

**State Defendants' Response to Gonzales Plaintiffs'
Motion for Preliminary Injunction**

Exhibit A

2025 0728 1CS Senate Committee Transcript

SENATE COMMITTEE ON
CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING, SPECIAL

PUBLIC HEARING

July 28, 2025

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

2 SENATOR KING: The Senate Special
3 Committee on Congressional Redistricting will come to
4 order. The clerk will call the role.

5 THE CLERK: Senator King?

6 SENATOR KING: Here.

7 THE CLERK: Senator Creighton?

8 SENATOR CREIGHTON: Here.

9 THE CLERK: Senator Alvarado? Senator
10 Hinojosa?

11 SENATOR HINOJOSA: Present.

12 THE CLERK: Senator Hughes? Senator
13 Miles? Senator Parker? Senator Paxton? Senator
14 Sparks?

15 SENATOR KING: There being...

16 THE CLERK: Three.

17 SENATOR KING: Four, would you show
18 Senator Miles here, please?

19 THE CLERK: Yes, sir.

20 SENATOR KING: There being four present,
21 a quorum will be established as the meeting progresses.
22 No votes or actions will be taken in the absence of a
23 quorum.

24 Ladies and gentlemen, I want to run
25 through just some opening remarks that we need to cover

1 as on how today will work and everything, and during
2 that time, I know we've got -- the other senators are
3 just going to be here in just a few minutes.

4 As posted, we will focus on the East
5 Texas region today, including the Harris County area.
6 If you're interested in another part of the state,
7 you're welcome to participate today. This is the third
8 of our four scheduled regional hearings. Please note
9 that the registration for this hearing has closed and
10 the registration, this is registration to testify, will
11 close 12 hours in advance of the upcoming hearing. The
12 date and focus area are posted on the Committee
13 website, but we'll include for Tuesday West Texas,
14 including the El Paso and Panhandle region. But again,
15 everyone is welcome today and at any of our virtual
16 hearings regardless if your testimony focuses on East
17 Texas region or another area of the state.

18 Please bear with us throughout these
19 regional hearings as we collect public testimony via
20 this video conference. And I know that sometimes
21 technical difficulties can come up. We will certainly
22 help you work through those. I do also want to point
23 out that there are other options for members of the
24 public to provide input if they are unable to testify
25 today or didn't make the registration cutoff for today.

1 You're welcome to register for the next
2 regional hearing and provide testimony at that time.
3 The next hearing is still open for registration until
4 9:00 p.m. this evening. And if the clerk would show
5 that Senator Hughes is present. The portal, you're
6 also able to submit written comments at any time
7 throughout the special session in the public input
8 portal that can be found on the Committee website.
9 The portal will remain available 24/7 throughout the
10 redistricting process. Submitted comments are shared
11 with the senators and are posted on the Committee's
12 website for public viewing. And by the way, on the
13 portal, you can attach any document that you might wish
14 us to listen to, including if you wanted to provide
15 your own proposed redistricting map. This hearing is
16 also being live streamed and will be archived for
17 public viewing on the Senate's website.

18 So why are we here today? The governor
19 has added the subject of congressional redistricting to
20 the special session call. We are here today in
21 response to that charge. I cannot speak to what the
22 outcomes will be with redistricting, but I do know that
23 hearing from Texans is a critical part of the process.
24 I believe these regional hearings provide meaningful
25 opportunities for input and discussion about

1 communities of interest and other matters critical to
2 the subject of redistricting.

3 I want to thank everyone here today for
4 your participation. Please note that since we are on a
5 video conference, we are unable to hear in-person
6 testimony today as stated in the posting for this
7 hearing. There will be opportunity for in-person
8 testimony in the future if and when a bill, a map in
9 this case, is heard and there are always the
10 opportunity to submit written comments through the
11 online portal.

12 Now, as for logistics, I would like to
13 give everyone a brief preview of the process for
14 today's video conference testimony. Everyone that
15 registered to testify and has signed onto the video
16 conference link should be in the Zoom waiting room. We
17 have, what, 110, approximately 110 people registered to
18 testify in today's hearing. You cannot view the
19 hearing from the waiting room, so you should view the
20 live stream available on the Senate website via the
21 link that is visible in the waiting room, so you will
22 know when you have been called to testify.

23 For those in the waiting room, please
24 make sure your screen name matches the name you used to
25 register. If you need to step away from the hearing

1 for any reason, you may leave the waiting room and
2 rejoin when you're able, as long of course as the
3 hearing is still ongoing. When your name is called and
4 it is your turn to testify, turn on your video, but
5 keep yourself muted until I recognize you to speak. So
6 what will happen as you're in the Zoom waiting room,
7 I'll call the next four or five people a panel to
8 speak, and then we'll take you one at a time. And when
9 you're called on the panel, you should go ahead and
10 turn your video on, the little button on your screen.
11 And then when I call your name at that time, please
12 turn off your mute so that we can hear you testify.

13 It's important to remember that when you
14 are called on to testify, you should mute or close your
15 livestream player. If you leave the livestream going,
16 there will be an echo heard, and you've probably heard
17 this before on a radio talk show or something where
18 someone's being interviewed and they've got the radio
19 on in the background and you hear the double echo, hear
20 the voice there. So when you're called to testify,
21 make sure you turn off the livestream or mute it so
22 that we're -- you're not hearing yourself in the
23 background.

24 Once recognized, you may unmute your
25 microphone. Your audio and your video will be heard

1 and seen by both the Committee members and the public.
2 Once I call your name, you will have an opportunity to
3 provide your testimony to the Committee. I will have
4 you state your name and whether you are testifying on
5 behalf of any organization. So everyone has an
6 opportunity to participate. I ask that witnesses, and
7 again, we have over a hundred registered for today,
8 that they limit their testimony to two minutes. And
9 although I don't want to cut anyone off, we must be
10 mindful of those witnesses that are still waiting. So
11 please try to be concise so we can hear from everyone
12 efficiently. Now, the senators will have opportunity
13 to ask you questions and any of their questions will
14 certainly not count against your allotted time. When
15 you're finished with your testimony, you'll be released
16 from the video conference and can watch the rest of the
17 hearing on the livestream.

18 Also note, it's very important, also note
19 if you're having technical difficulties with your video
20 or audio, Committee staff will move you back into the
21 waiting room and give you an opportunity to
22 troubleshoot the issue, and we can call you back in the
23 room with the next round of witnesses. If you need
24 technical assistance, you can contact Zoom customer
25 support. Please visit [Zoom.us/join](https://zoom.us/join), J-O-I-N. Say that

1 again. Zoom.us/join or call Zoom customer service at
2 1-800-799-9666, 1-800-799-9666. You can also call our
3 Committee office at (512) 463-0030, (512) 463-0030 if
4 you're having any issues and we'll try to help you
5 through those.

6 Clerk would also please show that Senator
7 Paxton is present.

8 We have some housekeeping measures, but
9 I'd like to -- I know a couple are particularly
10 important to Senator Alvarado, so I think we'll hold
11 off on those until we get everyone here. And, Members,
12 are there any comments or any -- Senator Hinojosa?

13 SENATOR HINOJOSA: Thank you, Mr.
14 Chairman. And just a comment in that as we move forward
15 and continue having these hearings, at some point I
16 would hope we would have a redistricting map so we can
17 really zero in on the interest and the objections that
18 our constituents out in the -- and the citizens of
19 Texas may have, because sometimes there may be a sense
20 we don't have a map before us that we're sort of
21 groping in the dark and trying to swing in the dark
22 which is not I know the purpose of this Committee. So
23 I would appreciate that as soon as we have a map
24 available to please make it available not only to us,
25 but to the general public. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 SENATOR KING: Senator, your comments are
2 very well taken. I have not seen any map myself.
3 Traditionally, during congressional redistricting the
4 congressional delegations will submit their proposed
5 maps, Republican and Democrat. I'm not in the process
6 of drawing a map myself, at least not at this time, but
7 as soon as anyone submits a map for consideration,
8 it'll be made available to the entire Committee, and I
9 certainly do expect one will pop up before too long.

10 So, Members, any other comments or
11 questions? If not the Chair now opens for public
12 testimony. As a reminder, public testimony --

13 SENATOR MILES: Mr. Chairman?

14 SENATOR KING: Oh, Senator Miles.

15 SENATOR MILES: I thought your comments
16 were about your rules. Are we not going to be able to
17 make any remarks or any opening remarks?

18 SENATOR KING: On anything you would
19 like, sir.

20 SENATOR MILES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
21 I'd like to make some opening remarks.

22 SENATOR KING: Certainly.

23 SENATOR MILES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 Today's hearing is focused on East Texas,
25 Harris County, and surrounding areas. Harris County

1 and Fort Bend Counties are where my Senate district is.
2 Senate 13 contains all of CD 18, a good part of CD 9
3 and a part of CD 29. That is three out of the four
4 name districts in the DOG -- in the DOJ hit list
5 letter. These districts are also some of the largest
6 majority minority opportunity districts in the state,
7 Mr. Chairman. According to the Texas Legislative
8 Council, as of 2021, over 70 percent of voting age
9 population in CD 9 is black and brown residents. CD
10 18 is over 70 percent. CD 29 is over 80 percent, Mr.
11 Chairman.

12 This is not a coincidence, as I've said
13 before. This is redistricting is nothing but an
14 attempt to dilute and suppress voting black power and
15 brown power of people in this state. It has been
16 instituted simply to satisfy a racist agenda of the
17 current president, Mr. Chairman, Members. Mr.
18 Chairman, I would like to also comment on this video
19 conference format that you spoke of. As far as I know,
20 we have had about 80 people signed up to testify. Mr.
21 Chairman, would you be surprised if I told you that
22 during the in-person hearings in Houston at the
23 University of Houston Saturday, they received around a
24 thousand witness registrations, Mr. Chairman? Over a
25 thousand.

1 Houstonians packed the University of
2 Houston Auditorium and Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church,
3 where I go to church. After that because Houston
4 Committee, the Houston -- the House Committee
5 Republicans would not hear all the witness registered
6 to testify. Many people showed up and showed out to
7 tell the legislature that they neither want nor this
8 redistricting or asked for it. They did so defining
9 their communities and did so basically blind because we
10 haven't even seen proposed maps as Senator Hinojosa has
11 said.

12 Assuming a thousand people did indeed
13 registered to testify, that would be a little more than
14 12 times the registration that we have received for
15 video conferences on our testimony. As I like to say
16 in the chamber, if we can measure it, we can fix it,
17 Mr. Chairman. Well, the numbers are clear. The
18 digital divide is real and you receive more engagement
19 with in-person testimony, Mr. Chairman. I believe
20 we're doing the constituents a disservice with our
21 current testimony format.

22 Finally, my motion for Ms. Dillon is
23 still tabled. I understand that you wrote a letter
24 asking for Ms. Dillon to appear. We have not heard a
25 response from it. You know, if Ms. Dillon wrote the

1 DOJ letter to kick off this redistricting issue, it's
2 Ms. Dillon that gave us this August 7th deadline as
3 well. If Ms. Dillon believes we should dilute to
4 suppress black and brown voices in CD 9, 18, and 29 and
5 would like to threaten our legislative process, then
6 she should come here and look us in the eye and answer
7 any questions we may have, Mr. Chairman.

8 Committee Members, I said this the very
9 first hearing, and I will say it again loud and clear.
10 This is not redistricting, this is rig-districting. It
11 is an absolute farce and disrespectful and to every
12 black and brown citizen in this state, Mr. Chairman,
13 and I'm not going to move from that position.

14 SENATOR KING: Thank you, Senator.

15 Will the clerk show that Senator Alvarado
16 is present?

17 May I respond? Not in contradiction. I
18 just wanted to respond. It's a good time to do some of
19 the housekeeping and this follows up on what you've
20 said a little bit.

21 I did want to say that with regard to our
22 attendance on Friday, which was our first hearing, we
23 had 778 people click in and watch online. Now
24 obviously, some of those could have double clicked,
25 left and come back in. We don't know those numbers,

1 but we know that 778 watched the livestream online
2 hearing Friday. That day we had 112 register to
3 testify, and 48 testified on Friday. The -- typically
4 as you know, we have a lot of people when we have
5 public hearings, they sign up on the kiosk, but not all
6 stay to testify. A lot of them just registered on the
7 kiosk to show that they were here to testify. But
8 those, that delta between the 48 that testified and the
9 112 that registered to testify on Friday, we sent each
10 one of them an individual email at the end of the day,
11 and we got back a lot of really nice responses. Thank
12 you for following back up and thank you for this
13 service, things of that nature.

14 On Saturday, we had 527 people click on
15 to the online stream service. So we had 527 viewers.
16 Now, again, there may have been some that signed on for
17 a while, left and came back, so they might be double
18 counted, but we know that during the course of the
19 hearing, 527 people clicked in, or if there were 570
20 that clicked on to watch -- 527, I'm sorry. On
21 Saturday we had 80 witnesses registered to testify, 34
22 stayed on to testify. We, again, followed up with
23 personalized emails to those as well.

24 I recognize that that the video
25 conferencing is a different approach than what the

1 House is doing. They are going to Harris County and to
2 DFW. And I understand that there's two ways to look at
3 this, but I also think that not everybody lives in DFW,
4 certainly not just in Arlington where they're at today,
5 and not everybody lives in Houston. And we're able to
6 reach out all over the state and give people from
7 Amarillo to Beaumont, El Paso to Lufkin the opportunity
8 to participate that would not have driven to DFW or to
9 Houston or to wherever we went to.

10 And so I think we also had some people in
11 their testimony thank us that they came to the House
12 last week and were not able to testify, and so they
13 were glad that they were able to testify with us. I
14 remember someone else from South Texas said thank you
15 for letting me participate in this way.

16 So I understand exactly the discussion
17 between field hearings and regional hearings like we're
18 having and -- but I do think we're offering a service
19 that a lot of Texans are taking advantage of. So I
20 under -- but I promise you that as soon as we have a
21 map to consider, there will be public hearings here in
22 the Capitol and we'll have as many of those as is
23 necessary to do the Committee's work.

24 With regard to the subpoena, I did
25 receive a letter from Senator Alvarado, I believe

1 specifically formally requesting that we subpoena the
2 author of the DOJ letter. I don't object to doing
3 that. We just sent the invitation Friday. Today is
4 just Monday. Our rules do specifically say that we
5 cannot subpoena during the regional hearing process,
6 but that will be over tomorrow. So what I would
7 suggest is if we and I -- and Senator Miles, I
8 understand you signed that letter and so did Senator
9 Hinojosa as well, the letter requesting a subpoena. So
10 what I would suggest is Wednesday, if we have not heard
11 back from the DOJ, that at that time we can have a
12 formal meeting on the floor upon adjournment. And
13 those are public meetings. It just -- we don't have to
14 come to a Committee room and we can -- if someone wants
15 to make a motion, it does take a two-thirds vote to
16 issue a subpoena. In the meantime -- and I'll take up
17 that motion. In the meantime, I'm going to ask Leg.
18 Counsel to do some research because I'm told -- I
19 haven't checked myself, but I'm told that there is some
20 case law out there that says that a state legislative
21 body cannot subpoena a federal officer because we only
22 have the authority to subpoena those under our
23 jurisdiction and they're not under our jurisdiction. I
24 haven't read that case myself.

25 I also presume we don't have the

1 authority to compel someone from out of the state to
2 attend. So I'll have that researched and we can take
3 up that motion Wednesday, but I'm kind of fully
4 expecting that we'll hear from the DOJ before then. I
5 know that the email was received late Friday. You
6 requested it, the invitation on Thursday. I sent it on
7 Friday and I know it was received because late Friday
8 we got one of those little -- I'm sorry you requested
9 it Friday. We sent it Friday, and I got one of those
10 email auto responses saying it had been received.

11 I'll also say, I guess it's public
12 because it was on Twitter, that the author of that DOJ
13 letter tweeted that she was spreading her husband's
14 ashes over the weekend. So I think, you know, we need
15 to give her a little slack on responding. So if we
16 haven't by Wednesday, then we can certainly take up
17 that motion, but I'm going to do the research before
18 then.

19 SENATOR MILES: Is that it, Mr. Chairman?

20 SENATOR KING: Yes. Go ahead. I'm
21 sorry. I think I got everything.

22 SENATOR MILES: Mr. Chairman, I thank you
23 for that follow up. But I have to say, you know,
24 watching and testifying are two different things, and I
25 think the delta of 120 testifying compared to a

1 thousand testifying is a big delta, Mr. Chairman.

2 Okay. Watching and testifying are two different
3 things.

4 And I also would like to ask, Mr.
5 Chairman, when we have the maps, is it your intent to
6 do regional public hearings or just here at the
7 Capitol?

8 SENATOR KING: To my knowledge, the
9 Senate has never done field hearings when considering
10 when a -- when there's a map before the Committee.
11 I'm subject to being shown I'm wrong on that, but to my
12 knowledge, we've never done that.

13 SENATOR MILES: Okay. The Senate has
14 never.

15 SENATOR KING: The Senate --

16 SENATOR MILES: The House has --

17 SENATOR KING: The House is -- the House
18 either.

19 SENATOR HINOJOSA: I think, Mr. Chairman,
20 if I may?

21 SENATOR KING: Yes, sir.

22 SENATOR HINOJOSA: And it may not have
23 been during without a map, but we in the past have had
24 regional hearings. I remember being part of a
25 Redistrict Committee. We had hearings down in the

1 River Valley, and quite frankly, I can't quite remember
2 the exact date, but I do remember having to travel to
3 other regions of the state. And I cannot tell you
4 whether we had a map before us or not, but I'm sure
5 we -- but I do remember the trips.

6 SENATOR KING: I know the Senate did
7 field hearings in 2019 or 2020 in preparation for the
8 2021 session. And then of course, that all kind of got
9 shut down for 2021 because of COVID.

10 SENATOR HINOJOSA: Correct.

11 SENATOR KING: And I think that's when
12 they first went to virtual, the House and the Senate.
13 I know the House, but as far as I know when we've
14 actually had a map before us, we haven't done them --
15 done them -- we haven't actually done --

16 SENATOR HINOJOSA: Actually Senator
17 Duncan I think was Chair at that time of the
18 Redistricting Committee, if I recall.

19 SENATOR KING: Would have been the cycle
20 before.

21 SENATOR MILES: So, Mr. Chairman, would
22 the hearings be just like we're doing the video
23 conferences, but regional or are we just going to have
24 one big hearing?

25 SENATOR KING: Well, they would be dealt

1 with as any other bill is.

2 SENATOR MILES: Sir?

3 SENATOR KING: They would be dealt with
4 in the same manner that any bill before any Committee
5 is in terms of posting, and then we would have a
6 hearing in the Committee room which would be open to
7 the public and we would have witnesses and testimony in
8 the normal course of business that we do for any bill,
9 but they would be in the Capital.

10 SENATOR MILES: But that's going to be a
11 lot of people, Mr. Chairman, a lot of people.

12 SENATOR KING: I would not be surprised.

13 SENATOR MILES: And yeah.

14 SENATOR KING: We always --

15 SENATOR MILES: I can belabor the issue,
16 but I'm not, Mr. Chairman. You know, we've never had
17 virtual, all virtual hearings either. But this is the
18 first.

19 SENATOR KING: I think we did in 2021
20 during COVID.

21 SENATOR MILES: During COVID, with the
22 exception of COVID. You're absolutely --

23 SENATOR KING: That was --

24 SENATOR MILES: -- correct, sir. Yes,
25 you're absolutely correct. With the exception of

1 COVID.

2 Okay. We -- more to come, we look
3 forward to getting those maps and, Mr. Chairman, I just
4 think it's necessary that, you know, we get a --
5 everybody gets a chance to testify on something as
6 important as this because, I mean, this is democracy
7 and everybody should have a part in it.

8 And I respect you and I appreciate you,
9 but things just aren't going right, Mr. Chairman. I'm
10 sorry. Thank you.

11 SENATOR KING: Thank you, Senator.

12 Senator Alvarado?

13 SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you,
14 Mr. Chairman.

15 I can't emphasize enough what my
16 colleague, Senator Miles, is saying because we
17 witnessed it. Look, the numbers don't lie. This
18 virtual testimony, it's just not working.

19 SENATOR MILES: It's not.

20 SENATOR ALVARADO: If you look at how
21 many people, and you gave the numbers, how many people
22 have registered, how many people stay on versus what's
23 happened in person, in fact, Saturday when we both left
24 here, we went to Houston and there were still a couple
25 of hundred people waiting to testify. So people are

1 showing up to the regional hearings and they're
2 staying. They're waiting to testify. I'm not sure
3 what kind of a turnout will happen in Arlington, but my
4 guess is that people will show up and will stay. So
5 again, the numbers speak for themselves on that.

6 Secondly, I want to just have some follow
7 up questions about the DOJ letter for just a couple of
8 points for clarification. After our first meeting on
9 Friday, did you or your staff have contact with the DOJ
10 prior to emailing the letter of invitation?

11 SENATOR KING: No.

12 SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay.

13 SENATOR KING: I haven't had any contact
14 with that office.

15 SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. So then it
16 seems like your response has been consistent. You said
17 before your only interaction with the DOJ was but when
18 you reviewed the letter dated, their July 7th letter
19 and then the letter of invitation that was emailed to
20 the Assistant Attorney General on Friday; is that
21 correct?

22 SENATOR KING: That's correct.

23 SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. So those would
24 be the two. And I think you said that you have not
25 received any response from the Assistant Attorney

1 General's office?

2 SENATOR KING: So we -- of course we
3 recessed our hearing and I went back to the office,
4 wrote up a letter right then. Sometime after 5:00 p.m.
5 I got one of those automatic responses from the --

6 SENATOR ALVARADO: And that's been it?

7 SENATOR KING: -- from their office
8 saying it had been received.

9 SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. And that's been
10 it?

11 SENATOR KING: That was Friday evening,
12 and of course today's just Monday.

13 SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. And then we did
14 some research and under our Senate rules and state law,
15 issuing a subpoena that's been considered a procedural
16 matter, not a non-procedural or subsequent matter, it's
17 clear that if the Committee chooses to do so, we could
18 issue a subpoena to the Assistant Attorney General
19 Dillon during today's regional hearing or tomorrow.
20 But I think you said that we're going to do that on
21 Wednesday; is that right?

22 SENATOR KING: So my understanding --

23 SENATOR ALVARADO: Did I hear that
24 correctly?

25 SENATOR KING: My understanding of the

1 Senate resolution we passed, it specifically says that
2 we cannot issue subpoenas during regional hearings,
3 but -- and I'm still not clear on if we can issue a
4 subpoena to a federal officer. However, I will ask
5 Leg. Counsel to research that for us all and I will
6 also take up a motion Wednesday from the Committee to
7 issue a subpoena if anyone cares to bring that. And
8 you obviously do. Hopefully before then, we will have
9 heard and have already begun to make arrangements for
10 someone from the DOJ to come and testify.

11 SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. And again, I
12 just, you know, keep bringing this up because the
13 reason that we're here is because of this letter and
14 they've given some pretty quick deadlines. I think
15 it's August the 7th that they have --

16 SENATOR KING: Which I'm not sure what
17 that is a deadline to.

18 SENATOR ALVARADO: Well, I just think if
19 they're giving us some pretty tight deadlines, it's
20 okay for us to give them a tight deadline to respond to
21 us.

22 SENATOR KING: I don't disagree. I
23 think -- and that's why I said Wednesday will take a --
24 be happy to entertain a motion. I'll be -- but always
25 need to bear in mind as well, the governor could have

1 put congressional redistricting on the call regardless
2 of whether he received that letter.

3 SENATOR ALVARADO: I don't think that
4 would've happened. I don't think he was going to put
5 this on the call until he got that letter and until
6 Trump called him. That's what sparked all of this.
7 That's why we're here, because none of this was ever
8 discussed during the regular session. And as I said on
9 Saturday, usually in Special sessions you take up
10 things that -- bills that needed to be tweaked or
11 something like the Central Texas floods that happened.
12 But nobody was talking about redistricting in the
13 Special session. The only thing we were talking about
14 kind of on the sidelines was the court case in El Paso.

15 SENATOR KING: Well, I'm not at all
16 disagreeing with you that that's the norm, but I will
17 say the map that we're -- that's in place today for the
18 congressional members was passed in a Special session
19 in 2021 and then reaffirmed in 2023 during the regular.
20 And then we -- on occasions during the prior decade due
21 to court orders or the governor, then Perry, just on
22 his own initiative, putting it on the call, have dealt
23 with redistricting.

24 SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. Well, and since
25 I brought up El Paso, we've referenced the court case

1 in El Paso several times, whether on the floor or here.
2 Is it leadership's intention to push members to move
3 forward with withdrawing the map in the next couple of
4 weeks? Then it would be beneficial for all the
5 Committee members to be knowledgeable about the claims
6 raised in the ongoing litigation and the State's
7 position on the 2021 map and what the expert witnesses
8 said. Would you be willing to ask the Attorney
9 General's office to provide us with full transcripts
10 from the trial and have them to be part of the
11 legislative record?

12 SENATOR KING: Yeah, we can certainly ask
13 those -- them to make them available. Probably drop
14 them into our Dropbox if they do that. I can tell you
15 that I've called the Attorney General's office and
16 asked them to come and just brief me, and they've done
17 that. And then I've read quite a few of the documents
18 myself, not all of them, by any measure, and I also
19 read the Attorney General's response to the DOJ letter
20 at issue and the Court's response to the motion by the
21 plaintiffs to reopen testimony because of that letter.
22 And I'm sure that if you individually wanted to ask the
23 Attorney General's office, they'd come to your office
24 and brief you up on it as well.

25 But we'll ask them to pick out the

1 pertinent documents that'll give a good overview and
2 get those to us, and they're all public record, and
3 we'll be happy to make sure they get dropped into the
4 Committee, into your Dropbox, the Committee Dropbox.

5 SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you. I would
6 appreciate that. I think it's important for us to see
7 that because attorneys, state officials, people were
8 under oath and talked a lot about how the maps in 2021
9 were racially blind, VRA compliant, constitutional.
10 And I'm just curious if -- were people lying back then,
11 or are they -- I mean, even the man that drew the map,
12 Mr. Adam Kincaid testified to that. And so was he
13 committing perjury? Was he doing something else? I
14 think it's important that we have that, so I appreciate
15 your reply. Thank you.

16 SENATOR KING: Happy to do that.

17 SENATOR MILES: One last thing. You
18 know, it bothers me that we continue to treat this mid-
19 decade redistricting like any normal redistricting
20 because it is not a normal redistricting. But yet we
21 insist on --this body insist on treating it as if it is
22 a regular redistricting cycle. This is not a regular
23 redistricting cycle. So why are we treating this as if
24 it is? I mean, we've -- we -- this is a mid-decade
25 redistricting called by the President of the United

1 States for personal reasons, but yet we want to conform
2 it into one of our regular decade redistricting. It's
3 a round peg trying to go into a square hole. So why do
4 we have to go by the guidelines of our regular
5 redistricting process?

6 The President's office isn't, our
7 governor's office isn't, our Lieutenant Governor's
8 office isn't.

9 SENATOR KING: So what I'm trying to
10 do --

11 SENATOR MILES: And, Mr. Chairman, I'm
12 going to say this before you say that. I have the
13 utmost, once again, the utmost respect for you and my
14 colleagues, but this is an arrogant process. This is a
15 blatant, arrogant, conceited process that's just being
16 shoved down the throats of our -- of the citizens of
17 Texas, particularly the African American and brown who
18 is going to hurt the most. By no means am I calling
19 any of my colleagues arrogant and cocky, but this
20 process is, Mr. Chairman, this process is. And it's
21 going to hurt my community. It's going to hurt Senator
22 Alvarado's community, and it just seems like nobody
23 cares. It's like we don't exist in this state. And
24 many a times I've said to you, my colleagues, the
25 strength of Texas is in its diversity. We cannot live

1 up to our full capacity until we embrace our diversity.

2 It's getting ridiculous, Mr. Chairman.

3 SENATOR KING: Senator, thank you for
4 your comments, and I take them in the -- with the
5 intent that they were offered.

6 SENATOR MILES: Please do, sir. Thank
7 you.

8 SENATOR KING: And what I'll do, what my
9 commitment is that we'll -- I'll do my best to make
10 sure that we operate the Committee in full accordance
11 with the rules of the Senate and with the rules of the
12 Senate resolution we passed on Monday. And I will do
13 my best to try to keep it as open and transparent as
14 possible. So if y'all have any more requests for
15 information, let me know and I'll do my very best to
16 accommodate those.

17 Again, for right now, we're just in an
18 information gathering stage. We're here in -- because
19 the governor, we're in response to the charge, the
20 governor placing this on the call. And we have one
21 more information hearing tomorrow. After that, as I
22 mentioned, we can have a discussion Wednesday if
23 someone wants to offer a motion for a subpoena. In the
24 meantime, I'll ask for Leg. Counsel to research that
25 question of subpoenaing a federal officer.

1 And with your help I'd like to go ahead
2 and open us up for the witnesses. I know we have a few
3 standing by, including a couple of congressional
4 members. We have about 50 people in the waiting room,
5 so is -- are there any more comments --

6 SENATOR ALVARADO: Mr. --

7 SENATOR KING: Yes, Senator Alvarado?

8 SENATOR ALVARADO: I do have a
9 suggestion. Since we have Senator Hughes on the
10 Committee and he as Chair of State Affairs, they did
11 issue a subpoena to the CEO of BlackRock who lived out
12 of state in New York, so maybe he can lend his
13 expertise in helping us to get that subpoena if the
14 issue is subpoenaing somebody that is out of state.
15 Just a suggestion since he has experience doing that --

16 SENATOR KING: I've already planned on
17 consulting him --

18 SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay.

19 SENATOR KING: -- about this. And I do
20 need to make sure that there's not something unique in
21 the fact that it's a federal officer. But again, we
22 will have a -- we will have a hearing on this Wednesday
23 right after we recess for the day and by then hopefully
24 we have all the answers and we may well find that we've
25 already received a response to our invitation and

1 worked out a date for someone from DOJ to come testify.

2 SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you.

3 SENATOR KING: Thank you.

4 That said, anybody else? All right.

5 Senator Hughes, did you --

6 SEN. HUGHES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 And you have all this under control. You -- of course,
8 you're proceeding appropriately. I would only to give
9 a little context to our colleague, Senator Alvarado.

10 The Committee on State Affairs authorized
11 by a two-thirds vote authorized the Chair to issue
12 subpoenas to a number of financial firms, BlackRock, I
13 believe BlackRock, State Street, also ISS and Glass
14 Lewis, ISS a proxy advisory firm was back in 2022.
15 Armed with that, we contacted those entities, told them
16 what we wanted, and they agreed to comply without the
17 necessity of issuing the subpoena. So we never tested
18 that issue.

19 We also, in that case though, each of
20 those firms have people in Texas. So our backup was
21 even if we couldn't get to the boys in New York, they
22 had folks in Texas we could spend if we had to. So
23 just for context, everything you said is true, but we
24 never got to the point of having to enforce that
25 subpoena against an out of state person. We hope we

1 have that authority, but again, we never tested that.
2 So -- and of course I going to assist the Chair and the
3 Committee moving forward, but I want to make sure we
4 were clear on that what happened with State of Affairs
5 historically.

6 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you,
7 Senator.

8 SENATOR KING: Okay. Thank you.

9 Anybody else?

10 Yeah. Staff's telling me I need to
11 clarify that what I meant by hearing on Wednesday is we
12 would have a formal meeting of the Committee upon the
13 end of that day's business.

14 SENATOR MILES: Mr. Chairman?

15 SENATOR KING: Yes, Senator Miles?

16 SENATOR MILES: Respectfully, we have our
17 congressional people waiting.

18 SENATOR KING: I was just fixing to call
19 them up.

20 SENATOR MILES: Okay. Thank you.

21 SENATOR KING: All right.

22 SENATOR MILES: Just want to make sure we
23 give them due respect.

24 SENATOR KING: And I'm going to call them
25 up one at a time and I'm going to call the Honorable Al

1 Green first. Not giving him preference over
2 Congresswoman Fletcher, but his name is just first up
3 on the list. So -- and he is the senior member.

4 Congressman, are you with us?
5 Congressman, are you able to hear us? And could you
6 speak so we can -- you need to unmute your screen.

7 REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: I'm unmuted, I
8 think.

9 SENATOR KING: There you are. Okay.
10 Great. Thank you for being here with us today. We can
11 see your -- see you and we're eager to hear what you
12 have to say. Please proceed. And just for our record,
13 just so it's on the archived tape, if you would please
14 state your name and who you're representing today.

15 REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: I'm Congressman Al
16 Green and I represent the 9th Congressional District of
17 Texas. But I think I represent people across the length
18 and breadth of the state because the issue impacts
19 people across the length and breadth of the state. And
20 if I may say so, I take no great delight in saying what
21 I'm about to say.

22 Let me start by thanking the Committee.
23 I thank the senators. I thank you, Mr. Chairman, the
24 Vice Chair. And I want to associate myself with the
25 remarks of Senator Miles and Senator Alvarado. They

1 took up quite a bit of what I would need to say and
2 don't have time to say. There's not enough time to
3 explicate so I will abbreviate.

4 This is wrong. It is wrong for us to
5 conclude that we can eliminate four districts with
6 minority representation simply at the behest of a
7 president who wants to stay in office. This is
8 unconstitutional. It is, in my opinion, what Senator
9 Miles said. This is a racist act. This is not
10 something that you should do. The Justice Department
11 is asking the state of Texas to commit a racist act.

12 I have no problem saying the word racism,
13 just as I have no problem saying antisemitism. If we
14 were about to eliminate four districts that were
15 electing Jewish members of Congress, we'd say it's
16 antisemitic, and I would be one of the people out front
17 saying it. So I'm out front now saying that this, this
18 act is wrong, and it is a racist act, and it's
19 something that we should not allow to occur.

20 Now, most of the conversation is about
21 maps. I would hope that the Committee of the -- would
22 consider not taking any action at all. Maybe the
23 people in the state of Texas are not wanting to see
24 redistricting right now, mid-decade, and to see what's
25 about to happen. It's sort of like having a basketball

1 game and at halftime you have one team that has the
2 power to say, look, it looks like we may run into some
3 difficulties in the second half. Let's take three of
4 their players and let's put them off the field and
5 we'll take three more players and put them on our team.
6 So we'll play them, they'll have two and we'll have
7 eight. I mean, this is what we are doing. We're
8 taking from the minority communities, and we are going
9 to now give it to a broader community so that it can
10 continue to maintain power. Yes, it's a power grab,
11 but it's a racist power grab.

12 I do thank you. I don't want to exceed
13 the time. If I'm asked a question, I'll be more than
14 proud to answer. And I thank you again, no delight in
15 saying what I say, but sometimes you have to speak
16 truth to power and truth about power. This is about
17 President Trump and what he wants for Texas. Let's do
18 what is best for the Texas Texans. I thank you.

19 SENATOR KING: Thank you, sir.

20 Members, any questions for the
21 congressman?

22 SENATOR MILES: I have quite a few, Mr.
23 Chairman.

24 SENATOR KING: Senator Miles?

25 SENATOR MILES: I have quite a few, Mr.

1 Chairman.

2 Congressman Green, let me first, thank
3 you for taking time to testify today. You know, I've
4 known you for a long time and you've been a great
5 representative to your community and in Washington DC.
6 And I know how much you care about your constituents.
7 I just have five questions that I want to get through
8 at what this rigged redistricting will mean for our
9 community, Mr. Congressman Green.

10 Congressman Green, how long have you been
11 representing Congressional District 9?

12 REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Since 2005.

13 SENATOR MILES: 2005. So you've been
14 through how many 10-year redistricting cycles?

15 REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Well, the truth is
16 this I have been in court litigating more than the --
17 pardon me, at least half of the time that I've been in
18 Congress. I arrived in 2005. I was elected in '04 and
19 shortly thereafter became a part of litigation. I'm
20 currently a part of the litigation taking place in El
21 Paso, Texas. And yes, I have been there. And yes, I
22 know that the testimony from the State has been that
23 this is a colorblind map. And I understand that if you
24 say it's colorblind, then you ought to defend
25 colorblind. You should not allow the president to say

1 you should do something that obviously ignores this and
2 would in fact be unconstitutional if you did it. But
3 the president doesn't care about it being
4 unconstitutional if you will implement it, because
5 it'll take years before it will get to a final judgment
6 in court. And by this time the president will either
7 be out of office or he'll be holding over under some
8 sort of martial law.

9 SENATOR MILES: And, Congressman, you
10 said you've been most of your time in court including
11 in Laredo, El Paso. How -- what was the outcomes of
12 those other trials that you've been in besides --
13 except for the -- this latest one?

14 REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Well, we've had
15 some positive outcomes but it was when Section 2 and
16 Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, when they had more
17 strength than they have now. The Voting Rights Act is
18 being chipped away, and the only thing left for us now
19 is Section 2. And we are not going to win under Section
20 2 unless we show that this act by the state of Texas.
21 If it doesn't, and I pray that it won't, I take no
22 delight in saying what I say, but if we don't say that
23 this is racial, if we don't indicate that, we are not
24 going to get to Section 2 and we can't win. And people
25 are very smart. They understand that if they say that

1 this is just politics, this is partisan politics, or
2 this is a power grab, they understand now that the law
3 has devolved to the point where you can say that, and
4 then I've got to prove, no, that's not what your intent
5 was. And that is almost impossible. So let's not have
6 the state of Texas do what the president is asking, and
7 that is something that's unconstitutional.

8 SENATOR MILES: Thank you for outlining
9 that, Mr. Congressman. Mr. Congressman, can you tell
10 me a little bit about your community?

11 REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Yes, Senator. I
12 have a very diverse community. Everybody likes to say
13 theirs is the most diverse when in fact my --

14 SENATOR MILES: Including me.

15 REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Well, my
16 community -- and the ballot is printed in four
17 languages, English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese.
18 In my community we have what's called an international
19 district, and that is a district wherein we have
20 literally all sorts of cultures that come together and
21 people come together and we have created what I call a
22 symbiosis. We're doing more together than we could
23 ever do separate and apart from each other. And this
24 symbiosis is something that you talked about, Senator
25 Miles, and this is what we need in the state of Texas,

1 appreciating what each can bring to the table and
2 allowing that to cause us to do together what we could
3 never do separate and apart from each other.

4 But aside from the symbiosis and aside
5 from the international district, we have the largest
6 medical center in the world in the 9th Congressional
7 District. It's a great economic engine for the 9th
8 Congressional District. And my regret is going to be
9 that it'll be drawn in such a way that the people that
10 I represent who need the benefits of that medical
11 center, the medical center that we have brought dollars
12 into to help the people of Texas and anyone else who
13 comes into the medical center, it could be drawn away
14 such that the projects that we have and the things that
15 we are doing with the medical center, we may no longer
16 be able to do.

17 Aside from those things, I would add that
18 this district has what I call character, and it is the
19 character of constituents who understand that it is
20 necessary to work together. Sunnyside, which is a
21 neighborhood that is inhabited by people who have been
22 there for a long time, an old neighborhood. People who
23 understand the importance of voting, understand the
24 importance of protecting their neighborhood from many
25 of the things that are encroaching that would make it

1 not as livable as they want it to be. But we have
2 Sunnyside. It's a crazy --

3 SENATOR MILES: Where I was born and
4 raised, as you know.

5 REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Yes, sir.

6 And then we have South Park. South Park
7 Village. South Park in that area where we have people
8 who are youngsters, a lot of them up and coming young
9 people but also another very much older and stable
10 community. And then of course we have the communities
11 out in the Fort Bend area and over also into the
12 Brazoria County area. So we cover three different
13 counties, but we've been able to bring people together
14 in all of these counties. I meet with the people in
15 these counties regularly. I don't depend on being able
16 to raise \$5 million to win an election, and too many
17 people do. They say they won, but they bought the
18 election. When you can outspend your opponent 10
19 times, 10 to 1, have you really won by virtue of what
20 you are going to do or by virtue of your being able to
21 drown out the audience or the voice of your opponent.
22 I win my election because I use my feet. I use my
23 voice and I'm in those neighborhoods and people know
24 it. And this is government of the people, by the
25 people, for the people, not government of the money, by

1 the money, for the powerful.

2 SENATOR MILES: You said that very well,
3 sir. You know, Congressman Green, we heard from a
4 Republican resident of Nacogdoches that he was
5 dissatisfied with his congressional district because
6 it's just crossed so many counties. He said he
7 appreciated his representative, but his East Texas
8 community had nothing in common with Round Rock outside
9 of Austin. Congressman, do you believe that your
10 district should remain the way it is because it has
11 unique and common needs? And if you do, could you
12 expound on that?

13 REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Well, thank you.
14 I am in litigation and we were trying as best as we
15 could to improve upon the district with that
16 litigation. And there were some things that were
17 carved out of the district that we thought should have
18 been left in, but we appreciate what we have and we
19 don't want to go from a district where we were trying
20 to improve it to a district that cannot be improved by
21 virtue of what may take place with redistricting that's
22 being offered up.
23 Eliminating four congressional seats where people are
24 electing persons of color, which means that if I want
25 the public to understand this, if this happens, that

1 means you're going to have four less seats with people
2 of color, and you're likely to have more districts with
3 persons who are Anglo, fewer people who are of color,
4 fewer African Americans, fewer Latinos. You're not
5 going to have that.

6 But with reference to your question, when
7 districts are compact, you do have the opportunity to
8 traverse the districts and to visit with your
9 colleagues. And I mean, colleagues, senators, state
10 senators and representatives, understand what's needed
11 so that you can bring home those community dollars. We
12 have something called community project funding, and
13 I've worked with the senators, I've worked with the
14 county commissioners, and we do this together. It's
15 not a congressional effort. It's an effort of elected
16 officials that have harmonized. And that harmony is
17 something that I think we should appreciate, celebrate,
18 and continue to cause to manifest itself in the 9th
19 Congressional District and in the 29th. I don't mean
20 to in any way say what I'm saying to the exclusion of
21 the 29th, because I worked closely with Congresswoman
22 Garcia and I have worked very closely with the
23 Congresswoman Jackson Lee, very closely with Garcia.
24 And when Sylvester Turner was there for a brief period
25 of time, he and I were working closely together.

1 So you've got all of this harmony and we
2 have the president coming in to do what he can it seems
3 to create disharmony among people who are working
4 together. I would hope that we would not let the
5 President of the United States decide that he will pick
6 the representatives for the people in the state of
7 Texas.

8 SENATOR MILES: So if I'm hearing you
9 right, Congressman, you're saying that the breakup of
10 your district would be detrimental to the community as
11 a whole?

12 REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: It would, to the
13 community as a whole, the district as a whole, but also
14 to the adjacent districts because we work together. We
15 work with Congresswoman Garcia. She and I serve on the
16 same committee together in Congress, that is financial
17 services. We work with the 18th Congressional
18 District. But they've been without representation for
19 too long now.

20 SENATOR MILES: Yeah.

21 REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: And if the 18th
22 Congressional District had been properly represented in
23 Congress, when we had the vote on what's called the Big
24 beautiful Bill it would not have passed with those
25 votes because the bill passed with one vote and the

1 18th Congressional District, I am absolutely, totally
2 and completely sure that it -- the representative would
3 have spoken for the people of the 18th who are not
4 enthralled with what happened with that piece of
5 legislation, which is going to hurt Medicaid, which
6 means you're going to hurt Medicare. If we all -- if
7 we live long enough, we will all need Medicaid because
8 your long-term healthcare once you're hospitalized,
9 comes from Medicaid. And we want to protect it, and we
10 want to protect social security. So we understand what
11 we have in common, and we work for a common cause
12 standing on common ground.

13 SENATOR MILES: So, Congressman, our
14 community in your district is not special just because
15 of the communities. It's really special because of the
16 diversity; is that correct?

17 REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Absolutely.
18 Totally. Yes.

19 SENATOR MILES: And if you could
20 estimate, what would you estimate the racial makeup of
21 Senate District 9 basically be is? Congressional 9.
22 I'm sorry. If you had to, if you had to estimate
23 what's the breakdown?

24 REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: The ethnic group
25 that would have the greatest number would be the Latino

1 community, followed by the African-American community,
2 followed by the Anglo community, followed by the Asian
3 community. The mixture has blended well together. We
4 work together, we celebrate together. We celebrate the
5 New year at least one or two months sometimes,
6 depending on how the lunar New Year falls. So all of
7 these are things that have made the district more
8 colorful and made it much more attractive to visitors
9 coming to Houston, Texas. The international district
10 draws people from across the globe. I'm very proud to
11 represent it.

12 SENATOR MILES: And the neighborhood of
13 Sharpstown, it's in your district, right, Congressman?

14 REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Yes. The sliver
15 of it is in -

16 SENATOR MILES: Yeah.

17 REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Yeah. But yes.

18 SENATOR MILES: And do you know how many
19 languages are spoken at Sharpstown High School?

20 REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Well, Sharpstown
21 High School, Alief, I had a little portion of Alief
22 too. I can't give you the exact number.

23 SENATOR MILES: There are 22 different
24 languages spoken at a high school in your district,
25 Congressman, 22 different languages at one high --

1 public high school.

2 REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Well --

3 SENATOR MILES: At Sharpstown High. It
4 is also in my district.

5 REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Yes, sir. And if
6 I may add this, Senator, with your permission. Over
7 120 languages, I believe in the district itself. We
8 have a polyglot community. We recognize the importance
9 of culture in the community. You know, we live in a
10 country where you can have unity without uniformity.
11 We don't all have to be alike. We don't have to look
12 alike. We don't all have to speak the same language
13 all the time. We can have unity notwithstanding this
14 without that kind of uniformity. So if the president
15 is trying to achieve uniformity across the length and
16 breadth of the country, Texas is not a good place to
17 start because Texas is a very diverse state with a
18 minority population that exceeds what we used to call
19 the majority population. It's just a fact. And with
20 these facts will come some additional responsibilities,
21 and that is to have minority voices.

22 Minority voices are important. They give
23 people who think that they are not being properly
24 represented the opportunity to see representation that
25 comes from the community that people have known and

1 respected. I just think that this whole plan, scheme,
2 plot that the president has put together is to disrupt
3 and to cause disharmony and is going to be
4 unconstitutional, but it'll be more than two years.
5 He'll be out of office before it will be proven to be
6 such, because they're asking that we deal with four
7 communities that have -- four districts that have
8 elected people of color. And removing those four
9 people is going to make a difference.

10 SENATOR MILES: And, Congressman, correct
11 me if I'm wrong, but Congressional District 9 also
12 produces one of the largest block, blocks of democratic
13 votes in the state of Texas, as well as one of the
14 largest blocks of democratic votes in the country; is
15 that correct?

16 REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Correct. It has
17 traditionally supported the Democratic candidate for
18 president, the Democratic candidates for state
19 senators, I mean United States Senators and other
20 statewide offices. Yes, it is a strongly drafted and
21 constructed democratic district. I would hope that we
22 would not deny Democrats to have an opportunity to have
23 a voice. I respect the Republicans and the voice that
24 they have. I trust that Democrats will have an
25 opportunity to have our voices continue to be respected

1 in the Congress of the United States of America.

2 SENATOR MILES: So, Congressman, let me
3 be respectful to my colleagues and to Congresswoman
4 Lizzie Fletcher with one last question. So it kind of
5 looks like the only concrete piece of information about
6 this redistricting is that President Trump publicly
7 said he wants five new seats out of Texas. And after
8 that, the DOJ letter was drafted that flatly attacked
9 majority minority congressional districts. Would you
10 agree with that, Mr. Congressman?

11 REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: I absolutely agree
12 with it. And, Senator, I think it's important for this
13 to be said. You and I have not had a discussion about
14 this.

15 SENATOR MILES: No, we have not.

16 REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: The questions are
17 all questions that I'm hearing for the very first time
18 today. No prior discussions. So we come to the table
19 with clean hands and a strong voice merely asking for
20 justice. This is an injustice if we proceed as the
21 president has asked, and it would be an injustice
22 perpetrated upon people who have demonstrated that they
23 love this country just as much as anybody else does.
24 They may have values that are different, but that's
25 across the state, across the country. Let the voices

1 of all be heard and let us not decide that in the
2 middle of a decade, we can change the rules so that a
3 president can maintain his power in office.

4 SENATOR MILES: You know, Mr.
5 Congressman, I asked my colleagues on the Senate floor,
6 did they think that was just a coincidence that they're
7 coming after the district they're coming after. Do you
8 think it's a coincidence, Congressman Green?

9 REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Well, it is no
10 secret that the president and I have had national
11 news -- made national news in terms of our
12 disagreements. And I've had at least one person to
13 tell me that if the president doesn't get five, there's
14 at least one that he's coming after. So I hear these
15 things and I notice, and I cannot ignore the
16 relationship between myself and the president, but I
17 think that it's bigger than me. I think that he does
18 want to get more districts, and I think that while I
19 may be one of the many that he might take, there's an
20 effort to do more than to harm just the 9th District,
21 which would do more than to harm just one constituency.
22 There are many constituents that would be harmed.

23 And, by the way, it's about the people
24 that we serve, not about the people that we ourselves
25 who rep -- are going to Congress, represented in

1 Congress. We are representatives of the people. This
2 is a democracy, but it is a democracy that is within a
3 republic. And the republic aspect of this means that
4 the people select the candidates of their choice. And
5 the people of the 9th, the 18th, the 33rd and the 29th
6 have elected people of their choice and they just
7 happen to be people of color. There are many districts
8 where Anglos are in the majority and they elect the
9 people of their choice, and they happen to be Anglos.
10 And there's no big deal made of it. No big deal if
11 Anglos elect an Anglo person. But if we minorities
12 select a minority person, somehow the Justice
13 Department believes that you can change that and you
14 can do something unconstitutional. And that is decide
15 that you're going to violate Section 2 of the Voting
16 Rights Act and discriminate against minorities simply
17 because they are a majority in a district.

18 SENATOR MILES: Congressman, I've always
19 appreciated your leadership. I want to say thank you.
20 As I say to our constituents all the time, we must keep
21 our faith and keep our fight. Thank you, Congressman
22 Green.

23 REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Thank you,
24 Senator.

25 SENATOR MILES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 SENATOR KING: Thank you, Members. Any
2 other questions, Senator? Okay.

3 Congressman, thank you for being here
4 with us today.

5 REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Thank you, Mr.
6 Chairman.

7 SENATOR KING: The Chair calls
8 Congresswoman Lizzie Fletcher. Congresswoman, if --
9 are you -- if you would push unmute on the screen and
10 try to speak. See if we can get you up there. There
11 you are. Thank you.

12 REPRESENTATIVE FLETCHER: Yes. Thank you
13 so much, Mr. Chairman.

14 Good afternoon to the Committee. I am
15 Congresswoman Lizzie Fletcher, and I have the honor and
16 privilege of representing the people of Texas's 7th
17 Congressional District, which is made up of diverse and
18 vibrant neighborhoods in Houston from Main Street and
19 Midtown Southwest and Harris and Fort Bend counties.
20 And Congressional District 7 is a majority minority
21 district where black, Hispanic, Asian American, and
22 other minority citizens have successfully elected their
23 candidate of choice since the district was configured
24 in 2021, and I'm proud to be that candidate.

25 It's important for you to know that all

1 but 1 of the 13 congressional districts in Texas
2 represented by a Democrat has a majority minority
3 population, and that in all 13 districts, it is
4 minority voters who elect their candidate of choice.
5 Those 13 districts are the only districts where
6 minority voters who make up more than 60 percent of the
7 population of our state consistently and reliably elect
8 their candidates of choice to dismantle. Any of these
9 13 districts currently represented by Democrats would
10 be intentionally diluting the voting strength of
11 minority communities. You cannot do it without harming
12 Texans, and you shouldn't. It's against the law, and
13 it's against the fundamental organizing principle of a
14 democratic society, that all citizens, not just the
15 privileged few, have the right and have the ability to
16 have a say in our government.

17 Configuring a new map where District 7 is
18 converted to a district where white voters elect a
19 Republican is an intentional assault on minority
20 Texans. We have a long and shameful history of
21 discrimination when it comes to voting in our beloved
22 state. From poll taxes to whites only primaries, Texas
23 has discriminated against voters of color for
24 generations. But you have the power to reject that, to
25 reject the pressure from President Trump and National

1 Republican operatives urging you to offset their
2 electoral losses elsewhere by redrawing the map in
3 Texas to discriminate against minority communities, to
4 put Texans first, not surrender them. And I urge you
5 to do so, to end this process and focus on the real and
6 urgent needs of our fellow Texans and our great state.
7 Thank you.

8 SENATOR KING: Thank you.

9 Members, any questions?

10 SENATOR ALVARADO: Sure.

11 SENATOR KING: Senator Alvarado?

12 SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you, Mr.

13 Chairman.

14 Congresswoman Fletcher, it's good to see
15 you. I -- well, I can't see her actually.

16 REPRESENTATIVE FLETCHER: Thank you,
17 Senator. I'm glad to be with you. Thank you.

18 SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you. Can you
19 tell me a little bit about your district? Because I
20 think it's important -- you said some words that are
21 very important. You were the candidate of choice for
22 that district. Can you tell me about the makeup of
23 your district?

24 REPRESENTATIVE FLETCHER: That's right.
25 Absolutely. And I think there is a little competition

1 among members of Congress. I heard Congressman Green
2 testifying that he thinks he has the most diverse
3 district. I think of course the 7th Congressional
4 District may be the most diverse district, not only in
5 Texas, but in the country. The racial and ethnic
6 breakdown is split among several groups. It is about
7 33 percent Latino. It's about 26 percent Anglo, 22
8 percent African-American, 21 percent Asian American.
9 And it encompasses so many diverse and vibrant parts of
10 the greater Houston area, starting, as I said, in the
11 middle of town right off of Main Street and running
12 West. And so we have the historic heart of the LGBTQ
13 community in the Montrose neighborhood. Of course
14 we -- I share a boundary with Congressman Green, and so
15 the international district and Asia town on Bellaire
16 Boulevard is part of this district as well as the heart
17 of the Jewish community in Meyerland, we have a huge
18 number. A big South Asian population as you get into
19 Fort Bend County.

20 But throughout the district, there are
21 minority communities that come together and elect their
22 candidate of choice. And what that means is that while
23 no one group has the majority in this coalition
24 district, the choice of these voters is to -- I mean,
25 has only been so far a Democratic candidate because

1 this district has been configured this way since 2021.
2 And I've had the privilege of representing it since
3 that time. It was differently configured prior to the
4 last redistricting, and I had the privilege of serving
5 two terms in that configuration as well.

6 But what we know about this community is
7 that, you know, anticipating some of the questions,
8 there are 140 languages spoken in Houston. In our
9 community in particular, we welcome so many people from
10 not only across the country but around the world. The
11 7th Congressional District has more than twice the
12 average of foreign-born residents as the state of
13 Texas, nearly 40 percent of the people in this
14 district. It's home to the Gulfton neighborhood, which
15 is kind of the Ellis Island of Texas. And I have spent
16 the last several years just working closely with people
17 in that community on the kinds of needs that folks have
18 relating to immigration matters. We have had the
19 privilege of helping resettle refugees from Afghanistan
20 and working with our community organizations that are
21 really focused on refugee resettlement and welcoming
22 people to our great state. And I do think it's
23 important this district and the Houston community in
24 general is so welcoming.

25 You know, we all had to take Texas

1 history in seventh grade, right? And learn about gone
2 to Texas and people wanting to come to Texas, and
3 there's no better representation of a welcoming
4 community where people want to be than Texas's 7th
5 Congressional District. And there are just so many
6 different people who live and work in this community
7 and who have made it just an absolutely thriving
8 dynamic place. And I'm so proud to have the privilege
9 of representing them.

10 SENATOR ALVARADO: Well, I knew your
11 district was diverse. I did not realize to the extent,
12 and that's quite a breakdown that you just gave, and
13 again, it -- I think the important words to recognize
14 here are candidate of choice. It's just like when many
15 of us were involved in creating the 29th Congressional
16 District, we created that as a Latino opportunity
17 district, and as it turns out, the voters chose a non-
18 Latino to represent them. And that was the candidate
19 of choice, and that was a man by the name of Jean
20 Green, who I later went to work for.

21 And so trusting the voters to elect their
22 candidate of choice is so important. And just your
23 district is a very good example of that. Thank you for
24 your testimony.

25 REPRESENTATIVE FLETCHER: Well, thank

1 you, Senator Alvarado. And if I might add, I do think
2 it's really important that's what we focus on. This is
3 about the voters, not the members. It's not about any
4 one particular member of Congress. But I do want to
5 note, as I said in my testimony, that all 13 of these
6 districts, whoever is sitting in that seat, is the
7 elected representative and candidate of choice of
8 minority communities. And it's an incredible privilege
9 for me, and it's my job to make sure that I'm speaking
10 for everyone across this incredibly diverse and dynamic
11 district, because this is about them. This is about
12 the voters and not the elected officials, and it's
13 important that the voters get to pick their
14 representatives rather than the other way around.

15 SENATOR KING: Senator Miles?

16 SENATOR MILES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 Senator Fletcher, I want to also thank
18 you for testifying today. And I also want you to know
19 that you've also been -- the citizens of Congressional
20 District 7 chose properly in choosing you because
21 you're a great -- you're a great leader in your
22 community. I've watched your work. I've also worked
23 with you in our district because we share some of the
24 same parts, Congressman Fletcher. And I want you to
25 know, you know, that we're in this fight together, and

1 you've done a great job and your district is just as --
2 makes up for the Diversity District of Senate District
3 13, and you do a great job in representing the people
4 of 7, did a great job in choosing you as the candidate.
5 Thank you, Congressman Fletcher, and thank you for
6 testifying today.

7 REPRESENTATIVE FLETCHER: Thank you so
8 much, Senator Miles.

9 SENATOR KING: Senator Hinojosa?

10 SENATOR HINOJOSA: Just a quick question
11 to follow up on Senator Miles and Alvarado. I guess,
12 your congressional district is a majority minority?

13 REPRESENTATIVE FLETCHER: That's correct.

14 SENATOR HINOJOSA: And you're not a
15 minority, are you?

16 REPRESENTATIVE FLETCHER: I am not.

17 SENATOR HINOJOSA: You are Anglo White?

18 REPRESENTATIVE FLETCHER: Anglo. Yes,
19 sir.

20 SENATOR HINOJOSA: And that's why it's so
21 important what -- where you have the candidate of
22 choice and that's who the voters wanted and they
23 elected you as congressperson.

24 REPRESENTATIVE FLETCHER: Well, thank
25 you. I'm proud to be the candidate of choice of the

1 incredible people of the 7th Congressional District and
2 have had the opportunity to represent many parts of the
3 district now almost eight years. I'm in my fourth
4 term. But certainly I was new to Fort Bend County
5 after the last redistricting, and what I've found is
6 this is the most dynamic and wonderful district. And
7 there's just an incredible opportunity to work together
8 to bring people together and that is very true to
9 Houston and to the community that I have the privilege
10 of representing. So I'm honored and proud to be their
11 candidate of choice and to work with my colleagues
12 across the congressional delegation and across our
13 community. And I think what Senator Miles noted is
14 very important too, that we work together and we build
15 relationships for the long term. And so I have had the
16 opportunity to work with Senator Miles and to work
17 with -- by state representatives of course in the
18 House, other state senators certainly, and our local
19 elected officials for the benefit of everyone across
20 our community, including the commissioners in Harris
21 and Fort Bend County.

22 And I do think it's important that we
23 have a community of interest and that we are all
24 working together effectively to deliver real results
25 for the people that we all have the privilege of

1 representing.

2 SENATOR HINOJOSA: Thank you for your
3 testimony.

4 REPRESENTATIVE FLETCHER: Thank you so
5 much.

6 SENATOR KING: Thank you. Members, any
7 other questions?

8 Congresswoman, thank you for being here
9 with us today, and I know you had to wait a little
10 while to get online because we had some things to talk
11 about. So thank you for waiting.

12 REPRESENTATIVE FLETCHER: I appreciate
13 it. Thank you so much, Senator King. Thank you all.

14 SENATOR KING: I am going to now call our
15 first panel of witnesses.

16 Oh, the clerk will also show that Senator
17 Parker's with us.

18 And again, as I call the first panel if
19 you will -- right. As I call your name you'll be moved
20 from the waiting room into the Zoom. At that time,
21 please keep your audio muted. Please turn your video
22 on if I call your name. [Audio distortion] testify, at
23 that time, turn your audio, make it -- turn the mute
24 off so that we can hear you.

25 So the first would be Terri Webster,

1 Kevin Chance, Meg Barnes, Lynita Robinson, and Judson
2 Robinson. Let me say those again. Terri Webster,
3 Kevin Chance, Meg Barnes, Lynita Robinson, and Judson
4 Robinson.

5 And, Mr. Robinson, I see that you're
6 already in the Zoom. If you would turn your mute off
7 and introduce yourself. I think we've got two
8 witnesses on. So again, if you're one of the names I
9 just called, please have your video on but stay muted.
10 And, Mr. Robinson, if you would go ahead and introduce
11 yourself. And if you're -- tell us your name and if
12 you're representing any organization, if you would do
13 that as well. And sir, you'll need to unmute.

14 JUDSON ROBINSON: Thank you, Mr.
15 Chairman.

16 SENATOR KING: There you go. Welcome.

17 JUDSON ROBINSON: Judson Robinson,
18 president of the Houston Area Urban League. Good
19 afternoon.

20 SENATOR KING: Please begin your
21 testimony and please try to keep it to two minutes.

22 JUDSON ROBINSON: I'll try.

23 Panel, good afternoon. As mentioned, my
24 name is Judson Robinson, president of the Houston Urban
25 League, 1 of 90 affiliates throughout the country

1 servicing about 10,000 people annually. We're here to
2 help folks in the areas of education, housing,
3 workforce, entrepreneurship, health matters, and to be
4 a voice for those who don't always have access to the
5 opportunities that others may have access to. And so
6 we have been very instrumental in working with our
7 partners, our elected officials, those who represent us
8 and help to speak on behalf of those that we work for.
9 So I'm very thankful that we have the lines that we do,
10 and we work with the legislators that we currently work
11 with because the work is so vitally important and
12 because we're able to do the work, we're able to touch
13 about 10,000 people a year.

14 Let me jump to -- in the interest of time
15 the fact that there are three things I really want to
16 make mention of today. First, the fact that trying to
17 redraw lines in 30 days is next to impossible. Trying
18 to do it where it's fairly done where it's not a rush
19 to judgment, to where we have enough opportunity for
20 the public to give their side, to review the maps,
21 that's going to be vitally important to us. Knowing
22 exactly what we currently have in terms of our
23 representation and what we stand to lose is going to be
24 something that is kind of ambiguous and without even
25 having a map to look at, it makes it very difficult for

1 us to have any confidence going into this process.

2 The first access to congressional
3 representation for black voters and other voters of
4 color, we don't think that should be weakened with any
5 new lines being drawn based on contradictory positions
6 of the Texas legislature and the fact that race of
7 voters has played a role in the 2021 Congressional map
8 development. Secondly, the Texas legislature should
9 rely on Texans every 10 years to research all the
10 criteria necessary to conduct accurate and fair
11 congressional redistricting. That should be done by us
12 for us. Third, attempting as mentioned before, to
13 complete any mid-decade congressional redistricting
14 during a such a legislative 30 day session increases
15 the risk of a rush and non-transparent process, thus
16 limiting meaningful public participation.

17 Therefore, we urge legislature to not
18 draw lines in any way that further harm black Texans
19 and voters of color and risk further damage to those
20 communities. We need to make sure that we have what we
21 have. We know what we know, and the unknown in times
22 such as these is not something we would welcome. I
23 would encourage you to support the lines that we
24 currently have as drawn.

25 SENATOR KING: Thank you, sir.

1 Members, any questions for the witness?

2 Senator Miles?

3 SENATOR MILES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4 Judson, Brother Robinson, I want to thank
5 you for coming out and testifying, taking time out of
6 your day to testify, not just for yourself, not just
7 for your community, not just for your legacy, but also
8 on behalf of the Houston Area Urban League. You've
9 done a great -- you've led for some time now and done a
10 great job as you did a great job as a city councilman.
11 I'm sitting here with a former city councilman Carol
12 Alvarado, as you know. And we just want to thank you
13 for taking time out and testifying on this very
14 important matter. You understand what's going on. I'm
15 sure your members understand what's going on. So I
16 would ask you that you make sure and reach out to them
17 and let them know what's happening as you always do.
18 And in the legacy of your father, in the legacy of your
19 father, the first African-American city councilman in
20 the city of Houston, stand up and we're going to keep
21 our faith and we're going to keep our fight, brother.
22 Thank you.

23 JUDSON ROBINSON: Thank you, Senator.

24 SENATOR KING: Members, any other
25 questions?

1 SENATOR ALVARADO: Yes, sir.

2 SENATOR KING: Senator Alvarado?

3 SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you, Mr.

4 Chairman.

5 Judson, thank you for joining us. I know
6 you were also at the hearing on Saturday, so thank you
7 for showing up there, and I know that was -- it was
8 quite a crowd. I'm sure you were in the audience for a
9 while.

10 You brought up a good point about trying
11 to get all of this done in 30 days and it being
12 impossible. I talked about that a little bit at maybe
13 it was the first hearing or on the floor, but
14 usually -- and you've been through this many a times
15 because of your -- the political family you come from
16 and being on the city council that it takes months to
17 get through the redistricting process. Would you agree
18 with that?

19 JUDSON ROBINSON: I do. And I think it's
20 important, Senator, to -- you know, this is really
21 important. This is -- this is helping to shape the
22 future of communities for years to come. And making
23 sure that you do this fairly, that you are right, that
24 you have all the data, that is very analytical and it's
25 accurate. It's just important. You know, I think

1 working with people that you have a relationship with,
2 you mentioned, you know, the history of our family's
3 involvement in politics in Houston, and I've built, you
4 know, tremendous relationships. Those relationships
5 help us at the Urban League serve over 10,000 people a
6 year. We help them get jobs. We help them buy homes.
7 We help them find affordable healthcare. We help them
8 do many, many things that had it not been for the
9 relationships that we have, we would be in lesser of a
10 position to be as effective as we have been. And I
11 think at the end of the day, that's what we all want.

12 We all want to see communities that are
13 self-sufficient that are producing at their highest
14 levels. The programs that I have simply assist and
15 help and make sure that no one misses the opportunity
16 to have that opportunity presented and afford it to
17 them. And so, you know, when I can pick up the phone
18 and call someone who understands what it's like to come
19 from the Fifth Ward, or the Third Ward, or from
20 Sunnyside, that they understand what it takes to find a
21 job in a job desert, where they're trying to find
22 healthy access to food and there's nowhere to shop,
23 that's something that you have to almost experience to
24 appreciate the magnitude of the devastation and the
25 challenge that it creates for people especially people

1 who live in these neighborhoods to really live with
2 every day.

3 So, you know, I'm thankful that people
4 like yourself and Senator Miles who, you know, I know
5 personally and I know where he is, where he comes from,
6 and how he got to where he is and the hard work that it
7 took. And I remember you as a young worker in
8 Congressman Green's office and how hard he worked to do
9 the work that he did, and how he set a real example
10 for, you know, what leadership looks like regardless of
11 your race. But it's an outlier. Doesn't always happen
12 that way, but I think the staff around him help to keep
13 him grounded about, you know, what people that in the
14 community that he represented really needed.

15 And so, I thank you for that and I thank
16 all of you for your expertise. And I just hope that
17 you will, as I mentioned at the last hearing, you know,
18 bring not only your view, but try to see the view of
19 others and to bring their lens to the table as well.
20 It's very important as elected official that you're
21 able to do that and that you are your own master. You
22 know, there's been rumor a lot of this come from
23 Washington DC and, you know, not even rumor, but it's,
24 you know, persons at the Department of Justice that
25 make recommendation that have all of us down scrambling

1 now. You know, so it's important stuff as I said
2 earlier in my comments, and I just hope that we all
3 take this opportunity to really kind of think about the
4 magnitude of our actions and the long-range effects
5 that'll have on the communities in which we live
6 working for them.

7 SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you for showing
8 up Saturday and for being with us today.

9 JUDSON ROBINSON: My pleasure.

10 SENATOR KING: Thank you.

11 Members, any other questions? All right.
12 Thank you for being here today.

13 Chair calls Kevin Chance. Kevin Chance.
14 Sir, if you'll --

15 KEVIN CHANCE: Okay.

16 SENATOR KING: There you go.

17 KEVIN CHANCE: Sorry.

18 SENATOR KING: Great. Welcome. If you
19 would, please state your name. If you're representing
20 any organization, please let us know that, and then I
21 was a little bit loose with the last witness. Please
22 do your best to keep your testimony to two minutes.

23 KEVIN CHANCE: I will.

24 Good afternoon. My name is Kevin Chance
25 and I'm testifying for myself. And I'm angry. I'm

1 angry because I have to tell you, the Senate
2 Redistricting Committee that Donald Trump is not your
3 constituent. He didn't vote for you. You don't answer
4 to him, but you should answer to your constituents.
5 Donald Trump isn't Greg Abbott's constituent. Greg
6 Abbott should listen to his Texas constituents, not
7 billionaires in Pennsylvania and not Donald Trump.
8 Stop bowing to a bully. Do your job, not Trump's
9 bidding. Again, he's not your constituent.

10 We shouldn't even be here. You should be
11 discussing flood mitigation and flood warning systems
12 so Texas doesn't have to again deal with a
13 heartbreaking catastrophe like happened in Kerr and
14 Hunt Counties as well as others. You should be
15 discussing common sense legislation concerning hemp
16 products and not gutting an industry that generates 5.5
17 billion in annual revenue. Hemp supports over 53,000
18 jobs in Texas and helps tens of thousands of veterans
19 deal with PTSD, anxiety and depression.

20 These are just two examples of what you
21 could be spending your time on. But no, you have to
22 bow to the bully and try to kill the votes a billion of
23 people of color. That is racism. Trump ordered you to
24 focus on four minority districts. That is racism. You
25 can say all you want, that you follow the Voting Rights

1 Act, but the state of Texas has been sued in every
2 decade for 50 years over gerrymandering. Why not for
3 once do the right thing? Listen to your constituents.

4 I've heard testimony across both House
5 and Senate hearings over the past few days, and I was
6 in Houston. From observation only, I would say it had
7 been overwhelmingly against redistricting. I would've
8 testified in Houston Saturday but for the House time
9 limit of five hours for testimony, hundreds were left
10 waiting to testify.

11 So in closing, do the right thing.
12 Listen to your constituents. Stop this nonsense now.
13 Vote no on moving forward with redistricting. Thank
14 you.

15 SENATOR KING: Thank you. Members, any
16 questions?

17 SENATOR MILES: Just one state, Mr.
18 Chairman.

19 SENATOR KING: Senator Miles?

20 SENATOR MILES: Mr. Chance?

21 KEVIN CHANCE: Yeah.

22 SENATOR MILES: Thanks for keeping it
23 plain and making it plain, sir. Thank you for making
24 it plain.

25 KEVIN CHANCE: You're welcome.

1 SENATOR KING: And, sir, also I'm sorry
2 you were not able to testify in Houston, but we're glad
3 you're able to be with us today.

4 KEVIN CHANCE: Yes, and I appreciate the
5 opportunity. I will submit comments to the House.

6 SENATOR KING: Thank you.

7 Chair calls Terri Webster.

8 TERRI WEBSTER: Hello, this is Terri
9 Webster.

10 SENATOR KING: Hi. Welcome. If you
11 would please state your name and if you're representing
12 an organization, please let us know that and please do
13 your best to keep your testimony to two minutes.

14 TERRI WEBSTER: Absolutely. My name is
15 Terri Webster and I am here representing myself as a
16 resident of Fort Bend County, Congressional District
17 22. However, I also lead the Indivisible Organization
18 for Fort Bend County.

19 My -- I am having a huge issue with this
20 redistricting for several reasons. One, I question why
21 it is necessary when we are in the middle of the
22 redistricting time. It's just been four or five years
23 since the last maps were released. Two, the fact that
24 we don't have any maps to even review prior to us
25 having public hearings. So it's really difficult to

1 speak to the validity of maps that we have not yet had
2 the opportunity to review. The other is currently my
3 congressman, Troy Nehls, has not made any attempt to
4 meet with his constituents within Fort Bend County or
5 Congressional District 22. And I believe that that's a
6 direct result of how this district has been
7 gerrymandered.

8 Fort Bend County is the most diverse
9 county within the state of Texas and growing. Yet
10 because of how the district is set up running from
11 Wharton to Brazoria to Matagorda County, which are
12 primarily white areas, we are not able to really
13 represent or elect the representative that would best
14 represent the majority of this district. If that -- if
15 these maps or if the proposal goes through to solidify
16 the Republican's presence in the United States
17 Congress, it will be years. And I believe that we have
18 the right to select our elected officials, not our
19 elected officials selecting us.

20 And I will close by saying there's a lot
21 of conversation at the state level and the national
22 level about DEI and people of color having to prove
23 their merit. I would say that what is happening today
24 and what you all are considering doing is not of merit.
25 You are stealing votes from the constituents in the

1 state of Texas and you didn't earn it. Thank you.

2 SENATOR KING: Thank you.

3 Members, any questions?

4 Well, thank you for being with us today.

5 You did a great job keeping it within the two minutes

6 as well. Thank you.

7 TERRI WEBSTER: Thank you. Take care.

8 Bye.

9 SENATOR KING: Chair calls Meg Barnes.

10 Ms. Barnes, if you'll just push --

11 MEG BARNES: There we go.

12 SENATOR KING: There we go. Great.

13 Welcome.

14 MEG BARNES: I believe I'm unmuted.

15 Thank you.

16 SENATOR KING: You are. And if --

17 welcome and if you would, please state your name and if

18 you're representing any organization, let us know that

19 and please try to keep your testimony for two -- to two

20 minutes.

21 MEG BARNES: Thank you very much.

22 My name is Meg Barnes. I live in

23 Northside Houston. I'm in the 29th Congressional

24 District, which has been very well represented by

25 Sylvia Garcia since 2018. I wanted to let you know, I

1 did try to attend the hearing in Houston on Saturday,
2 and I was one of the many, many people that were not
3 able to testify at that time. But at the time that we
4 filled out the testimony forms, there was a box we were
5 instructed to check the box neutral by the chairman,
6 Mr. -- anyway, I can't remember his -- anyway, the
7 chairman informed us to check the box neutral, and that
8 was because we weren't debating any kind of actual bill
9 with an up or down vote, so neutral would be the
10 choice. So after that, I figured out what's going to
11 happen here.

12 So what's going to happen is that you're
13 going to put all those -- all of our data in through
14 Trump's bigly AI, and it's going to have to be put
15 through AI to come up with whatever mystery map you
16 come up with, because no human will want to put their
17 name to it. And once you get this thing bigly and ugly
18 enough, then what you're going to do is you're going to
19 shove it down our throats. What you're going to just
20 tally all of those neutrals and then say, well,
21 everybody's okay with this.

22 SENATOR KING: Well, thank you and again,
23 I apologize that you are not able to testify on
24 Saturday at the House hearing in Houston, but we're
25 certainly glad you're able to talk to us today. And

1 I -- just to verify, you're not representing any
2 organization today, just yourself?

3 MEG BARNES: No, sir.

4 SENATOR KING: Thank you. And, members
5 are --

6 MEG BARNES: Just me and el Distrito
7 Veintinueve.

8 SENATOR KING: Okay. Thank you.

9 Members, any questions for the witness?

10 Well, thank you very much for being here
11 today.

12 Chair calls Lynita Robinson.

13 LYNITA ROBINSON: Good afternoon,
14 Honorable Chairs and Committee Members. My name is
15 Lynita Robinson. I am a community health worker, a
16 seventh generation Texan, and the granddaughter of a
17 hundred-year-old black nurse who lived through Jim
18 Crow, the poll tax, and generations of voter
19 suppression here in Texas. I am representing Pure
20 Justice where we advocate for criminal justice reform.
21 We also advocate for social justice and we advocate for
22 racial justice.

23 Today we are witnessing a new version of
24 that suppression, one that directly targets the
25 political power of black and Latino communities. In

1 2021, Texas passed congressional maps under Senate Bill
2 6, which are still being challenged in federal court
3 for violating Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. That
4 section prohibits racial discrimination in voting, and
5 yet these maps were drawn in ways that intentionally
6 diluted the strength of black and Latino voters despite
7 our community's driving almost all of Texas's recent
8 population growth.

9 Now in 2025, we are being baited, except
10 those gerrymandered 2021 maps still under legal
11 scrutiny or except new unseen maps that would break up
12 longstanding black and Latino districts designated,
13 designed to hand Donald Trump five more Republican
14 seats. This is not fair representation. This is a
15 power grab. There is no sense -- new census data.
16 There's no court order requiring this redistricting
17 Yet, the efforts target districts like Houston's 9th,
18 18th, and 29th where our communities have fought for
19 decades to be heard. As a community health worker, I
20 see these decisions affect more than ballots. They
21 shape our lives. Our communities already face higher
22 rates of chronic illness, fewer hospitals and greater
23 barriers to care. These conditions are not accidental.
24 They are a result of policy, and policy is shaped by
25 those who hold power.

1 Redistricting diminishes our voice. It
2 is not just unethical. It is discriminatory and
3 unlawful under the Voting Rights Act. I will close
4 with a quote, and I know I'm over a few seconds, by
5 Fannie Lou Hamer:

6 Nobody's free until everybody's free.

7 Protect our districts, honor our legacy.
8 Give us fair maps. Thank you.

9 SENATOR KING: Thank you for being here
10 today.

11 Members, are there any questions?
12 Senator Miles?

13 SENATOR MILES: Ms. Robinson, I want to
14 thank you for taking time out of your schedule today
15 and testifying as you did on Saturday. You make it
16 plain and clear as well, ma'am, and I want to thank you
17 as your state senator.

18 LYNITA ROBINSON: Thank you, sir. I
19 appreciate that.

20 SENATOR KING: And, Ms. Robinson, who did
21 you say was a hundred years old?

22 LYNITA ROBINSON: My grandmother, Annie
23 Mae Jones.

24 SENATOR KING: That's -- that is aged.
25 Is -- how -- is her health good?

1 LYNITA ROBINSON: She is in Louisville at
2 a center. She does have dementia, but she still knows
3 her grandbabies, so we do still get to play with her
4 and love on her. And that was just this past June
5 28th.

6 SENATOR KING: Wow. That's remarkable.
7 Well, thank you for being here today.

8 LYNITA ROBINSON: Thank you.

9 SENATOR KING: I'm going to call up the
10 next panel and, Members, by the way, I know we're going
11 to go a little bit into the evening, maybe late into
12 the evening which is fine. But we went ahead and
13 ordered dinner for everyone and it should be back in
14 the back after a while. So you can slip back there and
15 get something.

16 Chair calls Sheryl Williams, Brittany
17 Payne, Tiffany Hill, Shawn Gallagher, and Michaela
18 Williams. Let me try that again. Sheryl Williams,
19 Brittany Payne, Tiffany Hill, Shawn Gallagher, and
20 Michaela Williams. And of course, what you'll do
21 having had your name called is turn your video on, but
22 leave your voice muted and let me go ahead and call
23 Sheryl Williams.

24 SHERYL WILLIAMS: Good evening.

25 SENATOR KING: Hello.

1 SHERYL WILLIAMS: Hi. I wanted to just
2 thank first off thank Senator Miles and Senator
3 Alvarado and Congressman Al Green for their voices in
4 the community. I am a graduate of Jack Yates High
5 School --

6 SENATOR KING: And before you begin,
7 sorry for interrupting you. Please forgive me, but
8 would you mind just for the record state your name and
9 if you're representing any organization today. We'd
10 like to have that on the record as well.

11 SHERYL WILLIAMS: Okay. Well, I'm Sheryl
12 Williams. I'm representing myself. I am a Texas
13 realtor with HomeSmart. I've been a realtor for 13
14 years now, and I have lived in the con congressional
15 districts for Senator Miles, Senator Al Green,
16 Congressman Al Green, and also I'm currently in the
17 18th District. So these issues really press hard on
18 our community. And I wanted to just express my concern
19 as a concerned citizen.

20 For real estate, I've seen -- I worked
21 with many clients in our district and I wanted to let
22 everyone know that the home, the dream for America is
23 diminishing because many of our black and brown people
24 are not able to afford homes because they're not
25 affordable anymore. As I've seen, many programs are

1 diminishing. If we do not have a congressman in the
2 18th District that represents ourselves, then we won't
3 have -- they won't know the importance of down payment
4 assistance and the importance of needing closing costs
5 because many of the people in our district live
6 paycheck to paycheck. They're very hard workers, but
7 may fall just a tad bit short to meeting all the
8 criteria that's needed in order to own a home. That
9 hurts our businesses, that hurts everyone in the
10 community, and it also hurts our safety as well.

11 Speaking on the recent issues of
12 homelessness, yes, it is increasing because of the fact
13 that we had -- don't have affordable homes, housing.
14 In the past, yes, we have had some, but now that is
15 even diminishing. I agree with Senator Miles. That is
16 not a normal redistricting period. I suggest and
17 recommend that we do not have this redistricting
18 session. It should go as planned with every ten years.
19 I'm not sure exactly why -- well, I could speculate,
20 but I do not know exactly the president's thoughts on
21 why it's important to redistrict now.

22 SENATOR KING: If I may go ahead and stop
23 you at that time, that two minutes is up.

24 And, Members, are there any questions for
25 the witness? Senator Miles?

1 SENATOR MILES: Ms. Williams?

2 SHERYL WILLIAMS: Yes.

3 SENATOR MILES: JY to the day we die,
4 right?

5 SHERYL WILLIAMS: That's right.

6 SENATOR MILES: All right then.

7 SHERYL WILLIAMS: No lies.

8 SENATOR MILES: Let me thank you for
9 testifying today. Unfortunately, your time is out and
10 we're going to respect the body, but we understand what
11 you said. And I want you to know that I'm hearing you.
12 And what I'd like for you to do is get on the phone and
13 call three of our alumnis and let them know what's
14 happening. Okay?

15 SHERYL WILLIAMS: All right. Will do.

16 SENATOR MILES: Keep up the good work.
17 Thank you for testifying.

18 SENATOR KING: Thank you. Chair calls
19 Brittany Payne.

20 BRITTANY PAYNE: Hello. Can you guys
21 hear me?

22 SENATOR KING: We certainly can.
23 Welcome. If you please state your name and if you're
24 representing an organization, please let us know that
25 and please try to keep your testimony to two minutes.

1 BRITTANY PAYNE: Thank you. So my name
2 is Brittany Payne. I'm representing myself. I live in
3 League City and I'm in Senate District 11. I'm a
4 mother and I'm an -- and I'm an engineer, and I'm
5 concerned about the reasons behind this redistricting
6 effort.

7 Growing up, my father worked as a city
8 planner and described it as the most boring job in the
9 world. But from him, I learned the importance of maps
10 and how they can present data, how they can hide it,
11 how they can be manipulated and skewed. In 9th grade,
12 I first learned the term gerrymandering in a human
13 geography class. My background appreciation for maps
14 made this issue stick out to me, and the bewilderment
15 and disgust that I felt that such a thing was ever
16 allowed was at least partially comforted after learning
17 it was illegal in theory at least. Now I'm an adult,
18 I'm a voter, and I'm just as bewildered and disgusted
19 now that Texas politicians are still trying to
20 gerrymander solely because outside forces tell them to.
21 This redistricting effort reeks of barely disguised
22 racial gerrymandering with the intent to disenfranchise
23 voters even more than the 2021 redistricting, which is
24 still under pending litigation did.

25 Sixty percent of Texas' population is

1 people of color. More voting districts should be drawn
2 for them, not less, not to mention this redistricting
3 effort is incredibly rushed. How do we know that these
4 maps have been reviewed properly to ensure they're at
5 legal and fair if the legislature is not taking time to
6 do so? If Texas is truly intent on redistricting then
7 needs to be postponed until the pending litigation is
8 complete. The maps need to be made available to the
9 public and an independent Redistricting Committee needs
10 to be established to ensure fair districts for all
11 voters. Thank you.

12 SENATOR KING: All right. Thank you.
13 You said you're from District 11?

14 BRITTANY PAYNE: Yes, that's correct.

15 SENATOR KING: May I ask what part of
16 District 11?

17 BRITTANY PAYNE: I know it's under
18 Senator Middleton in League City.

19 SENATOR KING: Okay. I'm sorry. Okay.
20 You're in League City. All right.

21 BRITTANY PAYNE: Yes.

22 SENATOR KING: Thank you.

23 Members, any questions?

24 SENATOR MILES: Yeah, Mr. Chairman.

25 SENATOR KING: Senator Miles?

1 SENATOR MILES: Ma'am, you should let
2 your senator know how you feel about this redistricting
3 and this whole proposal. He needs to know that he's
4 got constituents in his district that feel like you do.

5 BRITTANY PAYNE: And I promise I have
6 been writing letters calling him, so hopefully he
7 listens.

8 SENATOR MILES: Okay. Thank you, ma'am.
9 Thank you for keeping it plain.

10 SENATOR KING: Thank you, Members. Any
11 other questions?

12 Thank you, ma'am for being here with us
13 today.

14 Chair calls Tiffany Hill.

15 TIFFANY HILL: Good afternoon --

16 SENATOR KING: Good afternoon.

17 TIFFANY HILL: -- Members and the Chair.
18 Can y'all hear me?

19 SENATOR KING: We sure can. If you'd
20 please state your name and if you're representing an
21 organization, please let us know that as well.

22 TIFFANY HILL: Yes, sir. My name is
23 Tiffany Hill. I am here on behalf of myself as a
24 concerned citizen of Harris County here in Houston,
25 Texas.

1 So I was at the hearing on Saturday.
2 Unfortunately, I did not get to testify, was not
3 expecting it to go as long as it did. I did try -- I
4 had another meeting and I did try to hurry to come
5 back. And I did come back, but apparently I missed my
6 turn. However, as I sat and watched hundreds as
7 Senator Miles stated people pouring their hearts out,
8 it was a little disheartening because I saw many of the
9 Republican counterparts there, some on their phones,
10 some talking to other representatives, and not
11 listening to the constituents pouring out their hearts
12 of their disapproval and their dismay about this mid-
13 decade redistricting.

14 SENATOR KING: Ma'am, I'm sorry. You
15 froze. What we're going to do is wait just a few
16 minutes and we'll -- when we're going to call you back,
17 try it again. Let me go ahead and call up the next
18 panel. Well, wait a minute. We've got you back.
19 Okay. Can you still hear me, ma'am?

20 TIFFANY HILL: Looks like when -- I can
21 hear you. Am I -- looks like I was muted.

22 SENATOR KING: All right. Sure. You --
23 we've got you back. Why don't we go ahead and try it
24 again? We've got about a minute left.

25 TIFFANY HILL: Okay. So as I was saying

1 is I didn't have to voice -- I had a written letter,
2 but I had so many of my fellow Houstonians out here
3 saying everything that I wanted to say, that I'm not
4 neutral on the redistricting, that I am vehemently
5 against this. And what I do call on y'all as the
6 Senate is to please reach out to your House of
7 Representatives counterparts and let them know this is
8 just unjust. This is morally wrong. We should not
9 have politics played with our lives. People's lives
10 are at risk. I'm in CD 18 where I'm coming up on a
11 year without a representative, and that's just not
12 right. There have been over 130 lives that have
13 lost -- that have been lost due to the flood. Instead
14 of focusing energy on things that need to be done,
15 we're focusing on something political. And I just
16 don't want to go over that. I just called to let you
17 all know to please talk to your counterpart, your House
18 counterpart representatives, and please let them know
19 not to move forward with redistricting. Thank you for
20 your time.

21 SENATOR KING: Well, thank you. And
22 again, I'm sorry you were not able to testify on -- in
23 Houston, but we're glad you're here with us today.

24 Members, any questions? Hearing none,
25 thank you again for being here.

1 Chair will go ahead and call the next
2 panel now. Deddrick Wilmer, Gwenn Burud, Lauri Ruiz,
3 Lisa Brenskelle, probably butchered that name,
4 Brenskelle, Rodney LaBruce. Let me try that again.
5 Deddrick Wilmer, Gwenn Burud, Lauri Ruiz, Lisa
6 Brenskelle, and Rodney LaBruce.

7 Ms. Wilmer, let me go -- or I'm sorry,
8 Mr. Wilmer, Deddrick Wilmer, if you want to go ahead
9 and testify.

10 DEDDRICK WILMER: Good afternoon, Mr.
11 Chairman and Members of the Texas Senate Committee. My
12 name is Deddrick T. Wilmer. I'm a resident of Harris
13 County, a father, a community leader, and I serve as
14 Director and Board Secretary of Harris County Municipal
15 Utility District 248, and also a candidate for the
16 Congress Texas 9th Congressional District.

17 I speak today, not just as a candidate,
18 but as someone who believes in redistricting must
19 reflect the truth, not fear. Texas has changed, the
20 people have changed, and our maps must catch up. For
21 too long, redistricting in our state, especially in
22 Houston, has been used to empower voters, but to
23 protect its political incumbents. Even worse, some
24 established politicians and urban districts have used
25 the fear of racism as a shield, including any change to

1 district lines as an attempt to suppress black and
2 brown voices when in reality it's about preserving
3 their own seats, respectfully, Senator Miles.

4 Let's be clear. I say this loud and
5 clear. True representation isn't defined by skin
6 color. It's defined by service, respectfully, Senator
7 Alvarado. If your only argument is to keep a district
8 frozen in place is fear, then you have to stop serving
9 the people and start serving the people yourself. Look
10 at Katy and Cy-Fair Independent School Districts. If a
11 congressional district was drawn around those two
12 communities today, voter data shows that 44 percent
13 would be Democrat, 39 percent would be Republican, and
14 17 percent would be independents. But guess what? The
15 racial makeup combines a black and Hispanic of 34
16 percent and 24 percent white. That is not racial
17 monolithic or politically one-sided community. It is
18 reflection of modern Texas.

19 The reality is many minorities, working
20 families and new voters have moved beyond the urban
21 core. Yet our maps and the narratives used to defend
22 them haven't moved with them as well. Yes, Sunnyside
23 deserves better. Salt Park can do better, and Texas is
24 too good to always settle. But let me say this
25 clearly, change is always good. Texas deserves

1 districts drawn for fairness, not fear for the people,
2 not politics. I urge this Committee to do what's
3 right, not for a party or for an incumbent, but for the
4 people of Texas. I will work with Houston and Texas
5 delegation regardless of caucus or party. We are
6 Texas. We deserve -- we are America. Thank you for
7 your time and your responsibility to get this process
8 right.

9 SENATOR KING: Thank you.

10 Members, any questions? Thank you for
11 being here today. Chair calls Gwenn Burud.

12 GWENN BURUD: Hi, very close, Senator.
13 Gwenn Burud.

14 SENATOR KING: Well, I apologize.

15 GWENN BURUD: No, you were very close,
16 so --

17 SENATOR KING: Thank you.

18 GWENN BURUD: Thank you for that.

19 SENATOR KING: Thanks for being here.

20 Please state your name and let us know if you're
21 representing any organization.

22 GWENN BURUD: Absolutely. So, good
23 afternoon, Senators. My name is Gwenn Burud. I'm the
24 executive director with Texans Defending Democracy, who
25 I am representing today. We're a nonpartisan nonprofit

1 providing clear, accessible information on policies
2 that impact everyday Texans.

3 So we're here today to oppose redrawing
4 congressional lines. It's a blatant power grab that
5 reeks of desperation. Instead of treating this like a
6 political game, let's treat this like what it -- like a
7 job interview, shall we? Representation is a job and
8 candidates should have to earn it by presenting real
9 policy, clear vision, and solutions that serve all
10 Texans. They shouldn't win by default just because the
11 maps were manipulated to cling to power.

12 Sneaking in a mid-census redistricting
13 with these tactics is not only unfair, it's
14 undemocratic. Districts are redrawn every ten years
15 after the census to reflect population changes. Doing
16 it now without the current data is a manipulation of
17 the system that does not represent the real people and
18 real communities. In other words, you're rigging the
19 rules in the middle of the game. Texans need their
20 leaders to focus on real issues like strengthening
21 public infrastructure, preparing for the next natural
22 disaster, and lowering costs to support working
23 families. Instead, we're watching this legislative
24 majority spend their time dismantling the voting power
25 of Texan -- of Texans, especially communities of color

1 through an unnecessary mid-decade redistricting
2 strategy.

3 These political maneuvers come at the
4 expense of the very priorities Texans sent you here to
5 address. At the end of the day, you have to ask
6 yourselves, does diluting the voices of your fellow
7 Texans serve the greater good or is it just for
8 political survival? The answer is clear, and we
9 believe you already know it. This sets a dangerous
10 precedent. Democracy belongs to we the people, and
11 should never be sacrificed for its own -- for your own
12 partisan gain. So reject this plan and prove to Texans
13 that you still believe in fair representation. Thank
14 you.

15 SENATOR KING: Thank you.

16 Members, any questions? Hearing none,
17 thank you again for being here today.

18 GWENN BURUD: Thank you.

19 SENATOR KING: And, Members, just want to
20 let you know that the El Paso trial transcript is now
21 in your Committee Dropbox. You bet. It was just easy.
22 I just had to ask.

23 Chair calls Lauri Ruiz. Lauri?

24 LAURI RUIZ: Yes. Good afternoon. Can
25 you hear me?

1 SENATOR KING: I sure can. If you'd just
2 please state your name and if you're representing an
3 organization, let us know that and please proceed with
4 your testimony.

5 LAURI RUIZ: Thank you. My name is Lauri
6 Ruiz and I live in Houston, Texas. I'm speaking for
7 myself. Thank you for holding these hearings regarding
8 proposed redistricting.

9 I, in turn, sincerely hope you will not
10 only listen to the citizens speaking out on this issue,
11 but will follow the will of the voters and reject
12 consideration of redrawing congressional district maps.
13 As you know, the current redistricting maps are not due
14 for reconsideration until after the 2030 census. We
15 have procedures for a reason, one of which is to
16 preserve the integrity of the representation process.
17 The current proposal to with -- to redraw maps is an
18 affront to that integrity. The proposal to redraw
19 these maps now does nothing to ensure that all voices
20 in our democracy are heard, but is meant solely to
21 disenfranchise minority voices and all democratic
22 voices. I strongly oppose the consideration of
23 redistricting during this legislative session.

24 Additionally, I note that these hearings
25 are being held without the release of any proposed

1 redistricting maps. This lacks transparency -- this
2 lack of transparency is disingenuous at best. The
3 topic of redistricting should be dropped from the
4 legislative session.

5 Finally, as I've been sitting in this
6 hearing and in the waiting room, I do have an
7 additional suggestion as to the procedure for these
8 hearings which specifically invite the public to
9 testify. This Committee spent the first 47 minutes in
10 discussion which could have easily been conducted
11 toward the ends of the hearings -- end of the hearing,
12 I feel that it shows a lack of respect for the time of
13 the voters who signed up to testify. I would expect a,
14 you know, a normal delay of a few minutes when coming
15 to testify, but not for the amount of time that it took
16 today. The first constituent testified 84 minutes into
17 this hearing. Please consider restructuring future
18 hearings so that constituents speak first or near the
19 time of the scheduled hearing. We're taking time away
20 from our jobs and lives to participate in this
21 democratic process. Thank you.

22 SENATOR KING: Thank you. And I
23 apologize you had to wait. These hearings could well
24 go on until late this evening.

25 And, Members, any questions? Hearing

1 none, thank you again for being here today.

2 LAURI RUIZ: Thank you.

3 SENATOR KING: Chair calls Lisa

4 Brenskelle.

5 LISA BRENSKELLE: It's actually

6 Brenskelle.

7 SENATOR KING: Well, I almost went that

8 direction. I apologize.

9 LISA BRENSKELLE: That's okay. Nobody
10 ever gets it right. You're in the majority. So I have
11 to apologize. My camera is not working, so I'm going
12 to be a disembodied voice.

13 SENATOR KING: Well, the name looks great
14 on the screen.

15 LISA BRENSKELLE: So it's Lisa Brenskelle
16 from Houston, and I do not represent any particular
17 organization. I just want to make a few points about
18 this redistricting process.

19 Firstly, there is really no valid reason
20 to redraw maps, and they have new census data. The
21 maps drawn in 2021 after the 2020 census are still
22 being challenged in court. We should not be redrawing
23 maps just weeks after the conclusion of a trial over
24 Texas current maps when concerns over those maps are
25 still pending. We shouldn't create new maps. We

1 should ensure that the 2021 maps comply with the Voting
2 Rights Act, right.

3 Secondly, the poorly reasoned Department
4 of Justice letter directly contradicts legislator's
5 testimony in that recent trial of the contested maps.
6 In the trial, representatives for the state argued
7 repeatedly that a race blind process was used to draw
8 the boundaries of the existing districts. The State's
9 quick acquiescence to the DOJ letter contradicts their
10 testimony, and frankly, it makes it appear that they
11 were lying in court.

12 Thirdly, the districts mentioned in the
13 DOJ letter appear to target non-white legislators or
14 non-white majority districts. This leads me to believe
15 that this is an attempt at racial vote dilution, which
16 is prohibited by the Voting Rights Act. Let me remind
17 you, voters must have:

18 An equal opportunity to participate in
19 the political processes and to elect candidates of
20 their choice, unquote.

21 And finally, fair maps maintain community
22 so that voters with common concerns and interests have
23 a representative who can respond to those concerns and
24 interests. This should be the primary concern in
25 drawing of voting maps. Fairness. I don't have any

1 confidence that the current rushed and non-transparent
2 redistricting process is being carried out on that
3 basis to be fair to all voters in the state. Thank you
4 for listening to my comments.

5 SENATOR KING: Thank you.

6 And, Members, any questions?

7 Hearing none, thank you again for being
8 here.

9 Chair calls Rodney LaBruce.

10 RODNEY LABRUCCE: Good afternoon. Thank
11 you for allowing me this time. My name is Rodney
12 LaBruce and I'm not representing any specific
13 organization, just myself and my family of four.

14 I'm a lifelong resident of Congressional
15 District 30. I'm a husband, a father, a pastor for
16 over 15 years now, and I'm also a proud candidate for
17 the United States House of Representatives here in my
18 district. I love my country. I love my state and I
19 also love my district. I've actually dedicated my life
20 to faith, family, and service as well. And I'm not
21 here today to talk about just politics. I'm here to
22 talk about principle because while fairness is
23 important, I know that word kind of gets lost in
24 translation. What is fair to some may not be
25 necessarily fair to others.

1 So instead, I want to talk about
2 something that I think we all can kind of understand
3 which is fear. The fear of unintended consequences,
4 fear of waking up one day and realizing that we made a
5 mistake that we can't simply undo. Those are fears I
6 think that we should be really thinking about right now
7 before moving on with this plan. You're not just
8 drawing lines for our neighborhoods. You're redrawing
9 the lines around yours as well. In an effort to gain
10 ground in these Democratic areas, you're actually
11 weakening your own Republican base. And that means for
12 you tighter races, that means riskier primaries. That
13 means ultimately less room for error.

14 You may survive this for now, but you'll
15 be walking a much, much thinner line going forward.
16 And if the political wind shift just even slightly,
17 then your seat may be the one that flips. So let me be
18 clear. People are paying attention. Voters who've
19 never voted before are now knocking on doors. Folks
20 who've never donated to any campaign, they're giving
21 what they can now, and young people who've never voted,
22 they're registering in record numbers.

23 Now, this isn't just about maps. This is
24 about voices. And when people feel like their voices
25 are being silenced, they don't stay home. They get to

1 work. And that's what I see a lot of people --

2 SENATOR KING: Thank you very much and
3 for being here.

4 Members, any questions? Hearing none I'm
5 going to go ahead and call the next panel. Chair calls
6 Jackie Mayhorn, Chloe Wilkinson, Grace Dong, Niloufar
7 Hafizi, Dianne Lyles. Let me go through those again.
8 Jackie Mayhorn -- is she one we had trouble --

9 THE CLERK: She had trouble connecting --

10 SENATOR KING: Okay. Great. That's good
11 to know. Thank you. Chloe Wilkinson, Grace Dong,
12 Niloufar Hafizi, Dianne Lyles.

13 And Ms. Mayhorn, let's have you go first
14 please and welcome back. Ma'am, if you would just push
15 unmute. We've got your video and there you are. And,
16 ma'am, if you would, I think if you could turn off your
17 livestream or mute it, that way we won't hear it in the
18 background. And you can go ahead and proceed.

19 Okay. Ms. Lyles, if you could turn off
20 your -- I believe you must have -- be unmuted at this
21 point and we want to try to go ahead and get Ms.
22 Mayhorn back up. Ms. Mayhorn, we do have your video,
23 but you appear to not be unmuted. We can't -- well,
24 actually you are unmuted, but your audio is not coming
25 through.

1 I'm going to go ahead for a moment and go
2 to Ms. Lyles and see if that doesn't resolve itself.
3 Ms. Lyles, would you want to go ahead and testify,
4 please?

5 Ms. Mayhorn, will you unmute?

6 JACKIE MAYHORN: Yes.

7 SENATOR KING: Okay. We're going to move
8 you back into the waiting room. I'm so sorry you're
9 having trouble.

10 SENATOR MILES: Ms. Mayhorn, take your
11 mute off, ma'am.

12 SENATOR KING: All right. Back to the
13 panel. Try another -- try again here. Let's try Chloe
14 Wilkinson.

15 Ms. Wilkinson, are you with us?

16 CHLOE WILKINSON: I am. Can you hear me?

17 SENATOR KING: We sure can. Thank you.
18 If you would, just please state your name for the
19 record and if you're representing any organization and
20 welcome.

21 CHLOE WILKINSON: Absolutely. My name is
22 Chloe Wilkinson. I am the Secretary for Texas Young
23 Democrats, and I'm just here today to speak on behalf
24 of redistricting because I think it will
25 disproportionately affect young people.

1 As we know, Gen A, Gen Alpha, over 50
2 percent of these generations identify as an ethnic or
3 racial minority. We do know that the DOJ has asked to
4 target four majority minority districts. Three where
5 they're represented by a black member of Congress and
6 one where they are represented by a Latino member of
7 Congress. It is very important for us as TYD members
8 that these districts where young people's voices are
9 especially well heard are not taken away from them.

10 We already know that disenfranchisement
11 among young people is a core problem in Texas politics.
12 We know that turnout is especially low among young
13 people in a state where a majority of our voting
14 population does not vote already. So once again, we're
15 asking you not to redistrict at all, and if you are
16 going to redistrict to not target any districts that
17 are already majority minority districts because these
18 are where young people's voices are especially
19 vulnerable to these sort of redistricting efforts.

20 And with that, I'd be happy to answer any
21 questions. Thank you so much.

22 SENATOR KING: Thank you.

23 Members, any questions?

24 Hearing none, thank you for being here
25 today.

1 Chair calls Jackie Mayhorn. Let's try
2 Ms. Mayhorn again. At this point, Ms. Mayhorn, please
3 unmute.

4 JACKIE MAYHORN: I'm here.

5 SENATOR KING: Hey, that's great. Thank
6 you. So I'm so sorry you've had trouble with this, but
7 we're glad you're here. And if you would, just for the
8 record, state your name and if you're representing any
9 organization and then proceed with your testimony.

10 JACKIE MAYHORN: Okay. Good evening. My
11 name is Jackie Mayhorn, representing myself.

12 I have it -- it's a lot of organizations
13 I wish I could speak for, but we'll talk later. But
14 I've had a hard time trying to get into the Senate
15 hearing and then also in Houston. I mean, are y'all
16 considering -- I'm totally disabled. My husband's
17 disabled and we were supposed to be able to not just do
18 the hearing in person, but also online. I had signed
19 up for everything, but anyway, I just have a little
20 time.

21 I'm Jackie Mayhorn, a non-white community
22 leader from Texas Senate District 18 -- I mean, Senate
23 District 6 and 13, Congressional District 18, where I
24 fought for our neighborhoods through floods and voter
25 drives. I'm here today to denounce this uncomfortable

1 mid-decade redistricting, a shameful scheme driven by
2 the White House led by a convicted felon throwing a
3 tantrum to silence black, Latinos, Asian, indigenous
4 voices, and also disabled voices like mine.

5 In 2021, Texas ignored that 95 percent of
6 our 4 million new residents were non-white, where
7 Latinos warranting two new districts. Instead, you
8 added three majority white districts prioritizing white
9 voters in a state where 66 percent of us aren't white.
10 Now in 2025, a flimsy DOJ letter contradicting Texas's
11 claim of race blind maps is a pretext to rig maps for
12 partisans game splitting Congressional District 18 to
13 dilute our voices. As a mother, I fear for our
14 children's future. These maps tell my kids that race
15 makes their voices worthless. Our diverse communities
16 have united for justice, yet this district erases us,
17 implying only white Texans count.

18 Elected officials, are you so easily
19 swayed by this White House pressure that you betray our
20 trust? We voted for you and stand with integrity, to
21 stand with integrity, not to enable a childish power
22 grab. I demand you reject the discriminatory force for
23 us and hold transparent hearings to draw maps that
24 honor Texas's diversity. Our children deserves a
25 democracy where every voice matters, not one

1 manipulated for control. Thank you. Honor our trust
2 and fight for Texas's future. Thank you, Jackie
3 Mayhorn.

4 SENATOR KING: Thank you, ma'am, for
5 being here today.

6 Members, any questions? Senator Miles.

7 SENATOR MILES: Ms. Mayhorn, this is
8 State Senator Borris Miles. I want to thank you for
9 your tenacity today and last week. I'm sorry you
10 couldn't get into the University of Houston. I also
11 want to thank you for always keeping it plain and
12 telling it like it is and being a community leader.
13 You know, I often say you can be a community leader
14 without a title, and if you're not one of those people,
15 I don't know who is. Thank you for all that you do for
16 the community. Thank you for testifying. Hope your
17 health gets better as well as your husband's. I look
18 forward to seeing you when I get home. We're going to
19 keep our faith and we're going to keep our fight, and
20 together we'll win, Ms. Mayhorn. Thank you.

21 JACKIE MAYHORN: Thank you.

22 SENATOR KING: And thank you, Ms.
23 Mayhorn. May I ask why you were not able -- were you
24 not able to attend on Saturday in Houston? Was it not
25 set up where someone with disabilities could attend or

1 was it just too big of a crowd?

2 JACKIE MAYHORN: No, not too big of a
3 crowd. I mean, I signed up virtually first of all, and
4 then I was told that you had to be there in person. So
5 my husband has brain cancer, and I have to make sure
6 that somebody's here with him at all times and
7 everything just didn't work out. But, you know, I had
8 prepared, I've been talking to my state reps, you know,
9 State Representative Thompson, you know, everybody just
10 to try to prepare to make sure our voices are heard.
11 But yeah, well, yeah, I'm disabled, but there's nothing
12 wrong with my mind. I'm going to talk and we're not
13 going to go away, just go away in the middle of the
14 night because somebody's trying to do this for us. I
15 want to speak up for the disabled people. No, I
16 couldn't get there. My -- and my husband, he can't
17 walk. And I am just -- I've been sick for three years.
18 But I will -- I had to say something.

19 SENATOR KING: Well, we're glad you here
20 to --

21 JACKIE MAYHORN: I have to say something
22 because I cannot just be silent. I go vote. I do
23 everything that I'm supposed to do, and this is
24 ridiculous.

25 SENATOR KING: Well, we're very thankful

1 that you were able to be here today, and brain cancer's
2 a terrible thing, and I know that's a lot to deal with.
3 And with that, thank you again for being here.

4 SENATOR MILES: Ms. Mayhorn, keep your
5 faith. Keep your faith. Keep your faith. Okay?

6 SENATOR KING: Thank you, ma'am.

7 Chair calls -- oh, I'm sorry. Senator
8 Alvarado?

9 SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you, Mr.
10 Chairman.

11 Ms. Mayhorn, thank you for joining us for
12 your passion and for all that you do in the community.
13 Senator Miles, she's not my constituent, but I kind of
14 feel like she is because she often texts me. In fact,
15 she texts me this morning and I did respond. So you
16 have a lot of friends out there that are rooting for
17 you, Ms. Mayhorn. Thank you for taking the time.

18 JACKIE MAYHORN: But I live in your
19 Senate District, Senator.

20 SENATOR ALVARADO: Oh, you just claimed
21 her. But Borris --

22 JACKIE MAYHORN: But the community
23 center, Launch Point CDC, where my husband runs, and
24 we've been feeding people since 2017 for Harvey trying
25 to get housing, just everything, that's in Senate

1 District 13.

2 SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay.

3 JACKIE MAYHORN: So we got --

4 SENATOR ALVARADO: So we share --

5 JACKIE MAYHORN: Tony Thompson as a -- as
6 our state rep. Then we got Omar Wall, then we have
7 Commissioner Garcia and Commissioner Ellis. So I'm
8 like, you know, I try to hold everybody accountable.

9 SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you.

10 JACKIE MAYHORN: Because I live --

11 SENATOR ALVARADO: We're glad to all
12 share you. Yes. We're glad to all share you.

13 JACKIE MAYHORN: Yes. You got me. Y'all
14 got me. Thank you.

15 SENATOR KING: Thank you. Chair calls
16 Grace Dong.

17 GRACE DONG: Can you guys hear me?

18 SENATOR KING: Yes, we certainly can.
19 Please tell us your name and if you're representing any
20 organization, and please try to hold your testimony to
21 two minutes.

22 GRACE DONG: Okay. My name is Grace Dong
23 and I'm here representing myself today. I am a rising
24 senior from Jordan High School in Katy, and I'm
25 represented by the United States Congressional District

1 22.

2 I'm here as a student and future voter
3 who is concerned by the priorities of our legislature
4 during the Special session. Just a few years ago,
5 Republicans responded to accusations of racial
6 gerrymandering from minority voters by asserting that
7 the maps of 2021 were created race blind and that there
8 was no need for redraws. Now, when accusations come
9 from the DOJ with redistricting likely to crack
10 districts with heavy minority populations, Texas
11 Republicans have suddenly decided that there are in
12 fact issues with racial representation and current maps
13 with Governor Abbott himself acknowledging the
14 potential that districts were actually drawn on strict
15 racial lines. Looking at the majority minority
16 districts targeted by the DOJ, the issue of racial
17 discrimination in voting seems to only become an issue
18 when black and brown voters hold legislative power.

19 Furthermore, the goal of redistricting as
20 noted by President Trump to pick up five seats for
21 Republicans would skew accurate representation in
22 Congress. If this happens, Texas Republicans would
23 make up around 80 percent of the total Texas
24 delegation, despite the fact that nearly half of Texan
25 voters at 42 percent voted Democrat in the 2024

1 presidential race.

2 Regardless of your personal party
3 alignments, going through with a partisan redistricting
4 would create a Congress that doesn't fairly represent
5 the wants of all Texans. Ultimately, I wish for the
6 Texas legislature to focus on supporting Texans instead
7 of partisan concerns. In the wake of historic flooding
8 in Hill County, I believe that this Special session as
9 a whole should focus on providing flood relief and
10 support for future infrastructure projects. And if
11 nothing else, I urge for the pressing needs of Texans
12 to be brought to the table before redistricting is to
13 ensure the swift passage and signage of flood relief
14 legislation. Thank you.

15 SENATOR KING: Thank you for your
16 testimony.

17 Members, any questions?

18 Hearing none, Chair calls Diana -- I'm
19 sorry, Dianne Lyles. Ms. Lyles, if you'll just unmute.

20 DIANNE LYLES: Hello?

21 SENATOR KING: There you are.

22 DIANNE LYLES: Can you hear me?

23 SENATOR KING: We certainly can. If
24 you'd please just tell us your name and if you're
25 representing any organization, please let us know that

1 for the record as well.

2 DIANNE LYLES: My name is Dianne Lyles
3 and I'm currently not representing any organization,
4 although I do work with several organizations in the
5 community. I'm a vote -- deputy voter registrar, and I
6 register constituents all over most of the
7 congressional districts that we're addressing today.
8 And I worked with constituents and signed up
9 constituents to register to vote in many of these
10 areas.

11 And as we know, we have a strong legacy
12 of many people in Senate District 18, which -- I'm
13 sorry, Congressional District 18, which was the former
14 Sheila Jackson Lee, which I work closely with as well.
15 We -- these are rich communities of people, and right
16 now what's happening is that this government, this
17 administration, from the Federal administration as well
18 as the Texas administration, is permanently trying to
19 silence the voices of over 800,000 people in these
20 districts. Black and brown people to be specific,
21 packing them into new districts, which does not
22 represent them, does not care about their wellbeing as
23 black and brown citizens.

24 You're moving people out of the areas
25 where they are used to be -- having a voice and

1 representing and having representation to meet their
2 needs, robbing them of the opportunities to thrive in
3 their communities. Republicans claim to be Christians,
4 but this behavior and all the recent behavior of this
5 administration in Washington DC and the Texas
6 government does not show the character of being a
7 Christian when you rob poor people to give to the rich
8 gods. It's not Christlike, it's voter suppression, and
9 we want it to stop. It's unfair and unconstitutional
10 and illegal. And I was gerrymandered out into the new
11 district of central -- Congressional District 38 back
12 in 2021. And this district does not represent my
13 ethnic background at all. It's all Republican. And
14 again, that's what's trying to be done with the four
15 districts that are being gerrymandered or attempting to
16 be gerrymandered this time. They're going to be all
17 pushed into Republican Congressional representation,
18 which we know does not represent the majority of black
19 and brown people and constituents.

20 Please do not do this. It's not fair.
21 It is unconstitutional and it's voter suppression.
22 Thank you.

23 SENATOR KING: Thank you.

24 Members, any questions?

25 Thank you for being here, ma'am.

1 DIANNE LYLES: Thank you.

2 SENATOR KING: Chair calls Niloufar
3 Hafizi.

4 NILOUFAR HAFIZI: Hello. Good evening,
5 Sir Chairman and Committee Members. Thank you for the
6 opportunity to testify. My name's Niloufar Hafizi, and
7 I'm testifying on behalf of myself and Engage Action, a
8 C-4 organization committed to building civic power and
9 strengthening a pluralistic democracy.

10 I was born and raised in Houston and I'm
11 currently a Fort Bend County voter in Congressional
12 District 22, one of the districts that has been
13 gerrymandered to include different parts of different
14 counties that don't hold together communities of
15 interest. I'm here to ask this Committee to not
16 consider redistricting at this mid-year point. This
17 Committee has some members who are voting on maps in
18 2021 and 2023 when our current maps were affirmed. At
19 that time, everyone knew that 95 percent of Texas
20 population growth was driven by people of color, growth
21 that had us increase our Congressional representation
22 by two seats.

23 At that time, everyone knew that the
24 current maps that the DOJ letter was about failed to
25 adequately represent communities of color because at

1 that time, maps that could have done a better job
2 representing Texas overall, were offered and rejected
3 by both the House and Senate Committees considering
4 congressional districts at the time. At this point, no
5 new census data or any other reason to consider new
6 maps is available.

7 Instead, redrawing the maps now is going
8 to be an expensive process that will disrupt how our
9 elections work next year and create voter confusion.
10 Currently, redrawing the maps means also adjusting
11 voting precincts in the Congressional districts that
12 will be affected, thus pushing many voters into new
13 voter precincts if this process goes through. We don't
14 have an estimate of how much this will cost overall
15 because we don't have any maps to look at right now as
16 these hearings are being conducted.

17 While I appreciate the opportunity for
18 the public to come and offer their opinion, especially
19 since I was also one of the members of the public there
20 on Saturday who didn't get a chance to speak, I would
21 rather that this process not be necessary at all.
22 Before it's too late, I urge this Committee to not go
23 through with redrawing maps, and if you will, ask that
24 the process be open and transparent and give the public
25 time to consider what maps are actually being proposed.

1 Thank you.

2 SENATOR KING: Thank you. And again, I'm
3 sorry you were not able to testify in person on
4 Saturday in Houston, but we're so glad you're here.

5 Members, any questions?

6 Thank you again for your testimony.

7 I'm going to go ahead and call the next
8 panel, and then I'm going to pass the chair to Vice
9 Chair Creighton for a few minutes. Michaela Williams,
10 George Patrin, Savant Moore, Mary Herrington, Brianna
11 Ashworth. Michaela Williams, George Patrin, Savant
12 Moore, Mary Herrington, and Brianna Ashworth.

13 SENATOR CREIGHTON: Okay. The Chair's
14 intention is to begin with Michaela Williams.

15 Savant Moore, please unmute and you may
16 begin.

17 SAVANT MOORE: Good evening. My name is
18 Savant Moore. I represent myself today. I'm speaking
19 on behalf of every working man in Texas. I'm out here
20 working to provide for my family. I am pulled over
21 safely, hazard lights on, but I can't forget about my
22 Texas family. I have to speak on this issue. Let me
23 be clear about the role of the Texas Senate.

24 You are not just lawmakers, you are
25 gatekeepers. You pass the state budget, approve new

1 laws, confirm appointments, and redraw the maps to
2 decide who gets represented and who gets erased. And
3 right now, the people in House District 142, Senate 13
4 and Congressional District 18 are watching to see if
5 the Senate will protect us or push us aside. I thank
6 God for Senator Borris Miles who has always stood up
7 for our community. He has a proven resume of fighting
8 for us. We can depend on him. My prayer is that his
9 colleagues, regardless of party will join him and say,
10 not now to redrawing maps that weaken our voice instead
11 of dividing us. Let's unite around the real issues
12 facing Texas families. Disaster management, flood
13 mitigation, increase Texas public education funding by
14 \$1,300. That's what the people need. That's what the
15 people elected you to do.

16 Chairman, you and I are both fathers.
17 We're both Christians. Will you make Texas a place
18 where both our children could thrive or only yours? I
19 hope the answer is both. Leave CD 18, CD 9, CD 29, and
20 CD 33 alone at this time. And to my Republican
21 friends, I hope you know this truth. If you move one
22 voter from one congressional district, you affect every
23 single district in Texas. That is a point of reference
24 for those who understand Robert's rules, as his body
25 does. When you ship one piece, the whole structure

1 moves. That's not strategy, that's instability. And
2 Texans deserve better.

3 Do not let political games, racist games,
4 destroy decades of progress. Protect our legacy,
5 protect our power, and most importantly, protect our
6 right to choose leaders who actually look like us, live
7 among us and fight for us. Because if you choose
8 silence, the history will remember that too. Thank
9 you. God bless you and God bless Texas.

10 SENATOR CREIGHTON: Thank you for your
11 testimony.

12 SENATOR MILES: Do I go now?

13 SENATOR CREIGHTON: Senator Miles.

14 SENATOR MILES: Thank you.

15 Brother Moore, let me thank you for
16 taking time off your business to call in and keep it
17 plain. I appreciate those kind words that you gave me.
18 But you're on the path, my brother. You're on the path
19 to be a leader in your community. You don't have a
20 title yet but you'll -- yours is to come. Just keep
21 the hard work, keep the faith, keep the fight, and keep
22 what's important in front of you which is our people,
23 and serving the people that you are going to represent
24 at some point in time.

25 I want you to get off the -- when you get

1 off of work today, I want you to call about ten people
2 in your generation and tell them how serious this is,
3 brother, and hip them to what's going on. Okay? In
4 the meantime, you keep your faith, keep your fight, and
5 thanks for calling in, and thank you for those kind
6 words.

7 SAVANT MOORE: Yes, sir.

8 SENATOR CREIGHTON: Members, any other
9 questions? Okay. We will proceed back to Michaela
10 Williams.

11 If you can unmute and proceed with your
12 testimony, please.

13 MICHAELA WILLIAMS: Hi, my name is
14 Michaela Williams. I am representing Datum Creo, a
15 youth led organization that combines politics in media,
16 critical evidence and sort of side of the situation.
17 So I'll be having a more emotional appeal.

18 Texas, a state that has prided itself on
19 its rugged individualism, now turns itself into a slave
20 for the Trump machine. This isn't merely about
21 redistricting. We are witnessing the deliberate
22 dismantling of democracy, not in the name of the
23 people, but instead in fear of them. In fear that
24 Texas will turn blue, in fear that we will hold the
25 Republican party accountable for stripping away

1 healthcare from the poor and from the starving of the
2 opposed amongst its citizens by getting rid of things
3 like food stamps, all the means made by this party to
4 keep its citizens weak of the state, and by extension,
5 the citizens of this country, because people who are
6 emaciated, people who have death knocking on their
7 front door because they cannot afford adequate
8 healthcare are people who cannot rise up.

9 Also, I find it ironic that this party of
10 Christian values bends willingly to a false God that
11 stands in the White House. Also, the fact that ignores
12 Isaiah Chapter 10, Verse 1, which is:

13 Woe to those who make unjust laws and to
14 those who issue oppressive decrees.

15 And the woe will be to you if you were to
16 go through with this action because God is no full
17 history, has no blind witness. It has not been kind to
18 cowards. It has not been kind to the greedy, and most
19 importantly, it has not been kind to racists. However,
20 this issue extends beyond party lines. Instead, it is
21 about the soul of our nations in the parameters of the
22 Constitution, because there is no sudden leap into
23 fascism. There's one step and then there is another.
24 And if we were to gerrymander these four districts that
25 we are talking about here today, it would be one giant

1 leap.

2 You will not -- if you go through this,
3 you will not be remembered as heroes. Instead you'll
4 be remembered as the one -- as the ones who sold your
5 soul for a seat and traded your people for maps. So
6 all in all, in conclusion, may God have mercy on your
7 soul because the people will not and history won't
8 either. Thank you very much.

9 SENATOR CREIGHTON: Appreciate your
10 testimony.

11 Members, questions? Senator Miles.

12 SENATOR MILES: Michaela, how old are
13 you?

14 MICHAELA WILLIAMS: I'm 17 years old.
15 I'm a rising senior.

16 SENATOR MILES: You're 17? Did you say?
17 17?

18 MICHAELA WILLIAMS: Yes, sir.

19 SENATOR MILES: And where do you go to
20 school?

21 MICHAELA WILLIAMS: Yes, sir. I'm 17
22 years old. I go to school in Waller, Texas. That's
23 District 18.

24 SENATOR MILES: Senate District 18? I
25 mean, Congressional District 18?

1 MICHAELA WILLIAMS: Yes, I'm represented
2 by Senator Lois Kolkhorst.

3 SENATOR MILES: Okay. Well, you should
4 call Lois and tell her exactly how you feel. Okay.
5 And I want to thank you for calling in today and giving
6 us your view on this. And you are exactly right and
7 you've got a bright future ahead of you. But I really
8 think you should call Senator Kolkhorst and let her
9 know how you feel about it since you live in, you're up
10 and coming in her district. Thank you very much. Keep
11 the faith and keep the fight, love.

12 MICHAEL WILLIAMS: Thank you so much.

13 SENATOR CREIGHTON: Members, any other
14 questions? Thank you for your testimony.

15 George Patrin, we'll go with you next.
16 You may begin. Please unmute, sir.

17 GEORGE PATRIN: Okay. I thought that the
18 controller was going to unmute us. Can you hear me
19 now?

20 SENATOR CREIGHTON: Yes. Very well.

21 GEORGE PATRIN: All right. Thank you. I
22 appeared on a Friday, but I was cut off by the media
23 problems and I was not given time to reclaim my time,
24 so I'm glad that I'm able to do that today.

25 Again, I'm Colonel retired Dr. George

1 Patrin. I was a pediatrician with the Army for 23 plus
2 years. I live in San Antonio. I represent myself and
3 my family members, my wife Pamela, and my mother-in-
4 law, Donna.

5 I had mentioned on Friday that I've been
6 an independent voter all of my life. I vote for the
7 best candidate depending on the issues. I do not like
8 to be -- have to be cornered to be Democrat or
9 Republican. I vote for the best. I -- for a long time
10 not been able to vote for any Republicans because the
11 current Republicans do not share my values and it's
12 perhaps serendipitous that I was knocked off from
13 giving my conclusion on Friday.

14 So the point I wanted to make and I
15 really appreciate being able to hear all my fellow
16 citizens speak up. And in particular, there's a
17 handful of Latino women who are Republicans who said
18 they wanted it redistricted now because they were not
19 happy with the Democrat representation they had. I
20 just wanted to point out that I'm Anglo along with
21 Kevin Chance, who spoke earlier, and in the -- what we
22 call the white privilege group, I don't have any
23 representation either here in San Antonio with the
24 redistricting which was gerrymandered. I don't believe
25 it was race blind. I had Kevin Doggett and my family

1 taken away from us, and since then we have had none of
2 our representatives ever answer our concerns, whether
3 it be by emails, phone calls, or otherwise. So there
4 are those of us who are also feel like we're being
5 discriminated against, and I am with my Latino, African
6 American, Asian, and other minority folks to say I'm
7 with you and I'm tired of not being heard.

8 And so this redistricting should not
9 happen unless it's done to get rid of gerrymandering.
10 If you'll speak up and stop gerrymandering, if the
11 governor will tell the White House we're not doing
12 this. It's not necessary, it's not needed. And please
13 Committee you need to speak up and say we're not
14 considering this. End your day tomorrow and stop this
15 process. Thank you.

16 SENATOR CREIGHTON: Thank you, sir, for
17 your testimony. At this time, we'll proceed with Mary
18 Herrington.

19 Please unmute and you may begin your
20 testimony, Ms. Herrington,

21 MARY HERRINGTON: Can you hear me?

22 SENATOR CREIGHTON: Very well, thank you.
23 You may proceed.

24 MARY HERRINGTON: Okay. Oseh Shalom, and
25 hello, my name is Mary Carol Herrington. I'm age 66

1 plus. I am First Nation and American Israeli, a proud
2 owner of the Bryan's County Texas Cattle Ranch Leap of
3 Faith. I'm not in your top one percent. I'm what's
4 called well-educated and land poor.

5 We are here to tell you no, to tell
6 Donald Trump no. We just completed an El Paso trial in
7 which GOP state reps testified the maps were race
8 blind. Yet the DOJ is introducing and interjecting
9 race as a legal argument to justify targeting for
10 districts which is illegal. Race is not a legal
11 argument. It was race blind if we are to believe what
12 the GOP said. Stop the gerrymandering now. Be the
13 proud independent Texans I know each of you can be.

14 I debated whether I should say this, but
15 I'm going to say it anyway because I'm a
16 straightforward plain talking person. Grow some huevos
17 with spicy chorizo. Tell Trump no. I am willing to be
18 lead plaintiff in a class action suit against Trump and
19 Abbots redistricting at the risk of being once again
20 disappeared. Not a threat, but a promise. Tell Trump
21 no. Tell DC Texas handles its own business. Say no.
22 And for God's sakes, hold the special election for
23 Turner Sage, which you deliberately have not done.
24 Again, tell Trump no and that we redraw after the next
25 decennial census and let those be fair, not

1 gerrymandered.

2 Am I happy with the present maps? No.

3 Were they gerrymandered? Oh, heck yeah. I have had

4 the privilege of working for non-profits, journal --

5 Houston Chronicle, been an investigative reporter,

6 retired several times, retired PIO city of Houston,

7 written legislation for two different states. I pay

8 attention to what's said and what's not said.

9 Honorable Alvarado, you want to look at T-O-

10 U-H-Y Rex for the subpoena of federal documents and

11 testimony. Again, T-O-U-H-Y Rex.

12 SENATOR CREIGHTON: Thank you for your

13 testimony.

14 Members, any questions? At this time,

15 the Chair will call Brianna Ashworth.

16 And, Ms. Ashworth, if you'll unmute. It

17 looks like you already have and you may proceed.

18 BRIANNA ASHWORTH: Yes.

19 SENATOR CREIGHTON: We can hear you just

20 fine.

21 BRIANNA ASHWORTH: Hi, my name is Brianna

22 Ashworth and I am representing myself. I would like to

23 thank the Committee for giving me this opportunity to

24 speak. As a 24-year-old Texan living in the outskirts

25 of Houston, I was raised to be proud of our state.

1 Texans look after each other. Since getting into
2 politics, I've realized that's not true. It is the
3 power hungry politicians versus us.

4 I can list a hundred reasons why you
5 shouldn't redistrict us again, but I won't waste my
6 time. I can sit here and tell you how our state would
7 be nothing without minorities, but why waste your time
8 again and talk about why we're actually doing this.
9 It's for power.

10 You didn't call us here over a DOJ letter
11 that looks like a fifth grader wrote it. You are
12 afraid to lose your empire. You are scared of what
13 Trump will do if you fail. You do not stand for
14 Texans, nor do you speak for us. You silence our
15 voices because it's easier to cheat and gerrymandered
16 than it is to play fair.

17 I'm part of District 22 of Fort Bend
18 County and was not one of the redistricts highlighted,
19 but I have been redistrict and now I'm in the same zone
20 as people two hours away from me. We cannot hold town
21 hall meetings because of this and because my
22 representative, Troy Nehls, refuses to do a town hall
23 meeting since he's been in Congress in 2021.

24 I cannot speak for the Houston districts
25 because I do not overpower voices of minorities, but I

1 can tell you what amazing community they are. Our
2 great city of Houston always looks after for each
3 other. H-Town until I drowned is our saying when
4 Harvey flooded us. When the state froze over and our
5 senator abandoned us, it was our community that
6 persevered. Every time we get a national disaster, we
7 hear the same thing over and over again, and here we
8 are, another disaster flood, and we are wasting our
9 time on redistricting instead of helping flood victims.
10 I'm not here to try to convince you to vote in favor of
11 Texans. I'm here to warn you that we are watching and
12 we are tired of being silenced. Thank you.

13 SENATOR CREIGHTON: Thank you for your
14 testimony.

15 Members, any questions? If not, then the
16 chair will call at this time, Stephanie Wilkins. We're
17 going to proceed with several more on this panel. In
18 addition to Stephanie Wilkins, the Chair calls Tim
19 Dowling, Patricia Garris, Charlene Shafer, Andrew
20 Forsythe, and we'll begin with Stephanie Wilkins.

21 Mr. Dowling, we'll go ahead and call you
22 for your testimony. If you'll unmute, and, Ms.
23 Wilkins, you'll be next after Mr. Dowling.

24 STEPHANIE WILKINS: Okay. I'm ready
25 whenever you are. Mr. Dowling, can you unmute for us

1 please? There you go.

2 TIM DOWLING: Yes, sir.

3 SENATOR CREIGHTON: We can hear you now.

4 TIM DOWLING: All right.

5 Good afternoon, Senators. My name is Tim
6 Dowley. I'm testifying on my own behalf. Before
7 retirement, I practiced law in Texas for 42 years.
8 Testified at least 7 times in 2021 before the
9 legislature about redistricting. You blew it then when
10 you were required to act. Blow -- don't blow it now
11 when you are not required to act.

12 Why are the majority of Americans so
13 deeply cynical about politics? This redistricting is a
14 stunt. It's nothing more than an over-the-top grab for
15 more power. Democracy be damned as despicable
16 illustration of why they are. Leave the lines low.
17 Let the courts do their job and tell you if the current
18 lines were legal or not. Only if they were illegal
19 should you change them. After all, you told everyone
20 that the lines were drawn race blind. Reject the DOJ's
21 claim that you lied. Your district now will start an
22 arms race. Blue and red state line redrawing will
23 cancel out. It will all be a colossal waste of time in
24 Texas and across the country.

25 Please follow President Lincoln's advice

1 and listen to the better angels of your nation, and
2 reject the illegal and immoral demand of the current
3 president who called our valiant veterans losers and
4 suckers, pardon people who violently attacked police
5 officers defending our democracy and who wished well
6 Epstein's recruiter after she was indicted. The
7 president who's among his most famous words
8 unfortunately were not something doble and uplifting
9 like Lincoln's, but instead you can grab him by the
10 pussy. Very sad. That is the kind of man who is
11 demanding that you redistrict Texas mid-decade.

12 Exercise the fierce independence Texans
13 are proudly known for. Have the moral courage to
14 reject his radical demand that you subserviently debase
15 yourselves for him by mid-district redistricting.
16 Redistricting now would be illegal and a moral waste of
17 time. Don't redistrict unless the courts tell you you
18 must. There is no need to do what he is selfishly
19 demanding that you do. Don't do it. Please also
20 consider my written comments that explain why the DOJ's
21 letter is very plainly, legally meritless, so it cannot
22 be used as a fig leave to justify radical mid-decade
23 redistricting. Thank you for your time and for
24 permitting virtual testimony.

25 SENATOR CREIGHTON: Members, any

1 questions?

2 Ms. Wilkins, if you'll proceed, Stephanie
3 Wilkins.

4 STEPHANIE WILKINS: Good afternoon,
5 everyone. My name is Reverend Dr. Stephanie Wilkins.
6 I work with a lot of different groups and organizations
7 throughout the Committee, but I am representing myself.
8 I am a member of District 18 and I want to thank also
9 those who have spoken before me.

10 I really could just say ditto, but I just
11 want to make sure that my voice is a matter of public
12 record. So I have witnessed something. I was also
13 there, Houston, at the U of H and I witnessed something
14 I have prayed for, and that was unity. That was unity
15 in our understanding that this should not even be
16 occurring, that we should not even be having these
17 meetings and these hearings because there's no map.

18 We see very clearly that this is a
19 stacking of the debt. This is fixing the fight, and it
20 is based on desperation and it is born of fear. It is
21 born of greed, and it is born of racism. I am a person
22 of faith, so I do want to share something that I live
23 by, which is Micah 6 and 8:

24 He has told you immortal what is good and
25 what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice

1 and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God.

2 And there is nothing just about it. This
3 is unjust. It is unjust. It is based again on fear.
4 So I am asking the Committee to please speak truth to
5 power. You are elected officials. You put your hand
6 on that Bible and you swore that you would uphold the
7 laws of the state and the Constitution, so help you
8 God. So asking you to do just that, see and serve all
9 the people.

10 One thing that occurred also during that
11 hearing -- and I got frustrated when I realized that we
12 were convening for no reason, that there was a lot of
13 time, energy, effort, probably money, everything spent,
14 and people are still saying don't do this. Please,
15 please, please do what you were elected to do. Do not
16 bow down to your governor or your president. You have
17 to see all the people and serve all of the people.

18 SENATOR CREIGHTON: Thank you for your
19 testimony --

20 STEPHANIE WILKINS: Thank you.

21 SENATOR CREIGHTON: -- very much.

22 Members, Any questions? Okay. We'll
23 proceed with Charlene Shafer.

24 CHARLENE SHAFER: Good afternoon. My
25 name is Charlene Shafer. I live in Cypress

1 Congressional District 38. I'm testifying for myself.

2 One -- Congressional District 38 is one
3 of the new majority white districts created during the
4 2021 redistricting despite the census data showing that
5 the population growth has primarily been people of
6 color. The census reports that whites are 45 percent
7 of the population, but control 70 percent of the
8 congressional districts. It should not be a surprise
9 that the current maps are still being reviewed by
10 federal court. All the districts targeted for
11 redistricting are majority people of color districts.
12 Texas has intentionally discriminated against voters of
13 color for the past 50 years. This bogus redistricting
14 attempt causes discrimination on top of discrimination.

15 Texas has a multitude of problems that
16 require legislative focus. The main one for this
17 session is the devastating flood and the multitude of
18 deaths that happened along the Guadalupe River.
19 Lawmakers have continuously ignored this area. HEB
20 managed to get to the flood torn area a full three days
21 before FEMA showed up. We must not allow this to be
22 swept under the carpet again by our leaders on the
23 state and federal levels who continue to fail us.

24 Instead of focusing on the problems of
25 Texas, Greg Abbott and Donald Trump have decided it's

1 time to redistrict Texas in an attempt to maintain and
2 increase power for an incompetent administration, an
3 administration who not only was slow to respond to the
4 devastating flood in the Guadalupe, but they're using
5 federal funds to build detention centers for migrants
6 with the hurricane season just beginning.

7 What has happened to the Texas spirit of
8 independence, where are the people who demand states'
9 rights, and where are these proposed maps? This is
10 another blatant attempt to silence more voters,
11 especially people of color. Texas must solve our
12 state's problems rather than silencing the voters of
13 Texas to satisfy Washington DC. The legislature needs
14 to refuse to conduct redistricting mid-decade and
15 concentrate on the issues that matter to Texans. Thank
16 you.

17 SENATOR CREIGHTON: Thank you very much
18 for your testimony.

19 Members, any questions? Thank you very
20 much. We'll proceed with Patricia Garris.

21 PATRICIA GARRIS: Hello?

22 SENATOR CREIGHTON: Ms. Garris, you may
23 begin. Just tell us your name and if you represent any
24 organizations other than yourself, and we appreciate
25 your testimony today.

1 PATRICIA GARRIS: My name is Patricia
2 Garris, and I represent myself.

3 The year is 2040. Five of Texas's
4 largest employers have departed the state. Chevron
5 moved its -- moved to its California headquarters and
6 the NRG consolidated back to New Jersey. Tesla went
7 bankrupt leaving over 10,000 Texans without jobs and
8 Austin home values in free fall. No one would buy the
9 toxic product. Public school funding is starved and
10 employers conduct expensive remedial training for new
11 hires. Job creation is at its lowest since 2019. Loan
12 repayment schedules and the Republican decision to
13 increase tuition for undocumented students produce
14 fewer college graduates every year. Texas is known as
15 a talent wasteland. The medical center moved to
16 Minnesota although 35 percent of Texans are uninsured.
17 After the government declared research frivolous and
18 healthcare optional, the University of Texas Medical
19 School closed. No one is applying. More employees
20 won't move to Texas fearing their wives or partners
21 will die during pregnancy or childbirth, or that their
22 children will suffer an uncontrolled infectious
23 disease. The population has declined to 29 million
24 after 35 years of Republican rule. With 10 percent
25 homeowner insurance deductibles, carriers moving out of

1 the state and the fair plan insolvent, home ownership
2 has declined.

3 In 2030, Hurricane Wesley destroyed
4 NASA's headquarters, most of the crops, left a
5 million -- 11 million Texans without power, and over
6 3,000 dead. There were limited and late weather
7 serving warnings. The state faces \$725 billion in
8 damages without federal grants or loans to help. With
9 FEMA eliminated, Texans foraged for food and water with
10 resources delayed or denied. Its reminiscent of Gaza
11 in 2025.

12 Looking back, the Republicans' hunger for
13 power didn't know when to stop. Their insatiable
14 appetite devoured the future of every Texan --

15 SENATOR CREIGHTON: Thank you.

16 PATRICIA GARRIS: -- not just the ignored
17 and --

18 SENATOR CREIGHTON: Thank you for your
19 testimony. We'll have to -- we'll have to stay on
20 time, Ms. Garris, but with your testimony wrapped up --

21 PATRICIA GARRIS: Thank you.

22 SENATOR CREIGHTON: -- I'll recognize --
23 the Chair will recognize Senator Miles with a question.

24 SENATOR MILES: Ms. Garris, I want to
25 thank you for always keeping it plain and telling it

1 like it is. I want to thank you for calling in today
2 and testifying here today. And I want to thank you for
3 all that you've ever done for me in my life. Thank
4 you, Ms. Garris. Thank you. Together we'll keep the
5 faith and keep the fight.

6 PATRICIA GARRIS: Yes, indeed. And thank
7 you, Senator Miles.

8 SENATOR CREIGHTON: Okay. Members, with
9 no further questions, the Chair will take the
10 opportunity to make an announcement. We have about 20
11 people left in the waiting room, Members. For those of
12 you in the waiting room and those of you also watching
13 on the livestream, if you are registered to testify,
14 this would be the time to log into Zoom and to be ready
15 to be called by the Chair to testify soon so that your
16 voice is heard and your testimony is registered in the
17 Committee record.

18 We will now call a new panel and the
19 chair will begin with Susanna Carranza, Jesus Zamora,
20 Rosa Hopkins, Erica Lee Carter, Hayden Cohen. So we'll
21 begin with Jesus Zamora.

22 Please unmute and if you will begin your
23 testimony, Mr. Zamora.

24 JESUS ZAMORA: Hello. Thank you so much.
25 Good afternoon, Chair and Members of the Committee. My

1 name is Jesus Zamora and I'm representing Mi Familia
2 Volta as a field director.

3 I'm a lifelong resident of Houston and a
4 proud young Latino. I'm here because I care deeply
5 about the future of my community. I grew up in
6 Southwest Houston Alief, which has over 80 languages
7 that are spoken from Mandarin, Arabic, Vietnamese, and
8 Spanish. We have the Alief Neighborhood Center where
9 the community comes together to address specific issues
10 or goals. Alief ISD ranks among the most ethnically
11 and linguistically diverse districts in Texas. The
12 issues that my community faces are unique to them.
13 That's why fair representation matters, because when
14 communities like this are split up or packed into a
15 single district, their voices are diluted and the
16 issues they care about are easier to ignore.

17 That's why I'm concerned about any effort
18 to redraw district lines before the official census
19 timeline is complete. We are in the middle of
20 hurricane season here in Texas, and we should be
21 focused on flood prevention. Houston is one of the
22 most diverse cities in the country, and Latinos make up
23 a significant growing part of its population.
24 Premature redistricting puts us at a risk of being
25 divided, our neighborhoods carved up in ways that make

1 it harder for us to be heard through our vote and
2 are -- hold our elected officials accountable.
3 Redistricting is supposed to be based on accurate and
4 complete data, not at the demand of Donald Trump.

5 It's the foundation for fair and free
6 democracy for any voter from any party when it's done
7 early because we have the full picture of our
8 population growth and the demographic shifts. It risks
9 silencing the very communities that have been
10 systematically ignored and underrepresented
11 historically. When our democracy is manipulated for
12 the sake of power hungry, every Texan loses today and
13 in the future, but we do matter. We're not just the
14 future of Texas. We're the present. Honor our
15 democracy and the values of freedom and fairness. Our
16 future is on the line. Stand against this rigged
17 process today to ensure Texans have a democracy
18 tomorrow. Thank you for your time.

19 SENATOR CREIGHTON: Appreciate your
20 testimony.

21 Members, any questions? Senator
22 Alvarado.

23 SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you, Mr.
24 Chairman. I just wanted to say I appreciate all the
25 work that Mi Familia does in our community. Keep

1 staying engaged and involved. Thank you.

2 SENATOR CREIGHTON: Members, with no
3 further questions, we'll move to Susana Carranza.
4 Please unmute and begin your testimony.

5 SUSANA CARRANZA: Hi, my name is Dr.
6 Susana Carranza. I'm representing myself and I live in
7 Congressional District 37, Texas Senate District 14,
8 and I oppose the current attempt to redistrict Texas
9 mid-census.

10 I said this during my testimony at the
11 House, but it bears repeating. Of the 18 items in the
12 Special session agenda, you chose to prioritize the
13 topic that does not help Texas at all. What Texans
14 need right now is legislation focused on disaster
15 relief and prevention. It really adds insult to injury
16 that the call came as an imposition from the White
17 House and the DOG -- DOJ as an attempt to further
18 disenfranchised communities of color. It's a blatant
19 attack on Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act.

20 If you're so determined to talk about
21 redistricting, I urge you to leave our current maps
22 alone, but focus on improving the process ahead of the
23 2030 census. For instance, you could advance SJR 3,
24 the Senate Joint Resolution that proposes an amendment
25 to establish an independent redistricting, the

1 redistricting commission.

2 You know what kind of map that might be
3 useful for Texans right now? We could really use an
4 updated flood map and strong rules to stop developing
5 in flood zones or a map of areas that need warning
6 systems for disasters like sirens. But I digress.
7 What matters most is that virtually nobody in Texas,
8 nobody, wants redistricting right now, and you are
9 proceeding with that anyway when you could easily have
10 chosen not to. Why? It is not acceptable that we have
11 not even seen your proposed maps. It's unacceptable
12 that the districts called by DOJ are minority
13 districts, that you break up racial gerrymandering and
14 is not acceptable that Senate -- that House District 18
15 is a target while it's not even being represented.

16 SENATOR CREIGHTON: Thank you --

17 SUSANA CARRANZA: I urge to stop this.

18 SENATOR CREIGHTON: -- for your
19 testimony, Dr. Carranza.

20 Members, any questions? With no
21 questions, we'll proceed with Ms. Erica Lee Carter.

22 Congresswoman, are you ready?

23 REPRESENTATIVE LEE CARTER: Yes, I'm
24 ready.

25 SENATOR CREIGHTON: Yes, we can hear you.

1 Welcome. Thank you.

2 REPRESENTATIVE LEE CARTER: Thank you.

3 Thank you. Good afternoon to this Committee, Chair and
4 in his absence Vice Chair, especially to Senator -- my
5 Senator Borris Miles, SD 13 and Senator Alvarado, SD 6
6 from Harris County. I'm here on behalf of myself and
7 on behalf of the Lee family and on behalf of my former
8 constituents of the 18th Congressional District.

9 There is something missing from this
10 fight and unfortunately it is my mother, the Honorable
11 Sheila Jackson Lee, who served almost 29 years. And
12 every time there was redistricting, she stood up, spoke
13 out to ensure that the voices of the 18th Congressional
14 District and her constituents, their voices were heard,
15 that they could retain the right to elect a member of
16 their choice, that the lines would comply with the
17 Voting Rights Act as it stood at the time. She raised
18 money, she participated in many lawsuits that would go
19 on for years out of her funds that she could secure and
20 convene to speak up for those who couldn't secure funds
21 and attorneys to ensure that these lines reflected the
22 rich diversity of her district, the values of her
23 district, and those across this great state. And she
24 did it year after year.

25 So I speak on behalf of my father, Dr.

1 Owen Lee, who fought side by side with her for those
2 same values for justice, freedom, opportunity, and
3 equality, which is what the people of Texas want. I
4 took Texas history and what we learned the most is
5 Texas is about freedom. It is about our own rights
6 without interference from outsiders, which included the
7 former six flags that flew that we so proudly say we
8 got rid of most of them except our own state flag and
9 includes being here without interference from
10 Washington. I would hear that time and time again from
11 our state leaders and some of you in this body.

12 And now what I see is a clear example of
13 yielding to outsiders who want to tell you all what to
14 do during this Special session. I think it's untenable
15 and unacceptable.

16 And so as I close, I close with three
17 numbers. The first is 22, 22 years ago in 2003, some
18 valiant senators fled and broke quorum. My mother's
19 district was again up for discussion, seemingly one of
20 the favorite districts to try to redrew -- draw and
21 regroup on the lines, and they were standing up for
22 people who cannot stand up for themselves. And I thank
23 them and I hope we -- that we don't get to this point.
24 I hope that this is disregarded and thrown out because
25 I've seen no map. I would love to comment on a map,

1 but I've seen no clear map for this hearing today.

2 Then four years ago was the launch of my
3 mother's last redistricting fight when you threw her in
4 with Congressman Al Green unnecessarily, clearly at a
5 point to target black members of Congress, pitting them
6 within the same district, intentionally cutting out my
7 mother's home where I grew up from her own district.
8 It is cruel to do this to the voters, to confuse and to
9 cause chaos, to disrupt and to deter. There are
10 parents mourning the loss of their children by the
11 Guadalupe River. There are families and lost parents
12 and grandparents, and yet we have to sit here and
13 discuss simple lines on a map that we have not seen
14 because of some voice from Washington.

15 And lastly, I end with the number that
16 means the most to my family is 18. The 18th District
17 that started with Barbara Jordan. He came out of your
18 body. Mickey Leland, who also came out of your body.
19 Craig Washington, who also came out of your body. And
20 I would think in honor of them and what they have given
21 to our state, we should and could do better as Texans.
22 And so that's all I ask, that we, and including you,
23 these great senators today, do better for Texas. Thank
24 you.

25 SENATOR CREIGHTON: Thank you for your

1 testimony. Senator Miles with a question.

2 SENATOR MILES: Congressman Lee Carter,
3 Congressman Lee Carter, let me thank you for your
4 testimony today. And I simply have one question, one
5 simple question. I don't think anybody would know
6 better the answer to this question. If your mom were
7 alive today, what would she think of the process in
8 this whole redistricting process ordered by the
9 President of the United States?

10 REPRESENTATIVE LEE CARTER: She would
11 think as a member of the Judiciary Committee a shameful
12 day for democracy, for our constitution, for our rule
13 of law. It is already said every ten years, you have
14 already done it. Those lines have already been voted.
15 There are members that have been elected and this mid-
16 census redrawing is unnecessary and out of order. And
17 she used to always get called out of order for speaking
18 past, but she was always speaking for her constituents
19 and her voters and her people. So thank you.

20 SENATOR MILES: I thank you and you would
21 make your mom very proud. Thank you. Keep the faith.
22 Keep the faith.

23 SENATOR CREIGHTON: Senator Alvarado.

24 SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you, Mr.
25 Chairman.

1 Congresswoman, I'm glad that you are here
2 representing folks in the 18th Congressional District
3 because they have had no voice and no vote in
4 Washington, and that's something else that infuriates
5 many of us. So your testimony today in this process
6 certainly lifting the voices of the historical 18th
7 Congressional District. Thank you.

8 REPRESENTATIVE LEE CARTER: Thank you,
9 Senator. But I'm so proud of them for showing up on
10 this virtual and in person. They'll be heard one way
11 or the other.

12 SENATOR CREIGHTON: Members, any other
13 questions?

14 Thank you very much for your testimony
15 today.

16 The Chair will call Rosa Hopkins.

17 SENATOR KING: Ms. Hopkins, if you would
18 please unmute. Could you try speaking? You're still
19 muted. Ms. Hopkins, we'll come back to you in just a
20 minute.

21 ROSA HOPKINS: Oh, I got it. I got it.

22 SENATOR KING: Oh, okay. Great.

23 ROSA HOPKINS: Okay. My name's Rosa
24 Hopkins and I'm in Congress -- US Congressional
25 District 25.

1 Donald Trump, who has been found liable
2 for sexual abuse and is a convicted felon, remember
3 that, has directed Texas Governor Abbott to complete a
4 mid-decade redistricting, been ordered to avoid five
5 more -- in order to add five more seats to the -- in
6 the [audio distortion] calling that he knows the House
7 would at least slip due to the failing -- get executive
8 order --

9 SENATOR KING: Ms. Hopkins, if I -- Ms.
10 Hopkins, if I may, I know you're in your car.

11 ROSA HOPKINS: Hello?

12 SENATOR KING: And I know you're in your
13 car and we're delighted you're here.

14 ROSA HOPKINS: Yes.

15 SENATOR KING: But since you're on a
16 phone, if you'll turn off the video. I think it may --
17 your voice is cutting out a little bit. We want to
18 make sure we hear everything, and I think that'll open
19 up some bandwidth for you if you turn off the video.
20 There you go.

21 ROSA HOPKINS: Hold on a second.

22 SENATOR KING: Although I wanted to make
23 sure, are you actually driving or are you riding? Just
24 checking.

25 ROSA HOPKINS: I'm riding. I wouldn't be

1 driving.

2 SENATOR KING: Just checking. Just
3 checking. Go ahead. Let's let you start over.

4 ROSA HOPKINS: Okay. Some likely reasons
5 Trump is calling for redistricting are that he knows
6 the house would otherwise flip due to the failing poll
7 numbers, litigated executive orders, Republican passage
8 of the transfer of wealth from the poor to the rich
9 billionaires acr, and cruel and failing policies.
10 Cruel policies include the opening of detention centers
11 that I call concentration camps that are treating
12 immigrants that have been hunted by ICE and treated as
13 subhuman, often without constitutional due process
14 protections.

15 Trump is also currently in trouble with
16 voters due to promising them that he would release the
17 Epstein files and then claiming there are no Epstein
18 files to release, and then contradicting himself by
19 stating that the Democrats added fake information to
20 the Epstein files that he says don't exist.
21 Additionally, Trump has downplayed his relationship
22 with Jeffrey Epstein claiming he has not -- he was not
23 a fan and that they had a falling out years ago.
24 Despite this evidence suggests Trump was close friends
25 with Epstein for many years before Jeffrey Epstein was

1 convicted of child prostitution.

2 These failures have resulted in Trump
3 along with Republicans being afraid to lose the House.
4 The current Republican Congress has ceded much of its
5 power to convicted felon and has failed to -- to
6 convicted felon Trump and has failed to check executive
7 powers. Trump is afraid that a Democratic Congress
8 will fulfill its constitutional duty of checking
9 executive prowess through its oversight authority.

10 Currently, there are redistricting cases
11 pending in court in which Republicans claim race was
12 not a factor in creating the districts after the 2020
13 census. In contradiction, Trump's Department of
14 Justice is claiming that districts are racially
15 gerrymandered as an excuse to further his demand for
16 redistricting. Republicans are expediting 30 days. In
17 30 days only, Trump's convict -- uncalled for
18 redistricting directive in an emergency legislative
19 session when they should be focused on measures for
20 preventing limiting the loss of life due to disasters
21 such as the recent floods for many children perished
22 unnecessarily.

23 The Texas House and Senate redistricting
24 commissions are holding hearings without having maps
25 visible for the public.

1 SENATOR KING: Ma'am, I'll have to stop
2 you there. Your time's up, but thank you for being
3 here.

4 Members, any questions?

5 Chair calls Hayden Cohen.

6 HAYDEN COHEN: All righty. Good evening,
7 Members.

8 SENATOR KING: Good evening.

9 HAYDEN COHEN: My name is Hayden. Can
10 you hear me?

11 SENATOR KING: Yes, ma'am. Sure can.
12 Please proceed.

13 HAYDEN COHEN: My name is Hayden. I'm
14 speaking on behalf of Students Engaged in Advancing
15 Texas. I'm a 21-year-old student in Congressional
16 District 7, and I urge you to not redistrict
17 mid-century. There's no new census data to guide how
18 we should be drawing boundary lines so literally no
19 reason why we should be having this conversation.

20 Despite the declaration, you as a
21 Committee have the power to stop this. You can just
22 not move forward on any map that's proposed, that is
23 your ability in the body so please stand up for us. An
24 overwhelming majority of people who have testified in
25 both the House and Senate have been against this

1 redistricting. People in your Senate districts do not
2 want this. We shouldn't have Democratic and Republican
3 congressional districts. That's not democracy. If
4 you're a Republican candidate who needs the lines
5 redrawn to win your seat, do better as a candidate.
6 Redrawing the lines to get rid of Democratic
7 congressional seats is cheating the system because the
8 Trump administration and the Governor don't have faith
9 that a Republican can win over constituents in that
10 district.

11 To be clear, these Democrats that you
12 want to redrawn in the Republican districts will make
13 it harder for Republican Congress elected officials to
14 keep their seat. These Democrats aren't going
15 anywhere. You can't just erase them. Voters should
16 get to choose, not be chosen. It's as simple as that.
17 Thank you.

18 SENATOR KING: Thank you.

19 Members, any questions?

20 Thank you for being here. I'm going to
21 call the next panel now. Rachel Hinojosa, Chelsea
22 Lindquist, Marvalette Hunter, Michelle Ebrahimi, Arthur
23 Fleming. Let me try that again. Rachel Hinojosa,
24 Chelsea Lindquist, Marvalette Hunter, Michelle
25 Ebrahimi, and Arthur Fleming.

1 MICHELLE EBRAHIMI: All right. Good
2 afternoon, everybody. My name is Michelle Ebrahimi. I
3 am a nurse in District 9 testifying for myself on -- in
4 opposition to the legislature's ridiculous attempt to
5 redistrict our congressional districts mid-census.

6 I want to emphasize clearly that no one
7 from Texas asked for this. So much for State's rights.
8 This brazen move by the Governor, the DOJ, and the
9 President to increase Republican representation in the
10 US House by taking it away from communities of color is
11 shameful. It is a blatant racial discrimination and a
12 misplaced priority at a time when we should be focusing
13 on flood relief efforts. It's giving desperation.

14 We are barely two months into hurricane
15 season, but you choose to prioritize saving your seats
16 and stealing even more seats to silence voters on the
17 orders of a low IQ convicted felon and failed
18 businessman from New York City of all places. This is
19 proof that the ruling party does not care about
20 protecting little girls, not from flood waters, not
21 from pedophiles. The only map we should be talking
22 about right now is the treasure map that leads to the
23 Epstein files. And the only way we will get to that is
24 by voting out the pedophiles in government and those
25 who continue to protect them.

1 Manipulating maps to artificially distort
2 political power undermines the principle of a
3 representative government. The government should
4 represent a fair cross section of society, and partisan
5 manipulation makes that impossible unless y'all want to
6 be known as like the pedo party from now on.

7 So go ahead and redraw your little maps
8 based on old data. Why not draw five districts in the
9 shape of the president's name since he apparently owns
10 Texas now and loves to put his name on everything. But
11 beware the domino effect from other states because
12 while you're trying to steal five seats in Texas,
13 you'll be lucky if your party can keep five seats total
14 once California has their say. Thank you for taking
15 the time to listen to me today.

16 SENATOR KING: Members, any questions?

17 Thank you for being here.

18 Chair calls Chelsea Lindquist.

19 CHELSEA LINDQUIST: Hi, can you hear me?

20 SENATOR KING: We can. Please proceed.

21 CHELSEA LINDQUIST: Hi, thanks so much
22 for this opportunity to testify before you today. I'm
23 a resident of State District 13 represented by Senator
24 Miles at Texas House District --

25 SENATOR KING: Ma'am, if you wouldn't

1 mind, ma'am, I'm sorry to interrupt you, but just for
2 our record, would you mind stating your name and if
3 you're representing any organization, please just let
4 us know.

5 CHELSEA LINDQUIST: Of course. Thank
6 you. My name is Chelsea Lindquist. I am representing
7 myself and my husband today.

8 So I am a resident of Texas State
9 District 13 represented by Senator Miles and a Texas
10 House District 131, represented by Representative
11 Allen, Alma Allen. I'm a wife, a mother of two young
12 boys and a preschool teacher.

13 I'm a fourth generation Texan and an native
14 Houstonian of nearly 41 years. My husband is a fifth
15 generation Houstonian, and we very strongly oppose any
16 redistricting in and around our city, as well as
17 anywhere in the great state of Texas in a way that may
18 favor the Republican party. Every Texan, regardless of
19 where they live deserves to have their voice heard. It
20 is the one job of our representatives to serve us. It
21 is our right as citizens of this republic to elect
22 officials who reflect our ideals, share our morals, and
23 represent our ideologies. If the current
24 representatives cannot align themselves with the needs
25 and desires of the public for which they serve, they --

1 then those elected officials need to remove themselves
2 from the occupation of public service and not redraw
3 district lines making it so that the public cannot
4 exercise their right to vote them out.

5 We, the people give them the power, not the
6 other way around. If the Republicans choose to move
7 forward with their plans to gerrymander districts who
8 have likely already been gerrymandered, then they
9 should prepare themselves for a fight. Residents of
10 this state will not stand for this. It is unethical
11 and it is un-American.

12 SENATOR KING: Thank you.

13 Members, any questions? Senator Miles?

14 SENATOR MILES: Yes. Ms. Lindquist, I
15 want to thank you for testifying today and taking time
16 out of your schedule to let your thoughts be heard.
17 And like I've told everyone else, we're going to keep
18 our faith and we're going to keep the fight. Thank you
19 for showing up here.

20 CHELSEA LINDQUIST: Thank you so much.

21 It's my pleasure. Thank you.

22 SENATOR KING: Thank you.

23 Chair calls Marvalette Hunter.

24 MARVALETTE HUNTER: Yes. Thank you.

25 Good afternoon. My name is Marvalette Hunter. I'm a

1 wife, a mother, and an entrepreneur, and a proud Texan
2 running for the United States Congress in Texas's 38th
3 District.

4 I have spent my life in public service
5 working for the city and the people who call this great
6 state home. I had the honor of serving as the chief of
7 staff to the late Congressman Sylvester Turner, and
8 during his two terms as mayor for the City of Houston.
9 I've sat in some rooms where the stakes were really
10 high, where the pressure was real and where decisions
11 carried weight. And I've seen what it means to lead
12 with integrity, to put people first and to govern with
13 a steady hand, and I've also seen what happens when
14 that kind of leadership is replaced with gamesmanship
15 and deflection. And so let's be honest about what this
16 is.

17 This redistricting effort is not about
18 fairness. It's not about transparency. It's not about
19 serving Texans. It's a political power grab rushed
20 into motion while our communities are still trying to
21 recover from tragedy. Texans are grieving right now.
22 The floods in the hill country took lives and washed
23 away homes and exposed how under-prepared we are for a
24 changing climate. And yet, in the face of that
25 devastation, this administration didn't lead with

1 compassion. It led with calculation. Instead of
2 focusing on recovery, the Governor buried flood relief
3 under a redistricting scheme designed to shrink
4 representation for communities of color and entrench
5 power for those already holding it.

6 That's not just disappointing, it's
7 deliberate. And this is not a correction to a flawed
8 map. This is an attempt to remove as many as five
9 Congressional seats currently held by Democrats. Seats
10 that reflect the voices of black, Latino, and Asian
11 Texans. Texas is a majority minority state, yet
12 somehow 66 percent of our Congressional seats are
13 controlled by one party, not because that party earned
14 those votes, but because they manipulated district
15 lines to make sure they never had to.

16 When disaster strikes again, and sadly it
17 will, the same Texans whose votes were diluted will be
18 the ones hit hardest and heard last. This isn't
19 leadership, it's exploitation, and Texans deserve
20 better. We are not powerless. We still have our
21 voices and we have our votes. The courts are watching,
22 the country is watching, and so are the communities who
23 know that their future is being debated behind closed
24 doors. This is about more than politics, it's about
25 people and principles, and there's only one question

1 left. Will you stand up for the people of Texas or
2 will you take a knee to Donald Trump? Thank you so
3 much for the time.

4 SENATOR KING: Thank you for your
5 testimony.

6 Members, any questions? Hearing none,
7 Chair calls Arthur Fleming. Mr. Fleming, if you would
8 unmute. Mr. Fleming, we'll go ahead and call you back
9 up later. I'm going to go ahead and call the next
10 panel. Chair calls May Nguyen, Kristie King, Kristiann
11 Rushton, Janice Poscovsky, and Muneeb Aslam. Try that
12 again. May Nguyen, Kristie King, Kristiann Rushin,
13 Janice Poscovsky, and Muneeb Aslam.

14 May Nguyen, are you ready to go ahead
15 and testify?

16 MAY NGUYEN: Hello. Yes. Thank you
17 very much for this opportunity. My name is May Nguyen.
18 I am testifying on behalf of myself. I live in US
19 House District 29. Thank you for the virtual
20 opportunity to voice my concern as a Texan.

21 I implore the State to not redraw nearly
22 a handful of districts which are all held by black or
23 Latino legislators. It's a blatantly racist political
24 maneuver to attempt to maintain Republican control of
25 the US House of Representatives ahead of the 2026

1 midterm elections. If anything, the population growth
2 in Texas is due to communities of color. These
3 communities should have more representation in elected
4 officials, not less. The Special session should be
5 used to address the hill country flooding disaster and
6 help the local community rebuild. Instead, the party
7 that's been in control of this state for over 30 years
8 is caving to pressure from the President of the United
9 States who is fearful his party will lose control of
10 the House in the next midterm elections.

11 The President's afraid that Americans
12 will hold House members responsible for passing tax
13 cuts for billionaires while cutting SNAP benefits,
14 Medicaid and Medicare. Redistricting already took
15 place after the last census. Several Democratic seats
16 in Houston were explicitly drawn to allow communities
17 of color to elect a candidate of their preference by
18 ensuring they constitute a majority in a congressional
19 district in accordance with the Voting Rights Act. The
20 current maps were voted on by Republicans in 2021.
21 What has changed in the last four years that have made
22 these maps illegal now?

23 You all are accountable to Texans. State
24 leadership has historically needed federal review of
25 voting practices, stop gerrymandering. Districts

1 elected employees should not be able to pick their
2 voters. Voters should be able to elect their
3 representatives. Thank you for your time and
4 consideration.

5 SENATOR KING: Thank you.

6 Members, any questions? Hearing none,
7 before I call the next witness, I want to say we have
8 ten people left in the Zoom waiting room. If you're
9 watching the livestream and are registered to testify,
10 please go ahead and log into the Zoom. So if you are
11 watching the livestream and are registered to testify,
12 please go ahead and log into the Zoom.

13 With that, Chair calls Kristie King.

14 KRISTIE KING: Good afternoon. Thank you
15 so much for the opportunity to be able to speak. Thank
16 you all also for sitting on the day as to receive us in
17 our comments.

18 SENATOR KING: And, ma'am, before you
19 start, so glad you're here, but would you -- just for
20 our records, please state your name and if you're
21 representing any organization, please let us know that
22 as well.

23 KRISTIE KING: Yes, sir. My name is
24 Kristie King. I am representing myself in my own
25 individual capacity. I am not representing an

1 organization.

2 SENATOR KING: Go ahead and proceed with
3 your testimony.

4 KRISTIE KING: Yes, sir.

5 So, again, thank you for allowing us to
6 speak today on record against the reconsideration of
7 maps that we have not seen especially with proposals
8 that would delay fair districting until 2037.

9 I stand here because we need integrity,
10 we need accountability, and I strongly oppose this
11 redistricting effort during this legislative session.
12 The lack of transparency surrounding the process is
13 disingenuous and dangerous to our democracy. In
14 Houston, there are few opportunities for voters to
15 speak and even fewer chances for our communities to
16 truly be heard. And that's not how democracy is
17 supposed to work. And for generations, black, Latino
18 and marginalized communities in Texas have seen their
19 voices muted and taken for granted through currently
20 these redistricting schemes that have divided our
21 neighborhoods and stripped away power. Just from
22 living and knowing about reconstruction to Jim Crow, my
23 grandparents, and my parents, today's gerrymandering
24 tactics, they deny us our constitutional right. So
25 with Texas being the most diverse state in the nation,

1 yet the maps we see and the ones still being drawn in
2 secret, it does not honor that diversity. They're
3 designed to keep power in the hands of a few while
4 truly erasing the strength of the very people who built
5 this state.

6 So it is my hope that we do not stand
7 quietly while our future, our schools, and our
8 children's understanding of democracy are shaped by
9 backroom deals. This is truly a call to action for
10 each of you to be able to demand that transparency,
11 that fairness and maps that truly see and serve every
12 community. Anything less than that is not democracy,
13 it's disenfranchisement. And I hope that we will
14 continue to fight it with everything we have. Please,
15 no voice erase, no maps in secret. Texas belongs to
16 all of us. Thank you for your time.

17 SENATOR KING: Thank you for being here
18 as well. Thank you for your testimony.

19 Members, any questions?

20 SENATOR MILES: Mr. Chairman.

21 SENATOR KING: Senator Miles?

22 SENATOR MILES: Ms. King, I want to thank
23 you for testifying today and keeping it plain and
24 telling like it is. You made it very clear and you
25 spoke very well and I want to thank you for testifying.

1 Thank you.

2 KRISTIE KING: Thank you, Senator Miles.

3 God bless.

4 SENATOR KING: Thank you.

5 Chair calls Kristiann Rushton.

6 KRISTIANN RUSHTON: Hello. Can you guys
7 hear me?

8 SENATOR KING: Yes, ma'am. We can. If
9 you would just state your name and let us know if
10 you're representing any organization and then please
11 begin your testimony.

12 KRISTIANN RUSHTON: Thank you. My name
13 is Kristiann Rushton and I represent myself. I'm a
14 native Texan and resident of Houston for the last 18
15 years as an engineer.

16 I strongly oppose redistricting efforts
17 and ask the Texas Senate to focus on flood relief and
18 infrastructure first, as that should be the most
19 priority of your activities. Prioritizing
20 redistricting is an insult to the friends, family, and
21 fellow community affected by this recent storm which
22 spread an impact over this entire state.

23 Redistricting mid-census cycle is wrong
24 and unconstitutional as it is discrimination against
25 all my fellow citizens that our minority populations.

1 I live in Texas, Senate District 15 and US
2 Congressional District 7 since 2021 and lived in Texas
3 146, 13, and US 18 for 14 years prior. I am here in an
4 attempt to represent those like-minded, but my
5 testimony does nothing to equate to what is being said
6 in the neighborhoods surrounding my home. The primary
7 driver for these efforts is the request of President
8 Trump to support his desire to change additional
9 districts to Republican control and suppress the impact
10 of the vote of many of my fellow Houstonians.

11 Just a reminder, this request comes from
12 an administration which failed to send FEMA search and
13 rescue resources for approximately 72 hours after the
14 flood. They are not -- Texans are not the priority for
15 them then, nor are they the priority now. Texans are
16 your constituents. Selfish discrimination is their
17 sole purpose, but that doesn't hurt only minority
18 Texans. It hurts all Texans. The greatest technology
19 innovations come from diversity of thought in the
20 boardroom or lab. And I believe the greatest progress
21 in society comes from similar differential perspectives
22 being in a room together in the legislature. Texas has
23 a strong history of not bow -- not bowing to federal
24 mandates.

25 I ask you to stand up to the Justice

1 Department and to stand up for all Texans by not
2 discriminating against the minorities of this great
3 state. These efforts hurt each and every Texan. Do
4 not allow it to happen.

5 SENATOR KING: Thank you.

6 Members, any questions?

7 Thank you for being here tonight.

8 Chair calls Janice Poscovsky.

9 JANICE POSCOVSKY: Thank you. My name is
10 Janice Poscovsky representing myself. I'm a citizen of
11 the United States and have lived in Texas for over 60
12 years. I speak today as a concerned Texan advocating
13 for fair representation.

14 Much of what I have to say has already
15 been said, but I want my protest to be on record. The
16 proposed mid-decade redistricting plan currently under
17 consideration is not about updating maps in response to
18 population changes, which would've been addressed after
19 the 2020 census had this body not then gerrymandered
20 the maps to gain more seats at that time.

21 This is rather a blatant attempt to
22 gerrymander districts so that the number of Republican
23 held seats exceeds the actual number of Republican
24 voters in Texas. Let's call it what it is, a political
25 power grab disguised as a procedural necessity, and the

1 process has been just as troubling as the plan itself.
2 The decision to throw in redistricting legislation
3 during this Special session when flood disaster relief
4 should be your main focus is manipulative. Texans
5 deserve better than being used as pawns in a scheme to
6 force Democrats to remain in session and lend
7 legitimacy to this redistricting process.

8 Flood preparedness, prevention, response
9 and relief are matters of public safety. They should
10 never be used as leverage to coerce participation in a
11 plan designed to suppress voters and skew
12 representation. Don't use the families who are
13 mourning the deaths of their loved ones to push through
14 gerrymandered maps that silence millions of Texans,
15 especially in communities of color.

16 Let's be clear. Non-white Texans have
17 driven nearly all the state's population growth over
18 the last decade, and yet this plan minimizes their
19 political influence through packing and cracking
20 tactics undermining their right to fair and equal
21 representation. Redistricting should serve the people,
22 not entrench power. When our democracy is manipulated
23 behind closed doors and veiled in legislative bait and
24 switch, trust is broken.

25 It's also telling that not one of the

1 multitude of speakers before me have been in favor of
2 this redistricting scheme. Let that sink in. This
3 plan isn't just unfair, it's unjust. And I urge this
4 Committee to reject it in favor of transparent and
5 constitutionally sound district maps drawn after the
6 next census, maps that reflect the true diversity and
7 will of the people of Texas. And if you are not
8 willing to do that, and if you are not willing to wait,
9 then do what's right and do what's fair. Thank you.

10 SENATOR KING: Members, any questions?

11 Thank you for being here tonight.

12 Chair calls Muneeb Aslam.

13 MUNEEB ASLAM: Good afternoon, Chair and
14 Members of the Committee. My name is Muneeb Aslam, and
15 I'm representing myself. I'm a proud Texan who grew up
16 in McKinney, Texas and I'm here to strongly oppose this
17 mid-decade redistricting.

18 Let's be clear, this is a power grab to
19 dilute the power of minority communities. Communities
20 of color have driven Texas's growth and success, yet
21 our political power is always under attack. Districts
22 like Texas 9 and Texas 33 weren't drawn by accident.
23 They reflect a diversity of our state and now they're
24 being targeted not to uphold the Constitution, but to
25 protect a partisan majority all the way in DC.

1 The hypocrisy is what upsets me. The
2 party of small government is now taking its cues
3 directly from the executive branch. Just recently
4 President Trump said Texas will be the biggest one,
5 just a simple redrawing, we pick up five seats, and
6 that's a direct quote. And that is not democracy.
7 That is plain corruption.

8 The State has claimed that these maps
9 were drawn racially blind, colorblind, and now insists
10 that race is the very reason to redraw them. You
11 cannot have it both ways. As someone who has worked to
12 engage young Texans in bipartisan civic life, it is
13 really disheartening to see our leaders prioritizing
14 political gain over public needs. We do not need
15 gerrymander districts. We need investment in our
16 communities. Texas ranks 43rd in childhood wellbeing.
17 We are the state with the second highest GDP and nearly
18 one in five of our children live in poverty. Over 1.6
19 million Texas kids are food insecure. And this is a
20 Special session priority for what reason?

21 I hope that you listen to our voices,
22 that you take our communities into consideration, and I
23 hope each of you finds the courage to stand up for what
24 is right and what you know is right. Thank you.

25 SENATOR KING: Thank you.

1 Members, any questions? Hearing none,
2 Chair calls Arthur Fleming. Oh, I'm sorry. This will
3 be a new panel. My apologies. I'm going to call up
4 this panel Arthur Fleming, Aida Pita, Konstantinos
5 Vogiatzis, Kellye McGarry, Arnetta Murray. Try that
6 again. Arthur Fleming, Aida Pita, Konstantinos
7 Vogiatzis, Kellye McGarry, and Arnetta Murray.

8 Ms. Pita, if you would, if you could
9 silence your streaming, and then if you wish to unmute
10 and go ahead and testify. Please tell us your name and
11 if you represent any organization. Okay. While we're
12 waiting on Ms. Pita, let's go to Arnetta Murray.

13 AIDA PITA: Can you hear me?

14 SENATOR KING: Yes, ma'am. Would you --
15 and you are? I think we've got two people at once
16 here.

17 Ms. Pita, if I could ask you to stand by
18 for just a minute, and we're going to go ahead and go
19 with Arnetta.

20 AIDA PITA: I'm here. Sorry. Can you
21 hear me?

22 ARNETTA MURRAY: I can be quiet. That's
23 okay.

24 SENATOR KING: Okay. All right. If
25 everyone would turn on their mute except for Ms.

1 Murray, and Ms. Murray, if you would, go ahead. Ms.

2 Murray, I think you're muted if you would unmute.

3 ARNETTA MURRAY: Okay. I'm unmuted. Can
4 you hear me now?

5 SENATOR KING: Yes, ma'am. Go ahead.

6 ARNETTA MURRAY: Good. First of all, my
7 name is Councilman Annetta Murray for Iowa Colony. I
8 just wanted to say, first of all thank you to Senator
9 Miles. Thank you, Chairman. Thank you, Senator
10 Alvarado for staying for 24 hours. And then I want to
11 thank Bryan Hughes for that prayer that he gave me when
12 Senator -- I'm sorry, Congressman Sylvester Turner
13 died. Thank you.

14 Everybody said everything. I'm not going
15 to repeat it because time is of the essence, and I know
16 that as an educator, as a councilwoman, I'm here on
17 behalf of myself and then I have elderly parents that
18 live in South Park along with their friends.

19 And I just want to say, do what's right.
20 I'm not going to say things over and over again. You
21 know this is right, wrong. You know that what Trump is
22 asking our governor to do is not right. At the end of
23 the day, this is particularly for Governor Abbott. If
24 he wants to be the governor of Trump, he needs to
25 resign and not be the governor of Texas because he's

1 not representing us. And now because of what he's
2 doing, I now do believe that he does not like black and
3 brown people and it really hurts and it's unbelievable.
4 I yield my time, and thank you for this moment.

5 SENATOR KING: Well, thank you for your
6 testimony.

7 Members, any questions?

8 Thank you for being here tonight.

9 ARNETTA MURRAY: Thank you. Bye-bye.
10 Oh, I'm sorry.

11 SENATOR KING: That's all right. Thank
12 you very much.

13 Let's go to Ms. Pita, Aida Pita. Just
14 give her a second. Ms. Pita, if you're still with us,
15 please unmute. All right. We'll come back to you.
16 Well, there you are. You -- we can see you on the
17 video. Try -- Ms. Pita, would you begin to speak? I
18 think your -- let's see if your audio's working. Okay.
19 Ms. Pita, if you would turn off your livestream and
20 just listen to the Zoom audio. Just give her a second.
21 She's trying to do it. All right. Ms. Pita, if you'll
22 just stand by, we'll come right back to you.

23 Go to Konstantinos Vogiatzis.

24 KONSTANTINOS VOGIATZIS: Close enough.
25 Pretty good actually.

1 SENATOR KING: Well, thank you. I
2 worked at it.

3 KONSTANTINOS VOGIATZIS: Good evening.
4 My name is Konstantino Vogiatzis. I'm a CPA, a first
5 generation homeowner and a proud resident of Brazoria
6 County falling within Texas's 22nd Congressional
7 District. I'm not here on behalf of any organization.
8 Thank you for letting me speak.

9 So as others have said in their
10 testimonies, Texans see this mid-decade redistricting
11 exactly for what it is, a partisan power grab happening
12 in broad daylight. Your party knows its policies are
13 deeply unpopular. You're not delivering for Texans, so
14 instead you're rigging the game. I want the focus of
15 my testimony on how what you're doing shows Texans just
16 how out of touch the priorities of the legislature are
17 with the crises the working-class Texans are facing.

18 I'm sick and tired of having to beg our
19 elected officials to give a damn and see that we are
20 living through one of the worst affordability crises
21 and generations. Housing costs and insurance costs are
22 crushing us and insurers are leaving the state
23 entirely, leaving us with even less competition.

24 I am a first time homeowner struggling to
25 stay afloat. Just look at what's happening around us

1 also. We're in the middle of hurricane season and
2 climate disasters keep coming. Just the last five
3 years, Texas was hit by 68 separate multi-billion
4 dollar natural disasters, hurricanes, floods, winter
5 storms, you name it. Our communities in Brazoria
6 County worry each time we watch the news in case the
7 next major storm is announced. This legislature should
8 be focusing on strengthening our grid, shoring up our
9 flood infrastructure, and preparing for the next
10 hurricane especially when the leader of your party is
11 talking about phasing out FEMA after this year's
12 hurricane season.

13 But I don't see Special sessions being
14 called to bolster disaster preparedness or to help
15 build after floods. I don't see the legislature
16 tackling the skyrocketing home insurance premiums that
17 force Texans into state run insurance pools as the last
18 resort. Instead, I see that this body is moving heaven
19 and earth to scheme up new election maps to entrench
20 one party's power. It's the wrong focus at the wrong
21 time. Regular Texans are wondering why are homeowners
22 fighting --

23 SENATOR KING: Sir, I'm going to need to
24 stop you there.

25 KONSTANTINOS VOGIATZIS: -- hard for us

1 as they're fighting to serve their friends' jobs in
2 Washington.

3 SENATOR KING: Thank you.

4 Members, any questions? Thank you for
5 being with us here tonight.

6 Chair calls Arthur Fleming. Mr. Fleming,
7 if you'll unmute and try to speak, I think we'll be
8 able to hear you. While we wait on Mr. Fleming, let's
9 go back to Ms. Pita. Try again.

10 AIDA PITA: Can you hear me?

11 SENATOR KING: We certainly can. Thank
12 you so much.

13 AIDA PITA: Good afternoon. Thank you
14 for having me. My name is Aida Pita. I live in Katy,
15 Texas, and I don't know where -- how are we doing this?
16 We are districting. It's not even four years since
17 2021 on SD 4 that we redistrict. And in October 15th,
18 2021, the bill was passed signed by the governor in
19 October 2020 -- in October 25th, 2021.

20 So here we go again. There's no maps,
21 there's no census. Supposedly the redistricting is for
22 the -- after the census when people grow, when the
23 states are -- when the states has more people. And
24 now, here we go again. Can somebody tell me what's
25 happening? We don't have maps. We don't have a

1 census. And I don't know what's going to happen. We
2 have had floods, we're in crisis. That's all I can
3 say. So please both know because this is just
4 outrageous. Thank you.

5 SENATOR KING: Thank you.

6 Members, any questions?

7 Thank you for being here tonight.

8 Let's try Kellye McGarry.

9 ARTHUR FLEMING: Can you hear me now?

10 SENATOR KING: Oh, Mr. Fleming, is that
11 you on the telephone?

12 ARTHUR FLEMING: Yeah. Hi. Yeah. Can
13 you hear me now?

14 SENATOR KING: We sure can. Welcome and
15 please begin your testimony.

16 ARTHUR FLEMING: Okay. Good afternoon.
17 Arthur Fleming, NAACP Dallas.

18 Jesus is back and he is black. I serve a
19 compassionate black Jesus, not the white heartless
20 Jesus guiding you all at this moment. What would Jesus
21 do with Snap, healthcare? Would he sacrifice it for a
22 tax cut for the rich?

23 Question, why are you doing this illegal
24 and unethical act? By doing this, you are in bed with
25 the president and the pedophiles. The gerrymandering

1 is about supporting a president who don't want to be
2 impeached. By doing this act, State of Texas,
3 Republicans in particular, are getting in bed with
4 pedophiles. Instead of stealing my vote in District
5 30, why don't you address the pedophile white
6 supremacists in the state of Texas.

7 Going forward, you'll be known as the
8 Grand Old Pedophile Party. Thank you.

9 SENATOR KING: Just to clarify. You said
10 NAACP. Are you representing them formally tonight or
11 are you just stating that you're a member?

12 ARTHUR FLEMING: No. I represent myself.
13 I'm past President Emeritus.

14 SENATOR KING: Past President Emeritus.
15 Okay. Thank you.

16 ARTHUR FLEMING: Yeah.

17 SENATOR KING: Members, any questions --

18 ARTHUR FLEMING: And myself.

19 SENATOR KING: Members, any questions for
20 the witness? Hearing none, thank you for being here.

21 Chair calls Kellye McGarry.

22 KELLYE MCGARRY: I am here on audio.

23 SENATOR KING: Yes, we can hear you.

24 Please proceed with your testimony.

25 KELLYE MCGARRY: Thank you, sir.

1 Because we're in Texas, I'll use the
2 analogy of football. Kind of seems like we're moving
3 the goal post here at halftime, and just because you
4 can do it doesn't mean you should. If the refs made
5 bad calls, they'd lose their jobs. Meanwhile, it's the
6 fans and the players who can't win.

7 On behalf of the countless families and
8 fellow Texans who are caught in the crossfire of so
9 much uncertainty and unrest that needlessly impacts
10 their safety, security, and wellbeing now and forever,
11 I am here to say I am so fortunate to be joining you
12 from the comfort and convenience of my residents in
13 Dallas, Texas. I would like to use my remaining time
14 to sit in silence and reflect on the many individuals
15 of this state, this country, and abroad who are unable
16 to represent themselves, but who will be so directly
17 and indirectly impacted more so than I as a result of
18 these egregious last minute calculated legislative
19 decisions that have killed the dreams and hopes of so,
20 so many.

21 I will await your response as to when my
22 time is up so that we can reflect on the many people
23 that your decisions will impact.

24 SENATOR KING: Thank you for your
25 testimony.

1 Members, are there any questions?

2 Hearing none, thank you for being here tonight.

3 Call the next panel. Chair calls Salena
4 Braye, Shannon Williams, Luz Sanchez, Kyra Dang,
5 Makayla Ponce.

6 Salena Braye, would you like to go ahead
7 and testify?

8 SALENA BRAYE: Yes. Can y'all hear and
9 see me?

10 SENATOR KING: We can hear you. Let's
11 try that again.

12 SALENA BRAYE: Okay. Let me see.

13 SENATOR KING: Yeah, there we go. Well,
14 you're there. There's your name.

15 SALENA BRAYE: Am I back?

16 SENATOR KING: We can hear you. Go ahead
17 and just state your name please and if you're
18 representing an organization, please tell us that
19 organization and then please try to keep your testimony
20 to two minutes.

21 SALENA BRAYE: My name is Salena Braye
22 [audio distortion].

23 SENATOR KING: Ma'am, I think if you'll
24 turn off --

25 SALENA BRAYE: Thank you for your time.

1 I --

2 SENATOR KING: You're cutting out a lot
3 and so let me suggest if you'll turn off your video and
4 just go with your audio. That should open up a lot of
5 bandwidth for you.

6 SALENA BRAYE: I think so. I think I
7 might have fixed the issue.

8 SENATOR KING: Yep.

9 SALENA BRAYE: But I will turn my video
10 off. Okay. Unless I reappeared. I'll just leave it
11 on. Okay.

12 Senators, thank y'all for your time. I'm
13 representing the Pure Justice Action Fund, a member
14 based 501(c)(4) organization based in Harris County
15 working for criminal, racial, and economic justice
16 transformation to ultimately end mass incarceration.
17 Prioritized justice involved community members and
18 society margins and many of our members reside in
19 Congressional Districts 9, 18 and 29. I come as our
20 policy organizer to reflect the concerns of multi-
21 generational, multicultural and multiracial members.

22 People, especially constituents of the
23 18th Congressional District from Aker Homes to
24 Sunnyside are extremely concerned about this
25 redistricting process, how it is targeting historically

1 black and increasingly Latino areas, how opaque it
2 seems to be, how unnecessary it feels, how this could
3 possibly be a priority while Texans faced actual urgent
4 challenges. Community members are anxious about
5 dealing with new, unfair and complicated maps, and
6 potentially having representation erased completely.

7 This blatant, top-down power
8 consolidation attempt is unconscionable in an area of
9 Texas that greatly relies on federal funding to keep
10 Texans alive when other government actors will not step
11 up. Several of our members and I were at the Texas
12 House Redistricting Committee hearing at the University
13 of Houston on Saturday, and [audio distortion] so many
14 people not to testify. From capacity issues inside and
15 outside of the hearing room, to running out of
16 testimony forms to the complete lack of overflow space,
17 there was a lot going on.

18 Yes, this process is happening very fast,
19 but such chaotic organization for a testimony
20 opportunity as critical as this was a severe misstep.
21 Not to mention, as others have stated, that individuals
22 from the 18th Congressional District have been nearing
23 almost a year without representation as several have
24 bills and other policies have been passed without their
25 congressional input.

1 Finally, as a young black woman from
2 Alabama, young enough to both learn about the voting
3 rights struggles of the 60s in history class, and
4 experience the Democratic implications of the Shelby
5 Beholder decision in real time, as I myself have grown
6 up as a voter, I must remind you that even if you do
7 not care or listen to our demands, we will always
8 remember these racist attempts to silence our voices
9 and break our souls. We will not stand for them. We
10 will never forget them, and they will never work. You
11 should not redraw our districts. And no matter what,
12 you will not rewrite this narrative. Thank, y'all.

13 SENATOR KING: Thank you. And I'm sorry
14 you had didn't have a good experience at the Houston
15 hearing, but we're glad you're here with us tonight.

16 Members, any questions for the witness?
17 Senator Miles?

18 SENATOR MILES: Yeah, Salena, I want to
19 thank you for your testimony today and your leadership
20 in Harris -- Houston, Harris County that you've
21 exhibited over the years. Thank you.

22 SALENA BRAYE: Thank you.

23 SENATOR KING: Chair calls Shannon
24 Williams.

25 Ms. Williams, if you would please just --

1 SHANNON WILLIAMS: Can you hear me?

2 SENATOR KING: Oh, we've got you there.

3 Thank you.

4 SHANNON WILLIAMS: Yay. Thank you. Hi.

5 SENATOR KING: If you would --

6 SHANNON WILLIAMS: This is an interesting
7 thing. I know why I would not be a representative, so
8 power to those of you who like doing this.

9 Thank you for this hearing today. I have
10 issues with the districts redrawing simply --

11 SENATOR KING: Before you go any further,
12 would you --

13 SHANNON WILLIAMS: Oh, yeah, yeah. Yes.
14 Shannon Williams. I'm Shannon Williams and I am for
15 myself.

16 SENATOR KING: All right. Thank you.
17 Please proceed.

18 SHANNON WILLIAMS: All right. I have
19 issues with the districts because they're political
20 power play, and I address this mainly to the
21 Republicans King and Creighton, and I'm not sure who
22 all is there. But then I also have a message for Miles
23 on that.

24 Both China and Russia have the structures
25 for representative government, but they use ploys to

1 limit what voices can be represented. In this way,
2 much less than half of their population have a voice.
3 Don't let that happen here, please. Republicans, don't
4 try to take over.

5 If we are to redistrict, it should be to
6 ensure that every district has a lively political
7 discussion during these times. We should debate the
8 merits of surrounding our children with arts and
9 education and entitlements versus ensuring that adults
10 work hard and are fiscally responsible and protected
11 from unwanted elements. These need to be balanced
12 discussions. The Chinese and Russian models do not
13 provide balance, and we should not emulate them.

14 So I urge you to consider that the
15 communistic and oligarchic regimes of China and Russia
16 are founded on representative government structures and
17 procedures just like ours, and they do exactly the same
18 thing that you're doing. The only difference is in the
19 representatives within their representative government,
20 so their people are not as free or as represented we
21 are, and that's based on the decisions made by their
22 representatives. These countries can never foster
23 democracy as their political foundation. They cannot
24 foster free market capitalism as their economic
25 foundation.

1 Both democracy and capitalism require
2 self-organizing, confident, entitled populations --

3 SENATOR KING: Ma'am, if I may --

4 SHANNON WILLIAMS: -- that remember --

5 SENATOR KING: I have to -- need to stop
6 you at that time, but thank you so much for your
7 testimony.

8 Members, are there any questions?
9 Hearing none. Thank you for being here tonight.

10 Chair calls Luz Sanchez. Ms. Sanchez?

11 LUZ SANCHEZ: Hi, can you hear me?

12 SENATOR KING: We sure can. Thank you.

13 LUZ SANCHEZ: Hi, my name is Luz Sanchez.
14 I'm representing myself, my family, and my friends. My
15 background is in agriculture, biology, and psychology.
16 I work in healthcare specifically in quality and
17 patient safety. So let me say that if healthcare was
18 characterized by the lack of innovation, the scarcity
19 of diversity, and an absence of open-mindedness the way
20 that the MAGA administration is highly lacking in, then
21 our medical providers would be stuck still prescribing
22 mercury and arsenic as medication. We have gone
23 through great lengths of innovation because of our
24 diversity, because of the innovation, and so I really
25 plead right now for you to reject this redistricting

1 because yes, I agree with Senator Miles. We absolutely
2 need to offer field hearings across Texas with the
3 proposed maps.

4 Now, even if this has not been done in
5 the past, because let us be honest, this redistricting
6 is being forced mid-decade only because Trump has asked
7 Republicans to jump, and Republicans have largely
8 responded with how high your majesty. And honestly
9 it's outrageous.

10 Now, are you familiar with the
11 traditional story, A Christmas Carol by Charles
12 Dickens? In this story, Ebenezer Scrooge, he's a penny
13 pincher, miserable, cold hearted old man. He goes
14 through an out-of-body experience where he sees scenes
15 from his earlier life reminding him of his greed, his
16 hatred for generosity, and he sees the future. He
17 actually sees himself how his hatred, his inaction, has
18 even allowed the expedited death of those around him.
19 I want to invite every single one of you people
20 listening in this room and outside of this room that is
21 in favor of going through and pushing this unpopular
22 gerrymandering to take a hard look at yourself and
23 self-reflect honestly and truly, sincerely self-reflect
24 in the same way that you forced through the unpopular
25 bills such as defunding our schools, refusing to add

1 right to abortion for rape, incest, or fatal fetal
2 abnormalities, or even in the passing of the
3 immigration enforcement bill that mandates cooperation
4 of sheriffs.

5 If you voted for this, I invite you to
6 look hard. Why are you driven by money? Why are you
7 driven by power and greed? Why are you aligning
8 yourself with Trump? Out of all of the people to align
9 yourself with, why are you choosing this path of
10 destruction? Look at the trajectory of the future and
11 truly sincerely ask yourself --

12 SENATOR KING: Thank you, Ms. Sanchez.
13 I'm going to have to stop you at that point, but we
14 thank you for your testimony.

15 Members, any questions? Seeing none,
16 Chair calls Kyra Dang.

17 KYRA DANG: Hello, can you hear me?

18 SENATOR KING: We sure can. Please tell
19 us your name and if you're representing any
20 organization and begin your testimony.

21 KYRA DANG: Hello, my name is Kyra Dang,
22 and I'm representing myself as a constituent from
23 Congressional District 7. I am a 16-year-old
24 Vietnamese American high school student from Fort Bend
25 County. And I worry that one day I or constituents of

1 other diverse counties like mine could be represented
2 by someone who doesn't reflect or care about the places
3 they call home.

4 This is my first time testifying and I
5 may not be able to vote yet, but I'm here because I
6 care deeply about my community and the future you're
7 shaping for me and my generation. We've established
8 that Fort Bend is one of the most diverse counties in
9 the country. My school is full of students from all
10 kinds of racial and cultural backgrounds, black,
11 Latino, Asian, white. We share classrooms,
12 neighborhoods, and values. Any redistricting process
13 should protect this kind of unity, not risk weakening
14 it in future maps.

15 Even if my area isn't directly being
16 targeted, I'm worried that the new maps will split
17 diverse communities apart just to protect political
18 power.

19 I know sometimes people avoid the word
20 gerrymandering, but what else do you call it when
21 communities like mine are split or ignored for
22 political gain? Because that's what it feels like and
23 it's why I'm here today. I appreciate that the
24 Committee addressed the timing of the proposed maps,
25 but I still want to emphasize how hard it is for young

1 people and community members to give meaningful
2 feedback without seeing what's being proposed.

3 I'm asking you to protect Fort Bend's
4 diverse neighborhoods and reject any maps that silence
5 voters of color. Please don't divide us across
6 districts that don't represent who we are. Keep our
7 communities whole and thank you for listening to a
8 young person like me because we're watching, we care.
9 And even if we're old -- not old enough to vote, we'll
10 remember who stood for us.

11 SENATOR KING: Thank you for your
12 testimony. May I ask, how did you learn about the
13 hearing tonight?

14 KYRA DANG: I learned about this hearing
15 through this organization called Students Engaged in
16 Advancing Texas. Hayden Cohen, who testified earlier,
17 is the state policy coordinator and she sent a message
18 to the entire organization.

19 SENATOR KING: Okay. Great. Well, you
20 did a good job testifying. I was just curious.

21 Members, any questions?

22 SENATOR MILES: Mr. Chairman.

23 SENATOR KING: Senator Miles?

24 SENATOR MILES: Yeah, ma'am, you've --
25 young lady, you've done a great job of testifying and I

1 want to let you know if you stay like you are, you're
2 going to have a bright future ahead of you. Thank you
3 for testifying this evening.

4 KYRA DANG: Thank you, Senator.

5 SENATOR KING: Thank you.

6 Chair calls Makayla Ponce.

7 MAKAYLA PONCE: Hi, y'all. Can y'all
8 hear me?

9 SENATOR KING: We sure can.

10 MAKAYLA PONCE: Great. Thank you so
11 much.

12 Hello, Special Committee members. My
13 name is Makayla Ponce, a constituent of Senate District
14 14 in Austin, Texas, representing only myself. Thank
15 you for holding these Special sessions to hear the
16 public's testimonies on this important issue and it's
17 truly appreciated.

18 I'm here today to appeal to the Committee
19 members and lawmakers sense of fairness, equality, and
20 care for their fellow Texans. Like many of us here, I
21 suspect I believe in a benevolent and fair God who sees
22 our continued efforts to be better and kinder than we
23 were yesterday and to be fair and just to our fellow
24 community members. With these redistricting efforts
25 called for in this Special session, I see a wonderful

1 opportunity for this kind of consideration.

2 Unfortunately, previous redistricting
3 efforts, as you'll know, such as those from 2011 and
4 even as recently as 2021, have created greater
5 unfairness and silencing of many historically
6 disenfranchised communities in Texas, especially black,
7 Hispanic, and Asian communities among many others. My
8 hope is that this session's efforts are not in
9 furthering that discrimination and coldness towards our
10 fellow Texans, but instead for righting some of our
11 past wrongs and creating a more fair and open process
12 for public input with the goal of creating a more just
13 map that supports every Texan's voice.

14 And I say all of this too in light of the
15 recent tragic floods that struck Kerr County and
16 surrounding county's residents. I appreciate that many
17 of this session's efforts have pivoted towards funding
18 for infrastructure and management to mitigate another
19 tragedy of this scale. With that being said, I truly
20 hope that our lawmakers wouldn't take precious time and
21 energy away from such issues to further their own
22 prominence and so greater division within the state.

23 It may be naive, but I'd like to believe
24 that at the end of the line, every one of us wants to
25 be able to look back on our decisions and sincerely

1 feel that we acted with love and consideration of our
2 neighbors. Thank you all so much for your time today.
3 It's really appreciated.

4 SENATOR KING: Thank you for your
5 testimony and for your graciousness in the way you said
6 it.

7 Members, any questions for the witness?
8 Hearing none, let me call up our last panel. Chair
9 calls Bridget -- and by the way, we have 109
10 registrants to testify tomorrow with about two hours
11 left until the deadline to register. Last panel is
12 Bridget Thomas, Ruei Tuo, Chris Pino, and Abigail Kehr.
13 Nobody's showing -- coming up. Try that again.
14 Bridget Thomas, Ruei Tuo, Chris Pino, and Abigail Kehr.
15 And I believe Mr. Chris Pino is up if you'd like to go
16 ahead and unmute and testify.

17 CHRIS PINO: Sure thing. Thank you so
18 much to the members of the Special Committee for giving
19 me the opportunity to speak today. My name is Chris
20 Pino. I am a proud resident of Fort Bend County,
21 living in CD 22. I'm 25 years old and despite my age I
22 have been very intimately involved throughout the
23 community over the last 10 years.

24 My experience -- my experiences range
25 from working in county government to running political

1 campaigns to working in the nonprofit sector, and I
2 like to think that I have my ear pretty close to the
3 ground because of that, because that my work is so
4 grounded in service. And something that I have heard,
5 I currently -- I should add I currently work for Baker
6 Wrigley, the largest community development nonprofit
7 here in the state of Texas, running a program that
8 helps everyday people get involved in the political
9 process, completely non-partisan. The last year alone,
10 we've registered thousands of students to vote and
11 helped tens of thousands, if not more people show up
12 and get to the polls.

13 So I like to think that I have my ear
14 pretty close to the ground in a nonpartisan fashion,
15 and something that I have heard across all ideologies
16 is a, number one, is a dedicated interest in what is
17 happening right now in regards to redistricting. And
18 number two, a pretty clear opposition to this mid-
19 decade redistricting attempt. I am a little bit
20 baffled that I find myself speaking in support of a
21 status quo, because the current maps water down
22 representation in a lot of ways that I think are
23 detrimental to our democratic republic. But I have a
24 hard time being more specific in my opposition because
25 we've never -- we haven't seen a map. Right.

1 And I think that that's one of the
2 biggest parts of the problem here. We don't know what
3 we're getting into. All we know is that y'all want to
4 do this and that maybe there are some folks out of the
5 state who are interested in doing that. But I think
6 that this --

7 SENATOR KING: Sir, I need to stop you at
8 this time, but just to confirm you are not testifying
9 on behalf of any organization tonight; is that correct?

10 CHRIS PINO: No, I am here in my personal
11 capacity.

12 SENATOR KING: All right. Thank you.

13 And, Members, any questions? Hearing
14 none. Thank you for being with us tonight. Chair calls
15 Bridget Thomas. Ms. Thomas, are --

16 BRIDGET THOMAS: Yes.

17 SENATOR KING: Great. If you'll please
18 tell us your name and if you're representing any
19 organization. We'd like to have that for the record
20 and then proceed with your testimony.

21 BRIDGET THOMAS: Sure. My name is
22 Bridget Thomas and I am a proud Houstonian and I am
23 representing myself. I am unequivocal in opposition
24 to this Special session that has been called by
25 Governor Greg Abbott, an action that disproportionately

1 impacts black and brown communities across our state.

2 Let's call this what it is. It's a theft
3 of power, a theft of representation, a theft of the
4 right to be seen, heard, and valued as equal citizens
5 in this democracy. What's happening today is not new.
6 It's just dressed up differently. Throughout this
7 nation's history, those in power have found creative
8 ways to steal and suppress then wrap that theft in the
9 language of law, order, and patriotism.

10 We stole this land from indigenous people
11 and called it discovery. We stole African-American men
12 and women, broke apart families, raped their women and
13 enslaved them for generations. And now in 2025, Texas
14 school books have the audacity to claim they were
15 simply seeking job opportunities. When black Americans
16 demanded civil rights, they were met with fire hoses,
17 dogs and bullets. And when the physical chains were
18 finally broken, a new system of Jim Crow and mass
19 incarceration was built to continue the oppression.
20 Different packaging, same goal.

21 And now here we are again today, watching
22 those in power try to redraw maps in a different way to
23 different franchise voters of color --

24 SENATOR KING: Ma'am, if I may --

25 BRIDGET THOMAS: -- ensuring that voices

1 remain unheard. I am opposed to it, please make that
2 known.

3 SENATOR KING: Thank you.

4 Members, any questions? Senator Miles?

5 SENATOR MILES: Usual que -- usual
6 statement. Thank you, Bridget, for testifying today
7 and making it plain. Thank you, ma'am.

8 BRIDGET THOMAS: You're welcome.

9 SENATOR KING: Chair calls Ruei Tuo.

10 RUEI TUO: I'm here. Can you hear me?

11 SENATOR KING: I sure can. Please tell
12 us your name and if you're representing an
13 organization, we'd like that for the record. And then
14 please try to hold your testimony to two minutes.

15 RUEI TUO: Of course. My name's Ruei Tuo
16 and I'm here representing myself.

17 I feel it is my responsibility as a
18 citizen of this great democracy to speak up against
19 injustice and to speak up for the people this midterm,
20 mid-decade redistricting. I don't even know where to
21 start. Like first of all, where are the maps for me to
22 comment on? I mean, I would love to give you the
23 specifics and work with you and to make sure the maps
24 are free and fair, but there's not even a map for me to
25 look at. And what's the rush? Why are you rushing it?

1 Why don't you wait until you have all the maps and
2 proper documents and go through the proper process and
3 procedures? And that's follow the rule of law instead
4 of rushing it in an attempt to power grab. And it's --
5 it just not right.

6 I mean, you know, the -- that's how you
7 start the divisiveness when people feel the system has
8 been unjust, the system has been unfair, and then
9 people won't take it that much longer. You -- it's
10 just wrong. And I wish that we can -- I mean, it's a
11 democracy. We all have different opinions.
12 Absolutely. That's the beauty of being a democracy.
13 But to act like you own it, that kind of audacity. I
14 hope when, you know, whoever is enabling this kind of
15 power grab can start thinking how they're going to
16 answer to their creators when it's their time to meet
17 him or her.

18 Please, my position is against this mid-
19 decade because it's wrong, it's unconstitutional, it's
20 unjust, and it's just not the American way. Thank you
21 very much, and you have a good day.

22 SENATOR KING: Thank you.

23 Members, any questions? Hearing none.
24 The chair calls Abigail Kehr.

25 ABIGAIL KEHR: Good evening. Can you

1 hear me, please?

2 SENATOR KING: We certainly can. If
3 you'd please state your name and let us know if you're
4 representing any organization and then proceed with
5 your testimony.

6 ABIGAIL KEHR: Thank you. My name is
7 Abigail Kehr, K-E-H-R. I am representing myself and my
8 family. I am a resident of Texas House District 148,
9 Texas Senate 115 and US House District 118, which means
10 that I am one of the thousands of people that have been
11 left without representation due to the governor's
12 failure to call an election for our district despite
13 there being plenty of time.

14 I am not at all interested in my right to
15 have representation being further infringed upon by a
16 ridiculous grab at extra power by redistricting.
17 Redistricting by the way to the purpose of targeting
18 minority groups is for breakup is -- by the way, that's
19 extremely racist. And this is actually illegal
20 according to the Texas constitution, which I hope you
21 have read because of the position that you are in.
22 This is not something that should be happening right
23 now anyways.

24 I was a census taker for the last census,
25 and I can tell you that there have been changes in

1 these areas since the last census has been done. It is
2 ridiculous and immoral to try to do this with outdated
3 maps. If you are trying to do this now, it is very,
4 very clear that it is for a racist power grab and this
5 needs to not be done. And this also should not be done
6 without actually having a map to do anything with.

7 When I tried to testify the other day at
8 the House hearing, I was not able to because it was so
9 extremely disorganized and began late. I had to leave
10 to go be with my child. And also at that one, it was
11 made clear that we could only register a position of
12 neutral, which to my understanding was due to the fact
13 that there were not maps.

14 Please focus on taking care of Texans,
15 not on new ways to disenfranchise them.

16 SENATOR KING: Thank you for your
17 testimony. And may I ask, which hearing were you
18 unable to testify at?

19 ABIGAIL KEHR: The Houston one on
20 Saturday.

21 SENATOR KING: Okay. Thank you.

22 ABIGAIL KEHR: That was the -- that was
23 the House hearing.

24 SENATOR KING: Right. Well, thank you.
25 We're glad you're able to be with us today.

1 Members, are there any questions?

2 Hearing none, thank you very much.

3 Members, we have no other witnesses who
4 have registered that are in the waiting room. And so
5 with that, public testimony is now closed. Is there
6 any other business to come before the Committee
7 tonight? Senator Miles?

8 SENATOR MILES: Mr. Chairman, how many
9 testimonies did we have today?

10 SENATOR KING: Do you know the count?
11 Looks like 54.

12 SENATOR MILES: Fifty-four, and if my
13 recollection is correct and my math is correct, there
14 was one in support of this and 53 against it; is that
15 correct?

16 SENATOR KING: I didn't keep a count, but
17 I take your word.

18 SENATOR MILES: That's what I counted.
19 And one other thing, Mr. Chairman, do you -- I'm sure
20 by now you've heard that in North Texas there were 400
21 capacity in the building and another 400 outside of the
22 building to testify.

23 SENATOR KING: I had not heard the
24 numbers.

25 SENATOR MILES: Yes, sir. There were

1 400 inside capacity and there was another 400 outside
2 waiting to testify today. Just wanted to let you know,
3 sir.

4 SENATOR KING: I am advised.

5 Senator Alvarado?

6 SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you, Mr.
7 Chairman.

8 Before we end today, I wanted to read
9 some quotes that I think are important for the public
10 to hear from my former colleague in the House and desk
11 mate, a former Republican representative, Burt
12 Solomons, who chaired the Redistricting Committee in
13 2011. I was on that Committee and we were desk mates,
14 so it made for some very lively conversation between
15 the two of us. The essay was published in the New York
16 Times last week and is entitled, When I led Texas's
17 Redistricting, there were lines we wouldn't cross.
18 Trump just sailed past them. I think some of you have
19 a copy of that in its entirety.

20 Representative Solomons warns of the
21 erosion of public trust that will be de-legitimizing
22 our institutions and undermine the public's confidence
23 in government. And here's one of the quotes:

24 What Mr. Trump wants my former colleagues
25 to do -- that would be us -- redistricting now, years

1 ahead of the usual one per decade timeframe would erode
2 the public's already flagging trust in government. The
3 legislature shouldn't stand up -- should stand up
4 against it. The president should stay out of it.

5 He warns us of authoritarian overreach by
6 the federal government. He says:

7 As a former Texas lawmaker and a current
8 constituent, I urge them to reject this clear partisan
9 manipulation, one that smacks of authoritarian
10 overreach.

11 He emphasizes the danger. This is from a
12 conservative and constitutionalist perspective:

13 If this happens, it would be a blatant
14 power grab, threatening our system of representative
15 government. It would inject more partisanship into our
16 already polarized politics, disregard the will of many
17 Texas voters, and override the autonomy of a sovereign
18 state contrary to the wisdom of the Constitution's
19 framers, and redrawing districts mid-decade is rare,
20 and for good reason. It shouldn't ever happen at a
21 President's whim.

22 He warns of the impact that this will
23 have on minorities across our state. And I quote Mr.
24 Solomons:

25 He's pushing Texas Republicans to use a

1 special legislative session to redraw districts in a
2 way that could effectively disenfranchise thousands of
3 people who don't always vote for Republicans,
4 particularly those in historically majority minority
5 communities, an apparent bid to rig the 2026 midterm
6 elections long before the votes are cast.

7 Lastly, he ends with an important quote
8 that I would like us to all contemplate as we conclude
9 our hearing:

10 Texas's elected officials can place party
11 loyalty above Texas voters or do the right thing. It
12 is their choice. They don't have to be complicit. We
13 should not be complicit.

14 Members, we all have our differences and
15 have passion debates over policy, whether it's in
16 Committee or on the floor. But this is not that. as
17 my former desk mate said, even when we were playing
18 hardball, there were rules and laws that were
19 respected, norms that were upheld and lines that
20 weren't crossed. Thank you.

21 And special thank you to my former desk
22 mate, Representative Bert Solomons. Thank you.

23 SENATOR KING: Thank you. If I -- and
24 thank you. I'd already read that article. I recall in
25 2003 when we did a non-census year congressional

1 redistricting in Special session, I'll need to go back
2 and check, but I believe then Representative that wrote
3 the article I believe that he voted for that even
4 though it was done in a non-census year. I'll have to
5 go back and check on. That's why I was so surprised to
6 see the article when I read it. Members, is there any
7 other business before the Committee?

8 There being no further business, this
9 Senate Special Committee on Congressional Redistricting
10 will stand in recess, subject to the call of the Chair.
11 Thank you, everyone.

12 (End of proceedings.)

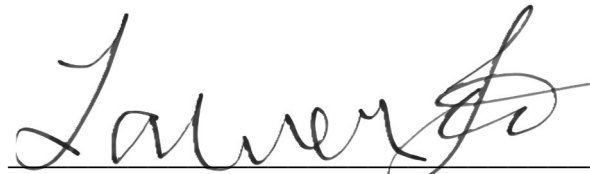
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Lauren Fox, 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.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lauren Fox", written over a horizontal line.

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