

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

**Exhibit U**

2025 0726 1CS, Senate Committee Transcript

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TRANSCRIPTION OF VIDEOTAPE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON CONGRESSIONAL  
REDISTRICTING, SPECIAL  
Saturday, July 26, 2025

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

2 2 hours, 40 Minutes, 38 seconds, recording  
3 transcription, as follows:

4 (Hearing called to order.)

5 THE CHAIR: The Senate Special Committee  
6 on Congressional Redistricting will come to order. The  
7 clerk will call the roll.

8 THE CLERK: Senator King.

9 SENATOR KING: Here.

10 THE CLERK: Senator Creighton?

11 SENATOR CREIGHTON: Here.

12 THE CLERK: Senator Alvarado.

13 (Silence.)

14 THE CLERK: Senator Hinojosa.

15 SENATOR HINOJOSA: Present.

16 THE CLERK: Senator Hughes.

17 (Silence.)

18 THE CLERK: Senator Miles.

19 (Silence.)

20 THE CLERK: Senator Parker.

21 (Silence.)

22 THE CLERK: Senator Paxton.

23 SENATOR PAXTON: Present.

24 THE CLERK: Senator Sparks.

25 SENATOR SPARKS: Here.

1 THE CHAIR: So, what do we have?

2 THE CLERK: We have five.

3 THE CHAIR: Do we have a quorum?

4 THE CLERK: We do not.

5 THE CHAIR: We do not have a quorum.

6 What's quorum?

7 THE CLERK: Five.

8 THE CHAIR: Yeah, we have a quorum.

9 There being five present, a quorum -- a quorum has been  
10 established, I know we have a few other members on their  
11 way here.

12 Just by way of opening remarks. As  
13 posted, we will focus on the North Texas Region,  
14 including Dallas and Fort Worth today.

15 If you are interested in another part of  
16 the State, you are certainly welcome to also participate  
17 today. This is the second of four scheduled regional  
18 hearings.

19 Please note that the registration for  
20 this hearing has closed. And the registration will  
21 close 12 hours in advance of the upcoming hearings.

22 Those dates and focus areas are posted  
23 on the committee website, but will include on Monday,  
24 East Texas, including the Harris County region. And  
25 Monday will also be a evening hearing. So, we are

1 beginning at what? 3:00 p.m.?

2 THE CLERK: 3:00 p.m.

3 THE CHAIR: So, we will begin at 3:00  
4 p.m. on Monday and go as long as we need to go to finish  
5 working through all the witnesses. That also means that  
6 you can register up until 12 hours before. So 3:00 --  
7 3:00 a.m. on Monday morning.

8 And then Tuesday we'll be back on our  
9 10:00 a.m. beginning schedule. We'll be focusing  
10 Tuesday on West Texas, including the El Paso and  
11 Panhandle regions.

12 But, again, everyone is welcome today,  
13 or at any of the hearings, regardless of whether your  
14 testimony today focuses -- focuses on North Texas or  
15 another region.

16 Please bear with us throughout these  
17 regional hearings as we collect public testimony via  
18 this video conference format. I know that sometimes  
19 yesterday we had just a couple minutes of glitches as  
20 people kind of figured out the system, but at the end of  
21 the day, it all worked out very well.

22 The reason we chose virtual for these  
23 hearings, and again, if and when the committee formally  
24 takes up a bill, a proposed map, those will be public  
25 hearings at the Capitol and conducted in the same manner

1 as we conduct any bill routinely before any committee.

2 But we chose virtual in this, in this  
3 period of information gathering, because my hope was  
4 that it would allow more Texans to participate without  
5 having to travel to the Capitol, or if we had gone to  
6 Houston, for example, without having to travel to Harris  
7 County. I know someone yesterday who testified, said  
8 that they were from Tarrant County, but they were going  
9 to be unable to be at -- at the Tarrant County location  
10 when the House was there. So, they were glad to be able  
11 to testify this way.

12 Another person from the Valley said that  
13 they really appreciated us doing it virtual yesterday so  
14 that they could participate. So, our hope is that it  
15 will allow more Texans to be a part of this process and  
16 be able to do so without having to find childcare or  
17 take off work or something of that nature.

18 I do also want to point out that there  
19 are other options for members of the public to provide  
20 input if they are unable to testify today or at one of  
21 the future hearings, or they just didn't make the  
22 registration cutoff for today.

23 You are, of course, welcome to register  
24 for another regional hearing and provide testimony at  
25 that time. And the other two hearings, as I mentioned,

1 are still open for registration.

2           You are also able to submit written  
3 comments at any time through the special session --  
4 throughout the special session in the public input  
5 portal that can be found on the committee website. The  
6 portal will remain available throughout the  
7 redistricting process. Submitted comments are shared  
8 with the Senators and are posted on the committee's  
9 website for public viewing.

10           The hearing is also being live streamed  
11 and that each live stream will be archived for public  
12 viewing on the Senate's website for an indefinite  
13 period.

14           Now, why are we here today? We're here  
15 today because the Governor added the subject of  
16 congressional redistricting to the call. I will tell  
17 you that in the Senate, we divide work by committees, by  
18 subject matter, and there are other committees working  
19 on the other items that the Governor has placed on the  
20 call, such as the Central Texas flooding.

21           So, by our committee meeting, there are  
22 no other topics, no other subjects that are being  
23 ignored. The work is divided and being robustly pursued  
24 by all the relevant committees. We are here today in  
25 response to the redistricting charge. I cannot speak to

1 what the outcomes will be with redistricting, but I do  
2 know that hearing from Texans is a critical part of that  
3 process.

4 I believe these regional hearings  
5 provide meaningful opportunities for input and  
6 discussion about communities of interest and other  
7 matters critical to the subject of redistricting. I  
8 want to thank everyone here for today for your  
9 participation, particularly being a Saturday. We also  
10 chose to do on a Saturday. We know it's difficult for  
11 many people to take off work, so we thought a weekend  
12 hearing would help.

13 We actually had someone who was an Uber  
14 driver yesterday testify while they were at work in  
15 their vehicle, which was kind of fun.

16 Please note that since we are on a video  
17 conference, we are unable to hear in-person testimony  
18 today as was stated in the posting for this hearing.

19 There will be opportunity, as I  
20 mentioned, for in-person testimony in the future if and  
21 when a bill, a map is heard, and there is always the  
22 opportunity to submit written comments in the online  
23 portal. As far as logistics for today, I would like to  
24 give everyone a brief preview of the process for the  
25 video conference testimony. Everyone that registered to



1 testify and has signed onto the video conference link  
2 should be in the Zoom waiting room.

3 I will mention that -- I would mention  
4 that we have about 80 people who registered, but we do  
5 not have that full complement that have signed on into  
6 the waiting room. So, if you do wish to testify, please  
7 go ahead and sign on into the Zoom waiting room.

8 You cannot view the hearing from the  
9 waiting room, so you should have the live stream  
10 available on the Senate website via the link that is  
11 visible in the waiting room so you will know when you  
12 have been called to testify.

13 For those in the waiting room, please  
14 make sure your screen name matches the name with which  
15 you registered. If you need to step away from the  
16 hearing, for any reason, you may leave the waiting room  
17 and rejoin when you are able to, as long as the hearing  
18 is still going, of course.

19 When your name is called -- and I'll  
20 call the names in advance. I'll give you some notice.  
21 When your name is called and it is your turn to testify,  
22 turn on your video, but keep yourself muted until I  
23 recognize you to speak. Remember, when you are called  
24 on to testify, you should mute or close your live stream  
25 player. If you leave the live stream going, there will

1 be an echo that you'll hear.

2 So, it's just like if you've ever heard  
3 anyone being interviewed on maybe a radio talk show and  
4 they have the radio going in the background, they're  
5 hearing their self twice and it gets confusing. So,  
6 once you begin to testify, just mute or turn off your  
7 live stream viewing.

8 Once recognized, of course, as I said,  
9 you may unmute your microphone, your audio and your  
10 video will be heard and seen by both the committee  
11 members and the public. Once I call your name, you will  
12 have an opportunity to provide your testimony to the  
13 committee. I will have you state your name and whether  
14 you are to testifying on behalf of any organization or  
15 simply yourself.

16 So, everyone has an opportunity to  
17 participate. I ask that witnesses limit their testimony  
18 to two minutes. Although I don't want to cut anyone  
19 off, we must be mindful of those witnesses who are still  
20 waiting. So, please try to be concise so we can hear  
21 from everybody today.

22 Now, Senators will have the opportunity  
23 to ask you questions, and their time in asking questions  
24 in your answer will not count against your allotted two  
25 minutes. When you are finished with your testimony, you

1 will be released from the video conference and can watch  
2 the rest of the hearing on the livestream.

3 Also note, if you are having technical  
4 difficulties with your video or audio, committee staff  
5 will move you back into the waiting room and give you an  
6 opportunity to troubleshoot the issue. And we had that  
7 happen a couple of times yesterday when someone --  
8 someone's streaming was breaking up and -- or they  
9 couldn't get it unmuted, something like that. But we  
10 can always call you back into the room with the next  
11 round of witnesses.

12 Now, if you need technical assistance,  
13 you can contact Zoom Customer support. Please visit  
14 Zoom.US/Join. That's Zoom.US/Join. Or call Zoom  
15 customer service at 1-800-799-9666. 1-800-799-9666. Or  
16 you can also call my committee office at 512-463-0030.  
17 512-463-0030 if you are having other issues.

18 With that said, let me give any of the  
19 senators that are with us the opportunity to make any  
20 comments. Senators, anything?

21 (Indicating.)

22 THE CHAIR: Senator Alvarado.

23 SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you,  
24 Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to thank you for providing  
25 us a copy of this letter. That is an informal

1 invitation to the Honorable Harmeet Dhillon. And I  
2 wanted to ask if we've put a deadline on this?

3 THE CHAIR: I did not. I assumed at  
4 some point, if the committee became impatient, that that  
5 issue could be brought up again.

6 SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. And just, in  
7 case those of you who are tuning in aren't aware of who  
8 this is, this is the person who wrote the letter from  
9 the DOJ which triggered the call for this to be on a  
10 special session.

11 THE CHAIR: Yes, and just for everyone  
12 listening, the watching the -- some of the members had  
13 requested yesterday that we invite. Her position is as,  
14 I think, is the director of the Civil Rights Division of  
15 the Department of Justice, and the request was that the  
16 committee formally invite Ms. Dhillon to testify.

17 So, we typed up a letter yesterday. I  
18 signed it on behalf of the committee, and we emailed it  
19 to Ms. Dhillon. And I know it was received because we  
20 received one of those automatic responses. So, I guess  
21 we'll just wait and see if she responds to the  
22 invitation.

23 SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. Because I  
24 know -- well, the conversation started off discussing  
25 subpoena, and so you made the suggestion -- or maybe

1 Senator Hinojosa -- about sending a formal invitation.

2 So, hopefully, Ms. Dhillon will respond  
3 and appear, either in person or virtually. But if not,  
4 I do want us to entertain the subpoena at that point.

5 THE CHAIR: We can certainly discuss  
6 that. I just did some quick research yesterday, and I  
7 found that our rules do not allow us to issue subpoenas  
8 at this stage of the hearing process, of the special  
9 session process, but there is a point at which we are  
10 allowed to do that, and I'll be happy to get that  
11 information to you.

12 SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. Is it because  
13 there's not a map? Is that deal?

14 THE CHAIR: No. It's actually in our  
15 rules that, I think, during the information gathering  
16 stage, we cannot do that. I can get that to you today.

17 SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. Thank you.

18 THE CHAIR: It was pretty quick research  
19 yesterday.

20 SENATOR ALVARADO: All right. And thank  
21 you for your -- your prompt turnaround on this.

22 THE CHAIR: Yeah. Certainly. And also,  
23 please bear in mind that we don't have the authority --  
24 as I understand it -- to compel anyone's testimony  
25 outside of the State of Texas. But fully expect us to

1 hear from the DOJ in response to the invitation.

2 SENATOR ALVARADO: Okay. I just --  
3 yesterday I mentioned -- I know that State Affairs had  
4 subpoenaed this -- I think it was the CEO of BlackRock.  
5 So, there is precedence for that.

6 THE CHAIR: Certainly. And we can talk  
7 about that if there's not a response to the invitation.  
8 But I fully expect we'll get some response. Thank you.

9 Members, anyone else?

10 (Silence.)

11 THE CHAIR: Great. Well, let's get  
12 going. And I know there's some other members that are  
13 on their way. In fact, would the Clerk please show that  
14 Senator Hughes is present.

15 Also, for those online, as you see  
16 people coming in and coming out -- because I know we'll  
17 be here for a long time -- please don't take that as any  
18 indication that the Senators are not interested in the  
19 topic at hand. Just like you, we have to take a break  
20 and grab a drink and a cup of coffee or something like  
21 that.

22 And I want you to know that if they go  
23 in the back -- even though there's someone that may go  
24 back there for a quick respite -- that the audio is  
25 playing back there, and they're able to listen into all

1 the testimony from here or from their offices as well.

2 So, with that, the Chair now opens for  
3 public testimony. As a reminder, public testimony will  
4 be limited to two minutes. Okay. I'll call up our  
5 first panel, and then I'll give you just a minute to be  
6 prepared. And, as I call your name, again, you'll need  
7 to unmute, and we'll hear your testimony at that time.

8 Cecilia Fernandez, Richard Howe, Angela  
9 Averetti, Songa Olson, and Chaplain Rich Stoglin.

10 Let me say that again: Cecilia  
11 Fernandez, Richard Howe, Angela Averetti -- and I  
12 probably mispronounced that last name -- Sonja Olson,  
13 and Chaplain Rich Stoglin.

14 And Chaplain, are you with us?

15 (Silence.)

16 THE CHAIR: Okay. Not yet.

17 THE CLERK: We'll start at the bottom.

18 THE CHAIR: We'll start at the bottom.

19 There's -- Ms. Fernandez.

20 MS. CECILIA FERNANDEZ: Yes, sir.

21 THE CHAIR: Welcome.

22 MS. CECILIA FERNANDEZ: Thank you.

23 THE CHAIR: We can hear you. Can you  
24 hear us okay?

25 MS. CECILIA FERNANDEZ: I sure can.

1 THE CHAIR: All right. Well, welcome.  
2 And, if you would, please state your name. And, just  
3 for the record, let us know if you're representing  
4 yourself or formally representing any organization, and  
5 then please begin your testimony.

6 MS. CECILIA FERNANDEZ: Okay. Good  
7 morning, members of the committee. My name is Cecilia  
8 Fernandez. I am a retired senior citizen who has lived  
9 in Texas for 51 years. I'm here today, not as a  
10 politician or policy expert, but as a deeply-concerned  
11 member of the public, someone who has lived long enough  
12 to see how political decisions shape people's lives for  
13 generations.

14 I've worked hard, raised a family, paid  
15 my taxes, and contributed to this State. But I never  
16 thought that in my later years I'd be standing here  
17 flipping, fighting for something so basic, a fair and  
18 functioning democracy.

19 I'm here today because I'm worried, not  
20 just for myself, but for my children, my grandchildren,  
21 and everyone who calls Texas home. When redistricting  
22 is manipulated to serve those already in power rather  
23 than the people, we all lose. Communities are silenced.  
24 Neighborhoods, like mine, are split and diluted, and our  
25 trust in government weakens. We, the people, deserve



1 fair maps, maps that reflect our communities, not ones  
2 drawn behind closed doors to protect incumbents or  
3 political agendas.

4               Redistricting should never be a tool to  
5 divide voters or disenfranchise people based on race,  
6 age, income, or party affiliation. As a senior, I've  
7 seen what happens when people give up hope in the  
8 system. And I refuse to let that happen on my watch. I  
9 want a future where every vote matters, where our voices  
10 are heard equally, and where those in power are chosen  
11 by the people and not the other way around. Please do  
12 not draw lines that divide us. Draw lines that reflect  
13 us.

14               THE CHAIR: If I may ask you to wrap up,  
15 ma'am, you're two minutes are up.

16               MS. CECILIA FERNANDEZ: Thank you for  
17 listening to the people of Texas.

18               THE CHAIR: And thank you very much.  
19 And I know it's hard to squeeze everything in, in two  
20 minutes.

21               MS. CECILIA FERNANDEZ: I know.

22               THE CHAIR: But you did a great job.  
23 So, thank you.

24               MS. CECILIA FERNANDEZ: Mr. Chairman,  
25 thank you, sir.

1 THE CHAIR: Members, are there any  
2 questions for the witness?

3 (Indicating.)

4 THE CHAIR: Senator Alvarado.

5 SENATOR ALVARADO: Mrs. Fernandez, I  
6 don't know if you can hear me, but I wanted to thank you  
7 for taking time out of your Saturday morning. I'm sure  
8 there are many other things you could be doing. But you  
9 said something that stuck with me. You said, you're  
10 worried. Well, I'm worried, too. I'm worried about  
11 this path that we're on.

12 Because now that Trump has asked Texas  
13 to do this, now there are other states trying to do the  
14 same thing. And I think whether it's a blue state or a  
15 red state, it should not be done on either side. This  
16 is mid decade. This is not the time to do  
17 redistricting.

18 So, I share your concern of being  
19 worried for the future of our state, the future of our  
20 country. Because then, if we do this, then any state at  
21 any time can follow this path and just start  
22 redistricting just because of a power grab or afraid of  
23 midterm elections. Well, guess what? It's part of the  
24 process. People lose in midterms. People lose in  
25 presidential elections. That's the way it is. The

1 political pendulum swings back and forth, and we go on.

2 So, thank you for sharing your thoughts  
3 with us and your Saturday morning.

4 MS. CECILIA FERNANDEZ: You're welcome.  
5 Thank you for having me.

6 THE CHAIR: Members, any other  
7 questions?

8 (Silence.)

9 THE CHAIR: Thank you for being here  
10 today.

11 MS. CECILIA FERNANDEZ: Thank you all.

12 THE CHAIR: Chair calls Richard Howe.  
13 Mr. Howe.

14 MR. RICHARD HOWE: Hi, good morning. My  
15 name is Richard Howe. Can you hear me okay?

16 THE CHAIR: We certainly can. If you  
17 would, please state your name and if you're  
18 representing -- representing any organization, please  
19 let us know that, and please proceed with your  
20 testimony.

21 MR. RICHARD HOWE: Okay. Yeah. My name  
22 is Richard Howe. I'm a native Texan, and I'm here  
23 representing myself. I live in Plano, Texas. And I  
24 wanted, again, thank the committee for providing the  
25 opportunity to in this -- in using this technology so

1 people can have their voices heard without having to  
2 travel all over the State.

3 I'm currently represented by Jeff Leach  
4 in the State House, House District 67. I'm also  
5 represented by committee member Angela Paxton in State  
6 Senate District 8. And I'm represented in Congressional  
7 District 4 by Congressman Pat Fallon.

8 I'd like to urge this redistricting  
9 committee to put forward a joint resolution for a ballot  
10 referenda to establish an independent, nonpartisan  
11 commission to be responsible for redistricting as is  
12 done in many states. District boundaries should be  
13 drawn compact and contiguous. Many of our districts are  
14 not. The configuration of those that are not undermines  
15 the principles of fair representation.

16 Many of our districts defy logic and  
17 geographical coherence, and they compromise the  
18 integrity of the democratic process. And, frankly, I  
19 think it's embarrassing. Let's stop letting the  
20 majority pick their voters, and get back to voters  
21 picking their elected officials. Thank you very much,  
22 again, for this opportunity.

23 THE CHAIR: Thank you. And, and first,  
24 if the clerk would show Senator Parker with us.

25 And, Mr. Howe, if I may be remembering

1 wrong, but I think you've testified on this subject to  
2 the redistricting committees before. Am I remembering  
3 correctly?

4 MR. RICHARD HOWE: No. I don't think  
5 I've ever done it, you know, in public or traveled to  
6 Austin.

7 THE CHAIR: Okay.

8 MR. RICHARD HOWE: I have submitted  
9 comments before, though.

10 THE CHAIR: Okay. I'm sorry. We've had  
11 testimony for that before, and for some reason I thought  
12 that might have been you. Members, any questions for  
13 the witness?

14 (Silence.)

15 THE CHAIR: Mr. Howe, thank you for your  
16 testimony this morning.

17 MR. RICHARD HOWE: Thank you.

18 THE CHAIR: Chair calls Angela Averitte.

19 MS. ANGELA AVERITTE: Yes. I wanted to  
20 come and testify before the committee.

21 My name is Angela Averitte. I'm from  
22 Dallas, Texas. I have been a resident since the day I  
23 was born. I mean, I'm like fourth generation, going on  
24 forever. And, mostly, I just wanted to let the  
25 committee know my thoughts on this whole redistricting

1 mid timeline and at the apparent behest of people  
2 outside of Texas.

3 I just -- I find it unacceptable, and I  
4 hope we'll just stick with the process that we have and  
5 go forward and not do this mid time. Thank you for your  
6 time.

7 THE CHAIR: Well, thank you. And just  
8 to clarify, are you representing any organization today  
9 or yourself?

10 MS. ANGELA AVERITTE: Just myself.  
11 Thank you.

12 THE CHAIR: All right. Thank you for  
13 being here with us. And, again, just to clarify, I know  
14 I mentioned this earlier, but the committee does not  
15 have any map before it. No maps have been proposed or  
16 presented to the committee. We're in the information  
17 gathering stage at this time on the subject matter of  
18 congressional redistricting.

19 Chair calls Sonja Olson. Ms. Olson, are  
20 you with us?

21 MS. SONJA OLSON: Yes. Thank you.

22 THE CHAIR: Thank you. There you go.  
23 Welcome.

24 MS. SONJA OLSON: Can you hear me?

25 THE CHAIR: We can. If you would,

1 please, just for the record, state your name and whether  
2 or not you're representing any organization formally  
3 here today.

4 MS. SONJA OLSON: My name is Sonja  
5 Olson. I'm not representing an organization. I'm a  
6 concerned citizen living in Richardson. I am a  
7 constituent of Congressional District 32 represented by  
8 Julie Johnson.

9 I, as a Texan, I would prefer that this  
10 legislative special session was working on disaster  
11 preparedness, reinforcing the electrical grid or  
12 preserving the environment. But instead we've chosen to  
13 focus on this plan to redraw our congressional districts  
14 outside of the ten year cadence of the US Census.

15 This is being done under direct  
16 political pressure from Donald Trump, and the primary  
17 purpose is to ensure Republican control of government  
18 regardless of the will of Texas voters. The  
19 redistricting process should be approached with due  
20 deliberation, but instead, public hearings are being  
21 compressed into five days with little advance notice to  
22 voters and tight time constraints in the in-person  
23 meetings that have prevented many constituents from  
24 testifying at all. Texas has a long history of  
25 discriminating against communities of color when drawing

1 congressional maps.

2 Texas recent population boom has been  
3 overwhelmingly driven by people of color, and yet the  
4 2021 redistricting did not reflect this on maps when  
5 they are proposed by the legislature. With this in  
6 mind, at the very least, we should wait until the court  
7 rules on the 2021 maps before redrawing.

8 Regardless, whether now or in 2031, this  
9 legislature should draw more representative opportunity  
10 districts for communities of color. We deserve and  
11 demand competitive representative districts which ensure  
12 all Texans have an equal voice in our government. Thank  
13 you.

14 THE CHAIR: Thank you. And, before I  
15 ask if members have any questions, if the clerk would  
16 please show Senator Alvarado here. And, my apologies,  
17 Senator, you've been here for a long time, and I -- I  
18 didn't ever ask the clerk to do that. So, apologies.

19 Members, are there any questions for the  
20 witness?

21 (Silence.)

22 THE CHAIR: Hearing none. Thank you.  
23 Chair calls Chaplain Rich Stoglin. Chaplain, are you  
24 with us?

25 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: I am.



1 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Welcome. Good  
2 to see you.

3 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: Thank you.  
4 You're welcome. My name is Rich Stoglin, Chaplain Rich  
5 Stoglin. I'm a native Texan currently residing in  
6 Arlington, Texas, and I am the president of the  
7 Frederick Douglass Republicans of Tarrant County.  
8 Anything else, Senator, you require of me at this time  
9 before my participation?

10 THE CHAIR: No, sir. I will tell him I  
11 was -- that I am also a member of your organization, and  
12 I have really enjoyed your leadership there. So, please  
13 proceed with your testimony.

14 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: Not only are you  
15 a member, you're an activist member, and we appreciate  
16 that.

17 One noted author stated, "history is  
18 dangerous if you don't know it, if you don't read it,  
19 and fail to have a moral compass."

20 While the founder of the Frederick  
21 Douglass Republicans of Tarrant County, the late  
22 Honorable Reby Cary, stated, "especially to black and  
23 brown Americans, be informed, intelligent voter, make  
24 your vote count."

25 Remember, historically, Texas has

1 elected 40 Democrats, one independent, one unionist, and  
2 six Republican governors.

3 We must read and evaluate the prosperity  
4 of our great State under each party, on fourth through  
5 sixth, 1867, in Houston, Texas, the Republican party of  
6 Texas was created by 150 colored men and 20 white men.  
7 They did this in the name of justice then. We are  
8 requesting redistricting in the name of justice now.

9 I echo their clarion call to have  
10 Republican leadership in the great State of Texas. As a  
11 black American, Afghanistan Veteran, a retired  
12 department head of the U.S. Department of Justice, I  
13 strongly support the Republican redistricting.

14 I do not want, nor does the great State  
15 of Texas or this magnificent nation deserve to continue  
16 seeing systemic gang and street violence, a plummeting  
17 educational system, communities deteriorating, men and  
18 women's sports, et cetera, while Democrats sit quietly  
19 and fail to condemn or acknowledge this systemic moral  
20 decay screaming systemic racism for anything that  
21 doesn't fit their narrative.

22 These acts of evil must stop. We need  
23 Republican leadership for such a time as this.  
24 Republicans have a larger story. Echoing the words of  
25 Frederick Douglass, I am a Republican, a black

1 dyed-in-the-wool Republican, and I never intend to  
2 belong to any other party than the party of freedom and  
3 progress.

4 We need and must have increased  
5 Republican leadership in the great State of Texas to  
6 remain great. As president of the Frederick Douglass  
7 Republicans of Tarrant County, I stand behind this  
8 statement. Thank you.

9 THE CHAIR: Thank you, Chaplain.  
10 Members, any questions?

11 (Silence.)

12 THE CHAIR: Well, Chaplain, good to see  
13 you. Sorry I missed the meeting Monday.

14 (Laughter.)

15 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: It's okay. We  
16 had a great meeting. It was -- it was terrific.

17 THE CHAIR: And we'll see you soon.  
18 Thank you.

19 CHAPLAIN RICH STOGLIN: All right.  
20 Semper Fi.

21 THE CHAIR: Chair shows Senator Miles  
22 present. Welcome.

23 And the next panel will be Crystal  
24 Chism, Kay Hill, Jessica Ramirez, Marianne Arnold, and  
25 Kassie Gossom.

1 Let me say that again: Crystal Chism,  
2 Kay Hill, Jessica Ramirez, Marianne Arnold, and Kassie  
3 Gossom. And Ms. Chism, are you with us?

4 (Silence.)

5 THE CHAIR: I think we have Ms. Hill  
6 ready. Ms. Hill, are you ready?

7 MS. KAY HILL: Yes, I'm ready.

8 THE CHAIR: Great. Thank you. If you  
9 would please tell us your name and if you're  
10 representing any organization, and then begin your two  
11 minute testimony.

12 MS. KAY HILL: My name is Kay Hill. I  
13 am representing just myself. I live in Sanger. It's in  
14 the 26th District, which is the strange "V" part coming  
15 up off the asterisk. This is Denton.

16 If your plan is to redistrict to better  
17 represent Texans and fix all the twisty turning  
18 nonsense, then great. I am 100 percent for that.

19 But we all know that that isn't the  
20 plan. The plan is to make the maps worse, so much worse  
21 you won't even present a sample before having these  
22 hearings.

23 Texans, we care about our neighbors.  
24 You should be giving our neighbors more accurate  
25 representation instead of gerrymandering. You should be

1 giving us Texans policies that people want to vote for  
2 instead of trying to rig that vote.

3 You should be committed to making life  
4 better for Texans rather than cowering to the whims of  
5 politics. But the sad truth is the majority of you are  
6 happy to disenfranchise other Texans, your neighbors.

7 And, as a born and raised Texan myself,  
8 I just have to say, shame on all of the cowards in this  
9 legislature that are even considering this. Thank you.

10 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Members, any  
11 questions?

12 (Silence.)

13 THE CHAIR: Thank you for being here  
14 with us today. Chair calls Jessica Ramirez.

15 MS. JESSICA RAMIREZ: Good morning.

16 THE CHAIR: Good morning.

17 MS. JESSICA RAMIREZ: My name is Jessica  
18 Ramirez, and I'm a constituent of the amazing  
19 Congressional District 30 represented by the amazing  
20 Jasmine Crockett in southeast Dallas. I'm here today to  
21 represent myself in opposition to any thought of  
22 redistricting in my state.

23 This decision, whether it involves  
24 changing lives -- we are already facing so much as it is  
25 in this State. And the direction that we're taking

1 is -- it's not acceptable without sufficient notice and  
2 clear just justification.

3 It's sending a message that the public  
4 input is -- it's an afterthought here. So, I really do  
5 appreciate that this was made available to us today.

6 I'm very concerned with how we're  
7 redirecting everything, and a sudden redirection  
8 undermines our ability to participate. So, you  
9 including us here today makes such a difference. But  
10 look at the census. The majority of -- the majority now  
11 makes up of -- in 2025, minorities make up majority of  
12 Texas.

13 Transparency and government depends on  
14 consensus on a constant basis and accessibility. It  
15 involves all decisions that impact our schools, our  
16 infrastructure, environment, our healthcare. You're  
17 messing with our lives.

18 And the right to choose effective  
19 leaders is eroding public trust. We expect and deserve  
20 a Senate that values input from all constituents, not  
21 just those who happen to benefit from the changes in  
22 administration.

23 If the goal is to serve the public of  
24 North Texas, then the changes to public meetings should  
25 be enhanced, and don't reduce us to something that we're

1 not. Texas is amazing. Texas is beautiful. We're all  
2 together in this, and we are deserve to be represented  
3 where you are sitting here today.

4 So, hopefully, you can go to sleep  
5 tonight, and one and everybody here that took their time  
6 to be here today, I appreciate it. And, please,  
7 reconsider redistricting. Thank you so much,

8 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Members, any  
9 questions?

10 (Silence.)

11 THE CHAIR: Hearing none, the Chair  
12 calls Crystal Chism.

13 MS. CRYSTAL CHISM: Thank you so much  
14 for the opportunity to speak.

15 My name is Crystal Chism. I represent  
16 not only Dallas County, CD30, I am the president of the  
17 Coalition for Black Democrats in Dallas County. I'm  
18 also an elected official in a North Texas City. And  
19 I'll just cut to the chase because I get this as a  
20 formality for you all to check the box and say, "hey, we  
21 allowed them the opportunity to speak."

22 And many of you on that day have made up  
23 your mind that you're moving in this direction because  
24 our President told you to do so. And so, what I will  
25 let you know and put you on notice on is that the black

1 communities in North Texas are growing. And not only  
2 are we educated, but we are organizing, and we are -- we  
3 will turn out in high numbers as we have every time  
4 we've been put up against opposition.

5 And not only that, Texas has a  
6 documented history, court-proven, that this is  
7 intentional discrimination against black voters, against  
8 brown voters, and redistricting just doesn't work. In  
9 2011, when y' all tried to do this before -- and it was  
10 ruled unconstitutional -- it didn't work.

11 You know, even in 2021, the fact that  
12 black voters, people of color, make up at least 95  
13 percent of the population growth, you try to draw maps  
14 then to drown our voices out.

15 And here we are, 2025, not even a full  
16 census, and we're back at it again, trying to redraw  
17 lines.

18 I just want to say that we have survived  
19 Jim Crow. We have survived attacks at the polls. We  
20 have survived everything and every attempt that Texan --  
21 that our forefathers have done to attempt to silence and  
22 mute our voice. And yet, we are still here. Yet, we  
23 are still voting. Yet, we are really loud.

24 And we're going to get louder. And for  
25 some of you all, because I did a lot of research on some



1 of your districts, some of your districts are -- to  
2 manipulate the maps in Tarrant County, it puts a few of  
3 you all in jeopardy.

4 To manipulate the maps in Collin County  
5 puts a few of you in jeopardy. I would think that you  
6 would be -- because -- just because you get orders to  
7 redistrict -- that you would also think about your  
8 voters, and that you're not doing.

9 And so, I just want to put you on notice  
10 that we are in for the fight. You may gerrymander those  
11 maps, but you can't gerrymander our voice. You can't  
12 gerrymander our fight, and you won't silence us in any  
13 of this. Have some common sense and decency.

14 THE CHAIR: Thank you. I -- you ran  
15 over your two minutes there -- but I really appreciate  
16 you being here today. Members, are there any questions  
17 for the witness?

18 (Silence.)

19 THE CHAIR: Well, thank you. Chair  
20 calls Marianne Arnold. Marianne Arnold.

21 MS. MARIANNE ARNOLD: Yes. Can you hear  
22 me?

23 THE CHAIR: Yes. We certainly can.  
24 Welcome.

25 MS. MARIANNE ARNOLD: Hi, my name is

1 Marianne Arnold. I am testifying today because we drove  
2 up to -- to Austin on Thursday. That's a two-hour  
3 drive, and only 40 people out of 170 people who got  
4 registered to testify were allowed to speak.

5 THE CHAIR: And if I may, that was in  
6 the House, not the Senate, correct?

7 MS. MARIANNE ARNOLD: Yes.

8 THE CHAIR: Thank you. And by the way,  
9 are you representing yourself today or an organization,  
10 just for the record?

11 MS. MARIANNE ARNOLD: I'm representing  
12 myself.

13 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Welcome. Please  
14 proceed.

15 MS. MARIANNE ARNOLD: I heard a lot of  
16 good testimony both yesterday and today in the House,  
17 and I would agree to most of it. So, the only thing I  
18 can add is a view of what happens when you gerrymander a  
19 district. If you look at the map of Texas right now, it  
20 looks like a bowl of spaghetti.

21 And it sounds like you all are going to  
22 make it worse. And that's a huge disservice to the  
23 person in office, as well as the constituents.

24 Four years ago, our county, Brazos  
25 County, got spaghettified into District 10. We'd been

1 in a different district before. Since that time, we've  
2 never had a town meeting, and a county of 250,000 people  
3 has never had a town meeting.

4 Most of the people in this county don't  
5 know our representatives names. My representative used  
6 to recognize my face at events even though he was of the  
7 opposite party. There's no going to barbecues or fish  
8 fries or talking one-on-one to constituents.

9 You're just trying to sift through as  
10 many high-impact events in a single day as you possibly  
11 can. Because it's a two-hour drive or a three-hour  
12 drive or a four-hour drive from one event to the next.  
13 And so, you're only hitting the people who can -- who  
14 can give you a lot of money.

15 THE CHAIR: Ma'am, if I may cut you off  
16 there?

17 MS. MARIANNE ARNOLD: Please don't make  
18 it worse. Please don't make it worse. Thank you.

19 THE CHAIR: We certainly understand your  
20 testimony, and I'm sorry to cut you off.

21 Members, are there any questions for the  
22 witness?

23 (Silence.)

24 THE CHAIR: Hearing none, Chair calls  
25 Kassie Gossom.

1 And for all those who are in the waiting  
2 room, there is a -- if you hear the beep, that indicates  
3 that the two minutes is up, and we would ask you to  
4 please try to wrap it up at that time. Thank you.

5 Ms. Gossom, are you with us?

6 MS. KASSIE GOSSOM: Yes, I am.

7 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Welcome. If you  
8 would please just state your name, and...

9 MS. KASSIE GOSSOM: Thank you. And  
10 thank you for the opportunity to speak. I'm Kassie  
11 Gossom. I'm representing myself and the future of my  
12 grandchildren, great grandchildren, and all other  
13 persons that would be affected by redistricting. I am  
14 in District 30 represented by Jasmine Crockett.

15 I have a deep concern about the future  
16 of the people of the great State of Texas as a lifelong  
17 resident and the effects of redistricting that will  
18 divide and marginalize voices of people of color.

19 The goal of this attempt to redistrict  
20 is an effort to rig the midterm elections and ensure  
21 that a public -- a Republican majority that will allow  
22 the current sitting President to run for a third term,  
23 which we all know is not constitutional.

24 For now, too many actions have been  
25 taken already by the Texas State Senate and Legislature

1 that adversely affect the poor and marginalized and  
2 persons of color in this State, including our Governor  
3 being tied to the hip of the current sitting President,  
4 seemingly representing his interests versus the welfare  
5 and well being of the citizens of Texas.

6 We see the gerrymandering attempt in  
7 this country, and now, unfortunately, it is creeping  
8 into our great State of Texas. This attempt and all  
9 others in this vein are racist and demonstrate the  
10 desire to exclude and marginalize the poor and any  
11 persons of color and, certainly, persons not represented  
12 by a particular party.

13 I would urge our representation for the  
14 great State of Texas to stop any attempts to redistrict  
15 four districts that are represented by minorities, which  
16 makes it even more obvious what the reasons of it is.

17 I want to live in a state, regardless of  
18 political party, that represents the interest of all  
19 people, not based on race, color, gender, or anything  
20 that has to do with not being a human being.

21 I thank you for this time this morning.  
22 And, again, I urge our State to not allow anybody to run  
23 and make decisions for us, but the people of the great  
24 State of Texas. Thank you this morning for this  
25 opportunity.

1 THE CHAIR: Thank you for testifying.

2 And, members, are there any questions for the witness?

3 (Silence.)

4 THE CHAIR: Hearing none, thank you  
5 again for being here.

6 And just a reminder to anyone who is  
7 watching online, if you have registered to testify  
8 today, please be sure to go ahead now and log into the  
9 Zoom. Please go ahead and log into to the Zoom if you  
10 still wish to testify so that we can move you over into  
11 the waiting room and have you ready to share with us.

12 With that, the Chair calls Craig Nazor.  
13 Sarah [sic] Pangalo, Lydia Reynolds, Julio Acosta, Jamie  
14 Fisher.

15 Let me say that again: Craig Nazor,  
16 Susan Pangallo, Lydia Reynolds, Julio Acosta, and Jamie  
17 Fisher.

18 [Audio echo feedback.]

19 THE CHAIR: (Laughs) Sir, if you would,  
20 the names I just called, if you would, please mute your  
21 live stream. Otherwise, you and -- we will both hear me  
22 say things twice.

23 Mr. Nazor, are you with us?

24 (Silence.)

25 THE CHAIR: How about Susan? Are you

1 with us? If you would, please just unmute,  
2 Ms. Pongallo, and we'll be able to take your testimony.  
3 You just need to unmute your Zoom.

4 (Silence.)

5 THE CHAIR: While we're waiting, we'll  
6 go to Julio Acosta.

7 MR. JULIO ACOSTA: Hi everyone. Can you  
8 hear me?

9 THE CHAIR: We certainly can. Welcome,  
10 and would you please state your name, and let us know if  
11 you're representing an organization. And please begin  
12 your two minute testimony.

13 MR. JULIO ACOSTA: Thank you. My name  
14 is Julio Acosta. I only represent myself today. I use  
15 pronouns "he" and "el." And I'm speaking to you from  
16 the Dallas area.

17 Recognizing that there are a lot of  
18 Texans that did not and will not have the privilege to  
19 be in any of the redistricting hearings, I am very much  
20 against the redistricting efforts. I echo the powerful  
21 voices of the passionate Texans that have spoken against  
22 this today and throughout all these hearings.

23 I hope that you listen intently to the  
24 legal experts that explain in detail why this possible  
25 ceiling of democracy is not just wrong, but also

1 unconstitutional and illegal. We should be a government  
2 by the people, for the people.

3 All I want you to remember is this:  
4 Past patriots literally paid in blood to not have a  
5 king. We, the people, do not want a king. The  
6 Constitution clearly does not want a king. You and  
7 anyone should also not want a king. Kings dictate what  
8 the government does. Anyone that tells you that you  
9 should be supporting redistricting before the 2030  
10 census is done properly is not a patriot and wants you  
11 to do what a king wants.

12 You're stealing the voices from fellow  
13 Texans. If you choose to go through this illegal steal  
14 of voices, know that you are in the wrong. Know that  
15 history will show that you are in the wrong.

16 I hope that deep, deep down, you at  
17 least recognize that you are in the wrong. But I also  
18 hope that you do not support this. Do not choose for  
19 the ceiling of democracy to be your legacy. I repeat,  
20 do not choose this stealing of democracy to be your  
21 legacy.

22 And I just want to say I really  
23 appreciate the idea of the independent, nonpartisan.  
24 That's a really great idea. I really support that. And  
25 I just echo all the voices of everybody else that has



1 spoken today. Thank you, and I yield my time.

2 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Members, any  
3 questions for Mr. Acosta?

4 (Silence.)

5 THE CHAIR: Thank you for being with us  
6 today. Let's try again. Craig Nazor, are you with us,  
7 sir?

8 (Silence.)

9 THE CHAIR: I know Mr. Nazor testified  
10 yesterday.

11 MR. CRAIG NAZOR: Yes, I'm here.

12 THE CHAIR: Good. Good to see you  
13 again. Please proceed.

14 MR. CRAIG NAZOR: Yes. My name is Craig  
15 Nazor, and I am a conservation chair of the State  
16 Chapter of the Sierra Club, and I was at the entire  
17 House hearing on Thursday, I watched the entire hearing  
18 yesterday, and I'm here today.

19 And from my calculations, less than 1  
20 percent of the people who've testified in front of you  
21 want this kind of political redistricting. Now, we  
22 don't see a map, but the request you've had to do this  
23 redistricting comes from a President who's made it  
24 completely clear that he wants political redistricting.  
25 This is important. Because there are a lot of -- as the

1 state chair, I see environmental problems all over  
2 Texas.

3 We have Shingle Mountain outside of  
4 Dallas. We have creosote pollution in the Fifth Ward of  
5 Houston, Texas. We have an Exxon ethane cracker plant  
6 in Corpus Christi bay. We have SpaceX in Boca Chica  
7 Beach in Brownsville. We have high energy and high  
8 water use by crypto and AI all over the State.

9 When you take away, when you cut these  
10 communities up into little pieces, you rob their voices.  
11 This -- when I think about this -- this is a form of  
12 bullying.

13 Now, when I was a kid, I was bullied,  
14 like many kids were. And what I learned is you must  
15 stand up to a bully. If you don't, you will continue to  
16 be bullied. So, what's happening now is the rest of the  
17 country sees this bullying because this president is a  
18 bully. I don't think anybody can deny that. Other  
19 states are going to gerrymander -- like California, like  
20 New York -- and it's going to become a playground mud  
21 fight.

22 And that's not going to be good for the  
23 country. It's not going to be good for any of us. Now,  
24 I know it may be legal, but we should have districts set  
25 up by people with common interests and not partisan

1 gerrymandering. And if you continue to do this, we, the  
2 bullied people will fight back.

3 And there is a lot of anger over this.  
4 So, just be aware of that, that we object, and it's  
5 going to hurt people. From an environmental point of  
6 view, it's going to hurt people all over this country,  
7 not just the State, but this country, if this bullying  
8 continues.

9 So I want to thank you once again for  
10 taking my statements, and listen to the people who are  
11 talking to you. Thank you very much.

12 THE CHAIR: Thank you, sir, for being  
13 back with us again today. Members, any questions?

14 (Silence.)

15 THE CHAIR: Thank you. Hearing none,  
16 Chair calls Lydia Reynolds. Ms. Reynolds, if you wish  
17 to testify, you just need to unmute.

18 (Silence.)

19 THE CHAIR: Let's try Susan Pongallo.

20 (Silence.)

21 THE CHAIR: How about Jamie Fisher?

22 Chair calls Jamie Fisher.

23 MS. LYDIA REYNOLDS: Hello. Can you  
24 hear me?

25 THE CHAIR: Yes.

1 MS. LYDIA REYNOLDS: Hi. This is Lydia.

2 THE CHAIR: Well, Ms. Reynolds, thank  
3 you for being with us. [Audio echo in the background]  
4 If you would...

5 MS. LYDIA REYNOLDS: Sorry about that.  
6 I'm not too technical savvy. So, I'm trying to learn.  
7 Okay.

8 THE CHAIR: You're just...

9 MS. LYDIA REYNOLDS: But good morning.

10 THE CHAIR: You're just...

11 MS. LYDIA REYNOLDS: My name is Lydia  
12 Reynolds, and I'm a resident of Dallas, Texas. And,  
13 today, as an American citizen of 80 years, I am deeply  
14 disturbed by what is taking place, not only in our city,  
15 but our State and our Nation.

16 And this redistricting situation is  
17 really causing a lot of pain and concern. And we have  
18 fought and died for the rights to do -- just simply vote  
19 for the persons of our choice and who represent our  
20 needs and our concerns.

21 And, for whatever reason, this is trying  
22 to be taken away from us. And we just really don't  
23 understand why it is that you all are wanting to do  
24 this. But, you know, when I listen to what  
25 Mr. President Trump said on the news the other night, it

1 was just so reminiscent of what he did for Georgia and  
2 demanding votes.

3 And that didn't work there, and it  
4 should not work here. So, we are pleading with our  
5 Governor to take an ethical stand, as they did in  
6 Georgia, and not allow this situation to occur.

7 And we all know why this is being done.  
8 It's not right. And we don't want our people to be said  
9 not to have the representation they deserve. So, we're  
10 just asking, please, I want to add my voice to this cry,  
11 don't allow these things to happen.

12 Continue to be fair and just and not use  
13 tactics to take away the rights and privileges of people  
14 who have fought and died for this, just the right to  
15 have a voice and in our government.

16 And I thank you for the opportunity to  
17 address this issue. It's one of the few rights we still  
18 have left, thank God, and I'm just hoping and praying  
19 that those who are listening to us today will take our  
20 cry to heart and pray about what they are going to do  
21 before they make a decision. Thank you so much.

22 THE CHAIR: Well, thank you for being  
23 here with us. And I'm sorry if you had a little  
24 difficulty in getting that going, but we appreciate your  
25 testimony. And just for our -- just so that I have it

1 for our records, you're not representing any  
2 organization today? You were speaking on behalf of  
3 yourself? Is that correct?

4 THE CLERK: It's muted again.

5 THE CHAIR: That's all right. I'll just  
6 show it that way. I understand...

7 MS. LYDIA REYNOLDS: Yes, sir. That is  
8 correct.

9 THE CHAIR: That is correct. Thank you  
10 very much again.

11 MS. LYDIA REYNOLDS: Yes.

12 THE CHAIR: Thanks for being with us.  
13 Chair calls Jamie Fisher. Jamie Fisher. If you would,  
14 please unmute. There on your zoom it unmuted, and then  
15 it muted again.

16 MS. JAMIE FISHER: I unmuted.

17 THE CHAIR: There you go. Great. We  
18 got you.

19 MS. JAMIE FISHER: Okay. Cool. Cool.  
20 There was a little delay there.

21 THE CHAIR: Welcome.

22 MS. JAMIE FISHER: Good morning Chairman  
23 King and committee. Thank you for the opportunity to be  
24 here. My name is Jamie Fisher. I hail from District 16  
25 out in El Paso. I am the founder of Pickleball El Paso

1 Association. But today I am speaking on my own behalf.  
2 So, when I travel, I have noticed Americans are  
3 incredibly proud of our 250 year young democracy.

4 We are fragile, we are young, and voting  
5 is the lifeblood of that democracy. When you go to  
6 Canterbury Cathedral and you see 1400-year-old building  
7 with a solid marble step that has bowed down from the  
8 millions of visitors and the one and a half centuries,  
9 you realize we are young and our survival is not  
10 guaranteed.

11 Texans have pride on steroids. And when  
12 you threaten our right for self determination, you see  
13 those secede bumper stickers pop out. Redistricting is  
14 a State's right. It's the 10th Amendment. And the  
15 President has no right to pressure us into redistricting  
16 out of census for his own unabashed political gain. He  
17 has sent troops into California against their wishes.

18 He is not respecting state rights, and  
19 it's going to get worse. So, we are in dark times. And  
20 the question is: What will your legacy be? Is it going  
21 to be like Paul Ferguson, or is it going to be more like  
22 George Washington or Lincoln or Georgia?

23 Georgia had the courage to stand up, and  
24 if we don't stop him and make him recognize our  
25 boundaries and our State rights, it is going to get

1 worse. Thank you for your service. You guys are under  
2 a lot of pressure. Good luck to you.

3 THE CHAIR: Thank you for being here  
4 with us today. Members, are there any questions?

5 (Silence.)

6 THE CHAIR: Hearing none, thank you  
7 again. Who's our next panel (talking to the clerk)?  
8 Okay. Well, let's try Susan Pongallo again. You'll  
9 simply need to unmute on your Zoom.

10 THE CLERK: She is...

11 THE CHAIR: We see your sign that says,  
12 "vote no please." But you're still muted. Would you,  
13 if you wish to speak, please just hit the mute button,  
14 and we'll be able to hear you.

15 THE CLERK: We'll place her back in the  
16 waiting room so she can unmute?

17 THE CHAIR: Ma'am, what we'll do, in  
18 case you're having some technical problems, is we'll go  
19 ahead and place you back in the waiting room, and we'll  
20 call you up again later. Thank you.

21 All right, Chair -- let me call up the  
22 next panel. Chair Linus -- Linus Spiller-Craft, Natalie  
23 Crittendon, Jacqueline Baez-Lugo, Stacy Milo, and  
24 Cristin Padgett. Let's try that again. Linus  
25 Spiller-Craft, Natalie Crittendon, Jacqueline Baez-Lugo,



1 Stacy Melo and Cristin Padgett.

2 Ms. Baez-Lugo, would you like to go  
3 ahead and testify? If you would, please unmute, and  
4 begin your testimony. For those...

5 MS. JACQUELINE BAEZ-LUGO: Hi. Good  
6 morning. Am I available?

7 THE CHAIR: You are here. Welcome.

8 MS. JACQUELINE BAEZ-LUGO: Oh, wow.

9 THE CHAIR: If you would, please just  
10 state your name and if you're representing an  
11 organization, let us know that, and then begin your two  
12 minute testimony, please.

13 MS. JACQUELINE BAEZ-LUGO: Hi, good  
14 morning. My name is Jacqueline Baez-Lugo. I represent  
15 myself. I'm a Puerto Rican lady. I live in Hidalgo  
16 County, which is Rio Grande Valley. Let me tell you  
17 some stats about Hidalgo County.

18 Hidalgo County has a high-poverty rate  
19 significantly exceeding both the state and the national  
20 level. Approximately, 27 percent of the Hidalgo County  
21 population lives below the poverty line. This is more  
22 than double the Texas average of 13 percent and the US  
23 average of 12 percent. This according to the census  
24 reported in the USA data.

25 The high unemployment rate in Hidalgo

1 County is higher than the whole country. Our income  
2 here is below the national average.

3 Okay. So -- and these stats go back to  
4 50 years. Our poverty rate has been more than 20  
5 percent. And let me tell you something, Hidalgo County  
6 has been controlled under the Democrats all of this  
7 time. I know there's been a lot of talk about  
8 gerrymandering for Republicans -- but guess what? --  
9 Democrats, they do it, too.

10 And I also was reading a little bit  
11 about the Galveston case. And, in that case, basically,  
12 they have been using the Voting Rights Act to weaponize  
13 that Act so they can have more voters for the Democrats.

14 So, basically, what I'm saying is, go  
15 ahead and redistrict, especially Hidalgo County. We  
16 need more representation from the Republican side.  
17 People like me, Republican conservative women, we don't  
18 get no voice. And people keep talking about democracy.

19 The last time I read, we are a  
20 constitutional Republic. I'm supposed to be able to  
21 vote for people that represent me. Thank God I was able  
22 to vote for Monica De la Cruz on CD15.

23 But as far as the county is concerned,  
24 the Democrats have a chokehold. It's very hard for us  
25 to vote for Republican representation around here. So,

1 go ahead and redistrict. I'm not afraid. All this fear  
2 mongering they're doing, it doesn't gonna stop me.

3 I will vote Republican no matter what  
4 lies they throw at me. And, like I said, come to  
5 Hidalgo County. See for yourself. Okay? There's  
6 plenty of people like me. I'm not the only one. So,  
7 there's plenty of Republicans, Hispanic like me, that  
8 would like to have representation, too.

9 And thank you again for your time. I  
10 really appreciate this Zoom stuff. It's pretty cool.  
11 Thank you so much. (Spanish) Viva America.

12 THE CHAIR: Thank you for being here  
13 with us today so much. Members, are there any  
14 questions?

15 MS. JACQUELINE BAEZ-LUGO: Nope?

16 THE CHAIR: All right. Thank you very  
17 much.

18 MS. JACQUELINE BAEZ-LUGO: Woo. Thank  
19 you.

20 (Laughter.)

21 UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: Thank you.

22 THE CHAIR: Linus Spiller-Craft. You'll  
23 simply need to unmute.

24 (Silence.)

25 THE CHAIR: All right. Let's go to

1 Stacy Melo.

2 MS. STACY MELO: Hello, can you hear me?

3 THE CHAIR: I certainly can. Welcome.

4 And if you would, please state your name and, for the  
5 record, if you're representing any organization, and  
6 then please begin your testimony.

7 MS. STACY MELO: Yes. My name is Stacy  
8 Melo. I am representing myself. I currently reside in  
9 CD30. Jasmine Crockett is my representative. Although  
10 I have no idea if that would change with this mid decade  
11 redistricting power grab because no maps have officially  
12 been released for the public to review.

13 So, questions that often run through my  
14 head as we face this redistricting power grab by Donald  
15 Trump bootlickers is: Do you think that Texans are  
16 dumb? Do we think that Texans are stupid? Do Texans  
17 not deserve the opportunity to elect the officials they  
18 want rather than politicians choosing the voters that  
19 they want?

20 You say you're doing this mid decade  
21 power grab because you want to preserve GOP control in  
22 Congress and advance President Trump's agenda. The last  
23 time I checked, our elected officials are public  
24 servants, not Donald Trump servants. And the only thing  
25 that GOP control in Congress and the Senate has gotten

1 us recently is the largest transfer of wealth from the  
2 working class to billionaires through the big, ugly,  
3 brutal bill.

4 It has stripped millions of Texans of  
5 their Medicare, defunded rural hospitals, stripped  
6 people of SNAP benefits. The atrocities go on and on.  
7 And while the GOP and Trump -- and probably some of  
8 you -- were celebrating the passage of this disgusting  
9 bill, Texans were dying. 137 Texans died because of the  
10 failure and GOP leadership through the flooding that  
11 happened in Kerr County and Central Texas and the  
12 flooding that happened in RGV earlier.

13 So, this special session should have  
14 been focused on figuring out how we can protect Texans  
15 from climate disasters like what happened there. And  
16 yet, here you are wasting time on a redistricting ploy  
17 that Texas did not ask for.

18 So, I want you all to go to those  
19 families who lost someone in the flooding and explain to  
20 them that you care more about doing Donald Trump's  
21 bidding and than presenting solutions that will protect  
22 Texans from climate disasters. Thank you for your time.

23 THE CHAIR: Thank you for your  
24 testimony. Members, are there any questions for the  
25 witness?

1 (Silence.)

2 THE CHAIR: Seeing none, Chair calls  
3 Linus Spiller-Craft.

4 MR. LINUS SPILLER-CRAFT: Okay. Can you  
5 hear me now?

6 THE CHAIR: We certainly can.

7 MR. LINUS SPILLER-CRAFT: Great.

8 THE CHAIR: Please proceed.

9 MR. LINUS SPILLER-CRAFT: Yes. My name  
10 is Linus Spiller-Craft. I'm a cofounding member of the  
11 Public Education Advocates of Texas, also known as PETE.  
12 I'm a proud resident of Congressional District 33,  
13 represented by Congressman Marc Veasey.

14 I would like to address the issue of  
15 this recent redistricting proposal, which I am  
16 personally against. In 2013, the Supreme Court struck  
17 down a key provision in the Voting Rights Act that  
18 required mostly Southern states to secure federal  
19 approval for congressional districts maps.

20 When this action occurred, as a black  
21 man, I was deeply concerned. Because recent census data  
22 shows his Hispanic, Asian, Black and Multiracial  
23 communities outpacing the declining White community in  
24 population numbers. Let's look at those numbers.

25 The White population shrank by 8.6

1 percent, while Hispanics grew by 23 percent, Asians by  
2 35 percent, blacks by 5.6 percent, and the multiracial  
3 population by 276 percent.

4 District 33 is already one of the most  
5 bizarre-drawn congressional districts. Go check it out  
6 if you haven't. Allegedly, it's one of the districts  
7 that will be impacted, potentially drawing in  
8 conservative voters from the cities of Irving, Grand  
9 Prairie, and Arlington.

10 This will greatly disenfranchise  
11 minority voices, votes, and representation of the  
12 rapidly growing minority communities mentioned.

13 And I am, vehemently, against this  
14 action and redistricting as a whole at this time. In  
15 addition, I support congressional legislation  
16 establishing independent redistricting commissions in  
17 Texas and across the nation to remove partisan politics  
18 out of our voting processes.

19 I thank you for your time.

20 THE CHAIR: Thank you, sir, for being  
21 here today. Members, are there any questions?

22 (Silence.)

23 THE CHAIR: Hearing none, Chair calls  
24 Natalie Crittendon. Natalie Crittenden, you are still  
25 on mute, but if you'll unmute, we...

1 MS. NATALIE CRITTENDON: Good morning.

2 Can you hear me?

3 THE CHAIR: We certainly can. Welcome.

4 MS. NATALIE CRITTENDON: All right. My  
5 name is Natalie Crittendon, and I am representing myself  
6 as a recently retired public school administrator. So,  
7 I'll go ahead and get started.

8 All right. Based on the letter that was  
9 sent to Governor Abbott and AG Paxton from the DOJ, it  
10 is evident that it is oriented around gerrymandering.  
11 The most-recent redistricting in Texas occurred in 2021,  
12 October 2021, following the release of the 2020 Census  
13 data.

14 That year, the Texas legislator passed  
15 and Governor Abbott signed, or allowed to become law,  
16 new maps with congressional state legislative and state  
17 Board of Education districts.

18 When Texas lawmakers completed the  
19 redistricting process in the fall of 2021, State Senator  
20 Joan Huffman, who chaired the Senate Redistricting  
21 Committee, publicly stated that the maps had been drawn  
22 "race blind."

23 During a legislative hearing she  
24 emphasized, "we drew these maps 'race blind.'" "We have  
25 not looked at any racial data, and we drew these maps



1 and to this day I have not looked at any racial data."

2 Now we have the letter from the DOJ  
3 which states that the congressional districts 9, 18, 29,  
4 33 currently constitute unconstitutional coalition  
5 districts and for our state to rectify these race-based  
6 considerations from these specific districts.

7 I'm confused. This sends an unclear  
8 message to our voters, both novice voters and seasoned  
9 voters. It was stated that when the redistricting was  
10 done in 2021, the lines were done and they were race  
11 neutral.

12 Now, according to the DOJ letter, it  
13 states that the coalition districts run a style to the  
14 Voting Rights Act and the 14th amendment.

15 So, based on the requesting the letter,  
16 we are going to interject race-based considerations to  
17 redo these districts. But it's been stated that the  
18 districts were created "race neutral."

19 It's not right to present this to our  
20 voters in such an unclear manner. And, secondly, it  
21 also undermines fair representation. We know  
22 gerrymandering manipulates district boundaries to favor  
23 one political party or group, often at the expense of  
24 fair voter representation. This means that the election  
25 outcomes can be manipulated, allowing the party to win

1 more seats than their share of votes.

2 And this process will also silence our  
3 communities and, especially, our minority communities.

4 And so, we have to make sure that we do  
5 not do this. I am against the request from the DOJ, and  
6 I'm asserting that we do not adjust the lines based on  
7 the assumptions of the DOJ. It's your duty to do right  
8 by your constituents that you serve. And I'm calling  
9 for all Texans to unite and to seek legal -- legal  
10 action against this process. Thank you.

11 THE CHAIR: Thank you for being here  
12 with us. And, members, are there any questions?

13 (Silence.)

14 THE CHAIR: Hearing none, Chair calls  
15 Cristin Padgett.

16 MS. CRISTIN PADGETT: Hello.

17 THE CHAIR: Hi. Good morning.

18 MS. CRISTIN PADGETT: I'm here  
19 representing myself. My name is Kristen Padgett. I'm a  
20 former candidate for Texas House District 33, one of the  
21 most aggressively gerrymandered districts in the State.

22 Today I live in House District 108 and  
23 Congressional District 32, proudly represented by  
24 Congressman Julie Johnson -- Congresswoman Julie  
25 Johnson.

1 After the last round of redistricting,  
2 my new district, HD108, saw 14 point drop in Democratic  
3 representation -- not because the people changed -- but  
4 because the lines did. Let's be clear. This mid decade  
5 redistricting isn't about fair representation. It's  
6 about political power. It's a partisan maneuver to  
7 entrench control before the next election without a new  
8 census and during a special session that was supposed to  
9 focus on disaster relief, not dismantling democracy.

10 They say this is about complying with  
11 the Voting Rights Act. But you can't ignore racial  
12 fairness in 2021 and suddenly claim it as your moral  
13 compass in 2025, especially, when the communities being  
14 carved up are black, brown, and increasingly suburban.

15 Texans deserve competitive districts  
16 that reflect people, not party preservation. This  
17 process weakens voter trust, suppresses engagement, and  
18 sends a clear message that your vote only matters when  
19 it benefits those in power.

20 I've run for office, I've knocked on the  
21 doors, and I can tell you, Texans aren't asking for new  
22 maps. They're asking for real solutions to  
23 homelessness, to rising rents, and to the cost of  
24 living. Let's stop redrawing the rules and start  
25 showing up for the people.

1 And to those driving this effort, I  
2 leave you with a reminder from the Bible you claim to  
3 live by, "do unto others as you would have them do unto  
4 you." Because when Democrats take back power, you don't  
5 want us using it the way you're using it against us now.  
6 Thank you. And I do not support redistricting in Texas.

7 THE CHAIR: Thank you for being here  
8 with us today. Members, any questions?

9 (Silence.)

10 THE CHAIR: Hearing none, let me call up  
11 the next panel. Lauren Chiong, Randall Bryant, Amina  
12 Showell, Claudia Torres Yanez, and Myra Alaniz. Let me  
13 call one more time: Lauren Chiong, Randall Bryant,  
14 Amina Showell, Claudia Torres --

15 [Audio interrupting]: Mr. Chairman, my  
16 name is Gary Bledsoe. I'm president of the Texas NAACP,  
17 and bring this idea to bring Dr. Cass onto our team.

18 The Chair: Well, welcome, and please proceed with your  
19 testimony. And we would ask you to keep to two minutes.

20 (Audio stopped.)

21 THE CHAIR: All right. Ma'am, if you  
22 would please remain muted until you're called. And who  
23 was that? Do you know? Hmm, Ms. Chiong, if you want to  
24 go ahead and unmute, and go ahead and begin your  
25 testimony.

1 MS. LAUREN CHIONG: Thank you so much.  
2 I just wanted to say -- to thank you for the opportunity  
3 to be a part of this, and I just wanted to echo and  
4 agree with what Senators Miles and Hinojosa had already  
5 stated. I reside in North Texas, Fort Worth, Texas, and  
6 I am just very concerned about possible gerrymandering  
7 and also that national consequences.

8 I'm very concerned that both parties  
9 will do a sort of tit-for-tat in terms of gerrymandering  
10 in various states. And that does concern me greatly.  
11 Because I don't think that this is an effective way to  
12 run a democracy. And I just don't think that the timing  
13 is correct for a redistricting effort. And, again,  
14 thank you so much for the opportunity to comment.

15 THE CHAIR: Well, thank you. And if you  
16 would, just for our record, would you please state your  
17 name and let us know whether or not you're representing  
18 yourself or any organization today?

19 MS. LAUREN CHIONG: Of course. I'm  
20 Lauren Chiong, and I'm just representing myself as a  
21 private citizen today --

22 THE CHAIR: Well, thank you.

23 MS. LAUREN CHIONG: -- concerned  
24 citizen.

25 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you for being

1 here with us.

2 Members, are there any questions for the  
3 witness?

4 (Silence.)

5 THE CHAIR: Well, thank you for being  
6 here. Chair calls Randall Bryant. Mr. Bryant.

7 MR. RANDALL BRYANT: Yes. Can you hear  
8 me?

9 THE CHAIR: We can. Please proceed.

10 MR. RANDALL BRYANT: Thank you,  
11 Mr. Chair, and good afternoon to [audio issue]...I'm a  
12 resident of Dallas, Texas, in Senate District 23 and  
13 Congressional District 30.

14 This past redistricting cycle, I served  
15 as -- I served on the City of Dallas's redistricting  
16 committee. I also formed an advocacy group called the  
17 North Texas Municipal Redistricting Project, where we  
18 work to protect, preserve, and defend minority- drawn  
19 districts within six cities and four school districts  
20 across North Texas.

21 I also served as a county-level  
22 redistricting consultant for the Texas Democratic Party.  
23 Needless to say, redistricting is one of my favorite  
24 subjects to discuss, But never in a million years did I  
25 imagine I will be discussing it with you all here today.

1 And that's because redistricting is not what's taking  
2 place here, but rather "rig-districting" is.

3 Because only in a rigged districting  
4 system would the 2021 congressional map be approved by  
5 this body that created two new white districts, when 95  
6 percent of the population growth over the prior 10 years  
7 was attributed to people of color.

8 And now that the Department of Justice  
9 and the President has called out that map urging this  
10 State to, "rectify these race based considerations," is  
11 the biggest slap in the face to the millions of Black,  
12 Latino, and AAPI communities that make our State, your  
13 State, the beacon that you claim to be so proud of.

14 I urge you all to resist this racially-  
15 based federal government overreach, and reject any new  
16 maps. Thank you.

17 THE CHAIR: Well, thank you for your  
18 testimony this morning. And, again, are you  
19 representing yourself or any organization today?

20 MR. RANDALL BRYANT: I represent -- I'm  
21 representing myself.

22 THE CHAIR: All right. Again, thank you  
23 for being here. Members, are there any questions?

24 (Silence.)

25 THE CHAIR: Hearing none, Chair calls

1 Amina Showell. Amina Showell.

2 MS. AMINA SHOWELL: Good morning. Thank  
3 you all for allowing me to join these proceedings this  
4 morning. I feel as though it's very, very important.

5 I am representing myself as a mother of  
6 a fallen Marine. I just want to explain that it is very  
7 crucial that us Black and Brown folks are represented  
8 correctly.

9 And I feel as though once this  
10 redistricting takes place, or it is allowed to take  
11 place, we will not -- our neighborhoods will fall, our  
12 children will not have what they need, and it is already  
13 scaring us to our cores. We would like for it to stay  
14 the way it is so that we can have the representation  
15 that we need to succeed as a human race. That is all I  
16 would like to say. Thank you.

17 THE CHAIR: Well, thank you. And thank  
18 you for being here. And was it -- did you mention --  
19 your son --

20 MS. AMINA SHOWELL: Yes, sir.

21 THE CHAIR: -- who was killed in the  
22 line of duty?

23 MS. AMINA SHOWELL: Yes, sir.

24 THE CHAIR: And we are so sorry for your  
25 loss, so very very sorry. But we're also so grateful



1 for your son's service.

2 MS. AMINA SHOWELL: We thank you.

3 THE CHAIR: And thank you very much for  
4 being here with us today. Members, are there any  
5 questions?

6 (Silence.)

7 THE CHAIR: Well, thank you, again, for  
8 being here with us. Chair calls Claudia Torres Yanez  
9 [sic] -- I'm sorry. Yanez.

10 MS. CLAUDIA TORRES YANEZ: Claudia --  
11 can you hear me?

12 THE CHAIR: We have got you. And, by  
13 the way, you get the best background award for today.

14 MS. CLAUDIA TORRES YANEZ: Oh, thank  
15 you. I appreciate that.

16 THE CHAIR: Please state your name and  
17 if you're representing any organization, and we're eager  
18 to hear your testimony.

19 MS. CLAUDIA TORRES YANEZ: Yes. Thank  
20 you for the opportunity to testify today virtually on a  
21 Saturday. I was unable to stay in the waiting room  
22 yesterday due to work responsibilities. My name is  
23 Claudia Torres Yanez, and I'm a school board trustee and  
24 resident of Pflugerville in Travis County representing  
25 myself.

1 I testified before the House  
2 redistricting committee in May of 2021, and I didn't  
3 expect to be back mid decade. Much of what I said then  
4 still holds true. I love my community, its diversity,  
5 its energy, its mix of cow pastures, and tech campuses.

6 Pflugerville has grown, but what binds  
7 us is our shared civic life. And that civic life is  
8 undermined by redistricting processes that split us into  
9 pieces, distorts representation, and disrespects our  
10 communities of interest.

11 Instead of being represented as a  
12 coherent community, we're now bundled with far-flung  
13 regions that share very little of our lived experience  
14 and local priorities.

15 Let me put it this way with a Texas  
16 analogy for you: If Texas were a barbecue plate,  
17 redistricting has become the equivalent of mixing  
18 brisket with banana pudding and calling it a balanced  
19 meal. It doesn't make sense, it doesn't taste right,  
20 and nobody asked for it.

21 Well, only someone not from here asks  
22 for it. Worse yet, the State wants to claim it's  
23 following the recipe while clearly just taking the order  
24 while throwing the cookbook out the window. You can't  
25 on one hand say the maps were drawn "race blind," and

1 then, on the other hand, carve up those same communities  
2 to serve partisan ends.

3 That's not Texan. That's hypocrisy with  
4 a side of disrespect. My ask is simple and echoes what  
5 I said four years ago: Reject racial and partisan  
6 gerrymandering, and follow a fair and transparent  
7 process that includes showing us the maps and giving us  
8 an opportunity to give input on them.

9 Texans deserve better than maps drawn to  
10 protect power. We deserve fair maps. A delicious plate  
11 of brisket, with a side of potato salad and pinto beans,  
12 and a cold German lager. Thank you.

13 THE CHAIR: Okay. Thank you very much.  
14 And, members, are there any questions?

15 (Indicating.)

16 THE CHAIR: Senator Alvarado.

17 SENATOR ALVARADO: I just wanted to  
18 thank you for that very creative analogy. In fact, it's  
19 making me a little hungry.

20 (Laughter.)

21 SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you.

22 MS. CLAUDIA TORRES YANEZ: It is  
23 lunchtime and chat GPT y' all. It works.

24 (Laughters.)

25 THE CHAIR: All right. Chair calls Myra

1 Alaniz. Myra Alaniz, are you with us?

2 (Silence.)

3 THE CHAIR: We're going to put her back  
4 in the queue, and this is the next panel. And what I'll  
5 do, ma'am, is put back...

6 MS. MYRA ALANIZ: Can you hear me?

7 THE CHAIR: Oh, we've got you. Thank  
8 you.

9 MS. MYRA ALANIZ: Okay. I guess it's  
10 morning. Good morning. My name is Myra B. Alaniz. My  
11 comments are my opinion, and I do not represent anyone.

12 Let's not pretend this committee hearing  
13 is normal. Redistricting is not supposed to happen at  
14 the five-year mark. We all know the rules. We all know  
15 the law. And yet, here we are, watching this committee  
16 bend the rules, their oath, their moral compass, just to  
17 say "yes" to His good graces.

18 Redistricting, as you're using it now,  
19 is not about fair representation. It's about a license  
20 to rig the system. It's permission for candidates to  
21 stop working for their people. Why bother earning a  
22 reelection when the map hands you a guaranteed win? Why  
23 answer to voters when the lines are drawn to eliminate  
24 competition?

25 Redistricting was designed to protect

1 fairness and give everyone, regardless of their race,  
2 wealth, and ZIP code, a voice in how they are governed.

3 And make no mistake, the people are  
4 watching and are fed up. Your actions are waking up a  
5 public that has been patient for far too long.

6 Texans are angry and getting angrier by  
7 the minute. Because this committee, this legislature,  
8 and this entire scheme are making it clear, you are  
9 choosing power over principle, favor over fairness, all  
10 to appease one man.

11 Bending the rules, no matter who's  
12 asking, is wrong. This remapping, it's not just flawed,  
13 it's dishonest and its dirty politics, plain and simple.  
14 And we all know it. Thank you for your time.

15 THE CHAIR: Thank you for your testimony  
16 today. Members, are there any questions?

17 (Silence.)

18 THE CHAIR: Thank you for being here  
19 with us.

20 Before I call the next panel, I just  
21 wanted to remind anyone watching on the livestream, if  
22 you did register to testify today, please go ahead and  
23 log into the Zoom as soon as possible. That's the only  
24 way we can actually take your testimony.

25 So, if you're -- if you have registered

1 to testify today, please log in to the Zoom.

2 With that, let me call the next panel.

3 Susan Morrison Tuason, Brittany Payne, Stephanie Morris,  
4 Brenda Martinez, and David Hafer. That is everyone that  
5 is in our currently in our waiting room.

6 So, again, let me call your names:

7 Susan Morrison Tuason, Brittany Payne, Stephanie Morris,  
8 Brenda Martinez, and David Hafer. All right. Susan,  
9 would you like to go ahead and testify?

10 MS. SUSAN MORRISON TUASON: Yes, sir.  
11 Thank you very much. My name is Susan Morrison Tuason.  
12 I am a resident of McKinney, Texas, and I have lived in  
13 a lot of different states. I was born in Georgia. I  
14 lived in Arlington, Texas, as a kid. My dad was  
15 subsequently transferred to Indiana. I've lived in  
16 South Carolina. I have lived in California, and moved  
17 back to Texas.

18 So, I've lived in states all over the  
19 political spectrum and seen a lot of different types of  
20 gerrymandering in my time. And, to me, redistricting in  
21 the middle, in between censuses, seems tantamount to  
22 just a power grab, especially, considering the  
23 President's comments on Republicans being able to pick  
24 up four or more seats. Thank you very much.

25 THE CHAIR: Well, thank you for your

1 testimony. Members, are there any questions?

2

3 THE CHAIR: Hearing none, Chair calls  
4 Stephanie Morris. Stephanie Morris. I believe you're  
5 still -- still muted.

6 MS. STEPHANIE MORRIS: Hello --

7 THE CHAIR: There we go.

8 MS. STEPHANIE MORRIS: -- can you hear  
9 me?

10 THE CHAIR: Yes. We sure can. Thank  
11 you for being here. If you would, just please state  
12 your name, and let us know if you're representing any  
13 organization today, and then proceed with your  
14 testimony.

15 MS. STEPHANIE MORRIS: Good morning.  
16 It's just me. I'm Stephanie Morris, a fourth generation  
17 Texan, nurse and beekeeper. I live in Leander where the  
18 South San Gabriel River flows across our land.

19 On July 5, our home and bee yard flooded  
20 as the river rose 35 feet with filthy water and debris.  
21 We've lost so much, but we are so lucky (crying).

22 Texans are suffering from floods and the  
23 policy failures that made them worse. We need your  
24 help, not partisan map games.

25 Short-sighted development changed our

1 lives and land long before this flood. We live  
2 downstream from the best, most beautiful pollutant  
3 discharge in the State. Millions of gallons a day of  
4 poorly treated wastewater turn a pristine stream into  
5 stinky, rotting, algae-covered sand. It pollutes our  
6 land and degrades the river.

7           They're taking our water and replacing  
8 it with wastewater and flash flooding and fire. Those  
9 profiting, rape and pillage, then move on to the next  
10 paradise to destroy at our expense.

11           Unscrupulous outsiders are exploiting  
12 freedoms meant for Texans who know freedom comes with  
13 responsibility. These same developments reshape the  
14 land, raising grade, filling creek beds, and paving  
15 native ground.

16           Water does what water does when people  
17 get up in her business. Now, even small rains, flood  
18 faster and angrier. Between storms, our wells, springs,  
19 and creeks dry up. It's not developers or cities with  
20 deep wells going dry. It's ours. And it's not those  
21 sending their waste who live with the consequences. We  
22 do. Our rivers, our land, our health. The risk isn't  
23 just land. Lives are lost after floods, not just during  
24 them.

25           The stress is crushing. People get



1 sick. People die. Our lives, livestock, livelihoods  
2 and the Texan way of life are in your hands today. You  
3 may think redistricting isn't about floods, land use, or  
4 water, but it is drawing lines decides who has a voice  
5 and who gets left behind.

6 Please do better for Texans, not for the  
7 Developer-in-Chief. Thank you. God bless you. God  
8 bless Texas. There are photos attached to my written  
9 testimony of the flooding and the pollution.

10 THE CHAIR: Well, thank you. And thank  
11 you for being here with us today. And we're very sorry  
12 for the damage that you received in those floods. And I  
13 want you to know that there are House and Senate  
14 committees actively, very actively, working on those  
15 issues today, and as are all the members of the House  
16 and Senate. So, it is not being neglected at all. And  
17 it is of the utmost concern. With that, Members, are  
18 there any questions?

19 (Silence.)

20 THE CHAIR: Chair calls Brenda...

21 MS. STEPHANIE MORRIS: Thank you.

22 THE CHAIR: And thank you again. Chair  
23 calls Brenda Martinez.

24 MS. BRENDA MARTINEZ: Thank you, sir.

25 My name is Brenda Martinez. I'm not

1 here representing anyone, except my own thoughts. I  
2 grew up in the City of Dallas. I was an "A" student. I  
3 graduated from the university. But, as I was growing  
4 up, I didn't know anything about voting. Even though I  
5 was an "A" student going to DISD schools, I graduated  
6 not knowing what was my civic duty.

7 I didn't know what it involved, what the  
8 electoral college was, until after I graduated high  
9 school. We are -- the minorities are starting to get  
10 that education, and they're starting to gain their power  
11 back, their voting power back.

12 And now we're having setbacks like this.  
13 I'm pleading to please not allow the redistricting.  
14 Don't disenfranchise our voters. This is an illegal act  
15 that should not be happening. I want us to be able to  
16 say that our vote counts and mean it.

17 And if with through these redistricting  
18 we're losing our democracy and we're going to lose the  
19 way that we are able to vote. And I ask that, please,  
20 vote against this. Don't let this happen. Don't.  
21 Please show us that there is still democracy in our  
22 country and that our vote still matters. Thank you.

23 THE CHAIR: Well, thank you for being  
24 here today. Members, are there any questions?

25 (Silence.)

1 THE CHAIR: Hearing none, Chair calls  
2 David Hafer. Chair calls David Hafer.

3 (Silence.)

4 THE CHAIR: Let's try Brittany Payne.  
5 Ms. Payne, are you with us still?

6 MS. BRITTNEY PAYNE: Hi.

7 THE CHAIR: There you are. Great.  
8 Would you please tell us your name and if you're  
9 representing any organization, and then begin your  
10 testimony.

11 MS. BRITTNEY PAYNE: Sure. Sorry. My  
12 name is Brittany Payne. I'm representing myself. When  
13 I was young and my siblings and I did things we weren't  
14 supposed to be doing, my mother would say, "my chili is  
15 hot." I stand here before you today, a middle aged mom,  
16 an eight generation Texan, and "my chili is hot."

17 Redistricting is a blatant attempt at a  
18 power grab with a goal of silencing certain communities.  
19 Texans are still waiting through grief, as you just saw  
20 in Stephanie's really moving testimony, of the floods.  
21 Discussions should be had and policies should be put in  
22 place to prevent such atrocities. Piggybacking this  
23 issue on those discussions is shameful. The powers that  
24 be want us divided.

25 [Audio echoing in the background.]

1 THE CHAIR: Sir, if you would, please  
2 mute. Thank you. And ma'am, would you go ahead and  
3 continue?

4 MS. BRITTNEY PAYNE: Sure. The powers  
5 that be want us divided. They remain in power if we are  
6 divided. They want us to forget this is our country.  
7 All of our voices must be heard. As stated in our state  
8 song, Texas, our Texas, so wonderful, so great, boldest  
9 and grandest, withstanding every test. We must  
10 withstand this test. Thank you for the opportunity to  
11 speak. I appreciate it.

12 THE CHAIR: Thank you for being here  
13 today. Members, are there any questions?

14 (Silence.)

15 THE CHAIR: Hearing none, Chair calls  
16 David Hafer. Mr. Hafer, please unmute you audio on the  
17 Zoom, and then mute the live stream.

18 (Silence.)

19 THE CHAIR: I think we had you there a  
20 moment ago. Mr. Hafer, are you with us?

21 THE CLERK: He's listening to the live  
22 stream. He'll get that message.

23 THE CHAIR: If you would, sir, simply,  
24 you'll need to just unmute your Zoom. Mr. Hafer, I'm  
25 gonna just leave you right there for now, and call

1 another witness -- well, do we have you?

2 THE CLERK: No. That was me.

3 THE CHAIR: Okay. We're going to call  
4 another witness. Chair calls Stephen Luce. [Audio echo  
5 feedback being heard] Mr. Hafer, is believe that's you.  
6 If you would, we'll go ahead and let you testify, but if  
7 you would please turn off your livestream or mute your  
8 live stream.

9 MR. DAVID HAFER: Are you able to hear  
10 me now?

11 THE CHAIR: Now we've got it. Thank  
12 you. I'm sorry you were having difficulty. All right.  
13 You can begin your testimony. Sir, you've -- you've  
14 remuted your Zoom. Mr. Hafer, we're gonna -- if you'll  
15 just stand by. We're gonna move back to calling Stephen  
16 Luce.

17 MR. STEPHEN LUCE: Hello.

18 THE CHAIR: Mr. Luce, welcome. And, if  
19 you would, please state your name and let us know if  
20 you're representing any organization, and then please  
21 proceed with your testimony.

22 MR. STEPHEN LUCE: Yeah. My name is  
23 Stephen Luce, and I am representing myself. I am a  
24 resident of -- well, I'm a -- I was born in Texas.

25 I've lived in South Lake since 1987.

1 Giovanni Capriglione is my State Rep. I'm hoping  
2 that -- that he will do the right thing on this  
3 redistricting and try to give South Lake a chance to get  
4 out from under racist moniker that they have placed upon  
5 themselves primarily through Tim O'Hare. Another South  
6 Lake resident stated, "out racism."

7 In fact, he had to be run out of town in  
8 Carrollton Farmers Branch for costing them \$5 million  
9 for being behind racist policies regarding Brown renters  
10 and Farmers Branch. He came to South Lake, and he's now  
11 renowned and on the County Judge. And as that, he has  
12 basically stated, that he is -- that every policy he has  
13 is pretty much founded in what I would say is racism.  
14 He's proud of it. He's out and about, and it's just  
15 going to be a shame that we're going to waste the money  
16 on the Tarrant County redistricting.

17 And y' all ought to use that as an  
18 example, and not do this mid, you know, census power  
19 grab, which is purely, purely centered in racism. It's  
20 so painfully obvious to everyone. So, I just implore  
21 upon you. I was on the Carroll School Board three  
22 times, elected three times, ran five times. I know Gary  
23 Fickes well, you know, rest his soul. But, as a South  
24 Lake resident, northeast Tarrant County, things are  
25 changing.

1 And y' all are not going to be able to  
2 stop what's coming. I mean, there's too many South Lake  
3 conservative Republicans that are telling me they are  
4 done. So y' all need to not try to get the power grab  
5 while you think you can and do the right thing, for not  
6 only Texas now, but for my three grandkids and  
7 everybody's grandkids in the State of Texas. Thank you  
8 for your time.

9 THE CHAIR: Thank you for your  
10 testimony. Members, are there any questions?

11 (Silence.)

12 THE CHAIR: Hearing none, Mr. Hafer,  
13 we're going to try you one more time. David Heifer.

14 MR. DAVID HAFER: Are you able to hear  
15 me now?

16 THE CHAIR: We've got you. That's  
17 great. Thank you.

18 MR. DAVID HAFER: Thank you, sir. Good  
19 morning. I'm David Hafer, A resident of Benbrook,  
20 Texas, where I've served as a local elected official in  
21 nonpartisan position for nearly eight years and served  
22 seven years prior to that on a local-appointed board.  
23 Today I'm representing myself. The timing of the DOJ  
24 letter is suspicious given the President's statements  
25 that he wants to pick up five more Republican

1 congressional seats in Texas.

2 In the last few months we've seen the  
3 DOJ be politicized and weaponized in a regrettable  
4 fashion. Texans have not determined that this mid  
5 decade redistricting is necessary. That has come from  
6 President Trump. To rush this effort through in a 30  
7 day special session is unwise and smacks of a  
8 predetermined outcome imposed on Texans from outside  
9 Texas behind closed doors and without significant input.

10 The legislature has much more important  
11 issues to tackle than unnecessary mid decade  
12 redistricting. Mid decade redistricting will be costly,  
13 an unnecessary cost. Reining in unnecessary costs is a  
14 value that many of you on this committee have spoken on  
15 many times.

16 Districts should be compact and  
17 contiguous to build community and not divide. Districts  
18 that get gerrymandered in a stretched out fashion make  
19 it impossible for people to be able to be represented by  
20 people who know their community.

21 So, I call upon the Texas Senate to set  
22 aside this effort with and wait until new census data is  
23 available following the 2030 census.

24 THE CHAIR: Thank you. And I'm sorry  
25 you had some difficulty getting on. Members, are there



1 any questions?

2 (Silence.)

3 THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. I want  
4 to call up the next panel. Chair calls Ingrid Robinson,  
5 Melody Koonce. Ingrid Robinson. Melody Koonce.  
6 Ms. Robinson, are you ready to go? If you would just  
7 unmute and begin your testimony.

8 (Silence.)

9 THE CHAIR: Ms. Koonce. Let me call  
10 Melody Koonce. Chair calls Melody Koontz. You'll --  
11 you simply need to unmute.

12 MS. MELODY KOONCE: Greetings.

13 THE CHAIR: There you go. Great.

14 MS. MELODY KOONCE: Can I be heard?

15 THE CHAIR: We certainly can. Welcome.  
16 If you would please just state your name and, for the  
17 record, if you're representing any organization, and  
18 then begin your testimony.

19 MS. MELODY KOONCE: Okay.

20 THE CHAIR: We can hear you, and you can  
21 begin at any time.

22 MS. MELODY KOONCE: Okay. I hear a  
23 different name. My name is Melody Koonce. Are you  
24 speaking to me?

25 THE CHAIR: Yes, ma'am, I am. Please

1 begin your testimony.

2 MS. MELODY KOONCE: Thank you. Okay.  
3 Thank you so very much. Thank you for this opportunity.  
4 Again, my name is Mel [background echo noise] -- again,  
5 my name is Melody Koonce.

6 THE CHAIR: If I could ask Ms. Robinson  
7 and Ms. Koonce, if you would please turn off your live  
8 stream or mute it. Because, otherwise we -- we get  
9 double...

10 MS. MELODY KOONCE: Are you able to hear  
11 me?

12 [Background echo noise.]

13 THE CHAIR: Yes, Ms. Koonce, if -- if  
14 you could wait just a minute. We were receiving  
15 testimony [background echo noise]. All right.  
16 Ms. Robinson, if you would please turn off your live  
17 stream, and we'll -- and we'll allow [background echo  
18 noise.]

19 Ma'am, if -- all right, let me kind of  
20 take a step back here. So, we are taking testimony from  
21 Melody Koonce. Ms. Koonce had begun her testimony. In  
22 the meantime, Ms. Robinson, if you would please turn off  
23 your livestream, and only listen to the Zoom audio.

24 MS. INGRID ROBINSON: Right. I did  
25 that. Okay. So can you hear me now?

1 THE CHAIR: Who's this?

2 THE CLERK: This is Ms. Robinson. Okay.  
3 But let's do this. Ms. Koonce, if you'll just stand by.  
4 Ms. Robinson, let's go ahead and let you testify. And,  
5 if you would, please just state your name, who you're  
6 representing, if any organization, and then begin your  
7 testimony.

8 MS. INGRID ROBINSON: Great. Good  
9 morning. My name is Ingrid Robinson. I'm the president  
10 and CEO of the Houston Minority Supplier Development  
11 Council. We're a nonprofit organization that represents  
12 over 75 major corporations and governmental entities and  
13 over a thousand small and minority-owned businesses who  
14 contribute over \$23 billion in economic impact to  
15 Texas's economy, and we account for nearly two percent  
16 of Houston's GDP.

17 In Districts 9, 18 and 29 alone, we  
18 represent over 233 businesses, both major corporations  
19 and small minority-owned businesses that contribute over  
20 \$8.9 billion in revenue to Texas economy on an annual  
21 basis.

22 This mid decade redistricting threatens  
23 the economic foundation our member businesses depend on,  
24 which is fair representation and equal access to  
25 opportunity for their companies and for their employees.

1 Our small minority suppliers and  
2 entrepreneurs need representatives who understand their  
3 challenges, both accessing capital, navigating  
4 procurement processes, and building generational wealth  
5 in their communities.

6 When you dilute the voting power of  
7 communities of color, the very communities driving Texas  
8 population and economic growth, you undermine the  
9 democratic process that ensures these voices are heard  
10 in the policy decisions affecting business development.

11 The numbers tell the story. Minority  
12 Communities drive over 95 percent of Texas's growth over  
13 the past decade. Yet, this redistricting effort targets  
14 districts where these communities can elect  
15 representatives of their choice.

16 This isn't coincidence. It's economic  
17 disenfranchisement. For Houston, specifically,  
18 districts like 9th, 18th and the 29th have been crucial  
19 advocates for small minority business development,  
20 supporting policies that create economic opportunities,  
21 and strengthen supplier diversity programs.

22 Weakening these districts weakens the  
23 entire ecosystem that helps small businesses thrive. We  
24 urge you to reject the mid decade redistricting and,  
25 instead, focus on policies that strengthen our Texas

1 businesses and our communities. Thank you.

2 THE CHAIR: Thank you. And thank you  
3 for your testimony today. And members, are there any  
4 questions for the witness?

5 (Indicating.)

6 THE CHAIR: Chair calls Senator Miles.

7 SENATOR MILES: Yeah. Ms. Robinson,  
8 this is Senator Borris Miles. I want to say thank you  
9 for your statement today. You know, you and I go way  
10 back with your family, and you've always been on point.  
11 You and your family have been on point to the tunes and  
12 the needs of our community. So, I want to say thank you  
13 for speaking out today and speaking out on behalf of the  
14 small businesses that will be affected by these midterm  
15 redistricting attempts.

16 You know, as I know, they're not needed.  
17 You know, as I know, what the real reasoning behind them  
18 are. And you know, and I know, what the major damaging  
19 effect will be. So, I just want to thank you for  
20 speaking out on those today and speaking up.

21 MS. INGRID ROBINSON: Thank you.

22 SENATOR MILES: And always keep in mind,  
23 we love your family.

24 MS. INGRID ROBINSON: Thank you so much.

25 THE CHAIR: Members, any other

1 questions?

2 (Silence.)

3 THE CHAIR: Thank you for being here  
4 with us. Ms. Koonce, let's go back to you. Chair calls  
5 Melody Koonce.

6 MS. MELODY KOONCE: Yes. Greetings.  
7 Can you hear me?

8 THE CHAIR: We certainly can.

9 MS. MELODY KOONCE: Okay. Thank you for  
10 allowing me to speak via the telephone. I am grateful  
11 for this hearing, and I am grateful for our political  
12 system that allows us to have government and government  
13 that is responsive. And can I be heard now?

14 THE CHAIR: You certainly can. And, if  
15 you would just, are you representing any organization  
16 today or just speaking for yourself?

17 MS. MELODY KOONCE: I am -- I am  
18 speaking for myself. I think that. Can I be heard now?

19 THE CHAIR: You sure? Please. We hear  
20 you great. Please just begin with your testimony.

21 MS. MELODY KOONCE: Yes, sir. I will  
22 start over. My name is Melody Koonce, and I live in  
23 Dallas, Texas. And I bring greetings from the -- I  
24 bring greetings from Sunny South Dallas.

25 THE CHAIR: Well, please proceed with

1 your testimony.

2 MS. MELODY KOONCE: Thank you. I -- I  
3 hear the live feed, and I'm having a telephone  
4 interaction with you, and they're not matching, but I  
5 will continue to speak. I'm grateful for this  
6 opportunity.

7 THE CHAIR: Maybe you might try just  
8 turning -- turning off your live feed.

9 MS. MELODY KOONCE: I am now.

10 THE CHAIR: You might try just turning  
11 off your live feed.

12 MS. MELODY KOONCE: I am now hearing Ms.  
13 Robinson and Ms. Koonce speaking.

14 THE CHAIR: Okay. Ma'am, if you would,  
15 you might try just turning off your live feed. It's  
16 kind of like having your radio on in the background when  
17 you're being interviewed. So, just turn off your live  
18 feed, and we can hear you perfectly well on your phone.

19 MS. MELODY KOONCE: Okay. Can I be  
20 heard?

21 THE CHAIR: Yes, ma'am.

22 MS. MELODY KOONCE: This is Melody  
23 Koonce.

24 THE CHAIR: Yes, ma'am.

25 MS. MELODY KOONCE: Okay. I'm going to

1 start now. Thank you, Chairperson, for allowing me to  
2 speak. Thank you everyone for being present. First of  
3 all, I would like to -- I've been watching for quite a  
4 while, and I was so glad to hear Senator Miles ask a  
5 question. And I think that's indicative to this  
6 process, is that people are taking their time to come  
7 and be a part of this hearing, and no one is asking us  
8 any question. It is almost like it is already  
9 predetermined what will happen.

10 So, that is really not a part of the  
11 process that we hold dear in democracy. So, thank you  
12 for asking and relating to the comments that were made  
13 prior to this, Senator Miles. And I hope that other  
14 people will have enough respect and care for the voters  
15 that come to be able to access questions because we came  
16 to express our concerns to this -- about this  
17 redistricting.

18 I am not in favor of this. We have all  
19 heard the reasons of what's happening and probability of  
20 why it is happening. And my question to all of you that  
21 are part of this process at this moment is to let's have  
22 authentic conversations, and not have a show of  
23 democracy, but how democracy can actually work and  
24 dialogue.

25 We know that we have come from different



1 ideologies, and the way to build bridges is to be able  
2 to converse and see each other's point of view and be  
3 able to make movements.

4 So, without that happening, it is a  
5 steal. It is not about the process of democracy. It's  
6 about doing what is wanted for the elected party that is  
7 in domination right now, and the President. And we do  
8 have a process that can allow us to be a part of  
9 discussion and move forward and not against each other.  
10 So, once again, please stop the steal, and thank you for  
11 your time.

12 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

13 MS. MELODY KOONCE: And greetings  
14 from -- greetings from Sunny South Dallas.

15 THE CHAIR: All right. Thank you,  
16 ma'am. And, members, are there any questions?

17 (Silence.)

18 THE CHAIR: Well, thank you for being  
19 with us here today. And I'm sorry you had a little  
20 difficulty there in getting the technology worked out.

21 MS. MELODY KOONCE: Yeah, well, thank  
22 you for acknowledging that. And I want to thank your  
23 staff for going over and beyond. They actually gave me  
24 a phone call. So, thank you all for doing what you can  
25 with this technology.

1 THE CHAIR: Yes, ma'am. Well, thank  
2 you. Chair calls Susan Pongallo. Susan Pongallo.  
3 Ma'am, if you'll just unmute, we'll be eager to hear  
4 your testimony.

5 MS. SUSAN PONGALLO: Can I talk now?

6 THE CHAIR: There you go.

7 MS. SUSAN PONGALLO: Oh, thank you.  
8 Thank you for your patience, too. Thank you.

9 I did want to start by saying thank you  
10 for giving us a chance to speak as to this today. And I  
11 think this is not something that is needed. We had  
12 redistricting four years ago. We only need it once  
13 every 10 years. So, I know we don't need to do it.

14 I think this is something that wasn't  
15 the idea -- this idea didn't come from Texans. This is  
16 Washington, D.C., trying to tell Texans how to run their  
17 State, and I don't agree with that either.

18 But, most of all, I just wanted to say,  
19 I don't even think this makes anything better or better  
20 serves Texas at all. I'm against it because Texas  
21 itself, the voters, are just a little over 50 percent  
22 Republican, you know, just a little under half vote  
23 Democrat usually, and we've already got honestly a  
24 disproportionate -- our congressional delegation is  
25 already disproportionately sending more Republicans than

1 what I think correctly represents our State.

2 And also, as far as districts where that  
3 concentrate a lot of nonwhite voters, which is actually  
4 my district. I live in Marc Veasey's district. There  
5 is a smaller number of those than correctly represents  
6 the population of Texas.

7 And to take -- to try to take or to make  
8 a deliberate attempt to it -- I think this is to take  
9 five of those and make it even more disproportionate.

10 I don't think that serves the people of  
11 Texas the right way. I think our State should be as  
12 fairly as possible represented by closer to half and  
13 half of the representatives representing the people of  
14 Texas.

15 And also, our district, number 33, which  
16 is one of the ones that would be affected by this  
17 redistricting, has -- it's been represented right now by  
18 Marc Veasey, and it has been represented ever since it  
19 was formed. They've chosen a Democrat every time. So,  
20 please vote no. Thank you.

21 THE CHAIR: Thank you for your  
22 testimony. And members, are there any questions?

23 THE CLERK: Will you have her say her  
24 name?

25 THE CHAIR: Ma'am, would you just, for

1 our records, please state your name, and whether or not  
2 you're formally representing any particular  
3 organization.

4 MS. SUSAN PONGALLO: My name is Susan  
5 Pongallo. And no. I'm just speaking as a voter from  
6 District 33.

7 THE CHAIR: Oh, great. We thank you for  
8 being here today. And, again, members, any questions?

9 (Silence.)

10 THE CHAIR: Seeing none, thank you.  
11 Members, and to everyone listening live stream, We are  
12 in a moment going to stand at ease for about 30 minutes.

13 A little background. Yesterday we had  
14 over 100 people, a little over 100 people registered to  
15 testify. We heard testimony from just under 50. That's  
16 not that uncommon in a committee hearing. In-person  
17 hearings will have a large number of people who will  
18 sign up to testify, and then only about half actually  
19 stay to testify. Others move on to other things, or the  
20 hearing goes too long, something of that nature.

21 We have everyone who did not testify  
22 yesterday but had registered to testify, we sent a  
23 personal email to each one of them and told them that if  
24 they still wish to testify, that they had up until  
25 midnight last night to register for today's hearing.

1 And, and we'll continue to do that  
2 throughout the, as we go forward with these virtual  
3 hearings. I would ask this, that we only have a couple  
4 of witnesses that are in the -- on the Zoom in the  
5 waiting room.

6 And so, if you did register to testify  
7 at today's hearing, we would ask that you go ahead and  
8 log in to the Zoom. So, if you did register to testify  
9 for today's hearing, please, over these next 30 minutes,  
10 go ahead and log in to testify.

11 We actually have no witnesses in the  
12 waiting room at this time. So, let's stand at ease,  
13 members for -- it's -- let's say 'till 12:30. So, it'll  
14 be about 30 minutes. And, again, if you are listening  
15 to the livestream and if you registered to testify at  
16 today's hearing, please go ahead and log into the Zoom  
17 because we are very interested in hearing your  
18 testimony. Thank you.

19 SENATOR ALVARADO: Mr. Chairman.

20 THE CHAIR: Yes, Senator Alvarado?

21 SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you,  
22 Mr. Chairman. I wanted to let you know that in Houston  
23 there is an in-person hearing taking place right now in  
24 the House. It is at capacity. There are over 600  
25 people there waiting to speak, and there are a hundred

1 people outside.

2                   So, again, I want to press upon the need  
3 for an in-person hearing. And I know you said we would  
4 eventually get to that, but you know, with just 50  
5 yesterday participating in our virtual, and maybe 30  
6 today, I feel that it seems like there's better luck  
7 with in-person hearings.

8                   And I know the House, yesterday or  
9 Thursday their first hearing, they limited a testimony  
10 to five hours, and they're doing the same thing again  
11 today.

12                   So, there will be hundreds of people  
13 today that will not get to testify at the Houston  
14 hearing, and that's way more than the hundred or so that  
15 did not get to testify Thursday at the House hearing  
16 here. So, just wanted to bring that to your attention.

17                   THE CHAIR: Okay.

18                   SENATOR ALVARADO: Thank you.

19                   THE CHAIR: Thank you very much.

20 Members, anything else?

21                   (Silence.)

22                   THE CHAIR: If not, let's just stand at  
23 ease until 12:30 p.m.

24                   (No audio, break from session.)

25                   THE CHAIR: There we go. If you are

1 watching in the livestream today, and you did register  
2 to testify, then please go ahead and log into the Zoom.  
3 At this time we have one person left in the waiting room  
4 to hear testimony from. And so, if there is anyone else  
5 that wishes to testify that registered for today, please  
6 at this time log into your Zoom.

7 With that said, the Chair calls Vannella  
8 Mallampati. Vannella Mallampati. Are you with us?

9 (Silence.)

10 THE CHAIR: If you are, please go ahead  
11 and unmute, and we'll take your testimony.

12 MS. VANNELA MALLAMPATI: Absolutely.  
13 Greetings to the committee. My name is Vannela  
14 Mallampati. I'm currently a student at the University  
15 of Texas at Austin, but I've lived in Frisco, a suburb  
16 of Dallas, nearly my entire life.

17 I come to you today as a concerned  
18 citizen and resident of Texas's Fourth Congressional  
19 District. My district is one of the most appallingly  
20 visible cases of gerrymandering in the State of Texas,  
21 and it is the result of egregiously partisan  
22 redistricting, the exact kind that this legislature is  
23 considering passing during the special session. My  
24 district currently comprises a sliver of Democrat  
25 leaning North Texas suburbs, and then stretches hundreds

1 of miles into East Texas, even close to Texarkana.

2 This is not only a massive disservice to  
3 Democrats of North Texas, my friends, family, and  
4 communities that I've grown up with, whose votes are  
5 being routinely diluted with the intentional inclusion  
6 of conservative Far North and Far East Texas areas  
7 within the same Congressional district.

8 This gerrymandering is also a massive  
9 disservice to residents of those same far north and Far  
10 East Texas cities like Sulfur Springs, Paris, Texas,  
11 West Tawakoni, and many, many more who find themselves  
12 represented by Congressmen who don't adequately  
13 understand their local politics and their local issues  
14 due to our district's massive geographic spread.

15 We, collectively, as North Texans,  
16 deserve better, fair districting. That is simply not in  
17 the cards this session. My district is a classic case  
18 of gerrymandering, and putting politics above people.  
19 And this is exactly what allowing abnormal mid decade  
20 redistricting and Texas would entail. It wouldn't just  
21 allow the disenfranchisement of millions of Texans, but  
22 markedly encourage it. So today, distinguished  
23 committee, I strongly implore you not to let Texas be  
24 redistricted in this thoroughly undemocratic way.

25 Borrowing the words of our founding



1 fathers, "don't let them tread on us."

2 Please don't let federal politics and  
3 political agendas tread on our democracy. Thank you so  
4 much.

5 THE CHAIR: Thank you. And you said you  
6 were here as a concerned citizen. So, I understand  
7 you're not representing any organization today. Just  
8 yourself?

9 MS. VANNELA MALLAMPATI: Yes,  
10 absolutely. I come to you as an individual.

11 THE CHAIR: Great. Thank you. Members,  
12 are there any questions?

13 (Silence.)

14 THE CHAIR: Well, thank you, ma'am, for  
15 being here with us today.

16 MS. VANNELA MALLAMPATI: Absolutely.  
17 Thank y' all.

18 THE CHAIR: Well, members, at this time,  
19 we have no one else that is logged into Zoom. We are  
20 set to reconvene on Monday at 3:00 p.m. Would anyone  
21 that is watching live stream, please know that you can  
22 register to testify 12 hours in advance of Monday's  
23 hearing, and we'd be delighted to hear from you. That  
24 hearing will be focused on the East Texas region,  
25 including Houston.

1                   And I think we already have 80 people  
2 registered to testify on Monday, so we'll look forward  
3 to hearing from them. Members, is there any other  
4 business to come before this committee today?

5                   (Silence.)

6                   THE CHAIR: There being no further  
7 business, the Senate Special Committee on Congressional  
8 Redistricting will stand in recess subject to the call  
9 of the Chair.

10                  (Strikes gavel.)

11                  THE CHAIR: Thank you, everyone.

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

TRANSCRIPTION OF VIDEOTAPE

I, Vicente Mendoza, the undersigned  
Certified Shorthand Reporter in and for the State of  
Texas, certify that the foregoing pages are a true and  
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best of my ability to understand and decipher the words  
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I further certify that I am neither  
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employee of any counsel employed by the parties hereto  
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SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO under my hand  
and seal of office on this 13th day of September, 2025.



Vicente Mendoza, CSR, RPR, LCI  
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