairman, Vice Chair, and honorable members of the
14 committee. I'm Joshua Worthey, business manager of IBW
15 Local 220, a Navy submarine veteran, a father of three,
16 and lifelong Texan. I also serve on the boards for the
17 Texas AFL-CIO, the Tarrant Labor Council, as well as
18 the North Central Texas Workforce Development Board.

19 I stand in strong opposition to the
20 redistricting push, not because of maps drawn, but
21 because of it in principle. Without a new census, and
22 with the previous map still under judicial review, this
23 creates a bypass of law, designed to manipulate
24 outcomes before the courts have even spoken. That's
25 not strength, it's fear. Redistricting is meant to

1 ensure fair representation, not insulate incumbents
2 through political engineering, yet we see taxpayer
3 dollars being spent on consultants and lobbyists just
4 to protect or gain seats, not to serve communities. Is
5 that good government efficiency, or is that just
6 electioneering, fraud, waste, and abuse?

7 As someone involved in workforce
8 development, I know that this matters. Gerrymandered
9 lines fracture labor markets and distort funding for
10 WIOA programs, dislocated worker support, veteran
11 services, and employer access to talent. When
12 districts serve political convenience instead of
13 community need, working families lose.

14 Let me share a real example. Our local
15 union office is in an area that was plagued with mail
16 theft. Drop boxes ripped out, checks stolen, delivery
17 stopped entirely. Businesses started pulling out of
18 the area. It wasn't until our local congressman
19 intervened to establish a secure mailroom that the
20 issue was resolved. That's what local representation
21 looks like, something this process potentially
22 threatens. And that would be Congressional District
23 33. Additionally, with service members deployed
24 abroad, manipulated district lines make access to civic
25 engagement and voting more difficult for service

1 members. At a time when the VA is already stretched
2 and Social Security Administration is under pressure,
3 this is the wrong direction.

4 Let's talk about accountability. You
5 don't redraw districts because voters are choosing who
6 you want, you do it because you're afraid you might
7 lose otherwise. I wanted to call it, you know, the new
8 DEI, Districts Engineered for Incumbents, but this
9 isn't what this is. This is Districts Engineered for
10 Insurrectionists.

11 REP. VASUT: Please complete your
12 testimony.

13 JOSHUA WORTHEY: Texas deserves better,
14 especially from those who call themselves leaders. So
15 I ask, do we trust voters to choose their leaders, or
16 will we keep moving the goalpost until democracy is
17 nothing but a show? So say no to this power grab, say
18 yes to fairness, trust, and the people of Texas. Thank
19 you.

20 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions?

21 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
22 testimony. The gentlemen is excused.

23 REP. ROSENTHAL: Mr. Chairman?

24 REP. VASUT: Did I miss you, Vice Chair?

25 REP. ROSENTHAL: No, no, no. Question

1 for the Chair.

2 REP. VASUT: Chair yields for question.

3 REP. ROSENTHAL: How much time is left
4 for public testimony?

5 REP. VASUT: Approximately -- I had to do
6 a little bit of an adjustment for our break earlier. I
7 believe we're at three hours and roughly ten minutes
8 right now, so one hour and fifty minutes.

9 REP. ROSENTHAL: So I'm just going to say
10 first, I'm loving hearing from the public, and I would
11 move to extend that time by at least an hour.

12 REP. VASUT: Gentleman is not recognized
13 for that motion at this time.

14 Members, any questions of the witness?
15 If not, thank you, sir. You're excused.

16 The next witness at this microphone will
17 be Carrie Schweitzer. Carrie Schweitzer, if you could
18 make your way down.

19 Is Price Warwick here? Okay. I show you
20 registered to testify as Price Warwick, on behalf of
21 the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
22 Local Union 20 and self, on the Revised Congressional
23 Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

24 PRICE WARWICK: That is correct, sir.

25 REP. VASUT: Please give us your

1 testimony.

2 PRICE WARWICK: Chairman, Vice Chairman,
3 distinguished committee members, I want to thank you
4 for your time. I know that it has been a long couple
5 of weeks, but this committee hearing is very important
6 to hear the voices of Texans. My name is Price Warwick
7 III. I am the principal officer of the International
8 Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 20, a
9 position that I am elected to by the electricians of
10 IBEW North Texas here.

11 Unions are founded on the principle that
12 every worker has a right to have their voice heard in
13 the workplace. As unions, we elect our representatives
14 on our jobs and our officers in our local and national
15 unions. We hold regu- [audio cuts out] rights that are
16 not to be infringed upon, and that the governing body
17 derives its authority from the consent of the governed.
18 I'm paraphrasing the Declaration of Independence here,
19 but I want to point out that the consent cannot be
20 given if the voices of the governed are silenced, which
21 is exactly what the goals of the current redistricting
22 effort are stated to be.

23 I know that you have not officially seen
24 a map, but the message of the stated goals have been
25 broadcast loud and clear. We are facing the same issue

1 with the same stated goals here in Tarrant County and
2 the Commissioner's Court, as you heard earlier from
3 Commissioner Alisa Simmons. These redistricting
4 efforts will ensure that certain voices will be
5 strategically silenced, and as such, their interests
6 will not be represented in government. And a
7 government that does not represent and provide for its
8 citizens is not, by definition, a democracy. That is
9 the definition of tyranny.

10 To circle back to those principles from
11 our Declaration of Independence, strategically
12 silencing the voices of individuals in this state says
13 to the Texans that they are not equal, that their
14 rights can and will be infringed upon, and that their
15 government holds authority over them without their
16 consent. Instead, I ask the members of this committee
17 to do everything in their power to uphold those
18 principles that our nation was founded upon in any
19 redistricting effort that it may take up. Thank you.

20 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
21 this witness?

22 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
23 testimony. The witness is excused.

24 The Chair will show Representative Josey
25 Garcia present.

1 The next witness at this microphone is
2 going to be Stephen Pogue, Stephen Pogue.

3 Chair calls Carrie Schweitzer. I show
4 you registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on
5 the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan? Is that
6 correct?

7 CARRIE SCHWEITZER: Yes.

8 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
9 testimony.

10 CARRIE SCHWEITZER: I'm Carrie
11 Schweitzer. I reside in CD32. I oppose this special
12 session mid-decade redistricting scheme set up by
13 Abbott because Donald Trump told him to. The Texas
14 Legislature does not work for Donald Trump, you work
15 for us. Texan voters, and I for one, am furious about
16 this scheme, which will ultimately cheat us out of our
17 right to choose the candidates who best represent us
18 and our community needs.

19 Ours is a country of laws and norms, and
20 while the redistricting calendar is not written into
21 law, it is the norm to draw upon a decade's worth of
22 census data to develop a clear picture of our state's
23 changing demographics on which to base new maps.
24 Clearly, you are tossing aside what is normal. So what
25 data are you using for these mid-decade maps? Will you

1 share it with the voters? Is it reliable? If not,
2 does it even matter? Because the 2020 census proved
3 that people of color accounted for 95 percent of Texas
4 growth in the 1990s. And still the Texas Senate set
5 two massive new Anglo districts and tried to mash up
6 Houston's 18th and 9th districts, people of color.

7 So my point is that even under normal
8 conditions, Texas maps are typically motivated to crack
9 and pack districts. Our current district maps are
10 still in litigation, as has been said so many times
11 tonight. Prior to preclearance being dropped from the
12 Voting Rights Act, Texas was always under federal
13 oversight because of racist mapmaking. Do not kowtow
14 to Abbott and to Trump. Don't willy-nilly bust up our
15 communities and deny our common concerns. Stand up for
16 the voters of Texas. Protect our voting rights. Do
17 your job.

18 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
19 this witness?

20 Chair hears none. The witness is
21 excused.

22 Next witness at this microphone will be
23 Jeremy Sutka. If you'll please make your way down.

24 Chair calls Stephen Pogue. I show you
25 registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the

1 Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that
2 correct?

3 STEPHEN POGUE: That is correct.

4 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
5 testimony.

6 STEPHEN POGUE: My name is Stephen Pogue.
7 I'm a resident of Mesquite, Texas. I will keep this
8 short. I am opposed to the redistricting before the
9 next census. There is no reason to do this now.
10 Redistricting is being imposed on Texas by weak
11 Republican leadership, which has surrendered to
12 President Trump. Abbott is doing Trump's dirty work
13 here in Texas.

14 You haven't even shown any maps yet. How
15 can we talk about redistricting when we don't even see
16 the maps? It's incredible. Republicans intend to
17 further undermine the voting strength of minority
18 Texans, disenfranchising minorities already harmed by
19 the current gerrymandering districts. If you create
20 new districts, like one I saw online, stretching from
21 East Dallas on into East Texas all the way to the state
22 line to pick up multiple rural counties, that is not a
23 community of interest.

24 And listen to this. Trump's effort to
25 get you guys to protect his majority in Congress is

1 going to fail anyway. Trump will lose his majority in
2 Congress in 2026, regardless of what you do. And so if
3 you proceed with this redistricting, you will have
4 shown yourself to be cowards, bowing down to Trump for
5 nothing. You will debase yourself for nothing.

6 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
7 this witness?

8 Chair hears none. The witness is
9 excused.

10 At this microphone next will be Mary
11 Palomares. If you could make your way down, up to the
12 front.

13 Chair calls Jeremy Sutka. I show you
14 registered to testify, on behalf of the Collin County
15 Democratic Party and yourself, on the Revised
16 Congressional Redistricting Plan? Is that correct?

17 JEREMY SUTKA: That's correct.

18 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
19 testimony.

20 JEREMY SUTKA: I'm Jeremy Sutka, Chair of
21 the Collin County Democratic Party, and I stand before
22 you to condemn an unconstitutional and racist assault
23 on Texas democracy. There is no legal basis for
24 redistricting today. No new census, no court order.
25 This is a raw political power grab. Donald Trump fears

1 losing the House due to his toxic agenda, so he has
2 asked Republicans to rig districts again, stealing
3 power from minority voters to prop up a failing regime.

4 We must follow the rules. We've heard
5 this. This violates our constitution. Article 3,
6 Section 28 of the Texas Constitution permits
7 redistricting only after a census. No census has
8 occurred. Democracy should be representative. But
9 rather than win over voters, Republicans seek to
10 gerrymander an even bigger artificial majority into
11 Texas, where we already have extreme gerrymandering.
12 Democrats only hold 32 percent of the house seats while
13 having 45 percent of the voters. That's
14 gerrymandering.

15 Federal courts have ruled GOP maps
16 intentionally discriminatory numerous times. While the
17 2021 maps are still tied up in court, the GOP is going
18 back to redistrict again. Why? Because Trump demands
19 it. Because he knows his policies can't win fair
20 elections even with already rigged maps. We demand you
21 halt this illegal process now, you reject all new maps,
22 and you put Texas over Trump.

23 Do not be complicit and bow down to this
24 wannabe king. History sees this. Texans see this.
25 Defend our democracy and stop this steal, or you will

1 give voters yet another reason to vote you all out in
2 2026. If anyone in this room, and now I'm talking to
3 the room, is not a precinct chair, get involved with
4 your county party and do the work to vote them out.
5 Thank you.

6 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
7 this witness?

8 Chair hears none. Thank you. The
9 witness is excused.

10 Chair calls Mary Palomares. Is Mary
11 Palomares here? Chair will show Mary Palomares
12 registered to testify, on behalf of Texas HOPE, on the
13 Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan but not
14 testifying.

15 Next two witnesses up for the
16 microphones. On this side, if I could get Donna
17 Wurster to come down, and on this side, Raymond Hamden.
18 Donna Wurster, Raymond Hamden.

19 I show you registered to testify as
20 Raymond Hamden, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised
21 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

22 RAYMOND HAMDEN: Yes, sir. That's
23 correct.

24 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
25 testimony.

1 RAYMOND HAMDEN: Good evening, Chairman
2 and members. Thank you all for being here. Thank you
3 all for having me. I seem to have walked into a lion's
4 den, which is okay. It's how we grow. It's how we
5 learn. When we listen for understanding, it helps us
6 all expand our horizons.

7 I grew up in Fort Hood, specifically the
8 Killeen-Harker Heights area. Friends of all races, all
9 religions, different socioeconomic statuses. Being
10 next to a military base was a true melting pot. It
11 taught us how to focus on commonalities, not
12 differences. And by doing that, it allowed us to
13 thrive regardless of circumstances.

14 Coming here again was a good learning
15 lesson, because my take on it was basically this is
16 about representation. Not every black or brown person
17 is a Democrat, just like not every white person is a
18 Republican. So in order to give everyone a fair say,
19 my thought was this was correcting something that
20 happened that was wrongful in '20 or '21. I like to
21 think that this is not happening to a specific group,
22 but this is an opportunity for all of us. I choose to
23 see it as an opportunity, not Republican versus
24 Democrat, not black versus brown versus white or
25 anything in between.

1 My hope is that we'll have a fresh
2 perspective. We can choose a positive mindset. Again,
3 we can see that this is an opportunity to shake things
4 up and get some of the career politicians out who have
5 been serving for decades with seemingly nothing, no
6 change. I enjoy hearing different perspectives, like I
7 said, and being able to hear just the momentum and the
8 passion from one group of people. When we end up
9 coming together, what could we accomplish? Maybe
10 chipping away at \$37 trillion of debt. So again,
11 looking at this, I think it's an opportunity for us to
12 grow and to expand. I appreciate your time, and I'm
13 happy to answer any questions.

14 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
15 this witness?

16 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
17 testimony. The witness is excused.

18 Next witness at this microphone will be
19 Jordan Wheatley. Please make your way down.

20 I show you registered to testify as Donna
21 Wurster, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised
22 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

23 DONNA WURSTER: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

24 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
25 testimony.

1 DONNA WURSTER: To the members of the
2 Redistricting Committee, I'm a military veteran and a
3 Texas resident of Collin County. I'm submitting this
4 testimony to oppose any redistricting maps that further
5 divide or weaken the voting power of communities like
6 mine. Veterans are part of nearly every zip code in
7 Texas, yet we are often treated like political
8 afterthoughts when lines are drawn without transparency
9 and fairness. Mid-term redistricting, at a minimum, as
10 Federalist 10 reminds us, is the action of men of
11 factious tempers and sinister designs seeking to obtain
12 our suffrages and then betray our interests, and is
13 likely unconstitutional.

14 The U.S. Constitution is clear on two
15 points. Amendment 10 says powers not specifically
16 granted to states and not prohibited are reserved to
17 the states. Article 1, Section 2 clearly states that
18 the actual enumeration will take place every subsequent
19 ten years. This statement is clear and does not leave
20 room for any discretion to the governor or the state
21 legislature. I ask that you not move forward with mid-
22 term redistricting.

23 Should you decide to go forward, please
24 keep communities whole, including communities of
25 veterans, working families, people of color. Stop the

1 practice of packing, cracking, or manipulating
2 districts to serve short-term power plays. The process
3 requires the county line rule. The idea is to keep
4 communities together because they have something in
5 common. At this time of division, should we not be
6 seeking that goal? I urge you to make this process
7 fair, accessible, and grounded in the constitutional
8 rights we swore to defend.

9 Finally, I find it amazing, as a former
10 project manager for 20 years, that we're here talking
11 about a plan that you do not have. What you do have is
12 a request from a misguided sponsor for something none
13 of us want at this time.

14 REP. VASUT: Please complete your
15 testimony.

16 DONNA WURSTER: Thank you.

17 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
18 the witness?

19 Chair hears none. Thank you. The
20 witness is excused.

21 We're going to take one more witness and
22 we'll take a short break.

23 Chair calls Jordan Wheatley. I show you
24 registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the
25 Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that

1 correct?

2 JORDAN WHEATLEY: Yes, sir.

3 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
4 testimony.

5 JORDAN WHEATLEY: I'm Jordan Wheatley, a
6 fourth-grade public school teacher and a candidate for
7 Congress in Texas' 3rd Congressional District. And
8 since many of you setting up there decided you needed
9 to defund public schools, maybe you need a teacher to
10 educate you. I'm someone who grew up in a forgotten
11 place. You know that kind of place where politicians
12 only remembered you when they needed a photo op or a
13 vote? And once they got what they came for, they
14 disappeared. This idea of redistricting is exactly
15 what that feels like.

16 This isn't about fair representation,
17 it's about keeping power. Black, brown, working-class
18 communities, like the one I live in and like the one I
19 work in, keep getting split up, packed in, and pushed
20 aside so the people in charge can keep power, not by
21 earning votes the old-fashioned way, but by cheating.
22 You know, and I get to see -- sorry. Because if this
23 was about facts, you would acknowledge that 90 percent
24 of the growth in Texas has come from communities of
25 color. But instead of drawing maps that represent

1 that, we're drawing maps that erase those voices and
2 silence them and their votes. And that's not a
3 coincidence, that is a strategy drawn up by the
4 Republican Party.

5 And I see the damage up close. My
6 students come from families working two or three jobs
7 just to survive in districts drawn by you all to ignore
8 them. These lines you're drawing don't just shape
9 elections, they shape lives. So let's stop pretending.
10 This isn't redistricting, it's rigging, and people are
11 tired of it. And although you may not hear us in the
12 room during your backroom deals, I promise you, you're
13 sure as hell going to hear us at the ballot box if you
14 proceed with this.

15 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
16 this witness?

17 Chair hears none. Thank you. The
18 witness is excused.

19 At this time, we're going to take our
20 last short break here for our court reporter. The
21 House Select Committee on Congressional Redistricting
22 will stand at ease for five minutes.

23 [Committee stands at ease]

24 REP. VASUT: The time is 9:20. The House
25 Select Committee on Congressional Redistricting will

1 come back to order. If everyone could take their
2 seats, we'll get our next two witnesses up here.

3 All right. For this microphone, if we
4 could get Robyne Kelly to come on down. And for this
5 one, if we could get Danielle Ayers. Danielle Ayers at
6 this one, and Robyne Kelly at this one.

7 I show you registered to testify as
8 Robyne Kelly, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised
9 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

10 ROBYNE KELLY: That's correct.

11 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
12 testimony.

13 ROBYNE KELLY: Okay. Thank you,
14 Chairman, fellow Aggie, and to my representative,
15 Nicole Collier. Thank you. And all the
16 representatives here.

17 I wanted to say, when I first thought
18 about what I'll say tonight in reference to this, the
19 word that came to mind is fear. Fear is the strategy.
20 Power is the goal. Because of the browning of America,
21 those currently in power, by hook or crook, excuse me,
22 I'm sorry, the Governor's plan to withdraw Texas
23 congressional maps is nothing short of a deliberate
24 attempt to silence communities like mine, black,
25 Latino, immigrant, and working-class neighborhoods that

1 have fought too long and too hard just to be heard.

2 Now, I want to just make -- I'm going to
3 make this quick. My mother just texted me and said my
4 aunt was rushed to the hospital, but this is how
5 important this is for me, that I need to say these
6 things. I'm sorry, I'm a little all over the place.

7 REP. VASUT: Take your time.

8 ROBYNE KELLY: The last thing that I'll
9 say is, Barbara Jordan made a quote. What the people
10 want is very simple. They want an America as good as
11 its promise. What the people of Texas want -- I'm
12 going to addendum that and say what the people of Texas
13 want is to have a voice.

14 And then I want to end with a quote from
15 Nelson Mandela. I think this was in regards to when
16 one asked him about Robben Island, how he felt. He
17 said that he learned that courage -- I guess, how did
18 he have the courage to do that? He said that I learned
19 that courage was not the absence of fear, but the
20 triumph over it. So I ask all of you representatives,
21 will you have the courage to triumph? Thank you for
22 your attention.

23 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
24 this witness?

25 Chair hears none. Thank you. The

1 witness is excused.

2 Next up at this microphone is going to be
3 Ian Stephens, if you could make your way down front.

4 Chair calls Danielle Ayers. I show you
5 registered to testify, on behalf of Friendship West
6 Baptist Church and yourself, on the Revised
7 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

8 DANIELLE AYERS: That's correct.

9 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
10 testimony.

11 DANIELLE AYERS: In 1964, Fannie Lou
12 Hamer stood before, sat before, the Credentials
13 Committee of the Democratic National Convention because
14 black voters in Mississippi were being silenced. And
15 she asked the question, she said, I question America.
16 Is this not the land of the free -- [audio cut out] --
17 black, brown, and communities of color. It is a power
18 grab at the center of this race-based political move.

19 Texas, as has been mentioned before, the
20 population growth in the last decade has come from
21 communities of color. The possible maps would dilute
22 the power of black, brown, and other communities of
23 color despite the fact that nearly all Texas population
24 growth over the past decade has come from these
25 communities. Mid-decade redistricting will fail to

1 reflect this reality. They will fracture
2 neighborhoods, split communities, and manipulate
3 boundaries in ways that silence voters who deserve to
4 be heard. The targeted districts will create maps that
5 either pack or crack them, as we've heard before,
6 minimizing Texas' ability to elect candidates of their
7 choice and weakening their influence in Congress, which
8 this is by design. It is fear. Fear of losing power
9 has prompted and promoted this mid-decade redistricting
10 that will result in unfair maps.

11 As committee members entrusted with the
12 responsibility, I urge you not to ignore the
13 demographic realities of this state or the voices of
14 Texans who will be sidelined and subjected to taxation
15 without representation. Something happened because of
16 that once before in this nation. Representation should
17 not be manipulated for political gain. We deserve
18 congressional maps that uplift, not suppress, protect
19 the power of every Texan, not just politically
20 convenient ones. I urge this committee to engage in a
21 process that centers ongoing community input and
22 reflects true voices of Texans. And not to fall prey
23 to the bullying of the Department of Justice and a
24 cantankerous convicted felon in the White House who is
25 attempting to usher in authoritarianism, because the

1 fact remains this is still a government of the people,
2 by the people, and for the people, and we will resist
3 all forms of tyranny.

4 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
5 this witness?

6 The Chair hears none. The witness is
7 excused. Thank you, ma'am.

8 Next up at this microphone is going to be
9 Garry Jones. If you could make your way down front.

10 Is Ian Stephens here? Chair calls Ian
11 Stephens. Chair will show Ian Stephens registered to
12 testify, on behalf of himself, on the Revised
13 Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

14 Next up at this microphone is going to be
15 Jason Thomas. If you could make your way down front to
16 that one.

17 We'll come over to you. Mr. Jones, I
18 show you registered to testify as Gary Jones, on behalf
19 of yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting
20 Plan. Is that correct?

21 GARRY JONES: Yes, that's correct.

22 REP. VASUT: Please begin your testimony.

23 GARRY JONES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
24 Mr. Vice Chairman, and members of the committee for
25 staying so late tonight and coming to Tarrant County.

1 My name is Garry Jones of Fort Worth, and I am here
2 today testifying on behalf of myself on the process.
3 On May 30th of this year, I testified under oath before
4 a panel of three federal judges in El Paso regarding
5 the State's 2021 redistricting process. At the time
6 these maps were drawn, I served as Chief of Staff to
7 then State Senator Beverly Powell and was her lead
8 staffer in redistricting. I witnessed the 2021 process
9 firsthand.

10 Throughout 2021, we were repeatedly told
11 the maps were drawn blind to race. During my testimony
12 in May, attorneys from the State asked me a number of
13 questions under the assumption that the State, the
14 lawmakers, drew the data -- drew the maps in 2021
15 without regard to racial data. Again, drawing the maps
16 blind to race. I've passed around a copy of an email
17 dated September 17th, 2021 from the staff of State
18 Senator Joan Huffman who led the drawing of the Senate
19 and congressional maps. In that email, her
20 redistricting staff explicitly wrote, "We are drafting
21 all maps without regard to racial data." In fact, the
22 email I originally sent, which prompted this response,
23 was said to have been "closed right away" just because
24 the email contained racial data.

25 So fast forward to today. You would

1 imagine my shock and surprise when the Department of
2 Justice informed the State of Texas that the 2021
3 congressional maps must be redrawn citing the
4 district's work created using "race-based
5 considerations." The email I provided today claims
6 that, "all maps were being drawn race blind." So, did
7 the State draw all the maps in 2021 now with racial
8 data as the DOJ claims, or were they drawn blind to
9 race, as was testified under oath and is in the email
10 before you?

11 Regardless, as we sit here today, the act
12 of dismantling districts specifically because of the
13 resulting racial makeup would be blatant act of
14 intentional racial gerrymandering discrimination. The
15 predominant use of race to justify this process will
16 cause all of us to defend illegal maps in court for
17 years to come. The best way to end this and avoid that
18 would be to end this process and focus on the real
19 needs of the state.

20 REP. VASUT: Members, questions for this
21 witness?

22 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
23 testimony.

24 Next up at this microphone is going to be
25 Barbara Applequist. If you could make your way up

1 front.

2 I show you registered to testify as Jason
3 Thomas, on behalf of the NAACP of Arlington, on the
4 Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that
5 correct?

6 JASON THOMAS: That is correct.

7 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
8 testimony.

9 JASON THOMAS: Chair and members of the
10 committee, my name is Jason Thomas, a resident of
11 Tarrant County, a recently-elected trustee of the
12 Mansfield ISD School Board, Director of Road and Bridge
13 Maintenance for the Honorable Commissioner Alisa
14 Simmons, but tonight I proudly speak on behalf of the
15 Arlington, Texas branch of the NAACP where I serve as
16 president.

17 We at the Arlington, Texas NAACP strongly
18 oppose this unnecessary and racially discriminatory
19 attempt at mid-decade redistricting. I'm a child of a
20 father and a mother who were born in 1929 and 1939
21 respectively, both African-American, both raised under
22 Jim Crow laws in Birmingham, Alabama, and both taught
23 me the cost of silence in the face of injustice. My
24 mother's favorite phrase, don't just sit on your stool
25 and do nothing, and that's why I'm here doing

1 something. They lived through poll taxes, literacy
2 tests, and voting districts drawn to suppress their
3 voices. And now, nearly 100 years later, we are
4 witnessing those same tactics resurface under the lie
5 of there being a process, but driven by the same intent
6 to silence voters of color.

7 This redistricting proposal targets
8 districts where black and Latino voters have
9 consistently elected their candidates of choice. This
10 mid-decade redistricting attempt is a clear attempt to
11 weaken the hard-won representation of black and brown
12 Texas voters. Although black, brown, and Asian
13 communities have fueled this state's population and
14 economic growth, we continue to be excluded from the
15 political future we've helped create. This mid-decade
16 redistricting only deepens that injustice, further
17 destroying our rights to fair and adequate
18 representation. To redraw lines mid-decade is a slap
19 in the face of the voters of Texas who did not ask for
20 this. It is also a signal to this country that Texas
21 is ripe for political bullying and will ignore Texas
22 voters.

23 We at the NAACP urge you, honor the
24 legacy of the Voting Rights Act. Respect the voices of
25 the people, and reject this mid-decade redistricting

1 effort that is racially motivated, legally suspect and
2 morally wrong. We also urge you to be the politicians
3 who serve all Texas voters and not just be a political
4 puppet for someone outside of Texas. Say no to this
5 mid-decade redistricting. Thank you.

6 REP. VASUT: Members any questions for
7 this witness?

8 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
9 testimony. Members -- witness is excused.

10 Next up at this microphone is going to be
11 Stacey Brown, if you could make your way up.

12 Chair calls Barbara Applewhite, or
13 Applequist.

14 BARBARA APPLEQUIST: Applequist.

15 REP. VASUT: Applequist. I just
16 defaulted for a second there. I apologize. I show you
17 registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the
18 Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that
19 correct?

20 BARBARA APPLEQUIST: That's correct.

21 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
22 testimony.

23 BARBARA APPLEQUIST: Thank you Mr.
24 Chairman and members of the committee for this
25 opportunity to share my perspective. My name is

1 Barbara Applequist. For the past two years, my husband
2 and I have lived in Congressional District 32 in
3 Dallas, and for the 36 years prior to that, we lived in
4 Arlington in Congressional District 6 which is
5 currently Congressional District 25. I'm a retired
6 Arlington ISD high school social studies teacher.

7 My concern about the current
8 redistricting proposal is based on what I understand to
9 have been the intention of the framers of the U.S.
10 Constitution. As seen in the Federalist Papers, there
11 was intense concern about the dangers of factions or
12 political parties. Their concern was, if we had
13 political parties the strongest ones would control
14 government and the government would not protect equally
15 the rights and interests of all the people. Instead,
16 government would promote the interests of the majority
17 political party.

18 A quick look at the current congressional
19 district map in Texas validates their fears. The
20 current map has 25 of the 38 congressional districts
21 favoring Republicans. That's a 65.8 percent of the
22 districts. That exceeds the percentages of voters who
23 voted Republican in the last two general elections, for
24 an advantage of two to three seats for the Republicans.
25 And yet, here we are with the potential of

1 redistricting, with the express purpose of providing
2 more Republican seats and thus a safer Republican
3 majority in the U.S. Congress.

4 Usually, gerrymandering is prettied up a
5 little bit, but this is blatant, out in the open,
6 partisan gerrymandering. It's appalling. That fear of
7 the founding fathers seems alive and well in Texas. So
8 I ask you, how sacred to you is the principle of one
9 person, one vote? How sacred to you is the right of
10 the people to choose their representatives and not the
11 other way around? How sacred and the need of our
12 protection is a truly representative democracy? Just
13 do the right thing. Thank you.

14 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
15 this witness?

16 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
17 testimony.

18 Chair calls Stacey Brown.

19 Before that, I apologize, this next
20 witness over here on this microphone is going to be
21 Richard Gonzalez, if you can make your way down.

22 Chair calls Stacey Brown. I show you
23 registered to testify, on behalf of the Friendship West
24 Baptist Church and yourself, on the Revised
25 Congressional Redistricting Plan? Is that correct?

1 STACEY BROWN: Yes.

2 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
3 testimony.

4 STACEY BROWN: My name is Reverend Stacey
5 D. Brown, and I am here on behalf of my church, my
6 beautiful three children, my Precinct 4502, which I am
7 the Chair, my sorority Zeta Phi Beta Sorority
8 Incorporated, and my community at large, which stand in
9 objection to this racist, unjust, and downright evil
10 redistricting. In addition to these roles, I am a
11 proud Texas girl through and through. I grew up on the
12 east side of El Paso, was schooled on the campuses of
13 Texas Southern University and Texas A&M, lived in
14 Lubbock, and now reside and lead in Grand Prairie.

15 But most of all, in addition to all these
16 roles, I'm tired. I'm tired of leaders talking out the
17 side of their necks, pretending that they promote
18 Christian values, but really they harm the very ones
19 which our sacred text, the Bible says, to aid and
20 protect. Now this text, I know you're familiar with it
21 because you voted to keep the Ten Commandments in all
22 of the classrooms. So, allow me to give you a brief
23 Bible study. Now Matthew -- allow me to give you a
24 brief Bible study on the text you either willfully
25 skipped or maybe just didn't understand. Okay.

1 So Matthew 6:21 says, "For where your
2 treasure is, there will your heart be also." So rather
3 than devote our treasury and our attention to the over
4 130 people that died needlessly to the flood, here we
5 are. So rather than devote our treasury to the
6 education for our children, my three sitting right
7 here, here we are. So rather than devote our treasury
8 to gun control and laws to protect the citizens of
9 places like El Paso and Allen and the children,
10 children of Santa Fe and Uvalde and all other places,
11 here we are.

12 Now this teaching stands in direct, in
13 direct opposition to the teachings of the man in
14 Galilee, you know, the one you claim to serve and
15 follow. But, you know, if he was here present day, you
16 would likely have him deported. So you sit at those
17 tables, you sit at tables that Jesus would have flipped
18 and participate in activities that he would have
19 rebuked.

20 REP. VASUT: Please complete your
21 testimony.

22 STACEY BROWN: Let me be clear. Isaiah
23 says learn to do right, seek justice, defend the
24 oppressed, take up the cause of the fatherless, and
25 plead the cause of the widow. But obviously, you have

1 no interest in doing that. And I'm going to say this
2 in closing. I leave you with this. Galatians 6:7
3 says, "Be not deceived. God is not mocked, for
4 whatsoever a man reapeth, whatsoever a man soweth, that
5 shall he also reap." You trying to steal five seats
6 and you might just lose ten.

7 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
8 this witness?

9 The Chair hears none. Witness is
10 excused.

11 The next witness at this microphone is
12 going to be Joanna Lardoza, if you could -- Cardoza, I
13 apologize. You can come down here.

14 Chair calls Richard Gonzalez. Is Richard
15 Gonzalez here? Chair will show Richard Gonzalez
16 registered to testify, on behalf of himself, on the
17 Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not
18 testifying.

19 The next witness here is going to be
20 Armand Avila. If you could make your way down front.
21 Armand Avila.

22 Okay. Chair shows you registered to
23 testify as Joanna Cardoza, on behalf of LULAC District
24 2?

25 JOANNA CARDOZA: 21.

1 REP. VASUT: District 21, on the Revised
2 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

3 JOANNA CARDOZA: Yes.

4 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
5 testimony.

6 JOANNA CARDOZA: Good evening. My name
7 is Joanna Cardoza. I am here this, what used to be
8 afternoon, tonight to speak on behalf of the League of
9 United Latin American Citizens of District 21, which
10 covers several North Texas counties. Although most of
11 Texas's population growth in the last decade has come
12 from people of color, some of you are working very hard
13 to silence those same communities. Texas deserves free
14 -- fair maps, not political manipulation. Every vote
15 should have an equal voice in our democracy. This
16 rushed and forced redistricting, sorry, efforts
17 threatens the fundamental principle.

18 If Abbott is going to call a special
19 session, it should not be to advance a political
20 agenda. It should be to solve real problems. Texans
21 deserve the right to choose their candidates of choice
22 that will fight for their values and the critical needs
23 of their communities, not a yes man or woman in D.C.
24 Instead of this manufactured attempt to redistrict
25 congressional maps, these are some real problems that

1 you'll -- let me take my glasses off -- that could be a
2 better use of your time.

3 Workforce housing. Each day in our
4 community, families struggle to keep a roof above their
5 head. How about investing in the next generation of
6 leaders by fully funding public schools instead of
7 defunding them through vouchers and continued approval
8 of charter schools in our community? How about the
9 expansion of Medicaid to address -- Medicaid, Medicare,
10 to address the huge health disparities among
11 communities of color. Disparities such as the high
12 maternal -- high maternal mortality rate and mental
13 health needs in the Tarrant County community. Thank
14 you.

15 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
16 this witness?

17 The Chair hears none. Thank you for your
18 testimony.

19 Chair calls -- well, next one up on this
20 side is going to be Anthony Bridges. If you can make
21 your way down front, Anthony Bridges.

22 Chair calls Armand Avila. Are you here,
23 Armand Avila? I show him registered to testify, on
24 behalf of himself, on the Revised Congressional
25 Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

1 Next up on this microphone down here is
2 going to be Bobby Cole. If you can make your way down
3 front for Bobby Cole here.

4 Chair is going to call Anthony Bridges.

5 ANTHONY BRIDGES: Which side?

6 REP. VASUT: Whichever makes you feel
7 comfortable. What's your name?

8 ANTHONY BRIDGES: Yeah, my name is
9 Anthony Bridges.

10 REP. VASUT: You got it. That's your
11 microphone. Mr. Bridges, I show you registered to
12 testify, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised
13 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

14 ANTHONY BRIDGES: That's correct.

15 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
16 testimony.

17 ANTHONY BRIDGES: My name is Anthony
18 Bridges, a grassroots candidate, and I say you're
19 worried about the wrong people. AIPAC-sponsored
20 Democrats who spread lies to enable the slaughter of
21 the innocent aren't your political enemy. I am. You
22 are worried about arbitrary power and pseudo-
23 opposition, but there are three powers that you can't
24 control: the power of the people, the power of God, and
25 the power of physics.

1 Every action has an equal and opposite
2 reaction. The mass starvation of millions of people
3 will have divine retribution to pay, and God knows who
4 is responsible. God knows who profited off these
5 crimes against humanity, and I look forward to the day
6 we stop seeking political solutions to these
7 atrocities. You want to redraw some lines? Go ahead.
8 Give people another reason to feel disenfranchised and
9 underrepresented. So please, show everyone how rigged
10 the game truly is, so we can start playing a new one.
11 Inshallah.

12 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
13 this witness?

14 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
15 testimony.

16 Bobby Cole?

17 BOBBY COLE: Yes, sir.

18 REP. VASUT: Okay. One sec. At this
19 microphone, if I could get James Collins. James
20 Collins at that microphone.

21 Okay. I show you registered to testify
22 as Bobby Cole, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised
23 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

24 BOBBY COLE: That is correct.

25 REP. VASUT: Please give us your

1 testimony.

2 BOBBY COLE: I'm Bobby Cole. I'm a
3 lifelong Texan. I'm an East Texas farmer and a retired
4 fireman. The Texas Republican Party is corrupt to the
5 core. Its spineless devotion to Donald Trump is on
6 full display, with Greg Abbott being the prize pony.
7 All that this blind loyalty to MAGA has brought to the
8 people of Texas has trampled freedoms, liberties, and
9 rights. Common decency and dignity that Texas used to
10 stand for is gone, replaced with cruelty and division
11 and a way of governance, not for the people, but at the
12 behest of only the ultra-rich and the powerful.

13 We are here today to testify against the
14 naked power grab ordered by Trump himself. This
15 redistricting scheme will disenfranchise hard-working
16 black and Latino communities that deserve to be heard.
17 These new maps will represent the tallest test yet for
18 Texas Republicans in regard to what the national
19 Republicans and Trump want. In trying to turn five
20 blue districts red, you will have to bust them up and
21 dilute the remaining Democratic vote with Republican
22 ones. There is only one way to do this. You have to
23 take your safe Republican districts, dilute them down
24 with Democratic votes, and hope they remain a light
25 pink.

1 If you are Texas -- if you are a Texas
2 Republican, this makes you nervous. Change is coming.
3 Hard-working Texans feel it. Democrats feel it. And
4 so do Republicans who are desperate to rig this system
5 one more time to hold on to power.

6 I'm just a common, hard-working Texan who
7 cares about his family and the legacy I will leave
8 them. But I bring forth a message from the people of
9 Texas. Along with change, accountability is coming for
10 Greg Abbott and Texas Republicans. The people of Texas
11 have weighed and measured your 30 years of governance,
12 and it is found to be lacking. Your malfeasance --

13 REP. VASUT: Please complete your
14 testimony.

15 BOBBY COLE: -- misfeasance, and non-
16 feasance is going to come home to roost. It doesn't
17 matter what maps you draw or how corrupt your reasoning
18 is to justify it. So do your worst because that's what
19 you're best at. A reckoning is coming, and the people
20 of Texas will render it on November 3rd, 2026. Thank
21 you.

22 REP. VASUT: Dean Thompson, for what
23 purpose? Chair recognizes Dean Thompson to question
24 the witness.

25 REP. THOMPSON: How would this

1 redistricting impact you as a farmer?

2 BOBBY COLE: What's that?

3 REP. THOMPSON: How would this

4 redistricting impact you as a farmer?

5 BOBBY COLE: Well, I mean, it really
6 depends. I'm in House District 5, and so it just
7 depends. I mean, like if you if you take in the
8 cities, we're going to have different needs from the
9 rule to the city. So, I mean, it would be better if
10 our district, our House districts were drawn more to
11 represent the common interest of the people in that
12 district.

13 REP. THOMPSON: Thank you.

14 REP. VASUT: Members, any other
15 questions?

16 Hearing none, thank you for your
17 testimony.

18 Chair calls James Collins. Is James
19 Collins here? Chair will show James Collins registered
20 to testify, on behalf of himself, on the Revised
21 Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

22 Next two, if they could come up. Kristen
23 Harden-Sigler and James Sigler. I apologize if that's
24 Sigler. I'll give them a moment to make their way
25 over. Kristen Harden-Sigler, James Sigler. Chair is

1 going to give them one more time. Kristen Harden-
2 Sigler, James Sigler. Hearing no response, Chair will
3 show Kristen Harden-Sigler registered to testify, on
4 behalf of herself, on a Revised Congressional
5 Redistricting Plan, but not testifying. Chair will
6 show James Sigler registered to testify, on behalf of
7 himself, on a Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan,
8 but not testifying.

9 Next two witnesses, if they could make
10 their way up. David Yaqubian and Crystal Chism.

11 I show you registered to testify as
12 Crystal Chism, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised
13 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

14 CRYSTAL CHISM: I'd like to make an
15 amendment. I'd like to also speak on behalf of the
16 Texas Coalition of Black Democrats for Dallas County.

17 REP. VASUT: So give me that one more
18 time. Texas?

19 CRYSTAL CHISM: Coalition Black Democrats
20 for Dallas County.

21 REP. VASUT: Do I have your permission to
22 modify your witness affirmation form accordingly?

23 CRYSTAL CHISM: Yes, sir, you do.

24 REP. VASUT: Okay. And I show you
25 registered to testify as Crystal Chism, on behalf of

1 the Texas Coalition of Black Democrats of Dallas County
2 and yourself, on a Revised Congressional Redistricting
3 Plan. Is that correct?

4 CRYSTAL CHISM: Yes.

5 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
6 testimony.

7 CRYSTAL CHISM: Thank you so much, and
8 thank you all for coming to the Dallas-Fort Worth area
9 for Arlington for this hearing. I serve also as a
10 public servant in the beautiful city of DeSoto, which
11 is the blackest city in Dallas County. As I mentioned
12 also, I am the Chair for the Texas Coalition for Black
13 Democrats in Dallas County, and I am a combat veteran
14 as well.

15 And I will be honest, when I'm -- I'm
16 saying this not just as an elected official but also as
17 a combat veteran. You know, I've served two tours in
18 Iraq. And I think that when I signed up to go fight
19 for terrorism in early 2000, 2001, I thought, okay,
20 terrorism, I can see it. It's the 9/11. It's the
21 burning of the buildings. But when I came home, I
22 never thought that I'd have to fight for political
23 terrorism that's happening right in our community by
24 the disenfranchisement of our communities and our black
25 and brown communities.

1 I appreciate a forum to have people speak
2 their minds. I think it's important. It's a part of
3 democracy, right? But I'll be honest with you. I've
4 been sitting here for six hours. I put my card in an
5 hour and a half before your minutes, your meeting
6 started, and I'm looking around in this room, and I
7 don't think you're going to be able to hear everybody.
8 And that's not democracy. And so I ask you as leaders
9 of this committee that you make changes for the rest of
10 the hearing that you have and let all of us have our
11 voice and time with you because we sacrificed our time,
12 we waited in parking and we should be heard as well.

13 Not to mention, there are no maps, there
14 are no drafts, as we have heard. We don't even know
15 what these lines are going to be withdrawn at, but yet
16 we're being asked to get input on something that we
17 don't even know. But here's what I do know as a fact.
18 Texas is home to the highest population of black
19 people, the highest population of black people, yet our
20 Texas Senate, our House, and as well as our
21 congressional districts don't look nothing like that.
22 Right? And so, whatever you're going to give me, I
23 know that already we're behind the curve.

24 And so, if you had not guessed, I'm
25 totally against any type of redistricting. This

1 doesn't make sense at all. And if I could quote --
2 because I'm in Congressional District 30, the late
3 Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson. She said it is
4 really puzzling why a nation of democracy does not want
5 to see African-Americans vote. You begin to wonder,
6 what is the mentality of those people that have to
7 continue to try to take us back? Here's what I want
8 you to know if nobody else has said it.

9 REP. VASUT: Please complete your
10 testimony.

11 CRYSTAL CHISM: We're not going back.
12 For those of you all who are Democrats sitting in this
13 seat, I need to know that you got some soldiers ready
14 to fight. You got some soldiers ready to raise money.
15 You have some soldiers ready to organize and mobilize.
16 Don't be fearful. Don't sit on your back. Don't let
17 money be the reason why you don't -- [audio cut out].
18 Yes, and I did it at the age of 18 and again at 21.

19 REP. ROSENTHAL: You got it.

20 CRYSTAL CHISM: Thank you.

21 REP. VASUT: Members, any other questions
22 to this witness? Chair recognizes Representative
23 Garcia to question the witness.

24 REP. GARCIA: Look, you're just trying --
25 thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ma'am, I just wanted to say

1 as a fellow combat veteran, thank you so much for your
2 service. I know things might not be understandable
3 right now, but you know what our mission is, and our
4 mission has never wavered. Thank you.

5 CRYSTAL CHISM: I got you. Thank you.

6 REP. VASUT: Members, any other
7 questions?

8 The Chair hears none. The witness is
9 excused.

10 Next up at this microphone, if I can get
11 Tracy Scott. Tracy Scott.

12 REP. VASUT: Chair calls David Yaqubian.

13 DAVID YAQUBIAN: Yaqubian.

14 REP. VASUT: Yes. And on behalf of
15 yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting
16 Plan. Is that correct?

17 DAVID YAQUBIAN: Yes.

18 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
19 testimony.

20 DAVID YAQUBIAN: Hi, I'm David Yaqubian.
21 First, let me share with you words of a renowned Texas
22 politician of old. Any fellow who will cheat for you
23 will cheat against you. Any man who will deceive the
24 voters during a political campaign will deceive them
25 after he is elected. Does this sound familiar? Why

1 are we being proposed a mid-decade redistricting?

2 The president, our governor, lieutenant
3 governor, our attorney general, they are all attempting
4 to act like thieves in broad daylight. They have no
5 moral, ethical inhibition from stealing my vote from me
6 and stealing votes away from my neighbors. Remember,
7 if your leadership will cheat for you, they will cheat
8 against you. I oppose this corrupt, bad-faith attempt
9 to redistrict and diminish the voting power of me, my
10 neighbors, and family.

11 Texas has been a lifelong home, and I've
12 never, never seen such peak corruption as I see now.
13 I'll end with another quote from a legendary Texan.
14 Every American citizen must have an equal right to
15 vote. There is no reason which can excuse the denial
16 of that right. There is no duty which weighs more
17 heavily on us than the duty we have to ensure that
18 right. Tread very, very carefully. Every Texan is
19 watching.

20 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
21 this witness?

22 Chair hears none. The gentlemen is
23 excused. Thank you.

24 Next up at this microphone, if I can get
25 Ricardo Estrada.

1 Chair calls Tracy Scott. Is Tracy Scott
2 present? Chair shows Tracy Scott registered to testify
3 on behalf of, I see Outreach and self, on the Revised
4 Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

5 Next up at this microphone, if I could
6 have Robert Vann come down. Robert Vann.

7 Is Ricardo Estrada here? Ricardo
8 Estrada. Chair will show Ricardo -- okay. Chair will
9 show him registered to testify, on behalf of himself,
10 on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but
11 not testifying.

12 Chair will call Robert Vann. Is Robert
13 Vann here? Robert Vann. Chair will show Robert Vann
14 registered to testify, on behalf of himself, on the
15 Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not
16 testifying.

17 Chair will call Kay Parr. Kay Parr. Is
18 Ms. Parr here? Please come on down to this microphone.
19 We'll wait for you, ma'am.

20 And then if I could get Larry Davis at
21 this microphone on our other side. Larry Davis. And
22 if not Larry Davis, then Tevita Uhatafe at that
23 microphone. Okay.

24 I show you registered to testify as Kay
25 Parr, on behalf of yourself and the Texas Democratic

1 County Chairs Association and the Parker County
2 Democratic Party. Is that -- on the Revised
3 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

4 KAY KARPFF: No, I think you've got the
5 wrong person here.

6 REP. VASUT: Okay. What's your name,
7 ma'am?

8 KAY KARPFF: Kay Karpf.

9 REP. VASUT: Kay Parr?

10 KAY KARPFF: Karpf with a K.

11 REP. VASUT: I have Kay Parr with a P.

12 KAY KARPFF: Oh.

13 REP. VASUT: Now, the odds of that are
14 very, very low, but it happens. Can we find her
15 registration? Well, let me ask this. Is Kay Parr with
16 a P, P-A-R-R, here? Okay. I show her registered to
17 testify as Kay Parr, with a P, on behalf of herself,
18 the Texas Democratic County Chairs Association, the
19 Parker County Democratic Party on Revised Congressional
20 Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

21 Now, Ms. Karpf, if you'll just stay right
22 there, we'll do everything we can to find your witness
23 registration. We're going to let you testify after
24 you've made that trip down. So if you just wait right
25 there, we're going to find it.

1 Okay. Is Larry Davis here? Okay. Chair
2 calls Larry Davis. I show Larry Davis registered to
3 testify, on behalf of himself, on the Revised
4 Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

5 REP. ROSENTHAL: Mr. Chairman?

6 REP. VASUT: Mr. Vice Chair, for what
7 purpose?

8 REP. ROSENTHAL: Can we pause so I can
9 ask a question of the Chair, please?

10 REP. VASUT: Absolutely. Chair will
11 pause the timer. Chair will yield for question from
12 the Vice Chair.

13 REP. ROSENTHAL: Thank you. And also, to
14 allow a minute to find this witness.

15 REP. VASUT: Absolutely. You bet. We
16 have another stack we're going to go through.

17 REP. ROSENTHAL: I'd like to reiterate
18 the request that the committee call for and receive the
19 complete transcript of the redistricting trial that
20 just happened in El Paso. Can we get that information
21 distributed to the entire committee, please?

22 REP. VASUT: I wasn't aware of that
23 request, but I'm happy to make that request and get
24 that for you.

25 REP. ROSENTHAL: Very good. Thank you so

1 much.

2 REP. VASUT: So we will -- we'll make a
3 note of that for staff to request a transcript of that
4 and provide that to the members of the committee.
5 Members, any other questions as we -- okay.

6 Just wait right there. You own that
7 microphone. Do not let anybody take that microphone
8 from you.

9 Is Tevita Uhatafe here? Okay. Chair
10 calls Tevita Uhatafe. Show registered to testify, on
11 behalf of the Tarrant County Central Labor Council, on
12 the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not
13 testifying.

14 Okay. I'm going to call up -- all right.
15 Ms. Karr, this is what we're going to do. You did
16 register to testify?

17 KAY KARR: Yeah, Katherine (phonetic).

18 REP. VASUT: Okay. I'll take you at your
19 word. We're going to bring you another form. Do we
20 have your permission, once we do this form, to delete
21 your duplicate registration?

22 KAY KARR: Sure.

23 REP. VASUT: God bless you. All right.
24 He's going to come and do that for you. In the
25 meantime, we're going to call up Kelly Dennison. Is

1 Kelly Dennison here? Chair will show Kelly Dennison
2 registered to testify, on behalf of herself, on the
3 Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not
4 testifying.

5 Chair calls Bruce Richardson. Is Bruce
6 Richardson here? Chair will show Bruce Richardson
7 registered to testify, on behalf of himself, on the
8 Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not
9 testifying.

10 Chair calls Juan Christman. Is Juan
11 Christman here? Chair will show Juan Christman
12 registered to testify, on behalf of himself, on the
13 Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not
14 testifying.

15 Chair calls Efrin Carrion. Efrin
16 Carrion. Chair will show Efrin Carrion registered to
17 testify, on behalf of himself, on the Revised
18 Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

19 Chair calls Paul James. All right.
20 Thank you, Paul. We were waiting on you, Paul. Next
21 after Paul will be Dr. Lyndia Thomas. If she is here,
22 just be ready. We'll keep going.

23 All right. I show you registered to
24 testify as Paul James, on behalf of yourself, on the
25 Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that

1 correct?

2 PAUL JAMES: Yes, sir.

3 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
4 testimony.

5 PAUL JAMES: I want to thank you all for
6 letting me present this. It almost felt like I was
7 sitting there waiting for jury duty when you're back
8 there. I live on the south side of Dallas, and I'm
9 proud to be represented by my Congresswoman, Jasmine
10 Crockett. I wondered what it would be like to speak to
11 a Republican and what they would say to voters during a
12 MAGA gerrymandering of Texas.

13 If I was a fire -- if you were a
14 firefighter, please get to my house quickly, save my
15 house, and save my family. But if you're a Democrat or
16 an Independent, we're going to take -- we are going to
17 water down your vote faster than Donald Trump puts on
18 spray tan. If you're a teacher, please teach our
19 children so they will grow up and be productive and
20 smart. But if you're a Democrat or an Independent, we
21 will take your vote, like a banned book, off the
22 library shelf. If you're a policeman, please keep our
23 towns and families safe. But if you're a Democrat or
24 an Independent, we want your voice to be silenced. If
25 you're a nurse, please take care of us when we are

1 hospitalized, pay attention to our condition. But if
2 you're a Democrat or an Independent, we want to stifle
3 your rights.

4 What is perplexing to those of us out on
5 the outside of politics is that we don't understand why
6 some who worked so hard, like all of you, to get
7 elected and serve the people of Texas, but now have to
8 please one governor who has to -- who has to serve the
9 orange felon in the White House. Some Republicans have
10 spoken out about gerrymandering. One said it has
11 completely broken our political system. That was Newt
12 Gingrich. One called gerrymandering anti-democratic
13 and un-American. That was Ronald Reagan. In closing,
14 I oppose redistricting in order to water down some
15 Texans' votes. It should not be that Texans are
16 cheating Texans. It's bad enough that we have
17 cheating, fraud, and even worse come out of the White
18 House. Thank you.

19 REP. VASUT: Thank you. Members, any
20 questions for this witness?

21 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
22 testimony.

23 All right. I show you registered to
24 testify as Kay -- is it Karpf?

25 KAY KARPf: Right.

1 REP. VASUT: Okay. On behalf of
2 yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting
3 Plan. Is that correct?

4 KAY KARPFF: Yes, yes.

5 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
6 testimony.

7 KAY KARPFF: Yes. I've lived in Texas
8 most of my life, more than 50 years, and it's good to
9 see my District 105 Texas House Rep, Terry Meza.
10 Anyway, it is Governor Abbott's job to work for all
11 Texans, not mainly for big donors, a political party,
12 or a president. By placing a -- by placing a strictly
13 political issue before the higher-priority flood
14 disaster and Texan safety, the Governor is virtually
15 spitting in the faces of the people he is mandated to
16 serve.

17 Before the 2020 census, my congressional
18 district was 24, a largely urban/suburban area,
19 geographically centrally close, mainly covering Dallas
20 and Tarrant Counties. When legislators redrew the
21 district in 2021 and changed my home from District 24
22 to District 6, they extended it far beyond its original
23 area. Boundaries now stretch from Irving to Mansfield
24 to Palestine, so driving within our district can now
25 exceed three hours and be hundreds of miles. And the

1 issues of interest of Irving couldn't differ more from
2 much of our new district's added territory, very rural.
3 Irving has a rapidly-growing population that includes a
4 well-established school district, plus massively
5 escalating land development in Las Colinas, home of the
6 Toyota Music Factory; whereas part of new territory
7 added in District 6 was the Wells School District,
8 which was only recognized as recently as 2010 by the
9 Texas Education Agency.

10 Congressman Ellzey, District 6 Rep, isn't
11 someone we typically see in our section of Texas. Is
12 this another example of our state government
13 legislators wanting to redraw our district boundaries
14 without concern for all their constituents? And of our
15 federal house representative not inclined to represent
16 all of his constituents? It's easy to conclude that
17 our legislators have no appetite to improve the
18 district boundaries so as to represent all Texans.
19 Therefore, it's even more egregious to solely address
20 the politicized issue of redistricting before that of
21 flood relief and flood infrastructure.

22 REP. VASUT: Please complete your
23 testimony.

24 KAY KARPFF: Okay. I'm about at the end.
25 Our Texas legislators showing that they don't want to

1 accept responsibility for anything related to
2 devastating events where people are still missing.
3 It's not as if Texas lacks a surplus of funds, or would
4 legislators rather hoard money and deny productive
5 action, action that will vastly benefit Texans' safety
6 and wellbeing now and in the future? Thank you.

7 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
8 this witness?

9 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
10 testimony.

11 Next up at this microphone is going to be
12 David Griggs, if you can make your way down front for
13 that microphone.

14 I show you registered to testify as Dr.
15 Lyndia Thomas, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised
16 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

17 DR. LYNDIA THOMAS: Yes.

18 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
19 testimony.

20 DR. LYNDIA THOMAS: Thank you for
21 allowing me to speak. And I am with House District 95,
22 Nicole Collier, as well as Congressman Marc Veasey in
23 our 33, in our Congressional District 33. And I'm here
24 because I am appalled. I'm really, really upset at
25 what is going on in our country. And it all started on

1 January 6th when No. 47, and he was No. 45 then, tried
2 to steal our country.

3 And we as people allowed this same
4 individual, this convicted felon, to take control of
5 what we take so precious as our White House. He's
6 throwing out there when he's mandating you to
7 redistrict. His first trial was for the United States
8 Capitol. He wanted to see how far he could go with
9 that. He succeeded. He's throwing this into Texas
10 where we say, don't mess with Texas.

11 He's trying you. Do not allow this man
12 to destroy Texas. You have a voice. Someone said it
13 earlier. Don't be -- don't be confounded about money
14 because money is not the issue here. If you want to
15 get reelected, you need to please the people, not No.
16 47, because No. 47's time is limited. The people are
17 going to be tired of being sick and tired of whether
18 you're a Democrat, whether you're a Republican, whether
19 you're liberal. You work for the people. When you
20 lose focus of the fact that you work for the people,
21 you can start counting the days that you're going to be
22 in office.

23 So I'm here to say I am against
24 redistricting. First of all, everybody has a voice
25 whether you agree with them or not. It doesn't matter

1 where you came from, because we're all aliens in this
2 country. Nobody was really here but the Indians. So
3 I'm asking you all, whether you're Republican or
4 Democrat or whatever, do not support this. Do not
5 support this redistricting. It's wrong. And like my
6 mom used to say, 400 wrongs don't make a right.

7 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
8 this witness?

9 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
10 testimony. You're excused.

11 Next up at this microphone over here, if
12 we could get Nicole Raphiel. Nicole Raphiel, if you
13 could come down there.

14 All right. I show you registered to
15 testify as David Griggs, on behalf of yourself, on the
16 Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that
17 correct?

18 DAVID GRIGGS: That's correct, Mr.
19 Chairman.

20 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
21 testimony.

22 DAVID GRIGGS: Good evening, Mr.
23 Chairman, members of the committee. My name is David
24 Griggs from Dallas County. I'm an attorney currently
25 in private practice, a former civil prosecutor with the

1 FTC, a longtime adjunct professor of political science
2 at Dallas College, and currently an adjunct professor
3 of election law at the University of North Texas Dallas
4 College of Law. Today, I am here representing myself.

5 It is from my experience in teaching
6 election law specifically that I have studied the
7 concepts of partisan gerrymandering and race and
8 redistricting. And it's from that that I draw my
9 comments today, opposing this mid-decade redistricting
10 effort. I agree with the public comments of many of my
11 fellow Texans who previously testified regarding the
12 ill-advised nature of this process. But the main point
13 of why I'm here tonight is to reiterate some of the
14 comments and testimony you've already received from
15 other law professors and legal experts, that the
16 Department of Justice letter is a deliberate
17 misrepresentation of case law governing these issues
18 and should not serve as any kind of legitimate
19 justification for the reconsideration of district
20 lines.

21 There are three cases. Most of you have
22 read this letter, three cases that are listed. First
23 is *Alla v. Michigan*. This was a case that upheld the
24 applicability of Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act
25 when Sections 4 and 5 were decimated (phonetic) by the

1 Shelby County v. Holder case in 2012. It was widely
2 hailed as a positive case for the future of the VRA and
3 its enforcement of Section 2. However, DOJ lawyers
4 distorted dicta in a concurrence by Justice Kavanaugh
5 to twist it around to support their concept of race-
6 based gerrymandering, and even said that it would
7 require a compelling state interest for Texas to keep
8 those districts. This is an absurd argument and a
9 serious misreading of the majority opinion.

10 The second case was Petteway v. Galveston
11 County. That was a Fifth Circuit case where the Court
12 expounded on coalition districts and what it takes to
13 make a successful claim to challenge them. It does not
14 have anything to do with the unconstitutionality of a
15 gerrymander. It merely asserts that the VRA in this
16 circuit only, the Eleventh -- the Fifth Circuit --
17 excuse me, yeah, the Fifth Circuit, does not allow
18 individual racial or ethnic groups to join together to
19 claim that the maps dilute their votes. The circuits
20 are split on that. It does not say that coalition
21 districts are not allowed.

22 And finally, the last case, Bartlett,
23 also misrepresents --

24 REP. VASUT: Mr. Griggs, one second.

25 DAVID GRIGGS: Do you have a question?

1 REP. ROSENTHAL: Sir, your time has
2 expired, but I have a question for you.

3 DAVID GRIGGS: All right.

4 REP. VASUT: I think he wants to ask you
5 about Bartlett.

6 REP. ROSENTHAL: I'm actually going to
7 ask you about the last case first.

8 REP. VASUT: Okay. Now you can answer.

9 DAVID GRIGGS: Mr. Chairman, may I answer
10 the question?

11 REP. VASUT: I think -- you can only
12 answer, but he's going to --

13 REP. ROSENTHAL: So I'm asking you the
14 question, to please explain the last case. And then
15 I'm --

16 DAVID GRIGGS: All right. Thank you, Mr.
17 Vice Chairman. The Bartlett case determined that a
18 minority group must meet a numerical test of more than
19 50 percent of the population to allow what was, in that
20 case, a crossover district. That's not what you're
21 here to consider, and that case doesn't apply. It
22 doesn't consider the permissibility of coalition
23 districts or crossover districts. And it even states
24 the following. It states that states who wish to draw
25 a crossover, or in this case coalition districts, are

1 free to do so where there are no other prohibitions.
2 So the case was completely misrepresented. And my
3 whole point is that this -- if this was the
4 justification for the governor's call, it is totally
5 bogus, and it has absolutely no purpose here. And I
6 think you all should find another justification because
7 it's not this. Thank you.

8 REP. ROSENTHAL: I do have one more
9 question if you don't mind.

10 DAVID GRIGGS: Sure.

11 REP. ROSENTHAL: I understand -- I
12 believe that the DOJ letter, besides misrepresenting
13 the law -- and remember I'm a lawyer -- I'm an
14 engineer, not a lawyer, so I need advice. But it is my
15 understanding that what they are asking us to do is
16 actually illegal.

17 DAVID GRIGGS: That is correct.

18 REP. ROSENTHAL: Can you please help me
19 understand that?

20 DAVID GRIGGS: Sure. Well, the Supreme
21 Court, by the way, has not weighed in on the Petteway
22 case. You've got to understand that. It's only in the
23 Fifth Circuit, and the circuits are split. And so if
24 you look at all of case law, it is not likely that the
25 Supreme Court is going to take the Petteway, which is

1 really what they are putting here -- and that's the
2 only reason they wrote it, is because there was a 2024
3 decision that was a circuit decision. It wasn't even
4 the entire country. And they're assuming that the
5 Supreme Court is going to take that. Well, even if
6 they do, there is other case law which says that you
7 cannot do this. You cannot take districts that were
8 drawn that were race blind and then use a race-based
9 theory to undo them. Even our Attorney General has
10 testified that it was legal.

11 REP. ROSENTHAL: And actually disputed.
12 So you're -- right. I got it. So the Attorney General
13 has backed up this claim. But let me just boil this
14 down into something that my feeble brain can --

15 DAVID GRIGGS: And, of course, he would
16 only tell you the truth. You know, you've got to
17 realize that.

18 REP. ROSENTHAL: The DOJ letter claims
19 that districts were drawn on the basis of race, which
20 is untrue according to the people that drew them in the
21 first place. And the DOJ letter then says, on the
22 basis of race, you are to go after these particular
23 districts, which is unconstitutional. Help me make
24 that make sense.

25 DAVID GRIGGS: The whole premise -- the

1 whole premise of this letter is wrong. And it was
2 written by, probably someone who had not passed the
3 bar. And if you -- if you remember Professor Katz
4 testified to you all that if she had graded a paper
5 that was written anything like this, she would have
6 given that student a very bad grade.

7 REP. ROSENTHAL: Thank you for your
8 testimony.

9 DAVID GRIGGS: And as a former civil
10 prosecutor for the Federal Trade Commission, and
11 keeping my interest in doing great work for the federal
12 government, it is an embarrassment to read something
13 like this. And it should not be.

14 REP. ROSENTHAL: Thank you for bringing
15 the expertise.

16 DAVID GRIGGS: Thank you, Mr. Vice
17 Chairman.

18 REP. VASUT: Members, any other questions
19 for this witness?

20 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
21 testimony.

22 At this microphone, can I get Kendyll
23 Locke? Kendyll Locke?

24 I show you registered to testify as
25 Nicole Raphiel, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised

1 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

2 NICOLE RAPHIEL: That's correct.

3 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
4 testimony.

5 NICOLE RAPHIEL: Sure thing. God bless
6 you all. Thank you all for being here in the city of
7 Arlington, North Texas. We appreciate that. I
8 appreciate that. As a former elected official in the
9 City of DeSoto, I was located -- or I live, my city,
10 and I live in District 109 where freshman Aicha Davis
11 is my state rep. I appreciate that. As well as I live
12 in Congressional District 30 where Jasmine Crockett is
13 my Congresswoman. And I appreciate that.

14 I want to -- I'm coming before you today
15 concerned about the Governor's July 9th directive to
16 pursue the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan
17 mid-decade. As someone who has worked closely with
18 residents, community leaders, and city staff, I've seen
19 firsthand how policy and representation directly
20 impacts people's lives, particularly as the 2020 Chair
21 for the City of DeSoto and seeing how redistricting and
22 its purposes really do affect people's lives. Now, in
23 District 30, it is a strong home for those who are
24 civically engaged, black and Latino populations who
25 live in our community. It's a community that's built

1 in faith, generational wealth, and advocacy for fair
2 housing, education, healthcare access, voting rights.
3 Any efforts to redraw its lines without any clear
4 justification or public input is both reckless and
5 deeply disrespectful for those of us who really care
6 about our community, care about law, care about being a
7 resident here in Texas.

8 What's most alarming is the lack of
9 transparency. And as of today, the public has not been
10 shown any purpose maps -- proposed maps. The reasons
11 behind the redistricting remain vague. You've heard
12 all the things, and I agree with every single
13 individual who's come here today. But what I want to
14 be clear about is that in District 30 it has earned its
15 voice, particularly as it was carved out specifically,
16 I mean, initially by our late and great Eddie Bernice
17 Johnson. I want you to know that we won't to accept
18 being silenced through political maneuvering. We want
19 to stand firm, and we will stand firm in resolving this
20 issue, doing whatever we need to do to make certain
21 that we're heard, that you hear us.

22 And I want to strongly urge you to halt
23 the process until the public is properly informed, the
24 maps are released, the interests of the communities of
25 colors like ours in DeSoto and across the southern

1 Dallas County are fully protected, fully protected,
2 fully protected. But for you as elected leaders, you
3 have a tall order. Here in the State of Texas, it
4 seems like there is a different voice for those of you
5 who are small city versus bigger city. And I want to
6 give you a few words that might help you.

7 REP. VASUT: Please finish your
8 testimony.

9 NICOLE RAPHIEL: Thank you. Don't tread
10 on us. So when you go and share this information with
11 others, don't tread on us. That's a racist trope that
12 I've heard in the past, but it's something that might
13 mean something for the smaller, the smaller cities or
14 representatives who represent smaller areas in Texas.
15 One of the things that I fear is that small, not small,
16 but small-city representatives versus big-city
17 representatives have a bigger voice in our city, and
18 that can't continue. That cannot continue. So, thank
19 you for listening.

20 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
21 this witness?

22 The Chair hears none. Thank you for your
23 testimony.

24 And then at this microphone, if I could
25 get Andy Lauiolette. Okay. Apologize if I said that

1 wrong.

2 Chair calls Kendyll Locke. I show you
3 registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on the
4 Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that
5 correct?

6 KENDYLL LOCKE: On behalf of myself and
7 Congresswoman Jasmine Crockett.

8 REP. VASUT: Okay. Technically, since
9 she is an individual -- I don't know if he can testify
10 on behalf of an individual. Technically, under the
11 rules, I think it's only --

12 REP. ROSENTHAL: Can he testify on behalf
13 of the Congresswoman's office?

14 REP. VASUT: Yeah, okay, okay. The
15 committee has conferred and agreed. Now, can I change
16 your registration to say that you're testifying on
17 behalf of the Office of Congressman -- Congresswoman
18 Crockett?

19 KENDYLL LOCKE: Yes.

20 REP. ROSENTHAL: Engineer playing with
21 law.

22 REP. VASUT: Okay. So you registered to
23 testify as Kendyll Locke, on behalf of the Office of
24 Congresswoman Crockett and yourself, on the Revised
25 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

1 KENDYLL LOCKE: Yes.

2 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
3 testimony.

4 KENDYLL LOCKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
5 Mr. Vice Chair, members of the -- [audio cuts out] --
6 while she couldn't be here due to other official
7 commitments, I thought it's best or would be best that
8 I pick up where she left off. Let's call this what it
9 is, a power grab. This proposed redistricting of
10 congressional districts across the state isn't about
11 fairness. It's not about equal representation. It's
12 not even about righting the wrongs of this state and
13 its state legislature when it comes to giving people of
14 color in this state a voice. It's about securing
15 political advantage at the direct expense of
16 historically underrepresented communities.

17 Specifically with regard to Texas 30,
18 it's a district that has long been a stronghold for
19 communities of common interest. Black, Hispanic, AAPI,
20 working-class families across South and West Dallas,
21 other cities like DeSoto, Duncanville, Lancaster, Glenn
22 Heights, just to name a few, who all share deep
23 cultural, economic, and social ties. Our district is
24 reflective of who they are, who those people are. It
25 amplifies their voice, and that's exactly why it's

1 being targeted along with other districts. To break
2 apart Texas 30, or any other majority-minority district
3 across this state, is to fracture communities that have
4 consistently fought for every inch of representation in
5 which it has.

6 Let me be clear. The people in these
7 districts aren't just voters on a map. They are our
8 neighbors, our churches, small-business owners, and
9 generations of Texans bound by shared values and shared
10 challenges. Disrupting communities of common interest
11 is not just bad policy, it's a direct violation of
12 redistricting principles that I would hope you uphold,
13 and a betrayal of the trust Texans place in you as our
14 elected state leaders to steward this process. This
15 redistricting attempt isn't neutral. It's surgical.
16 It's going to slice through community lines to protect
17 outside interests, not constituents, to secure extreme
18 control, not public service.

19 I urge you, do not rubber stamp a map
20 that silences communities. Don't dismantle districts
21 that have long provided an actual voice for people in
22 the U.S. House. And as for Texas 30 --

23 REP. VASUT: Please complete your
24 testimony.

25 KENDYLL LOCKE: As for Texas 30, let me

1 be very clear. It's working, it's united, it's
2 representative, and it should remain untouched. Let's
3 focus on the people, their voices, and their interests,
4 because at the end of the day, that's what matters
5 most. Thank you so much.

6 REP. VASUT: Members, questions for the
7 witness?

8 Chair hears none. Thank you. You're
9 excused.

10 This microphone next, if I can get
11 Latrena Lampkin. Latrena Lampkin at that one.

12 Chair calls Andy Laviolette?

13 ANDY LAVIOLETTE: Laviolette.

14 REP. VASUT: Laviolette?

15 ANDY LAVIOLETTE: Laviolette yes.

16 REP. VASUT: Okay. On behalf of
17 yourself, on revised Congressional -- that's a pretty
18 cool name, I've got to say.

19 ANDY LAVIOLETTE: Thank you.

20 REP. VASUT: On behalf of yourself, on
21 the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that
22 correct?

23 ANDY LAVIOLETTE: Yes.

24 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
25 testimony.

1 ANDY LAVIOLETTE: Thanks. So, my wife,
2 my daughter, and I are all registered voters in Denton,
3 Texas. You know, I think that a lot of, you know, what
4 has been said today is so brilliant and beautifully
5 put, and I won't restate so many of the things that
6 we've heard here today. But I think it comes down to
7 just, sort of, accurate and fair representation. And
8 the problem of where our government has gone to on
9 bending to the will of Donald Trump, and not being able
10 to stand up for what's right. And regardless of what
11 party we're affiliated with, I would hope that the
12 overall goal of the districts that are being put
13 together on maps are to accurately reflect the will of
14 the people.

15 And so, I would hope that everyone that
16 sits on this committee, when it comes time for that
17 vote, for you to exercise the power that you have, for
18 you to take a moment and to reconsider that you have
19 the ability to stand up to the Trump administration and
20 to Greg Abbott and to what they're asking you to do.
21 This can be your moment, even if your party is not the
22 Democratic Party. If you're part of the Republican
23 Party, this can be your moment to stand up and to stand
24 out and show your constituents that you are willing to
25 vote for what's right, and to do what's right, and to

1 help us create a society that gives accurate
2 representation of people. So I hope that you consider
3 that.

4 REP. VASUT: Members, questions for the
5 witness?

6 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
7 testimony.

8 Chair calls Latrena Lampkin. Latrina
9 Lampkin. Chair will show Latrena Lampkin registered to
10 testify, on behalf of herself, on the Revised
11 Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

12 Chair calls Christopher Erickson.
13 Christopher Erickson. Chair will show Christopher
14 Erickson registered to testify, on behalf of himself,
15 on the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but
16 not testifying.

17 Chair calls Tigist Solomon. Tigist
18 Solomon. Chair will show Tigist Solomon registered to
19 testify, on behalf of himself, on the Revised
20 Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

21 Chair calls Jeremy Matthews. Mr.
22 Matthews, make your way down to that microphone.

23 Chair will ask Allison Campolo, if you
24 could make your way down to that other microphone.

25 I show you registered to testify as

1 Jeremy Matthews, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised
2 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

3 JEREMY MATTHEWS: That's correct.

4 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
5 testimony.

6 JEREMY MATTHEWS: Greetings, Committee.
7 My name is Jeremy Matthews. I live in Plano, Texas in
8 Congressional District 3. I am against this
9 redistricting, and I would like to make three points.

10 My first point is addressed to the
11 Republicans on this committee. This redistricting
12 effort is a flagrant abuse of power. Texas's
13 representation in Congress is already distorted in
14 favor of your party. In the past three presidential
15 elections, the Republican presidential ticket has been
16 favored by Texans by only low to mid-50s percentages,
17 yet Republicans currently occupy 66 percent of Texas's
18 congressional seats. The president is asking for five
19 more Republican seats, which would result in the party
20 occupying 79 percent of these seats. The difference
21 between the statewide voting percentages with the
22 current representation to possibly nearly 80 percent
23 Republican occupation is obscene. It is not even
24 Republicanism. The Texas public is not being truly
25 represented, and will be even less so if this

1 redistricting goes through.

2 My second point is addressed to the
3 Democrats on the committee. I truly appreciate your
4 opposition to this redistricting effort, but please,
5 can we stop with the talk of breaking quorum? Breaking
6 quorum is not what the public elected you to do. You
7 were not elected to be absent. It is very
8 understandable to want to break quorum, and, if you do,
9 please do not flee the state or go into hiding. I
10 think it is better to stand up for what you believe
11 here in Texas than to flee.

12 My third point is addressed to the whole
13 committee, but probably more so to the Republicans
14 because I think the Democrats might be more on board
15 with the following. I think an independent
16 redistricting body is in order. I think Texas'
17 congressional seats are the people's seats. They are
18 not political party seats. All of you are in public
19 service, and I commend you for caring about the future
20 of Texas. However, this redistricting is not public
21 service. It is political party service. Fair district
22 lines lead to fair representation, a principle on which
23 our country was founded. Let's please act on that
24 principle. Thank you for your time.

25 REP. VASUT: Members, questions to the

1 witness?

2 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
3 testimony.

4 Next up at this microphone, if I can get
5 Jan McDowell.

6 Chair calls Allison Campolo. I show you
7 registered to testify, on behalf of the Tarrant County
8 Democratic Party, on the Revised Congressional
9 Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

10 ALLISON CAMPOLO: That's correct. I'm so
11 glad you can read my handwriting. It's really bad.

12 REP. VASUT: I got you. Please give us
13 your testimony.

14 ALLISON CAMPOLO: Of course. Members of
15 the committee, my name is Dr. Allison Campolo. I'm the
16 Chair of the Tarrant County Democratic Party, where we
17 are now. I had a whole cool, really eloquent -- I'm
18 really smart. I had a really eloquent thing written
19 out. But, like, we've been here for seven hours, so
20 I've had time to, you know, percolate. So I'm just
21 going to monologue a little bit. Obviously, stop me
22 when I'm done. Okay?

23 So I'm more like talking to the audience,
24 anybody watching the livestream. And our Democratic
25 House members, thank you, bless you, you're wonderful.

1 I -- like I said, you know, we've been here all night.
2 I know our House members have had a lot of long nights.
3 Thank you. Thank you for staying for people, no matter
4 how many there are. You're wonderful. I think I
5 represent a lot of Texans, a lot of people who have
6 come out here. I think I'm just like them. I work a
7 full-time job, then I work another full-time job being
8 chair of the party. I have three kids under -- that
9 are all under four now. I mean, life is hard, and
10 we're here, like at 10:30 p.m. Like holy crap. And
11 obviously, you guys have seen that all across the state
12 as you've been going around, right? Like you have way
13 more people coming to testify than you have time to sit
14 here. And man, I gotta tell you, that, like -- that's
15 a message for 2026. Like, what's coming, guys?

16 So, you know, one of the things -- I
17 still have a green light. I'm going to keep going.
18 All right. So one of the things that really stuns me,
19 one of the things I wrote down, is like, what stuns me
20 about this body undertaking this action, is that it
21 undercuts everybody, not just Democrats, not just
22 people of color. It systematically carves up the urban
23 areas to dilute them with rural voters, right? So
24 you're ruining everyone's chance to have fair
25 representation. Nobody is fairly represented.

1 And I just want to say -- and I know I'm
2 running out of time, I'm so sorry. We will remember
3 who stood for democracy and who bowed down to political
4 pressure. You will dilute your own Republican
5 districts with our numbers, and your congressional
6 members will lose their seats in droves. Because look
7 at this, it's like midnight. And when the legal
8 challenges come up, as they will, and when the voters
9 rise up, and they will, the shame of this blatant
10 gerrymander will be forever tied to your names.

11 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
12 the witness?

13 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
14 testimony. You're excused.

15 Next up at this microphone, if I can get
16 Micaela Watkins. Micaela Watkins at that microphone.

17 Is Jan McDowell here? Okay. Chair calls
18 Jan McDowell. Chair will show Jan McDowell registered
19 to testify, on behalf of herself, on the Revised
20 Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

21 Chair calls Micaela Watkins. Micaela
22 Watkins. Chair will show Micaela Watkins registered to
23 testify, on behalf of -- oh, Ms. Watkins? Okay. Take
24 your time.

25 All right. If I could get Chris Wood at

1 this microphone over here. Chris Wood at that
2 microphone.

3 Okay. I show you registered to testify
4 as Micaela Watkins, on behalf of yourself, on the
5 Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that
6 correct?

7 MICAELA WATKINS: Yes, sir.

8 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
9 testimony.

10 MICAELA WATKINS: Good evening, Mr.
11 Chairman, committee members, and fellow outraged
12 Texans. My name is Micaela Watkins, and I am a
13 resident of Congressman Veasey's 33rd District. Ladies
14 and gentlemen, complacency and lack of integrity landed
15 us here, and I find it incredibly disheartening to look
16 upon some of the faces on the dais and see soullessness
17 and disinterest in your eyes as we plead for not only
18 our voting rights, but our human rights. What we are
19 seeing and experiencing is the effect of spineless
20 leadership that has placed us under and further in the
21 line of fire of fascist rule.

22 As we know, this racially motivated
23 redistricting attempt would have immense adverse
24 effects on our black and brown communities. This
25 reactionary violation of the Voting Rights Act is an

1 acknowledgment of our growth and our power within these
2 historic and beautiful communities. The felon in chief
3 and his incompetent cronies are afraid of our voting
4 power, and they are afraid of our growth. That growth,
5 that power, it reminds them of their ineptitude and
6 lack of deservingness to occupy such prestigious and
7 once respected offices. In a time where we should be
8 significantly more concerned with a near 150 lives lost
9 in Kerr County and the negligence that led to it, we
10 find our leaders moving the goalpost. In a time when
11 we should be working to improve the inefficient,
12 ineffective power grid that simply cannot handle the
13 growth and infrastructure of our great state, we
14 instead must face the abnormality of a mid-decade voter
15 suppression attempt at our fiscal expense, the
16 taxpayers.

17 When a caveat is repeatedly reiterated
18 that the lines were drawn blind to race, yet the
19 integrity to provide transparency on said maps is non-
20 existent, I would respectfully request that you not
21 insult our intelligence by playing in our faces.
22 Neutrality is no longer an option. Silence is no
23 longer an option. It's time to fight, and I would be
24 remiss if I did not remind each of you, these
25 distinguished representatives present, that your

1 constituents are watching.

2 Your jobs are on the line, and before you
3 is a crowd of proud Texans who will not stand for the
4 blatant dilution of our districts. I implore you to be
5 reminded that the felonious predator that holds office
6 at Mar-a-Lago, with the occasional visit to
7 Pennsylvania Avenue, is an egomaniacal self-
8 preservationist. You bowing to him will not provide
9 you proximity to his abusive power, but be mindful,
10 because that power cannot vote you out. Our power can.
11 May God bless you to stand on the side of justice, and
12 may God continue to bless and protect the great state
13 of Texas. Thank you.

14 REP. VASUT: Members, any questions for
15 the witness?

16 Chair hears none. The witness is
17 excused.

18 I apologize. Representative Wu, did you
19 have a question?

20 REP. WU: For you.

21 REP. VASUT: Okay, okay. You need to ask
22 it now?

23 REP. WU: I would like to.

24 REP. VASUT: Okay. Chair will yield for
25 questions. Representative Wu, for what purpose?

1 REP. WU: Thank you, Mr. Chair. How much
2 time is left?

3 REP. VASUT: From what I see here, we
4 have about ten minutes.

5 REP. WU: Okay. Thank you. And the
6 clock is paused, correct?

7 REP. VASUT: The clock is paused.

8 REP. WU: So, this is the last of our
9 public hearings.

10 REP. VASUT: Currently scheduled.

11 REP. WU: Currently scheduled, correct?

12 REP. VASUT: That is correct, of the ones
13 currently scheduled.

14 REP. WU: Have any other hearings been
15 scheduled?

16 REP. VASUT: Not yet, but they will be.

17 REP. WU: Okay. So, in the first two
18 hearings, I asked you at the beginning of each hearing
19 whether you have reviewed a map, or has someone talked
20 to you about a map, or your staff has looked at a map
21 that somebody has provided them, and you have said no
22 to both of those questions.

23 REP. VASUT: The only one I've seen is
24 that one that was posted online that we talked about
25 previously, and I have not since then. No revision to

1 my previous statement.

2 REP. WU: And so, my question to you is,
3 I would assume that that has not changed.

4 REP. VASUT: Correct.

5 REP. WU: You have not looked at a map
6 that someone else has provided you other than that one?

7 REP. VASUT: That's correct.

8 REP. WU: That was just uploaded by the
9 public?

10 REP. VASUT: Correct.

11 REP. WU: Okay. Your staff and anyone
12 who works for you has also not looked at a map and not
13 seen a proposed map of any kind?

14 REP. VASUT: There may have -- there was
15 one that was uploaded that may have been seen that was
16 in the same portal. I can't remember if it was the
17 same one as the first one or another, but nothing
18 beyond what has been put into that public portal.

19 REP. WU: Okay.

20 REP. VASUT: And I haven't looked at any
21 of the others since that first one.

22 REP. WU: And I also asked you whether
23 you have contacted Governor Abbott to see what is at
24 top of mind of his rationale for why he put a mid-cycle
25 redistricting on the call for the special session.

1 REP. VASUT: I have not.

2 REP. WU: Okay. And has that changed?

3 REP. VASUT: Not since we last spoke, no.

4 REP. WU: Okay. And no one on your
5 staff has spoken to the Governor, or somebody on the
6 Governor's staff, or somebody who works for the
7 Governor or represents the Governor --

8 REP. VASUT: No, not to my knowledge.

9 REP. WU: -- about any map?

10 REP. VASUT: No.

11 REP. WU: Okay. We have now -- there's
12 only ten -- as you said, there's only ten minutes left
13 of this hearing. In the last three hearings -- I
14 assume that 99 percent of this hearing is basically
15 concluded. We've heard from several hundred witnesses
16 at least. At the beginning of the last hearing, I
17 asked you if you had in mind what you planned to do and
18 what kind of map you planned to draw. And you said you
19 did not have anything in mind as of yet. Now, almost
20 all the hearing has been done. In your mind, do you
21 have an idea of what you propose to do or what type of
22 map or what kind of changes you intend to make?

23 REP. VASUT: No.

24 REP. WU: Okay. So, at the beginning of
25 this process, you told us that, because you did not

1 know and do not know what the Governor wants, why he
2 put this on the call, and you have not contacted him or
3 asked him why, you are -- and you said that the purpose
4 that you're -- all we're doing here is to see how the
5 public feels about the current maps. Is that a fair
6 statement? A summary?

7 REP. VASUT: Perhaps a fair summary of
8 the first phase of this, is to generally hear from the
9 public about whether to do redistricting, and if so,
10 what are some of the things they'd like to see changed
11 or not changed.

12 REP. WU: Absolutely. And in my
13 attendance of these hearings and listening to the
14 witnesses, let's just say in a very unofficial way that
15 roughly 99 percent of the witnesses testified against
16 this -- against a mid-cycle redistricting. Would that
17 be fair?

18 REP. VASUT: I have not done the -- of
19 the testimony that's been given, I haven't done an
20 analysis. I mean, a lot have been opposed. I think
21 that's fair.

22 REP. WU: An overwhelming majority.

23 REP. VASUT: Fair, fair. From the
24 testimony given, yes.

25 REP. WU: Additionally, I have asked you

1 in the prior hearings whether you have reviewed any
2 kind of population data, census data, or any revised
3 data dealing with population changes or anything like
4 that, and you also said you have not reviewed any kind
5 of data like that. Has that changed?

6 REP. VASUT: That has not changed.

7 REP. WU: Okay. So you have also said
8 that, you know, you would let us know when a map comes
9 out, when you have an idea of what you want to do. And
10 right now you're telling us, as of this moment, you
11 don't have anything in mind, correct?

12 REP. VASUT: Nothing specific, no.

13 REP. WU: Okay. So, would it be -- if a
14 map does come out -- you're saying that there's nothing
15 in your mind at this moment. Is there anything during
16 this process that makes you think of what you would
17 like to do from hearing the people talk?

18 REP. VASUT: No, not at this time, other
19 than I want to go and review the written comments that
20 were submitted into the public portal as well.
21 Because, as you know, this is just one of many other
22 forms that have been done. So, I know that two of
23 those have been summarized, I think, that are on the
24 committee's website right now. And, of course, the
25 public portal for this hearing doesn't close until this

1 hearing is over.

2 REP. WU: So, we've done this for three
3 hearings now. It's been across about almost a week's
4 worth of time. And after all this, you don't have any
5 idea, you don't have anything in mind of what you're
6 going to do -- my question is sort of, is this plan
7 going to spring forth from your head like Athena from
8 Zeus, fully formed, at some point?

9 REP. VASUT: My intention is to review
10 the testimony pretty much -- you know, I've obviously
11 been hearing the testimony --

12 REP. WU: Sure.

13 REP. VASUT: -- and we've got ten more
14 minutes here tonight. And I want to review the
15 submitted comments. That will probably be tomorrow
16 that I do that. And then --

17 REP. WU: Do you suspect that after you
18 have reviewed the written testimony, after you've
19 finished listening to the last ten minutes of this, of
20 the in-person testimony, are you going to have a time
21 where you're going to discuss with us, with the entire
22 room, what your thoughts are and what their thoughts
23 are before you draw the map?

24 REP. VASUT: I don't know right now. I
25 don't know.

1 REP. WU: You don't know? Were you
2 planning to work with the members of this committee?

3 REP. VASUT: My intention is, if a map is
4 filed, that will come to this committee for public
5 hearing and will come to this committee for debate, and
6 for feedback and input by all the committee members.

7 REP. WU: So what you're saying is
8 somebody else is going to submit the map and you will
9 be told which one that is?

10 REP. VASUT: I don't know what we're
11 going to do yet.

12 REP. WU: Are you --

13 REP. VASUT: If I'm going to file a map
14 or not.

15 REP. WU: Are you intending -- is it your
16 intent to submit a map yourself, or are you simply
17 waiting for someone else to submit the map?

18 REP. VASUT: I don't definitively know
19 right now whether I'm going to file one or someone else
20 will.

21 REP. WU: Okay. Thank you.

22 REP. VASUT: You're welcome.

23 Members, any other questions?

24 REP. TURNER: Mr. Chairman.

25 REP. VASUT: Mr. Turner, for a purpose?

1 REP. TURNER: Just a follow-up question.

2 REP. VASUT: Chair yields --

3 REP. TURNER: For the Chair.

4 REP. VASUT: Yes.

5 REP. TURNER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 Just a follow-up on Mr. Wu's conversation with you just
7 now. So to be clear, you've said you haven't seen a
8 map, and you are not drawing a map presently?

9 REP. VASUT: I'm not drawing a map
10 presently.

11 REP. TURNER: Okay. And have you -- you
12 said you haven't heard from anyone about a map. Have
13 you heard any indication, say from the Governor's
14 Office or the White House, that a map is coming?

15 REP. VASUT: I have not heard from the
16 Governor's Office or the White House.

17 REP. TURNER: Okay. Has anyone else
18 indicated that a map is coming?

19 REP. VASUT: There's been maps submitted,
20 of course, that people have indicated they put online,
21 and I haven't worked on one yet. I may. That may
22 change. I'm going to review the testimony today, and
23 particularly the written comments that are done. I'll
24 review those tomorrow, and that may change.

25 REP. TURNER: Okay. To clarify my

1 question, have any members of the Legislature suggested
2 to you that they'll be filing a map?

3 REP. VASUT: No member of the Legislature
4 has told me that they are going to definitively file a
5 map. I'm sure that individuals probably have ideas,
6 but no one has told me, "I'm going to file a map."

7 REP. TURNER: Okay. So right now you're
8 not aware of any map?

9 REP. VASUT: Basically, the stage I'm at
10 right now is, I want to gather all the testimony. I'm
11 going to review the written comments tomorrow and see
12 what we do next.

13 REP. TURNER: Okay. And I think that --

14 REP. VASUT: That's basically it.

15 REP. TURNER: That's a perfectly
16 reasonable position. And I would just -- I know your
17 previous statements on the record, which I appreciate,
18 that anything we do, if we do anything -- and it's
19 still an option not to do anything.

20 REP. VASUT: Sure.

21 REP. TURNER: Anything you do, you said
22 you would want to make sure it complies with the
23 Constitution and the Voting Rights Act.

24 REP. VASUT: Yes.

25 REP. TURNER: And I would just observe

1 the complexity of just those two things, and then the
2 complexity of drawing a statewide congressional map is
3 very detailed, very time-consuming. So is it
4 reasonable to conclude we won't be seeing a map really
5 anytime soon? Because it sounds like there's not any
6 maps under development right now.

7 REP. VASUT: I don't know the exact
8 timing of that, but what I can commit to you is that,
9 if a map is filed, we're going to have a public hearing
10 on it, and every member of this committee will have an
11 opportunity to provide feedback and input into that
12 process.

13 REP. TURNER: Okay.

14 REP. VASUT: That's been my commitment
15 this entire time. I believe, as I mentioned at the
16 first hearing, that we're going to take this in a two-
17 phase process.

18 REP. TURNER: Okay. As we sit here right
19 now tonight, you're not aware of any maps being filed
20 as a bill for the committee's consideration?

21 REP. VASUT: Not right now.

22 REP. TURNER: Thank you.

23 REP. VASUT: Thank you, Mr. Turner.

24 REP. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman?

25 REP. VASUT: Dean Thompson, for what

1 purpose?

2 REP. THOMPSON: I'd like to ask a
3 question to the Chair.

4 REP. VASUT: The Chair yields for
5 questions.

6 REP. THOMPSON: Will the committee be
7 privy to reviewing, along with the Chair, the written
8 statements that the Chair will be reviewing?

9 REP. VASUT: Sure. Those -- Dean
10 Thompson, good question. The statements that I have
11 referred to that I have seen, when you go onto the
12 committee's website, and you go to our page and you
13 click Meetings, each of the committee hearings has a
14 notice, which is in text and in PDF. On the right-hand
15 side, you'll see what I believe is a column marked - I
16 can actually - let me give you the exact answer, Dean
17 Thompson. I was looking just a while ago to see what
18 the status of that was.

19 So if I go to our committee page, and I
20 go to Congressional Redistricting Select, and I click
21 meetings, on the right-hand side is a PDF marked
22 Comments. And so those are some of the comments that I
23 will be going through. We have comments posted for
24 7/24 and 7/26. We do not have any comments posted for
25 7/28. I don't know how many or if any are in there.

1 We won't know that until that portal closes after this
2 hearing. And I would assume those will be either
3 linked there tonight or tomorrow morning.

4 REP. THOMPSON: How will you be
5 evaluating the public testimony?

6 REP. VASUT: Just like I do all public
7 testimony, read it, comprehend it, see what the general
8 themes are, and whether or not there's anything
9 specific to take into account.

10 REP. THOMPSON: Okay.

11 REP. VASUT: Thank you, Dean.

12 Members, any other questions? Chair
13 recognizes Representative Gervin-Hawkins. I assume to
14 question the Chair?

15 REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: I do have a
16 question of the Chair.

17 REP. VASUT: I yield for such questions.

18 REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: Mr. Chair, you
19 know, based on reading of the notes, based on the three
20 hearings and the concern that the community has raised,
21 is there a possibility that you would recommend to the
22 Governor not to proceed with any maps?

23 REP. VASUT: You have my word that I will
24 evaluate that tomorrow. I don't -- I don't know. I'm
25 not going to give you a definitive answer right now,

1 but I will evaluate that tomorrow based on all the
2 comments. I mean, that is obviously one of the
3 scenarios.

4 REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: So my final
5 question is that -- so the citizens who spend so much
6 of their time and effort, is it possible, is it
7 possible, or is it impossible, that indeed there could
8 be a recommendation to this committee, this full
9 committee, to take a vote on if maps should be drawn or
10 not?

11 REP. VASUT: I think to that specific
12 question, if no map is heard in this committee, then
13 that effectively means that there will be no map, on
14 that basis, Representative Gervin-Hawkins. I don't
15 think a formal vote is necessary to the committee on
16 that point. But if no map comes forward, there is no
17 map.

18 REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: Thank you, Mr.
19 Chair.

20 REP. VASUT: Thank you, Ms. Gervin-
21 Hawkins.

22 Vice Chair Rosenthal, for what purpose?

23 REP. ROSENTHAL: The Chair yield for a
24 couple questions.

25 REP. VASUT: The Chair will yield for a

1 couple questions.

2 REP. ROSENTHAL: Thank you. Do you have
3 a ballpark idea of the number of comments that have
4 been submitted online?

5 REP. VASUT: I can give you the exact --
6 well, I can give you the number for the two, if you'd
7 like that for the record. The number of comments that
8 were submitted, or I would say received, that it shows
9 in the system for the July 24th hearing was 1,071
10 comments. Well, let me -- actually, hang on. There's
11 two under that in, I think, maybe Spanish-language
12 comments, so I guess you would add those together,
13 1,073. The number of comments submitted for the last
14 hearing -- and what I haven't done, Vice Chair
15 Rosenthal, is to determine whether these numbers are
16 cumulative or have to be added together. Right? I'd
17 have to ask -- honestly, I'd have to ask the committee
18 gurus how this data comes. I'm assuming, my assumption
19 would be that these are additional comments. And if
20 so, then there were 1,335 additional comments for the
21 July 26th hearing in English and three in Spanish.

22 REP. ROSENTHAL: So depending on whether
23 they're cumulative or separate --

24 REP. VASUT: Yeah, it could be -- that
25 could mean there's 2,300 or it could mean that there's

1 only 1,300 if they add together.

2 REP. ROSENTHAL: Exactly. Thank you for
3 doing accurate math.

4 REP. VASUT: I don't know if that was
5 accurate or not. That was top of mind, roughly,
6 roughly thereabouts.

7 REP. ROSENTHAL: And then over the course
8 of these three hearings, we've had in the neighborhood
9 of 2,000 people register. Is that about right?

10 REP. VASUT: We had -- what was it? We
11 had about 200 at the first hearing. We had about, a
12 little over 750. I didn't know quite where we exactly
13 landed. That will be in the minutes, but we haven't
14 approved those yet. We've done the ones from the first
15 hearing -- [audio cuts out].

16 REP. ROSENTHAL: -- quite used them all,
17 so --

18 REP. VASUT: Correct. I don't know --
19 several hundred registered today.

20 REP. ROSENTHAL: So I'm not asking for an
21 exact number, but would it be fair to say 600 or 700?
22 In that neighborhood, in that ballpark?

23 REP. VASUT: Let's say at least 500 or
24 600, yeah.

25 REP. ROSENTHAL: All right. So you're

1 looking at 1,500 people that took time out of their
2 lives --

3 REP. VASUT: To register, yes.

4 REP. ROSENTHAL: -- to come, speak in
5 front of us, to register. And then, because of the
6 limited nature of the number of hours that we have had
7 for these, we've offered this portal for folks to
8 submit comments online.

9 REP. VASUT: Yes.

10 REP. ROSENTHAL: And there are either
11 1,000 or 2,000 more.

12 REP. VASUT: And an unknown possible
13 additional set right --

14 REP. ROSENTHAL: For tonight.

15 REP. VASUT: -- for tonight.

16 REP. ROSENTHAL: Very good.

17 REP. VASUT: It won't close until the
18 hearing's done.

19 REP. ROSENTHAL: So to my recollection,
20 over the course of all these hearings, we had like one
21 person come up to the microphone and say, I strongly
22 want this to happen. That's my recollection.

23 REP. VASUT: I think there were a
24 handful. I don't know the exact number, a handful. It
25 was more than one, but a handful. I would -- I would

1 say that, to your point that I would expect you'd make,
2 there were more against.

3 REP. ROSENTHAL: Yeah. So when we say
4 more against, it's like -- it's like 1,000 to one. So
5 I'll be interested in what that has.

6 REP. VASUT: Sure.

7 REP. ROSENTHAL: So here's what the whole
8 line of questioning leads up to is, if the stated
9 purpose of this set of hearings is to elicit input from
10 the people of the State of Texas, as to their opinion
11 as to whether or not we should even engage in this
12 process -- because that's all we can talk about right
13 now. We haven't looked at a map.

14 REP. VASUT: Well, engage in the process
15 or if -- for example, we've had testimony about, if you
16 do it, then do this. For example, we had several
17 testimony tonight -- and you remember, I think your
18 favorite witness in Houston was the gentleman who came
19 up with the hexagon thing. Right. Okay. So you had
20 testimony about if you're going to do it, do it this
21 way.

22 REP. ROSENTHAL: Yeah, we had a whole
23 conversation of area versus perimeter. And while I can
24 get into that, yeah, fair. So if you, after
25 prepondering all of this evidence, find an overwhelming

1 sentiment expressed to us by the people of Texas that
2 they don't want us to do it, would that lead you to
3 actually not do it?

4 REP. VASUT: I intend to make that
5 decision over the next couple days. But that is
6 absolutely a factor.

7 REP. ROSENTHAL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

8 REP. VASUT: Thank you, Mr. Vice Chair.

9 Speaker Moody, for what purpose?

10 REP. MOODY: Just a couple questions of
11 the Chair.

12 REP. VASUT: Chair will yield for
13 questions.

14 REP. MOODY: I know that, I think either
15 yesterday or earlier today, you extended an invitation
16 to the individual who wrote the letter for the
17 Department of Justice that kind of set this process --

18 REP. VASUT: That's correct.

19 REP. MOODY: -- in motion. I appreciate
20 you doing that. I assume we still haven't heard back
21 from them during the pendency of this hearing?

22 REP. VASUT: Speaker Moody, I haven't
23 checked my email box, but I would -- I'll get back to
24 you tomorrow about that. But no, I have not received a
25 formal response to that other than the out-of-office

1 message.

2 REP. MOODY: Okay. And I appreciate
3 that. I know we're working on a short timeline. I'd
4 like to focus on the recipients of that letter, both
5 the Governor's Office and the Attorney General's
6 Office. I'd like to request that in any subsequent
7 hearing, that the Chair also extend an invitation to
8 the proper party within either of their offices since
9 they've -- the Governor's Office certainly took note of
10 it, and that's why there's an item on the call. I
11 think it would be important for this committee to hear
12 what they took from it, and why it's on the call, and
13 why it's here, and what their constitutional issues
14 they think we have to address. And the Attorney
15 General actually engaged in conversation, at least in
16 written communication, with the DOJ. And I think it
17 would be important for this committee to hear that as
18 well. And that would be the request I'd make of the
19 Chair.

20 REP. VASUT: Understood, Mr. Speaker.
21 I'll take that under advisement and view that tomorrow.

22 REP. MOODY: Thank you.

23 REP. VASUT: Members, any other
24 questions? Chair hears none.

25 We'll go back to our witnesses for public

1 testimony. I believe, let's see, Meg Schuessler?

2 CHRIS WOOD: Chris Wood.

3 REP. VASUT: Chris Wood. Okay.

4 Is Meg Schuessler here? Okay. If you
5 could take that microphone, if you don't mind, we'll
6 come to you in just a second.

7 I show you registered to testify as Chris
8 Wood, on behalf of yourself, on the Revised
9 Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that correct?

10 CHRIS WOOD: That is correct.

11 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
12 testimony.

13 CHRIS WOOD: Governor Abbott only agreed
14 to include redistricting on his agenda after a phone
15 call from President Trump. Obviously, Governor Abbott
16 was bullied by Trump. My dearly departed brother is
17 also named Greg Abbott. And my brother, Greg Abbott, a
18 student of history and an avid follower of politics,
19 taught me, and he taught me well, always stand up to a
20 bully. Standing up to a bully weakens the bully and
21 strengthens the one being attacked. Trust me, Governor
22 Abbott, you will sleep well after standing up to your
23 bully. Join me and my dearly departed brother, Greg
24 Abbott in heaven, as we say, give me liberty or give me
25 death!

1 REP. VASUT: Members, questions for the
2 witness?

3 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
4 testimony.

5 At this microphone next, if I can get
6 Joseph Schuessler, if you would come up.

7 Okay. I show you registered to tes- --
8 oh, we've got a husband-and-wife duo ago. All right.
9 Obviously, she's going to beat you, right? Okay.
10 Chair shows you registered to testify as Meg
11 Schuessler?

12 MEG SCHUESSLER: I am.

13 REP. VASUT: On behalf of yourself, on
14 the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that
15 correct?

16 MEG SCHUESSLER: It is.

17 REP. VASUT: All right. Please give us
18 your testimony.

19 MEG SCHUESSLER: Good evening. My name
20 is Meg Schuessler, and I'm a Texas public school
21 teacher. And I teach federal and Texas government. In
22 fact, Kendyll Locke was one of my students. The fact
23 that we're holding these hearings in '25 tells me that,
24 well, somebody wasn't paying attention in government
25 class. And so I'm here to correct some problems and

1 misconceptions you might have in the system.

2 So it's going to just be real quick. It
3 will be three quick lessons. Our first one is about
4 the Constitution. You know, our plan of government?
5 It lays the foundation for redistricting under Article
6 I, Section 2. You know, representatives are among the
7 states based on that census. It's meant to reflect
8 population and not to give a party edge in an election,
9 especially in the midterm. This is a really rare
10 moment, and it should never be used as a political
11 weapon.

12 Lesson number two. In 2021, Texas
13 officials stood before the federal court in LULAC v.
14 Abbott and argued that those maps were racial neutral.
15 For four years, it's gone on, and now these same
16 officials are claiming that the DOJ's concerns justify
17 redrawing, while telling the same court that those
18 concerns are off base. That's not legal consistency.
19 It's political strategy, and it undermines our public
20 trust.

21 And lesson three, and the most important
22 thing that I can leave with you all tonight, is that
23 these maps should reflect real communities and the
24 people that they represent. They shouldn't be set up
25 to silence us. I teach my students that their voices

1 matter, no matter where they live, what they look like,
2 or who they voted for. But this process sends the
3 opposite message. It tells them that the power matters
4 more than the people, that manipulation is acceptable,
5 and that democracy is optional. This is a power grab.
6 It's wrong.

7 And if you're still in favor of
8 redistricting mid-decade, someone clearly failed
9 government class and is ill-equipped to hold public
10 office. But I'll say this. I'm actually a really good
11 teacher. Again, that's my student. I'm going to offer
12 you guys some extra credit. Adopt an independent
13 redistricting commission like Michigan or Arizona.
14 These models increase transparency, they reduce bias,
15 and they help restore public trust. And this is
16 something you are severely lacking at this moment --

17 REP. VASUT: Please complete your
18 testimony.

19 MEG SCHUESSLER: If you didn't notice the
20 thousand people who are opposed to this, you're missing
21 out on the message that we've all been trying to tell
22 you. So, your assignment, because a good teacher
23 leaves you with an assignment, I want you to follow the
24 Constitution. Ten years is ten years, and 2025 isn't
25 the time for a census. Do the right thing for your

1 constituents, for democracy, and for my students.

2 Class dismissed.

3 REP. VASUT: Members, questions for the
4 witness?

5 Chair hears none. The witness is
6 excused.

7 Chair calls Joseph Schuessler. I show
8 you registered to testify, on behalf of yourself, on
9 the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that
10 correct?

11 JOSEPH SCHUESSLER: Yes, sir.

12 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
13 testimony.

14 JOSEPH SCHUESSLER: Okay. First off,
15 don't follow your wife. Good evening, committee
16 members. My name is Dr. Joseph Schuessler. As a
17 business professor, I stand before you today.

18 REP. VASUT: Mr. Schuessler, I think that
19 microphone might be a little finicky. Raise it up.

20 JOSEPH SCHUESSLER: Is that a little bit
21 better?

22 REP. VASUT: There, that's perfect.
23 Please give us your testimony.

24 JOSEPH SCHUESSLER: Apologies. Good
25 evening, committee members. My name is Dr. Joseph

1 Schuessler. As a business professor, I stand before
2 you today to oppose this mid-census congressional
3 redistricting. This effort is profoundly
4 inappropriate. Redistricting is constitutionally
5 mandated after each decennial census using accurate
6 population data. Doing it now with outdated 2020
7 census figures ignores Texas's significant non-white
8 population growth. This isn't about fairness. It's a
9 blatant partisan power grab.

10 As a voter historically aligned with
11 Republican values, I must say I feel profoundly
12 abandoned by my party. Their sudden embrace of DOJ
13 claims about racially-drawn districts directly
14 contradicts their own past offenses. This is a
15 transparent ploy to gain partisan seats, slicing up
16 black and Hispanic communities and diluting their
17 voting strengths. Our current districts, as drawn,
18 already fail to reasonably reflect their constituents,
19 especially given our state's diverse growth. Such
20 politically-motivated actions ignore established
21 process, erode public faith in our government, and
22 undermine our democracy.

23 I urge this committee to immediately halt
24 these mid-census efforts. The established
25 constitutional process for redistricting is after the

1 decennial census, and adhering to this
2 constitutionally-mandated process is absolutely
3 necessary. Texas needs non-partisan redistricting,
4 achieved through an independent commission, insulated
5 from political influence, ensuring fair maps for all
6 Texans. Let us choose a path that strengthens our
7 democracy, not one that diminishes it for political
8 expediency. Thank you.

9 REP. VASUT: Members, questions for the
10 witness?

11 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
12 testimony. Witness is excused.

13 Chair calls Kee West. Kee West. Okay.
14 Chair will show Kee West registered to testify, on
15 behalf of the Black Chamber of Commerce, on a Revised
16 Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

17 Chair calls Lydia Beam. Lydia Beam.
18 Chair shows Lydia Beam, or Bean, I apologize, Lydia
19 Bean. Chair shows Lydia Bean registered to testify, on
20 behalf of herself, on the Revised Congressional
21 Redistricting Plan, but not testifying.

22 Chair calls Angela Ferrelli. Angela
23 Ferrelli? All right. Come on down. If I can get you
24 right here at this microphone.

25 And then Manuel Mata. Manuel Mata?

1 Okay. Chair calls Manuel Mata. Chair will show Manuel
2 Mata registered to testify, on behalf of himself, on
3 the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan, but not
4 testifying.

5 Instead, at that microphone over there,
6 if I could get Ted Ellis. Is Ted Ellis here? Chair
7 shows Ted Ellis registered to testify, on behalf of
8 himself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting
9 Plan, but not testifying.

10 Let's try this again. If I can get at
11 this other microphone, Danny Minton.

12 All right. Chair shows you registered to
13 testify as Angela Ferrelli, on behalf of yourself, on
14 the Revised Congressional Redistricting Plan. Is that
15 correct?

16 ANGELA FERRELLI: Yes.

17 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
18 testimony.

19 ANGELA FERRELLI: My name is Angela
20 Ferrelli, and I reside in Dallas, specifically part of
21 the 30th Congressional District. A lot of what I had
22 put in my statement that is going around to you all has
23 already been said. And so, rather, I'd like to use my
24 time to just address what Mr. Chairman, you had said in
25 terms of the number of people who have come out and

1 spoken and your need to evaluate what has been shared,
2 and if there is still a need for this committee to even
3 exist. You did state that there were about 500 to 600
4 people who came today.

5 You weren't prepared to say about how
6 many, what percentage of those people were testifying
7 in terms of opposing this committee's existence or
8 their disapproval of redistricting in general. But
9 from my recollection, there was only one person who
10 spoke very adamantly in terms of favoring
11 redistricting, and one person who was a little wishy-
12 washy and wasn't really quite sure what he was trying
13 to say. Everyone else who has come up to the lectern
14 and made a statement to everyone on this committee very
15 clearly is against this effort, and they are wanting to
16 make sure that their vote counts.

17 So I really think that it is very prudent
18 of you to acknowledge that and to not say that you're
19 not sure where people stand on this issue. By saying
20 that you're not -- by not being able to say publicly
21 that you have heard what the people are saying, and
22 that the majority overwhelmingly do not want this,
23 doesn't make us trust you. So I just -- I think it's
24 very important for you to know that the people of Texas
25 do not want this. The people of Texas are not going to

1 trust you if you move forward with this. And that the
2 people of Texas will vote everyone out who does approve
3 this.

4 REP. VASUT: Members, questions for the
5 witness?

6 Chair hears none. Thank you for your
7 testimony.

8 ANGELA FERRELLI: Thank you.

9 Chair calls Danny Minton. I show you
10 registered to testify as Danny Minton, on behalf of
11 yourself, on the Revised Congressional Redistricting
12 Plan. Is that correct?

13 DANNY MINTON: Yes.

14 REP. VASUT: Please give us your
15 testimony.

16 DANNY MINTON: All right. My name is
17 Danny Minton. I'm very excited to actually get a
18 chance to do this. Thank you for staying here and
19 listening. This subject is near and dear to my heart,
20 as I was going to announce my intention to run for the
21 U.S. House of Representatives tonight. As a very proud
22 Democrat, by the way.

23 So, I was leaving the house a long time
24 ago to come to the protest beforehand and then to come
25 to this. And my son, who was hoping I was going to

1 make dinner because I love to cook barbecue every
2 night, and he was excited that I was going to, and then
3 he found out I wasn't. But he's like, Dad, why are you
4 in your best go-out-and-protest gear? That's what I'm
5 wearing. And I had to tell him I'm going to the
6 redistricting meeting. And he says, oh, is that that
7 salamandering thing? And he's 15, he's learning. I
8 said, kind of, yeah, it's gerrymandering. And I
9 explained exactly what it was. And he said, well,
10 isn't that just cheating? And that's come up a couple
11 times tonight, but not enough.

12 This is something that is blatant
13 cheating. We teach our kids not to cheat. We don't
14 just teach our kids not to cheat. We actually punish
15 our kids when they cheat. When people cheat at work,
16 they get fired. When people cheat in life in general,
17 there are repercussions, and this is blatant cheating.

18 This is actually epic cheating, what
19 we're trying to do here with redistricting. This is
20 like Coldplay kiss cam cheating, except for a nice-
21 looking CEO standing behind you with his arms wrapped
22 around you, you have a rapist pedophile that is
23 standing there saying, you need to cheat and give us
24 these votes, give us this Congress. And does he have
25 to cheat to win? Yeah, he does. In 2026, we will

1 annihilate him. But it's still wrong. That's
2 democracy. Democracy means, if we can beat him, we
3 will. And I think even if you cheat, we're going to
4 beat him in 2026. But at the very least, we need to
5 know that this is absolute cheating and it is wrong.
6 Thank you.

7 REP. VASUT: Members, questions for the
8 witness? Chair hears none. Thank you for your
9 testimony.

10 Members, the time for public testimony at
11 today's hearing has concluded. Thank you for all those
12 who testified today. The electronic portal for today's
13 hearing will close right after we adjourn. If you
14 registered to testify but were not reached today, or if
15 you had more to say than time allowed, you can feel
16 free to turn in your testimony up front. The minutes
17 of today's meeting will also show that you registered.

18 So my - let's see, where is - where is
19 my - so my assistant clerk is around here, Dylan,
20 right behind me. Okay. So we're out up front. We'll
21 meet you right here. If you want to turn in a written
22 copy of your testimony and bring it down front, we'd be
23 glad to receive that from you.

24 So there being no further business before
25 the committee, the Chair moves that the House Select

1 Committee on Congressional Redistricting stand
2 adjourned, subject to the call of the Chair. Is there
3 objection?

4 REP. ROSENTHAL: I object and ask for --

5 REP. VASUT: The Chair hears objection.

6 REP. ROSENTHAL: -- a record vote.

7 REP. VASUT: Under the rules, this is a
8 non-debatable motion. The Clerk will call the roll.

9 THE CLERK: Chair Vasut?

10 REP. VASUT: Aye.

11 THE CLERK: Vice Chair Rosenthal?

12 REP. ROSENTHAL: Nay.

13 THE CLERK: Representative Garcia?
14 Representative Garcia?

15 REP. GARCIA: No.

16 THE CLERK: Representative Geren?
17 Representative Geren?

18 REP. GEREN: Yes.

19 THE CLERK: Representative Gervin-
20 Hawkins?

21 [Shouting from the gallery]

22 REP. VASUT: A motion has been made and a
23 vote is underway. The members of the committee will
24 cast their votes. Representative Gervin-Hawkins?

25 REP. GERVIN-HAWKINS: No.

1 THE CLERK: Representative Guerra?
2 Representative Guillen? Representative Guillen?

3 REP. GUILLEN: Aye.

4 REP. VASUT: Representative Hefner?

5 REP. HEFNER: Aye.

6 THE CLERK: Representative Hickland?

7 REP. HICKLAND: Yes.

8 THE CLERK: Representative Hunter?

9 REP. HUNTER: Yes.

10 THE CLERK: Representative Manuel?

11 REP. MANUEL: Nay.

12 THE CLERK: Representative McQueeney?

13 REP. MCQUEENEY: Yes.

14 THE CLERK: Representative Metcalf?

15 REP. METCALF: Aye.

16 THE CLERK: Representative Moody?

17 REP. MOODY: No.

18 THE CLERK: Representative Pierson?

19 REP. PIERSON: Aye.

20 THE CLERK: Representative Spiller?

21 REP. SPILLER: Aye.

22 THE CLERK: Representative Teppner?

23 REP. TEPPER: Aye.

24 THE CLERK: Representative Thompson?

25 REP. THOMPSON: No.

1 THE CLERK: Representative Turner?

2 REP. TURNER: No.

3 THE CLERK: Representative Wilson?

4 Representative Wu?

5 REP. WU: No.

6 REP. VASUT: There being 11 ayes, 8 nays,
7 the motion prevails. The House Select Committee on
8 Congressional Redistricting stands adjourned subject to
9 the call of the Chair.

10 (End of proceedings.)

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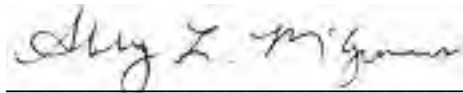
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Abby McGinnis, certify that the foregoing is a correct transcription from the audio recording provided to me in connection with the above-entitled matter.

I further certify that I am neither attorney or counsel for, nor related to or employed by any of the parties to the action in which this transcription is taken, and further that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, or financially interested in the action.

Certified to by me this 16th day of September 2025.



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