

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, JUNE 21, 2011
10:00 A.M.
WSRE-TV AMOS STUDIO
PENSACOLA, FLORIDA

Transcribed by:
CLARA C. ROTRUCK
Court Reporter

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

2 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Good morning, ladies and
3 gentlemen. The Joint Florida Senate, Florida
4 House of Representatives Redistricting Hearing
5 is called to order.

6 We want to thank WSRE Public Television,
7 Pensacola Jr. College, Pensacola State College
8 now, for allowing us to use this facility, and
9 thank you all for being here, especially
10 members of the public who have come to share
11 your comments and your recommendations to help
12 shape Congressional Senate and House Districts
13 for the next decade.

14 My name is Don Gaetz. I am proud to be
15 the Senator for northwest Florida, and along
16 with my House colleague, the Speaker Designate
17 of the Florida House of Representatives, Will
18 Weatherford, who is to my left and that is
19 interesting because often he is to my right,
20 but today he is to my left.

21 We are chairing today's hearing and we are
22 delighted to be here. This hearing is being
23 webcast throughout the state by the Florida
24 Channel over the Internet and we welcome the
25 many, many people who are following us today on

1 the Internet or over the Florida Channel.

2 Our sole purpose today is to hear from the
3 public about how you believe the legal
4 standards governing redistricting should be
5 applied in your community so that you are
6 represented in Washington and in Tallahassee
7 fairly, equitably and sensibly.

8 It is not debatable as to whether
9 Amendments V and VI will be applied. They are
10 in the Constitution and they will be applied.
11 The question is how those legal standards
12 should be applied to make sure that your
13 community is fairly, equitably and sensibly
14 represented.

15 Our procedures today are simple but
16 important. It is important that if you want to
17 speak, and we hope you do, that you will sign
18 in so that we can create an accurate public
19 record of all attendees and all speakers, and
20 also you may opt to join our e-mail list.

21 We hope you will so that we can keep you
22 informed about how the redistricting process is
23 working over the next several months.

24 This is hearing two of a 26 public hearing
25 tour that the House and Senate Committees are

1 taking together to hear from the people of
2 Florida.

3 If you have not signed in and you wish to
4 speak, please raise your hand now and a
5 professional staff member will get you a
6 speaker card because we want to hear from you.

7 Is there anybody here who wishes to speak
8 who has not filled out a card or who has not
9 signed in? Anybody? Great.

10 Well, if there are people who come in late
11 we will make that offer again. Before we
12 begin, the Chair would like to recognize the
13 Speaker Designate, Will Weatherford, to explain
14 how today's hearing fits into the redistricting
15 process. Mr. Speaker.

16 SPEAKER WEATHERFORD: Thank you very much,
17 Mr. Chairman. It certainly is an honor today
18 to be in God's country, the panhandle. We are
19 in step two of our process here.

20 We had a great day yesterday in
21 Tallahassee of public comment and input and we
22 certainly look forward to it today here in
23 Pensacola.

24 Ladies and gentlemen, every ten years the
25 Legislature is required by our Constitution to

1 redistrict the state based on increases,
2 decreases and movements of population.

3 Because Florida has grown more than other
4 states in the last ten years we will move up
5 from 25 Congressional Seats to 27 Congressional
6 Seats.

7 Because some parts of our state have
8 increased or decreased disproportionately in
9 population, many Senate and House Districts
10 will change, either adding or losing
11 population.

12 When redistricting is completed,
13 Congressional Districts must be equal in size
14 and contain 696,345 people. The 40 Senate
15 Districts must also be nearly equal and will
16 contain 470,033 people, and our 120 House
17 Districts must also contain nearly equal
18 amounts in population and will be at 156,678
19 persons.

20 There is a map at the front of the room
21 showing this area of the state. The current
22 boundaries of all of the Districts and the
23 number of the persons which must also be added
24 or subtracted from current districts to achieve
25 equal representation.

1 Equality of representation isn't the only
2 legal requirement that redistricting plans must
3 meet. The laws and important court cases
4 governing redistricting are explained in detail
5 on the House and Senate websites.

6 Those websites are listed on the
7 Redistricting 2012 brochure that was available
8 to you when you came in. Our Redistricting
9 2012 brochure summarizes Federal and State laws
10 and outlines the topics we hope you will
11 discuss here at today's hearing.

12 If you did not get a brochure they are
13 available on the tables outside the hall and
14 our staff would be happy to get you a copy of
15 that brochure if needed.

16 Those same websites have been available to
17 the public and all of the demographic
18 information from the U. S. Bureau of Census
19 that will be used to draw districts and the
20 redistricting software that Legislators will be
21 using.

22 These websites will allow any member of
23 the public, and hopefully you, to see all of
24 the district maps that are proposed by
25 Legislators and for the citizens, themselves,

1 to propose their own district maps for their
2 own communities or for the whole state using
3 all of the tools that are available to us as
4 Legislators.

5 Before and during and after this hearing,
6 Senate and House professional staff are
7 available to show you and anyone who wants to
8 see the simple steps in getting on-line and
9 making your submission for maps in the coming
10 weeks.

11 Every recommendation from any member of
12 the public or any group will be made public.
13 In fact, some public submissions of maps have
14 already been available on the web, and one I
15 will mention to everyone today is we had a
16 college student who is from Florida who goes to
17 Columbia University and weeks ago submitted a
18 Congressional map for the entire state of
19 Florida.

20 It was a very -- a lot of work that went
21 in to that, but that is the type of
22 participation that this body is looking for.

23 The submission of proposed maps that makes
24 sense for your community is the single most
25 effective form of public participation in the

1 redistricting process.

2 The redistricting schedule under which we
3 are operating is imposed by our State
4 Constitution. The Constitution does not permit
5 the Legislature to act on legislative maps
6 before the second year after the census is
7 done. In other words, before 2012.

8 We accelerated this process as much as we
9 possibly could by moving the 2012 Legislative
10 Session from March to January, and beginning
11 our statewide hearings five months in advance
12 of the 2012 session.

13 It has been suggested that the Legislature
14 should draw maps first and then ask the public
15 for comment. We believe that puts the answer
16 ahead of the question.

17 There should be no preconceptions created
18 by politicians, but rather public testimony
19 should be free and unrestricted. Our intent is
20 to use the recommendations made at our 26
21 hearings and through our Internet sites as the
22 basis for developing one or more options for
23 district maps.

24 We will discuss those options in open
25 public meetings before any votes are taken even

1 in a Committee. Throughout the process we will
2 solicit additional public comment so that
3 proposed maps can mature and with public
4 involvement all before the Legislature approves
5 any final maps.

6 Whatever the Legislature votes on, it is
7 submitted for judicial review to insure that
8 the final plans meet every legal requirement.
9 Because our mission today is to hear from you,
10 100 percent of the time between now and then,
11 and between now and 1:00 p.m. will be used to
12 insure that every member of the public who is
13 here and wishes to speak will have time to
14 present testimony and be listened to
15 respectfully without interruption or argument.

16 If, after every citizen has had his or her
17 say, there is time remaining before our
18 scheduled adjournment, any member of this
19 Committee may make a statement or offer any
20 observation.

21 Of course, any member of the Legislature
22 may today or at any time propose a map that
23 will be made available to the public.

24 Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for
25 giving me these few moments. I hope this

1 description of our schedule and the process
2 helps set the stage for a very successful
3 hearing. Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker,
5 by Senate and House rules we will adjourn
6 promptly today at 1:00 p.m. There are so far
7 36 individuals signed up to speak.

8 We hope more people who may come in a
9 little later will let professional staff know
10 if they would like to speak, but to ensure that
11 each person is heard, and I am an advocate for
12 the last person who signed up, I want to make
13 sure they get a chance to speak, just as I am
14 an advocate for the first person.

15 So to ensure that each person is heard we
16 will try to divide the time equitably and I
17 would ask each testifier to try to limit her or
18 his remarks to somewhere between three and five
19 minutes.

20 Now, if later we pick up additional people
21 who would like to testify, and therefore, we
22 get pushed on a time crunch I may have to be a
23 little bit more specific about the time frame,
24 but if you would be cognizant that there are
25 people who also came here and want to testify

1 who are waiting behind you, I am sure everybody
2 will be civil and courteous and there will be
3 time for everyone.

4 What we would like to do is call out two
5 speakers at a time so that the first speaker
6 who is the Honorable Lynn Laird from the
7 Escambia Soil and Water Conservation District,
8 if Commissioner Laird will come forward, and
9 then behind Commissioner Laird is Stephen Rome,
10 and we will let you know if you are on deck and
11 next in line.

12 Commissioner, are you here? Thank you
13 very much. Welcome to the Committee, and you
14 are recognized, sir.

15 COMMISSIONER LAIRD: I am a supervisor.

16 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Supervisor. We, I don't
17 know if we demoted you or promoted you there,
18 but we welcome you to the Committee.

19 COMMISSIONER LAIRD: For the record, my
20 name is Lynn Laird. I am Vice-Chairman of the
21 Soil and Water Conservation District Board of
22 Supervisors. Elected, this elected office is
23 for Escambia County voters only. The candidate
24 must be a resident of Escambia County.

25 Escambia County population is 297,619

1 residents according to the recent census.

2 Registered voters, Democrat, No Party,

3 Minority, et cetera, 110,000. Republicans,

4 84,000.

5 Escambia County, unfortunately, has been
6 divided into two Senatorial districts, both of
7 them held by Republicans. Three State
8 Representative Districts, all held by
9 Republicans. That means 212,791 individuals,
10 or 67 percent of Escambia County population is
11 disenfranchised, because in 2000 Escambia
12 County was divided up so that there would be
13 two Senatorial districts versus one, because
14 prior to 2000, Escambia County was a Senatorial
15 district.

16 Prior to that, State House Representative
17 District III was all of Pensacola, some of
18 Escambia County, but they had to cut that up
19 and now we got some of Santa Rosa. The
20 minority representation for Escambia County is
21 about 23 percent African-American.

22 Currently there are no minority
23 Representative in the State House, none,
24 period. Who are Escambia County State
25 Senators? I happen to live in south of

1 Escambia County, never met my State Senator,
2 hardly know where he is from, but he is Senator
3 Gaetz, our Chairman, hello. He lives in
4 Niceville, Niceville, wherever that is.

5 His District Office is in Destin, that is
6 over an hour away from Escambia County, I don't
7 know if I could find it if I get there. Greg
8 Evers, the other State Senator, he lives in
9 Baker, up in the country somewhere in another
10 county. His District Office is in Crestview.

11 How do the people from Escambia County who
12 would like to drop in, say something, give him
13 something, not too many people are going to
14 drive to Crestview if they could find it, it is
15 over an hour away.

16 We have a State Representative who basic
17 some of the districts in northern Escambia
18 County, Doug Broxson, I have no idea where he
19 is from. I have no idea where his office is,
20 and I don't know if anybody in Escambia --
21 maybe some of the people up north do. I don't.

22 Then, of course, we have Representative
23 Clay Ford, and most of us know, that is
24 District III. Almost 90 percent of the
25 geographical area and population lives in

1 Escambia County. Clay Ford lives in Gulf
2 Breeze. Until a number of years ago it wasn't
3 part of District III. Thirty percent of the
4 population in Pensacola is African-American.

5 Clay Ford lives in Gulf Breeze, which only
6 has one or two at the most African-Americans.
7 Basically Gulf Breeze is 100 -- almost
8 100 percent white, and Clay Ford lives over
9 there, and I do not believe the Pensacola
10 residents have any input at all, and only one
11 Representative, and I think he is here, Clay
12 Ingram, he lives in Escambia County, and he is
13 elected by the people of Escambia County.
14 Thank you for that person.

15 In other words, I will sum it up, 212,791
16 people in Escambia County or 67 percent of
17 Escambia County population is totally
18 disenfranchised. That means they are not
19 represented by the individuals who are sitting
20 at the round table up there.

21 We are supposed to have representation in
22 state government. I cannot feel that this
23 would go very far when 67 percent feel they are
24 disenfranchised. So all I can say is I hope
25 whoever is going to draw the lines will take

1 that into fact that Escambia County, the
2 largest county in the panhandle, should be a
3 State District by itself and should have at
4 least a minimum of not two, but maybe three
5 State Representative Districts so that the
6 221,000 people who are currently
7 disenfranchised might have a chance to, one,
8 run a candidate, and two, vote for the
9 individual who actually does and will represent
10 their ideology. Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much,
12 Mr. Laird. We appreciate your testimony, very,
13 very kind of you to come today, and now our
14 next presenter is Stephen Rome. Mr. Rome, and
15 behind Mr. Rome is Diane Mack from the Women's
16 Civic Forum.

17 Mr. Rome, you are recognized. Thank you
18 very much for being here today.

19 MR. ROME: Good morning, my name is
20 Stephen Rome. I reside in Pensacola, in
21 Escambia County. I appear today as an AARP
22 volunteer. I urge the Legislature to make the
23 redistricting process all it can be.

24 As you exercise your constitutional duty
25 to draw voting districts applicable for the ten

1 years beginning with the 2012 election, AARP
2 urges you to, first, insure transparency of the
3 legislative redistricting process every step of
4 the way.

5 Transparency means that redistricting
6 discussions among members and by members should
7 be noticed and open to the public.
8 Transparency means that the public has the
9 opportunity to comment and to have those
10 comments meaningfully considered by the
11 Legislature during all legislative
12 redistricting proceedings, and on
13 redistricting, on redistricting proposals,
14 interim and final.

15 This is before the Legislatures make any
16 decisions. We must ensure the timeliness of
17 the redistricting process and ensure public
18 input.

19 The Legislature has an obligation to meet
20 the constitutional dictates as already
21 expressed by 63 percent of Florida voters. The
22 Legislature owes Florida's residents and voters
23 professionalism and timely completion of their
24 redistricting process, hopefully before the
25 filing for the 2012 elections.

1 The Legislature knows the procedural
2 steps, legislative and non legislative, that
3 redistricting plans will need to complete in
4 order for there to be timely qualifications for
5 the 2012 candidates under the new districts,
6 and for vigorous campaigns before voters can
7 cast their ballots.

8 That means the Legislature should
9 consider, complete, should consider completing
10 its portion of the process sooner rather than
11 later.

12 Please take steps to ensure that the
13 redistricting process -- to prevent the
14 redistricting process from the appearance of
15 conflict of interest.

16 For example, subcommittees of Legislatures
17 could research, develop alternate district
18 proposals for the area of the state remote from
19 the member's geographic residencies.

20 Perhaps four areas of the state, and then
21 redefine, reconcile for two halves of the state
22 and then redefine and reconcile by the full
23 Chamber into one state plan.

24 It is now legislative's command
25 performance time. Your audience is Florida's

1 voters. We will not contenance undue expense
2 and delay in that performance. It is up to the
3 Legislature.

4 What will it be, redistricting
5 presentation or voter resentment? I am
6 confident that the Legislature and its staff
7 have the professional competence and technical
8 assistance to research and analyze and propose
9 new voting districts in accord with the
10 constitutional and Federal requirements.

11 Please make your best effort. Thank you
12 for the time to address the panel.

13 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much, Mr.
14 Rome, we really appreciate your testimony
15 today. Our next testifier is Diane Mack from
16 the Women's Civic Forum, followed by Claudia
17 Curry from the Democratic Executive Committee.

18 Ms. Mack, thank you for being here and you
19 are recognized.

20 MS. MACK: Thank you, Senator Gaetz,
21 Honorable Senators, members, staff members, let
22 me first express my appreciation for this
23 public hearing for the numbers of you who are
24 here.

25 When I entered I had no idea that we would

1 be in such august company. My remarks will be
2 brief.

3 The Women's Civic Forum is an informal
4 organization who's mission is to help
5 interested women learn about our community, to
6 further their civic interests, and in the end
7 also to further their political interests.

8 We want to see more women elected to
9 office. However, that is not the purpose of
10 redistricting. Those -- those goals have to be
11 accomplished in a much different way.

12 My remarks are simply brief. I am
13 concerned about the past horizontal divisions
14 in forming our districts. For different
15 reasons as our previous speaker said, I would
16 certainly ask this body to consider forming
17 districts with Escambia County, Santa Rosa
18 County vertically and not across the north part
19 of the counties and then the south part.

20 I realize communities of interest are
21 something you take into consideration, but I
22 believe that was in a Tier II criteria.

23 Finally, I realize the Constitution
24 requires that the process neither favor nor
25 disfavor incumbents, but we are human and I

1 would simply ask all of you to be statesmen,
2 stateswomen, not politicians. Put aside your
3 own interests and do what is best for the state
4 of Florida, but in this case also for northwest
5 Florida. Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much, Ms.
7 Mack. We appreciate you being here. Our next
8 speaker is Claudia Curry from the Democratic
9 Executive Committee, and followed by Paula
10 Montgomery from the League of Women Voters.

11 Ms. Curry, you are recognized. Thank you
12 for being here.

13 MS. CURRY: Good morning, my name is
14 Claudia Brown-Curry and I represent the
15 Escambia County Executive, Democratic Executive
16 Committee, but I don't want to be redundant at
17 this time. Everything has been well said, so I
18 pass. Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Well, thank you for being
20 here. We really appreciate it. Next is Paula
21 Montgomery from the League of Women Voters, and
22 Ms. Montgomery, you will be followed by Richard
23 Mills.

24 Ms. Montgomery, we are grateful that you
25 took the time to come today, and you are

1 recognized.

2 MS. MONTGOMERY: Okay. Thank you, and
3 thank you for your attention. I am one of the
4 Co-Presidents this year of the League of Women
5 Voters of the Pensacola Bay area. Excuse me.
6 And I am speaking on behalf of the League in
7 general. I would like to make the following
8 three points.

9 The Legislature's timeline for drawing
10 districts is really unfair to the Florida
11 voters. The Legislature should not be spending
12 taxpayer money to oppose fair districts as
13 described in Amendments V and VI, and we would
14 like to know where our maps for us to
15 reasonably be expected to respond to.

16 First, according to the current plan, the
17 Legislature will be discussing new districts in
18 January and pass them in March of 2012. This
19 does not leave enough time for possible
20 litigation and the required pre-clearance of
21 plans before the date in June, when candidates
22 have to qualify to run for elections.

23 Therefore, potential candidates won't know
24 if they can run and voters will not know for
25 whom they can vote in time to prepare

1 adequately for the fall election.

2 Unfortunately it will result in chaos and
3 gives the impression that the timeline was
4 designed to benefit incumbents, which is
5 prohibited by the Constitution and its
6 amendments.

7 Secondly, the voters have already spoken
8 in their overwhelming support for Amendments V
9 and VI. This is the voter input to the
10 Legislature. It is what you need to hear from
11 us, that is that we really want redistricting.
12 We need to stop wasting time and money by
13 fighting these amendments and just, just do it.

14 Third, these hearings would be more useful
15 and provide more meaningful voter input if
16 there were maps to which we could respond. We
17 pay our Legislators and their staff to do the
18 work of the people.

19 Why are we being asked to provide you with
20 maps? What will be done with these maps? You
21 may get thousands of them. What will you do
22 with them?

23 We ask that you provide maps that we can
24 respond to. These hearings give the appearance
25 that you are listening to the citizens of

1 Florida, but in reality, they deny us means of
2 useful input. Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much,
4 Ms. Montgomery. We appreciate you being here.
5 Next we have Richard Mills, and following Mr.
6 Mills is Deborah Nelson from the Santa Rosa
7 Democratic Party.

8 Mr. Mills, thanks for being here, and you
9 are recognized.

10 MR. MILLS: Thank you for the opportunity
11 to speak. I am Richard Mills, resident of
12 Escambia County.

13 First let me say I am not here to
14 represent any ideological group. I am just a
15 plain citizen, I certainly, most of all, do not
16 envy you people in the job that you have ahead
17 of you.

18 I know you are not going to make very many
19 people happy. That is just the nature of the
20 beast that you have to attack, and I just want
21 you to know that many of us will be praying
22 that you will do this job with the best of your
23 ability and with great consideration to the
24 rights of our citizens, and that you will act
25 in accordance with the constitutional

1 requirements upon you. Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much, Mr.
3 Mills. We appreciate those kind sentiments.

4 Deborah Nelson with the Santa Rosa
5 Democratic Party and then following Ms. Nelson
6 will be Jerry Couey with Santa Rosa Week TV.

7 Ms. Nelson, thanks a lot for being here,
8 and you are recognized.

9 MS. NELSON: Thank you very much, I am
10 Deborah Nelson, I am Chair of the Santa Rosa
11 Democrats. I also co-host Santa Rosa Week TV
12 on Media Com Channel 27.

13 I would just point out to you that
14 currently the population of Democrats in the
15 state versus the population of registered
16 Republicans is not reflected in the makeup of
17 Florida's House of Representatives and Florida
18 Senate, and I would just suggest that perhaps,
19 perhaps there is a political reasons for that,
20 but then again, maybe you need to seriously
21 consider that you have a gerrymandering problem
22 in the state when you go about this
23 redistricting process.

24 What happens when you have gerrymandering
25 present is that the populous is not accurately

1 represented in their political bodies, the
2 political bodies that belong to them.

3 When you have that problem it leads to
4 things like cronyism, it leads to special
5 interests being perhaps represented a little
6 more heavily than the people.

7 It leads to corruption. We have certainly
8 seen indications of corruption problems coming
9 out of Tallahassee in recent years.

10 We have had -- I would call it a
11 disastrous legislative session this year. We
12 have had a legislative session that I don't
13 believe in any way, shape or form reflects the
14 wants and needs of the Florida population.

15 You all passed SB 430 which will just
16 about guarantee to raise homeowner insurance
17 policy rates, at least by double over the next
18 five years. I don't believe any Floridian
19 wanted you to do that, and you did it anyway.

20 To me it represents a problem with special
21 interest influence. Maybe that is related to
22 gerrymandering, maybe it isn't. You have just
23 about destroyed growth management process in
24 this state.

25 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Ms. Nelson, I apologize

1 for interrupting. Because today's hearing is
2 about redistricting, if you could narrow your
3 comments to redistricting. We would be
4 delighted to hear from you about these other
5 issues, and you are welcome to come to the
6 Legislative Delegation meeting that will be a
7 public meeting and discuss those or we will
8 provide other venues, but today just to respect
9 the other people who are behind you who wish to
10 speak, could you confine your comments to the
11 purpose of the hearing today, please?

12 MS. NELSON: I appreciate that. And my
13 point was that those problems do point to the
14 gerrymandering situation, but I will go ahead
15 and move on.

16 I would just ask you all if you could
17 answer at least, do you have any idea of a time
18 frame when you think this process is going to
19 be finished as far as how far in advance of the
20 2012 elections people are going to know where
21 the districts are?

22 Do you all have any plan for that or any
23 idea when that is going to happen?

24 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Well, Ms. Nelson, we have
25 a website that lists the schedule. It is

1 flsenate.gov/redistricting. You can go to that
2 and see the schedule, but also Speaker
3 Weatherford will remark at the end of the
4 willing to our timeline in case you didn't hear
5 his comments at the beginning.

6 MS. NELSON: Do you have a specific date?

7 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Ma'am, the date, the
8 dates depend upon when the hearings are
9 concluded, when Bills are introduced. Any
10 member of the Legislature can introduce a Bill
11 at any time, but any other comments you have,
12 ma'am?

13 MS. NELSON: Well, I would just again,
14 just like other speakers have done, just urge
15 you to be very transparent with this process.
16 I think there is a lot of mistrust of the
17 current sitting Legislature and I think that,
18 you know, it is not going to help you any if
19 you are behind closed doors making this happen.
20 So please, you know, just make sure people know
21 what is going on. Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much,
23 Ms. Nelson, for being here and for your
24 comments. Jerry Couey, who is perhaps your
25 co-host on Santa Rosa Week TV, and then

1 following Mr. Couey, Dr. Calvin Avant, who is
2 with the Escambia Pensacola Human Relationship
3 Commission.

4 Mr. Couey, you are recognized. Thanks for
5 being here.

6 MR. COUEY: Thank you, and I appreciate
7 the opportunity to be here. There have been a
8 few things swirling, so I would like to get,
9 and Ms. Nelson asked a question and she didn't
10 get an answer. So let me just ask what a lot
11 of people are wanting to know.

12 Is anybody here going to answer a question
13 today with the cameras rolling?

14 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: I am sorry, sir?

15 MR. COUEY: Will any question be answered
16 by any of our elected officials today, because
17 that seems to be a real concern for the
18 citizens of the state of Florida.

19 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Well, let's spike that
20 rumor right now. At the end of this hearing,
21 assuming everyone in the public has the
22 opportunity to speak, we will invite any member
23 of this Committee to make any comment, answer
24 any question that has come up today if they
25 would like, or to offer any proposal they would

1 like, but now we would love to hear your
2 testimony, sir, and we are now up to 44
3 individuals.

4 So I am going to have to ask you to, if
5 you can, be as succinct as you possibly are
6 able to be.

7 MR. COUEY: Well, again, I will certainly
8 push forward the idea that this needs to be
9 transparent, but apparently what we are hearing
10 is true. Although you say questions will be
11 answered, you have been asked a question
12 already and you really didn't answer it. You
13 just put it off.

14 I would like to second the thought that it
15 is too late in the process. I see it as real
16 gamesmanship again. We really won't know until
17 late in next year, and I just really encourage
18 this Committee to reconsider that immediately
19 and not drag it out so long.

20 How -- how are we as voters going to --
21 how is anybody going to prepare a campaign?
22 How is anybody going to know who is running? I
23 just have some real doubts in this whole
24 process.

25 I realize it appears it be transparent. I

1 will tell you my perception is, and some of the
2 things that we are hearing now that questions
3 don't get answered, there is no maps available.

4 You know, I think it is kind of ridiculous
5 that the people that are going to be proposing
6 this haven't furnished a map yet, and I would
7 also like to second the thought that I don't
8 appreciate districts that are split north and
9 south.

10 I want you to truly consider that and I
11 will reserve any additional time in case
12 somebody will answer a question. Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much,
14 Mr. Couey, and next we have Doctor, is it
15 Dr. Avant or Avant?

16 DR. AVANT: Avant.

17 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Yes, sir, and following
18 you, Doctor, is Ray, I believe it is Ray
19 Huggins or Hudkins, with the Coffee Party.

20 Doctor, you are recognized. Thanks for
21 being here.

22 DR. AVANT: I am Dr. Calvin Avant,
23 Executive Director for the Escambia Pensacola
24 Human Relations Commission, and I come to speak
25 to -- the last time you redistrict, made your

1 redistricting, you took as a part of those who
2 would represent us in the Florida State, State
3 House, our State Representatives, and diluted
4 the minority vote in District III.

5 You took and the two, one of the two
6 larger and older minority communities and took
7 them out of District III and put them in
8 District II. That was communities of Wedgewood
9 and Lincoln Park.

10 Both of those communities were taken and
11 put into, and when I say diluted, these are
12 voters, these are people who are a larger block
13 of minority voters who actually vote, and they
14 were taken out of District II and put into, I
15 mean, out of District III and put into District
16 II.

17 Then they took and brought in Gulf Breeze,
18 which was explained to you which is the great
19 majority of the people who live in Gulf Breeze
20 are from the majority community, and we have
21 been -- the minority, as has been stated, the
22 minority community here in Escambia County has
23 not had a Representative in Tallahassee ever.

24 And to take and take, to move where there
25 was an opportunity, I think, I don't know if it

1 was the last time they voted or the time
2 before, but one of the candidates lost by about
3 800 votes, and it is well over about four or
4 five thousand votes out in the area that I just
5 got through speaking of.

6 And if we are looking at having an
7 opportunity for everyone to be represented, we
8 need to go back and revisit how you move, how
9 you set that district up and to assure that
10 minorities have an opportunity to have
11 representation in Tallahassee out of Escambia
12 County. Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much,
14 Doctor. That is very helpful testimony. Next,
15 is it Ray Hawkins, and I apologize if I messed
16 up your name?

17 MR. HUDKINS: That is all right, it has
18 happened before.

19 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: And my handwriting is
20 even worse than yours, sir. Thank you for
21 being here, and we welcome you and you are
22 recognized, and following Mr. Hawkins will be
23 Dustin Ponder.

24 MR. HUDKINS: Thank you very much. If
25 your handwriting is worse than mine, I hope you

1 use a computer.

2 My name is Ray Hudkins. I live here in
3 Pensacola. As you stated, I am a member of the
4 Coffee Party USA, which is a nationwide
5 organization that is only 15 months old.

6 I coordinate the activities, both here in
7 Pensacola and for the state of Florida, and our
8 group is a democracy movement that seeks to
9 give voice to people of all political
10 persuasions.

11 We are grassroots volunteer, non partisan
12 citizens who are independent of all political
13 parties and labels. We strive to restore
14 stability to the political process to reduce
15 the extreme polarization of interest where both
16 Republicans and Democrats too often act in the
17 interest of their parties rather than of
18 people, and you have heard previous speakers
19 state to that fact.

20 One statement in the Declaration of
21 Independence stands out that essentially says
22 your task is to listen to the people, and I
23 quote, "Governments instituted by men derive
24 their just powers from the consent of the
25 governed."

1 My goal here today is to add to the voices
2 that you have heard and will hear following me
3 to take a message to your leadership and to
4 you, listen to the people.

5 Recent legislative actions by the
6 Legislature and the Governor indicate you are
7 not listening. Please do so.

8 You have heard a lot about the timeline
9 already, and I will echo the comments of the
10 folks that preceded me. And I have to ask, it
11 only took you 60 days to modify our election
12 laws which are probably in violation of the
13 Voting Rights Act.

14 Why can't you give us maps in 60 days? I
15 don't understand the process. I understand the
16 process that you would like to hear from the
17 public, but it is almost like a poker game.
18 You want us to show our hand before you show
19 yours, and I would offer that you have the
20 experts on the staff to come up with the maps
21 and then put those forward for public hearings.

22 These public hearings essentially are very
23 difficult for us as citizens who are not
24 familiar with the software, not familiar with
25 all of the demographics that go into that, and

1 I think it would be so much more open and
2 transparent if you actually provided the maps,
3 and I would ask you to think about suspending
4 public hearings until you can provide the maps
5 and then go back and do the hearings.

6 I wasn't aware of the comment that was
7 made about the Constitution forbidding the
8 Legislature from taking action until 2012.

9 I would assume taking action is actually
10 finalizing something. Preliminaries are not
11 action taken, they are action proposed. So
12 notwithstanding the 2012 Constitutional
13 requirement, I don't think there is any problem
14 with you providing maps prior to 2012.

15 And as previous speakers have said, you
16 essentially are putting a person who wants to
17 run for office in a position of not knowing who
18 their constituents are, and that is kind of
19 important when you are running for office.

20 The sad but true fact is that a lot of the
21 redrawn districts possibly will end up in
22 court. I think a way to avoid that is to have
23 the public input on what you are proposing,
24 because ultimately you are going to take your
25 version of the public input to the review

1 process, and if you get the public input you
2 can start building a consensus of the public
3 that ought to short circuit some of the
4 potential litigation.

5 And quite frankly, I with rather have the
6 Legislature and the citizens making decisions,
7 not lawyers and judges.

8 As a Coffee Party activist I am pledged to
9 support leaders who work towards positive
10 solutions and hold accountable those who
11 obstruct them. Please be leaders that we can
12 support and thank you very much for allowing me
13 to comment.

14 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.
15 We appreciate you being here. Our next speaker
16 is Dustin Ponder, who comes all of the way from
17 Gainesville. Thank you for driving all this
18 way to talk to us here in northwest Florida,
19 and following Mr. Ponder is Janet, I believe it
20 is Delorge, Janet Delorge. So if Ms. Delorge,
21 if you will be on deck. Mr. Ponder.

22 MR. PONDER: Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: It is good to see you
24 again.

25 MR. PONDER: It is good to see you again.

1 I was in Tallahassee yesterday, so I got to see
2 some of the process and full disclosure, I am
3 writing a story about it. So you will probably
4 be seeing more of me as we go on, hopefully not
5 speaking as much, but since there is no maps to
6 talk on today, I want to talk on the two points
7 that Representative Weatherford brought up, and
8 I want to talk about this process here today,
9 because ultimately if we want to get the
10 process of redistricting right, I mean, as
11 Weatherford said, it is going by public input.

12 It is going by what has to happen here
13 today. So this has to be correct, this actual
14 meeting, these 26 meetings, but first, the
15 first point that Representative Weatherford
16 brought up was that we are bound by the
17 Constitution, we can't act on maps until 2012,
18 because we can't vote on them, but that doesn't
19 mean we can't start the process now of looking
20 at maps.

21 Nobody is asking from the public to vote
22 on maps right now. I mean, I just don't think
23 that is a legitimate reason not to have maps,
24 and I would hope at the next meeting that that
25 is not brought up, because to me, that just

1 sounds like a sort of misleading talking point.

2 The second reason is that we don't want
3 any preconceived notions. That is why
4 supposedly we are having these 26 meetings, so
5 the voice of the people can be heard and this
6 process can be correct.

7 And if I was to take your word, that might
8 be a legitimate reason, but I would say the
9 actions here today say otherwise, and as great
10 as it is to see so many retirees and some paid
11 lobbyists from Tallahassee here, this meeting
12 is at 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and I know we
13 have 17 percent real unemployment right now,
14 and some of those folks might have been able to
15 make it if they weren't looking for jobs that
16 don't exist.

17 But the question I have and I would like
18 answered and I would like somebody to maybe
19 write it down if you want and make comments at
20 the end, is if you want public input from the
21 vast majority of people who work for a living,
22 how can you schedule a meeting at 10:00 a.m. to
23 1:00 p.m., and multiple meetings throughout the
24 process.

25 I mean, there is many more, I think my

1 actual meeting in Gainesville, I believe is at
2 10:00 to 1:00. That might be 6:00 to 9:00, but
3 one of those in my home district is actually
4 going to basically disenfranchise all of the
5 people who work for a living from being part of
6 this process, and that just tells me that we
7 don't care about working families here.

8 And it tells me that we don't care about
9 the people at NAS, the Naval Air Station or
10 military veterans, farmers, like Senator Evers,
11 we don't care about those people's input, you
12 know, and that is sad to see.

13 So one thing I propose, I encourage all
14 areas that are having meetings to have evening
15 sessions. I appreciated that in Tallahassee
16 yesterday, so that everybody could have their
17 input, because if we have a public meeting with
18 no working people, with none of the vast
19 majority of people you represent here, that
20 means we have a flawed process.

21 I mean, today is a failure in my opinion,
22 and if we have a flawed process, we are going
23 to have flawed districts, again, that
24 disenfranchise exactly who has been coming up
25 and saying here.

1 So I mean, that is all I got to say today
2 and hopefully we will see some maps and we will
3 see some working people here and we can have a
4 legitimate discourse and move forward. Thank
5 you.

6 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you, Mr. Ponder,
7 and we look forward to seeing you tonight at
8 6:00 o'clock at Ft. Walton Beach.

9 MS. DELORGE: Hi.

10 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Janet, how do you
11 pronounce your last name?

12 MS. DELORGE: Delorge, Delorge.

13 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Delorge, and following
14 Ms. Delorge is Lonnie Hawkins.

15 MS. DELORGE: Thank you for allowing me to
16 express a couple of my concerns about
17 redistricting in Florida.

18 The Florida voters have spoken. Last year
19 Florida voters passed Amendments V and VI
20 setting standards for redrawing boundaries the
21 Census. These Amendments passed with a
22 63 percent favorable vote, greater than
23 lawmakers consider to be a super majority in
24 legislative settings.

25 Please recall that you as Legislators

1 increase the requirement that citizen initiated
2 proposals would have to meet the super majority
3 standards for approval rather than a simple
4 majority vote.

5 Supposedly this change was made so that we
6 could prevent frivolous issues from becoming
7 part of our State Constitution.

8 The citizens of Florida have met and
9 extended that requirement or those
10 requirements. Thus, as members of the
11 Redistricting Committee, have an obligation to
12 follow the constitutionally approved standards
13 of these Amendments.

14 Among the standards to be taken into
15 account is that of geographical boundaries.
16 That includes city and county boundaries. I
17 want to address that aspect of the provision.

18 At the present time, Escambia County, the
19 largest county in the area with the largest
20 population has no representation in the Florida
21 Senate.

22 Escambia County has a population of almost
23 300,000, and Santa Rosa's population is
24 slightly greater than 150,000.

25 That gives these two counties almost

1 enough population for one State Senate seat.
2 Only a small portion of Okaloosa County, of
3 their population would need to be added to
4 these two counties to reach the approximate
5 470,000 population that would be required for a
6 State Senate District. I encourage you to
7 consider that.

8 Further, a district drawn in this way
9 would meet the standards of being compact.
10 That was one of the standards approved by the
11 voters in Amendments V and VI. The entire
12 populations of Escambia and Santa Rosa would be
13 in one Senate District rather than having the
14 southern part of Escambia County in another
15 district as it is under the current designation
16 from the last census.

17 I understand your concerns about
18 incumbency and political party affiliation.
19 However, the Constitution is the document by
20 which we as Florida citizens live and our
21 future is dependent on it.

22 It is imperative that you set aside your
23 personal considerations, incumbency and that
24 you act as statesmen rather than political
25 politicians with party -- party affiliations

1 and follow the dictates of the voters when you
2 redraw the boundaries of the Florida
3 Legislature. Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much,
5 Ms. Delorge. We appreciate your testimony, and
6 next is Lonnie Hawkins, and behind Mr. Hawkins
7 is Bea Thomas. Mr. Hawkins, welcome, you are
8 recognized.

9 MR. HAWKINS: Thank you. Let me give you
10 a proper welcome which has not been done yet,
11 and Mayor Vince Webbs is no longer with us, so
12 let me welcome you to the western gate to the
13 sunshine state.

14 This morning I had the privilege of
15 sitting on the shores of Pensacola Bay watching
16 the Blue Angels as they practiced. And now I
17 have the privilege of addressing our elected
18 representative government. What other country
19 in the world has that opportunity?

20 My concerns are that most of the people I
21 have heard speak today have it backwards. You
22 represent us. We are here to propose to you
23 our ideas, not you to come down and dictate to
24 us, here is the pre-drawn maps, what do you
25 think of the work I did.

1 We are to let you know what we think. So
2 let me tell you what I have done. Yesterday I
3 got on to the My District Builder, didn't quite
4 understood how it worked, so this morning I
5 came and asked, tell me how it works.

6 So I played with Escambia County just to
7 start. Mr. Laird, you are not going to get
8 three Representative Districts. You don't have
9 the numbers for two. So you going to have to
10 share with other counties.

11 The way they run now, I am not real
12 excited about long wide districts, but I
13 understand the logic from ten years ago that
14 the rural farming districts had a lot in common
15 and maybe they needed a farmer representative.
16 The southern districts that deal with tourism
17 and business, maybe they needed their own
18 Representative or Senator.

19 We could compact them and I have looked at
20 the maps and, yes, it will work compacted, but
21 in doing so do we dilute the representation
22 from the north and the south in our diverse
23 counties.

24 So I don't envy the job that you have to
25 do. I have heard this morning what you did ten

1 years ago. I look at our local delegation and
2 I think two members were freshmen ten years
3 ago, they didn't do anything. They sat back
4 and watched the process.

5 Now you have grown up and you get to deal
6 with it. Again, I don't envy what you are
7 doing, and yes, I do have a job, I took a
8 personal day of leave to be here today, and
9 also Mr. Laird, let me save you that drive to
10 Crestview. Senator Evers does have a Pensacola
11 office.

12 And the other thing I am confused about,
13 when I got here this morning, the doors weren't
14 closed, they were open. There is nothing here
15 but transparency. So thank you for doing open
16 transparent hearings. The good news is, two
17 down, 24 to go. Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much,
19 Mr. Hawkins. We appreciate your testimony.
20 Next is Bea Thomas, and following Bea Thomas is
21 Susan Watson from the ACLU. Bea Thomas, you
22 are recognized, and thank you very much.

23 MS. THOMAS: Hi, and good morning to
24 everyone, and I just want to make it real, real
25 brief. I really thank God for people, thank

1 God for this awesome creation of the United
2 States of America, but we have to make sure
3 that we -- we step on people toes because we
4 always are voicing our opinion.

5 Somehow or another you never get it right,
6 okay. I represent District III, and I do see
7 my Representative. I do see the County
8 Commissioners at the County Commission, the
9 woman that is over District III. District III
10 do have some problems. It has got to be worked
11 out.

12 The redistricting of it, I have to study
13 it. The word of God say study thy self, show
14 thy self the proof, but you have to have wisdom
15 and knowledge of how to do it.

16 So what I represent is this is my motto to
17 everybody, we have what we voted for, we had a
18 chance, we voted, so what we have and we voted
19 for, we got to work with it one way or another.
20 Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much,
22 Ms. Thomas. We appreciate you being here, and
23 next up is Susan Watson with the ACLU of
24 Florida, and behind Ms. Watson is Jerry, I
25 believe it is either, I think it is Jerry David

1 from the Florida Farm Bureau, and I apologize,
2 Mr. David, if I -- if I am misunderstanding the
3 writing of your last name.

4 But Ms. Watson, thank you for being here
5 and you are recognized.

6 MS. WATSON: Thank you. Chairman Gaetz,
7 Chairman Weatherford and Committee members. It
8 was my honor a couple of weeks ago to attend a
9 public meeting when Chairman Gaetz was the
10 featured speaker.

11 Fortunately, Chairman Gaetz was not under
12 a gag order then, for he cheerfully explained
13 the process of redistricting, telling us that
14 if things go well and without a hitch, and
15 there is always a hitch, but if things go well
16 without a hitch, we should know nine days prior
17 to qualifying where the district lines are
18 going to be drawn.

19 Why, I wonder? If this isn't a recipe for
20 chaos, then I don't know what is. Florida's
21 process is one of the slowest, most secretive
22 in the country. There is no reason that it
23 needs to be like this, unless the goal is to
24 keep the people in the dark and confuse them.

25 Show us the maps now. You say that you

1 invite us to draw the maps, but that is your
2 job. It is your job. It is our job to comment
3 on them and give meaningful input.

4 We can't do that if we don't have maps.
5 It is a slap in the face to the voters of
6 Florida to cut us out of the process. You are
7 holding meaningless hearings with no proposals
8 and nothing for us to comment on.

9 The voters overwhelmingly approved the new
10 rules for redistricting. It is an insult for
11 you to ignore us and to play games with us.
12 Please stop playing games now. Please stop the
13 charade, please show us the maps. Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much,
15 Ms. Watson. It is good to see you again.
16 Next, is it Jerry David?

17 MR. DAVIS: Davis.

18 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Davis, I am sorry,
19 Mr. Davis. And following Mr. Davis is Brett
20 Ward, and Mr. Davis, it says here you are with
21 Farm Bureau, is that right, sir?

22 MR. DAVIS: Yes, I represent -- I am a
23 Director for Florida Farm Bureau, and represent
24 Escambia, Okaloosa and Santa Rosa Counties.

25 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Well, you are recognized

1 and we are delighted you are here, sir.

2 MR. DAVIS: Thank you, and one thing I
3 wanted to say to the delegation that we
4 appreciate when we call that a Representative
5 or one of ya'll contact us back and we have
6 never had any problem having any communication
7 with our Representatives and Senators, and we
8 appreciate that fact.

9 And we represent agriculture in the rural
10 communities of the area, and agriculture is the
11 second leading economic generator for the state
12 of Florida, and we would like to see that
13 recognized, as well as the fact and appreciate
14 Mr. Hawkins' comment about the districting.
15 They are giving the rural areas a voice in the
16 Legislature.

17 Without these horizontal areas of it we
18 would be leaving off the large expanse of the
19 state that is rural and agricultural, and we
20 appreciate the continued focus on that through
21 the state, and also this redistricting process.

22 And as you see, we are working farmers and
23 several of us have taken off our days to come
24 down here because this is very important for us
25 to have a voice in our state government, too,

1 and we appreciate the fact that ya'll are here
2 to do that.

3 And we represent thousands of working farm
4 families there and we would like to continue
5 representation of them, and one of the
6 definitions of a good compromise is when all
7 parties go away semi mad and we don't, we do
8 not envy your job here of doing this
9 redistricting, but we appreciate your efforts
10 and we would like ya'll to keep these points in
11 mind as you go through the process.

12 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very, very
13 much, sir. Next is Brett Ward, Mr. Ward, and
14 following Mr. Ward is Mike Godwin.

15 Mr. Ward, thank you for being here with us
16 this morning and you are recognized.

17 MR. WARD: Mr. Chairman, ladies and
18 gentlemen. It is a pleasure to speak with you
19 today on this redistricting. I guess I will be
20 in the minority.

21 I have heard a lot of speakers speak about
22 the south end of the county and how they would
23 like to encompass the north end into their
24 district.

25 We are Americans first, Floridians second

1 and that is about where it stops when it comes
2 to this county. The south end is the south end
3 and the north end is the north end. I am very
4 pleased right now with the way the district is,
5 the district lines are drawn. We have
6 representation.

7 If Escambia County is put together and
8 Santa Rosa County is put together, we will lose
9 our voice on the north end because the south
10 end of both counties is where the population
11 is.

12 Right now we can pick up the phone, call
13 Representative Broxson, Senator Evers, we can
14 get a response, they know who we are. That is
15 a good thing in state government.

16 The goals are different. The lifestyle is
17 different. Let us keep the districts where the
18 rural area is represented. If the districts
19 are put together we will lose our voice, and as
20 a member of Escambia County Farm Bureau Board
21 of Directors, we choose to lead and not follow
22 in this.

23 We will give you a map as it presents, as
24 it pertains to our rural area, not for the
25 whole county, but just for our area, and how we

1 would like to see it drawn. Thank you for your
2 time.

3 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.
4 We appreciate your being here. Mike Godwin is
5 our next speaker and following Mr. Godwin is
6 David A. Nelson.

7 Mr. Godwin, we appreciate your taking time
8 to come to speak to the Committee today and you
9 are recognized, sir.

10 MR. GODWIN: Thank you very much. I am a
11 farmer in the north end of the county and also
12 a Board member of the Farm Bureau. I have no
13 problem with the east/west boundary lines
14 district and the way it is laid out, because
15 that gives agricultural its representation and
16 that is why I came today to tell you that
17 agriculture needs its representation.

18 I am probably a minority here. I doubt if
19 anybody else has got spray planes and we
20 service two or three counties in the north end
21 of the county with ag planes and we don't need
22 to be tied in with Pensacola, because I doubt
23 if anybody down there has any concern other
24 than not to use it.

25 But we would like to stay in the north

1 end, all agricultural areas across the north
2 end of the counties be represented by one
3 Representative. Thank you very much.

4 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.
5 Our next speaker is David A. Nelson and
6 following Mr. Nelson, Ellen, I believe it is
7 Ellen Roston.

8 Mr. Nelson, thank you for being here
9 today. We appreciate your taking your time and
10 you are recognized in front of the Committee.

11 MR. NELSON: Thank you very much, Senator,
12 and Representative Weatherford and the rest of
13 the panel. I certainly appreciate the
14 opportunity to have this venue and have a
15 chance to make some comments about this
16 process.

17 It is a heck of a thing to follow these
18 three gentlemen who just talked eloquently
19 about the needs and the special demands of
20 farmers and we respect that.

21 However, going forward we all know that we
22 are in a tremendous crunch as it relates to
23 revenue. Our cost of everything is rising, and
24 unfortunately, even though for those who have
25 special interests in the south end of these

1 counties, like Escambia, Santa Rosa and
2 Okaloosa, the north very definitely has those
3 same kind of issues and respect that.

4 But unfortunately our counties are not put
5 together that way, and I think that it is
6 important that your emphasis be put on how we
7 can encourage the integration of these counties
8 in order to maximize our potential to develop
9 revenue, to encourage development and hold on
10 to our citizens.

11 Having grown up here and had to leave for
12 many, many years to make a living, I see that
13 process. I have got four kids, they are spread
14 all over the country. We need to keep our
15 people home, and I think we have to have
16 vehicles put in place that help to encourage
17 understanding and representation that brings
18 counties together and I don't think that your
19 job is going to be easy.

20 I certainly don't envy you, and this job
21 of redistricting is only a precursor to the
22 problems that you are going to face or those
23 who will sit in your seat will face in
24 providing for our government, and providing for
25 the needs of the citizens.

1 And I think the only way that is going to
2 happen is if we can find a way to bring
3 together these divergent needs and divergent
4 priorities and make the county entities that we
5 have, and unless we are going to change that,
6 unless we are going to redraw the lines of
7 counties, then I think it is incumbent upon all
8 of us to give the input and for you to do the
9 job to bring our alignment of districts back to
10 respect and maintain the integrity of our
11 counties and our communities. Thank you very
12 much.

13 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much, Mr.
14 Nelson, for your testimony. Next is Ellen, I
15 think it is Roston. Did I get that right,
16 many?

17 MS. ROSTON: Yes.

18 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: And following Ms. Roston
19 is Muriel Wagner. Ms. Roston, we appreciate
20 your being here, and you are recognized.

21 MS. ROSTON: Thank you. Escambia County
22 lacks full and fair representation in the State
23 Legislature. This is a statement made by when
24 Dr. Wynn Teasley, former Head of the University
25 of West Florida Whitman Center for Public

1 Service, and I agree with his statement.

2 The Senate District II is currently drawn
3 so that the northern sections of Escambia,
4 Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton and Bay Counties
5 are in District II.

6 Senate District IV is currently drawn so
7 that the southern portion of Escambia, Santa
8 Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton and Bay Counties are in
9 District IV.

10 The counties are effectively split between
11 north and south for their Senate Districts.
12 District IV is approximately 115 miles long. I
13 can tell you that as a resident of Escambia
14 County I rarely go to Bay County and feel I
15 have little in common with them.

16 I would like to see the district lines
17 drawn not between north and south, but county
18 by county. A combination of Escambia and Santa
19 Rosa Counties would nearly equal the population
20 required for one Senate Seat.

21 Escambia County residents do have a lot in
22 common with Santa Rosa County residents. We
23 are neighbors. Many people live in one county
24 and work in the other. Basing the Senate
25 District on county boundaries rather than an

1 artificial split between north and south, not
2 only makes more sense, but follows the
3 requirements of the Constitutional Amendments
4 passed in 2010 by the voters, that districts be
5 compact, contiguous and use existing political
6 boundaries. Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much,
8 Ms. Wagner. We appreciate your coming today.
9 Next is Beatrice, I think it is, is it Belous?

10 MS. BELOUS: Yes.

11 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: I am sorry, ma'am, could
12 you pronounce your name for us?

13 MS. WAGNER: My name is Muriel Wagner.

14 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: I am sorry, behind
15 Ms. Wagner is Beatrice Belous. I apologize,
16 Ms. Wagner, you are recognized. I am glad that
17 you are here.

18 MS. WAGNER: And her name -- her name is
19 pronounced Belous.

20 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Is that right?

21 MS. WAGNER: Yes.

22 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Well, we are delighted to
23 have you here to help us pronounce the name of
24 the person behind you.

25 MS. WAGNER: I am a former Escambia County

1 Commissioner. And I was the first woman
2 elected, woman elected in her own right, and I
3 ran a grassroots campaign.

4 So that meant that I had to have a very
5 experienced group of people mapping out my walk
6 routes, because you don't do grassroots
7 campaigns without walking.

8 That was a while back, and I don't intend
9 to do that again, but I just want to remind you
10 that I ran into a great many problems.

11 One of them was the fact that I would
12 sometimes have one side of the street but not
13 the other, and when you got into the northern
14 part of the District it was very confusing and
15 I found other candidates who were also
16 confused.

17 I just want to point out that Escambia
18 County's Districts are not perfect, and Wynn
19 Teasley's column about perfect districts should
20 be examined a little more carefully.

21 When I moved to the congregate living
22 facility where I live now I found out that I
23 live in a gerrymandered district. That the
24 person, a person running for School Board, I
25 guess, didn't want those old folks voting for

1 them. So I mean, I have in a gerrymandered
2 district.

3 I think we should look at the districts in
4 Escambia County with an eye to using the
5 natural resources to determine the boundaries
6 so that people can have a logical way of
7 examining them. And that is all I have to say.
8 Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very, very much
10 for being here and for your service to this
11 community.

12 And now Beatrice, you are up, and behind
13 her is Barbara Goggins, I believe it is,
14 Barbara Goggins.

15 Thank you very much for being here today,
16 ma'am, and you are recognized to speak before
17 the Committee.

18 MS. BELOUS: Well, I don't have much to
19 say, but I read in the paper that only the
20 leaders can make, can answer questions. So I
21 want to know why the others have taken the
22 Fifth Amendment so as not to be able to answer
23 our questions.

24 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Well, ma'am, let me spike
25 that rumor for the second time. It is not true

1 and any member of this Committee will have the
2 opportunity after the public has been heard to
3 make any comments they wish. The floor is
4 yours.

5 MS. BELOUS: Well, all I want to say is
6 that we do need the fifth -- the fair
7 amendments to the Constitution of Florida and
8 hope that we can get a fair district and not
9 gerrymandering. Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you. Thank you
11 very much, ma'am, for being here. Next is
12 Barbara Goggins and behind Ms. Goggins is
13 Rosemary Hays-Thomas, with the League of Women
14 Voters. Ms. Goggins.

15 MS. GOGGINS: Yes, I am Barbara Goggins.
16 At one time I lived in the south part of
17 Escambia County and I was in a snake and the
18 snake went from the Alabama line all the way
19 down to Panama City.

20 Now, there is very little that the western
21 side of Pensacola has to do with Panama City.
22 I don't know whether you saw the joke, that
23 really the districting was a joke in the
24 newspaper where some of our districts looked
25 like Barney and some of our districts looked

1 like the Enterprise taking off someplace.

2 I would like to say that we live in a
3 county, this is Escambia County. We have
4 county government, we have county police and
5 the least we can do is have districts that are
6 within our county and close.

7 We have a lot in common with Santa Rosa
8 County and I am not even sure where Baker
9 County is. So the only thing I ask you is to
10 put our governments together, and I would like
11 to pass my thing to this gentleman and maybe
12 you can look at my jokes.

13 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: We will be happy to. We
14 will be happy to. We need a little good humor.
15 Now, Rosemary Hays-Thomas from the League of
16 Women Voters, and beyond Ms. Thomas, the next
17 speaker is Jack Livingston, if you can be
18 ready, Mr. Livingston.

19 Ms. Hays-Thomas, thank you for being here
20 and you are recognized.

21 MS. HAYS-THOMAS: You are welcome, thank
22 you for giving us the opportunity to talk to
23 you today. My name is Rosemary Hays-Thomas. I
24 am Co-President with Dr. Paula Montgomery of
25 the League of Women Voters of the Pensacola Bay

1 area. The following comments are made on
2 behalf of our local League.

3 First we would like to make the point that
4 the timeline sent by the Legislature is
5 unrealistic and seems designed to cause massive
6 voter confusion, which is a quote from the
7 House's own redistricting attorney, Miguel
8 DeGrande.

9 The legislative plan to pass the maps in
10 March of 2012, at the end of the session does
11 not leave enough time for court approval and
12 Department of Justice review before the end of
13 the period to qualify to run for the election
14 in June, which is going to cause a lot of
15 confusion.

16 This seems calculated, regardless of what
17 the motive was, the appearance is that it is
18 calculated to give a big advantage to
19 incumbents, since challengers will not know the
20 districts nor have time to campaign.

21 This contradicts Amendments V and VI which
22 were passed as has been said previously by
23 almost two-thirds of the voters of the state.

24 Other states are drawing their maps early.
25 Why can't Florida? Prepare the maps earlier,

1 debate them in the fall and pass them at the
2 beginning of the session, which would double
3 the time available for challenges and
4 pre-clearance by the U. S. Department of
5 Justice.

6 Second, as other speakers have asked,
7 where are the maps? These hearings are not in
8 my opinion a good use of taxpayer time and
9 money, and I have thought a little bit today
10 about what it is costing the state to have
11 these hearings, looking around at the numbers
12 of those of you who have had to travel
13 distances to be here and the audio visual
14 equipment and the software, all of that stuff.
15 It seems to me pretty expensive.

16 There aren't my maps on which we can
17 comment. Legislators and their staff are paid
18 by us to do things, like draw maps for
19 redistricting and we are curious why you are
20 asking us to do it.

21 Considerable time and money has been spent
22 to develop the software for the public to play
23 with, drawing maps that give them the illusion
24 of inclusion. What will be done with these
25 maps drawn by citizens who do sign up to use

1 the system?

2 I also call your attention to the fact
3 that this system is restricted to people who
4 are computer literate and have access to
5 computer facilities. Why are maps not
6 available to which we can react?

7 Other states use hearings to solicit
8 public comment on maps. Why can't Florida? If
9 maps have been drawn, where are they? Why
10 aren't they made available to us for public
11 comment?

12 These hearings are spending our time and
13 money to give the illusion that the Legislators
14 are listening to the citizens, and I grant you
15 the attribution that that is what you are doing
16 today, listening to us, but the voters of
17 Florida have spoken loud and clear in approving
18 Amendments V and VI, and we expect our
19 Legislature to implement them.

20 Third, in this time of financial austerity
21 why is the Legislature spending taxpayer money
22 to oppose fair districts, as were specified in
23 Amendments V and VI which were overwhelmingly
24 approved by the voters?

25 The Legislature has hired expensive

1 lawyers and held Committee meetings to fight
2 the Amendments, argued to the Supreme Court
3 that they should be stricken from the ballot,
4 tried to confuse voters by adding a misleading
5 Amendment VII, which was stricken.

6 Worked to avoid pre-clearance by the U. S.
7 Justice Department, joined a lawsuit
8 challenging their constitutionality, thus using
9 taxpayer money to challenge Amendments that
10 were passed by two-thirds of our voters, and
11 finally chosen a course that requires the state
12 both to attack and defend these Amendments,
13 because our Secretary of State, Kurt Browning,
14 is the Defendant in this case.

15 This appears to me to be a giant waste of
16 money, which I wish you could spend for other
17 purposes, such as maintaining and creating
18 employment for our citizens. I thank you for
19 the opportunity to speak today.

20 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much,
21 Ms. Hays-Thomas. Next is Jack Livingston and
22 following Mr. Livingston is Patti Hightower.
23 Mr. Livingston, thank you for being here.

24 MR. LIVINGSTON: Good morning.

25 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: And you are recognized.

1 MR. LIVINGSTON: Good morning, thank you,
2 sir. I am Jack Livingston. I am the President
3 of Escambia County Farm Bureau and we have over
4 4,900 members in Escambia County.

5 We have already had three of my friends
6 speak for Farm Bureau, and one of the persons
7 before I came up was talking about he didn't
8 know where the districts where, didn't know
9 where people's offices were. Jeff Miller, I
10 have called him numerous time, Greg Evers, I
11 did him when he was in the House. I visited
12 with him several times. I never called him
13 when he didn't help me out, didn't help out the
14 farmers of Escambia County.

15 Doug Broxson is new, Clay Ingram, Clay
16 Ford, I visited with all of them in Tallahassee
17 and in their offices locally, and speaking on
18 behalf of Escambia County Farm Bureau, we like
19 the way the districts are east or west and for
20 the benefit of the farmers, the people who grow
21 our food, we would appreciate it if it would
22 stay that way. Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much,
24 Mr. Livingston, for your comments. And next is
25 Patti Hightower. It is good to see you again,

1 Patti. Thank you for being here. You are
2 recognized.

3 MS. HIGHTOWER: Thank you for this
4 opportunity, and just as a disclaimer, I am
5 speaking as Patti Hightower. Some of you may
6 know me as a School Board member in Escambia
7 County, and I need to tell Ms. Wagner I did not
8 draw those lines.

9 All of our School Board members are
10 involved in this process even as we speak. So
11 we know what an awesome task you have laid in
12 front of you and you know that you will be
13 lucky if you can please one or two people, but
14 I did want to get -- so many people have spoken
15 so eloquently about the issue here of trying to
16 draw the lines vertically rather than
17 horizontally.

18 I respect our Farm Bureau people because I
19 understand what their needs are, too, but I
20 would like to say that I would like to concur
21 in creating the Escambia, Santa Rosa County
22 District, if that is at all possible.

23 I would also like to ask you to be sure
24 that you publicize the hearings after the maps
25 are drawn as well as you have done this. I

1 really appreciate as a taxpayer, I know it is a
2 lot of money, but the opportunity to see where
3 our population is, how it has grown, be able to
4 play with the lines.

5 We have been doing that as our school
6 districts and it is a valuable tool and I want
7 us to be able to also be able to comment once
8 those lines are committed to paper or to the
9 computer, so that we all have the same
10 opportunity since the maps are not drawn now to
11 be involved afterwards.

12 And the other thing is, again, about the
13 contiguous lines and using the geographical
14 boundaries. So thank you very much.

15 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you, Ms. Hightower.
16 Thank you for your service to the people of
17 Escambia County. Next we have Jeremy Evans and
18 behind Mr. Evans is Jeff Bergosh.

19 Mr. Evans, thank you for taking the time
20 to come today. You are recognized. We are
21 delighted to have you.

22 MR. EVANS: Thank you very much. First
23 off I am the Vice Chairman of the local
24 Republican Party in the nature of full
25 disclosure, and I have been involved in

1 politics since I was a little kid and this is
2 the first time I have ever heard of anybody,
3 any organization, government organization,
4 supplying the data to the citizens so the
5 citizens can then go and make the maps
6 themselves.

7 On top of that you are going to as many
8 places as you can throughout the state to speak
9 to anybody who wants to come and let us tell
10 you what we think, and I have never heard of
11 anybody being more transparent than that, and
12 there always can be calls for more
13 transparency, but I think you have done more
14 than anyone has ever done before, so for that I
15 thank you.

16 There has been several things said today
17 that I would just like to kind of offer a
18 rebuttal to.

19 The first is there has been a lot of talk
20 about vertical lines for the Senate and I would
21 like to remind the Committee as you know, and
22 everybody here, that you have to draw lines for
23 an entire state and if you make a vertical line
24 of Escambia and Santa Rosa, there has huge
25 population centers in the panhandle, the next

1 district over has to be ginormous in order to
2 encompass as many people as is necessary to
3 create a district.

4 And I think if, as many people get on to
5 My District Builder as they can, they will find
6 that it is not easy to do to make districts
7 that are geographically concise and have a
8 population, the population necessary to create
9 districts.

10 It is also true in the, with House
11 Districts. You have, you know, Escambia County
12 with a large part of the population in
13 Pensacola. So if you are going to have
14 multiple districts, a large parts are going to
15 come in and encompass part of Pensacola in
16 order to make the population centers necessary
17 to have a vote -- to have a district.

18 And the final statement I would like to
19 say, there has been a lot of talk about
20 disenfranchising voters based on, based on
21 partisanship, and I think that a lot of times
22 we cannot define people in their political
23 views by the party they choose to be registered
24 by.

25 If that were the case in the 2010

1 election, we have more Democrats registered
2 statewide than we do Republicans. I think we
3 have 4.7 million Democrats and 4 million
4 Republicans, and yet in the statewide election
5 that doesn't have anything to do with
6 geographical boundaries we elected an entire
7 Republican Cabinet for the first time, and by
8 the Democratic candidates in most of those
9 races garnered under 40 percent of the vote,
10 and what that says to me, at least somewhat, is
11 that if all Democrats voted for all Democratic
12 candidates, then we wouldn't have had that
13 election result.

14 And not at all times can we look at
15 people, look at, look at race, creed,
16 partisanship and say those are the people that
17 they choose to vote by and I think when we do
18 that we start to box people in unnecessarily
19 and I hope that as you move forward you choose
20 to look at more than just race, partisanship,
21 gender, whatever it is, and try to create
22 districts that best suit the state.

23 And I know that you are going to have
24 challenges, because the Supreme Court and the
25 courts are going to have to say whether or not

1 you chose to favor or disfavor any individual
2 or candidate.

3 So I don't envy you for the rest of what
4 you are doing. Thank you for being here today.
5 I appreciate it.

6 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much,
7 Mr. Evans. Next, Jeff Bergosh who says he is
8 here on his own behalf as a private citizen,
9 but I know that people also are aware that you
10 are a public servant and an elected official,
11 serve with great distinction here in Escambia
12 County.

13 MR. BERGOSH: Thank you very much, Senator
14 Gaetz. First I want to welcome everyone to
15 Pensacola, again, I want to echo that
16 sentiment.

17 As Ms. Hightower mentioned, the School
18 Board and our counterparts and the County
19 Commission are doing a similar exercise on a
20 much smaller scale, thankfully, and so I know
21 what you are doing is difficult.

22 I appreciate the fact that you have taken
23 the time to come to Pensacola, and I appreciate
24 the fact that you are going to listen to all of
25 the people that want to speak.

1 I came in here with some things that I
2 wanted to say. I am glad that I am further
3 down the line so I could hear some of the other
4 folks speak, but I do have one thought and I
5 would like to leave that with you.

6 When you look at Escambia and Santa Rosa
7 County, there is a lot of similarities and
8 there is a lot synergy between those two
9 counties.

10 We have our news channel, we have our
11 newspaper. When you move over to Okaloosa you
12 lose a little bit of that. They have their own
13 identity, their own major newspaper.

14 When you go through the process I would
15 just like to say, there is enough population
16 there that we could do three State Reps Seats,
17 two from Escambia and one from Santa Rosa, and
18 a majority of one Senate District, and I have
19 heard the compelling arguments from the Farm
20 Bureau.

21 It makes sense to me, however, what I
22 would say to that is if you look at any group
23 of people you are going to have a Doctor living
24 next to a lawyer living next to a mechanic.

25 Just because you are a farmer doesn't mean you

1 are entitled to something special.

2 I mean, we all appreciate what you do,
3 believe me, I do when I go to Walmart and I buy
4 corn, but with that said I think it is more
5 important to keep geographic boundaries in
6 tact, and also as a School Board member I will
7 say this, too.

8 When you start moving things all of the
9 way over to Destin and Panama City, Okaloosa,
10 Walton county, when it comes to issues that
11 relate to schools, issues that we confront as
12 School Board members and representatives, we
13 have some unique challenges here in Escambia
14 County.

15 We have poverty. We have demographics
16 that are quite different. I think if you
17 consolidate the seats and you are able to put
18 one Senator and two Reps from Escambia, I feel
19 we would have a better connection with our
20 Legislators.

21 So I appreciate you coming here. Please
22 give some thought to what I said and thank you
23 for your time.

24 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you. Thank you
25 very much, Jeff. Marilyn Badessa is our next

1 speaker, Marilyn Badessa, and behind

2 Ms. Badessa is Vivian Faircloth.

3 Ms. Badessa, thank you for taking time to
4 be here today, and you are recognized.

5 MS. BADESSA: Okay, thank you. I just
6 want to say I agree.

7 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Would one of the
8 Sergeants or one of the staff members please
9 pull the microphone down. There you go.
10 Sometimes those are hard to pull up and down.
11 I didn't know how flexible it was, but thank
12 you for being here and please start again.

13 MS. BADESSA: Well, I agree with many of
14 the other speakers, Lynn Laird, Paula
15 Montgomery and Jeff Bergosh.

16 I really think that it is unfair. The
17 current districting is unfair to the people in
18 Escambia County as a whole, and I really would
19 like to see the districting be more compact and
20 vertical, and also I would like to see, I hope
21 that you all would not keep fighting the
22 passage of Amendments V and VI.

23 That you would go ahead and let, get on
24 with the process so that we can get these
25 districts done in a good time.

1 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much,
2 Ms. Badessa. Vivian Faircloth is our next
3 speaker, Ms. Faircloth, and behind her is Don
4 Richards.

5 Thank you for being here, Ms. Faircloth,
6 we are anxious to hear your testimony, and you
7 are recognized.

8 MS. FAIRCLOTH: Thank you very much. I am
9 Vivian Faircloth and I am a resident of the
10 city of Pensacola. I had looked forward to
11 being able to see your initial maps to get an
12 idea of your philosophy on how the lines for
13 the redistricting would be done, would be
14 drawn.

15 The differing points that prior speakers
16 have pointed to showing the different
17 philosophies really illustrates the fact that
18 we really need to have something tangible so
19 that we could have the beginning of a
20 conversation.

21 Escambia County is a population of
22 297,619. It is the largest county in the area
23 and has sufficient population for two
24 Representatives.

25 At the present time Escambia County has

1 one Representative in the House and none in the
2 Senate. At the same time, Okaloosa County,
3 population 180,822, has two Senators and one
4 House Representative.

5 Santa Rosa County, about half the size of
6 Escambia County with a population of 151,372,
7 has two House members residing.

8 The present structure is not really fair
9 in my view. The population in Escambia County
10 is 68.9 percent white, 22.9 percent black, and
11 9.2 percent of other races.

12 Santa Rosa County has 87.8 percent white
13 with 5.4 black and 6.8 other races. Using
14 existing count, Escambia County boundaries
15 would allow racial minorities to having more
16 equal opportunity to elect representatives of
17 their choice. Thank you for allowing me to
18 speak.

19 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much,
20 Ms. Faircloth. We are delighted that you were
21 here, and Don Richards is our next speaker, and
22 following Mr. Richards is David Radcliffe.

23 Don Richards, thank you for being here, we
24 are grateful for your testimony.

25 MR. RICHARDS: Senator, thank you very

1 much, and Chairman, I appreciate you allowing
2 us the opportunity. I understand that
3 Representative Broxson must have known that I
4 was going to have a comment to say about him.

5 One of our previous speakers talked about
6 some of you in your freshman stint not
7 accomplishing much, and I was just going to say
8 and his ears were probably going to be burning
9 now that he is gone and I see Clay Ingram has
10 left as well, so they obviously knew I was
11 going to speak.

12 Representative Broxson was clearly a
13 statesman this year representing his people on
14 the south end of his area, and I just want to
15 say thanks for doing that.

16 Another spokesperson, I believe the first
17 person up was here chastising quite a few of
18 you in terms of what you have attempted to do.
19 If you listen to what went on today so far, you
20 have an unenviable task, a task of you can't
21 satisfy all of these people any of the time and
22 only some of them some of the time, and that is
23 going to be the way it is.

24 I live on the south end of Santa Rosa
25 County and I don't object to the districts the

1 way they are at all. I was born and raised in
2 Escambia County, and like one of the other
3 speakers, had to leave to earn a living. I,
4 too, have five kids and they are all in
5 Atlanta, not here.

6 Vertical districting, if you go back to
7 vertical districting, there are going to be
8 people that don't understand what they are
9 about to get into with that. Maybe it is
10 better representation.

11 I have no complaints and I can name
12 everyone of you and everyone of you can name me
13 because I have spoken and met with you on
14 numerous occasions from first year
15 Representatives to Representative Evers when he
16 represented us and now Senator Evers,
17 Representative Gaetz and Senator Gaetz, all of
18 you, I don't have any trouble getting access to
19 any of you.

20 I applaud you for being able to on one
21 hand represent farmers that have a very diverse
22 need for this county and the other counties,
23 and to some of the other gentlemen that have
24 been here, and ladies that have spoken about
25 this, think about what you said.

1 You want vertical districts and I want
2 Escambia and Santa Rosa County to come together
3 with one Senator.

4 Do you really? I am not sure that Santa
5 Rosa County would enjoy a one-third, two-third
6 representation. Maybe that is not the way that
7 it should be done, and I believe you have got
8 more representation right now with horizontal
9 districts, even though it is played forward
10 from the City of Gulf Breeze, that is the City
11 of Gulf Breeze with 5,000 some odd people, not
12 in proper Gulf Breeze that has 50,000 plus
13 people.

14 I happen to live out there, and we don't
15 have a problem saying we are from Gulf Breeze.
16 Some people have a problem understanding we
17 don't necessarily live in the city of, but I
18 have never had a problem of contacting
19 Representative Clay Ford and talking with him
20 about all of the interests of northwest
21 Florida, not just the city of Gulf Breeze.

22 Senator Evers, former Representative Evers
23 represented Gulf Breeze on the south end
24 equally well, although he is a farmer and I
25 happen to know where Okaloosa is and Baker,

1 been through them quite a bit, every week back
2 and forth to Atlanta.

3 I go right through the whole stretch of
4 Santa Rosa County. It is extremely diverse,
5 and the south end and the north end happens to
6 be represented right now by Representative
7 Broxson.

8 We have two Senators that we can call on
9 to help get together to be a block vote in
10 bringing some interest to something in the
11 state of Florida. If you go to all vertical
12 boundaries you are going to have Santa Rosa
13 County and Escambia County and that is the far
14 west.

15 It is fun to say we are the western gate
16 of the sunshine state, but it is also kind of
17 an appalling task if you are having to compete
18 for monies, as Senator Gaetz has found out on
19 the BP Oil Spill, the impact for the south
20 Florida people where the oil never got to.

21 So I think it is really a daunting task
22 that you have. I hope you will listen to what
23 has been heard loud and clear today by a
24 majority of the people, and that is we would
25 like to see some idea of what you have in mind

1 as far as maps go. I think that is kind of
2 important.

3 I have gone on My District Map and I have
4 played with that and I am fairly computer
5 literate, and I would venture to say that quite
6 a few people here would have a challenge
7 working on that if they even had the computer
8 to go on and get on that and not be confused
9 with exactly what that meant.

10 So please, think about that and when you
11 complete these, get back out as quickly as you
12 can with your ideas of what is going on.

13 And thank you all so much, you are elected
14 people representing us. Most of you, while we
15 may not always agree, I certainly applaud you
16 for the efforts that you have done this past
17 year and thanks again ever so much.

18 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much.
19 Thank you, Mr. Richards. Next is David
20 Radcliffe, Mr. Radcliffe, you are recognized
21 and after Mr. Radcliffe is through we have John
22 W., I think it is Baker, from Pensacola.
23 Mr. Radcliffe, thank you for coming today.

24 MR. RADCLIFFE: Thank ya'll, thank ya'll
25 for letting me speak. I am from south Santa

1 Rosa County. I have no problems with the way
2 the Senate Districts are aligned and
3 everything. South Santa Rosa County though, I
4 felt for many years and everything, having us
5 split up into having three different
6 Representatives from our area and everything, I
7 do like to see it go back and have the
8 horizontal lines.

9 I think that the tourism, the financial,
10 the retail interests of the south Santa Rosa
11 County, south Escambia County, and if it
12 stretches far enough to get over into south
13 Okaloosa County, all of those people have the
14 same interest and everything and they are very
15 diverse from our, the interest of the rural
16 north of the county.

17 While I have had great results and great
18 communications with Representative Broxson and
19 Representative Ford, I do feel like
20 Representative Broxson's district goes way up
21 to much, way too far north and everything and
22 takes into too many, too much of the rural area
23 to represent of the interest of south Santa
24 Rosa County. Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.

1 Next -- is it Mr. Baker? Thank you very much,
2 Mr. Baker, for being here, and behind Mr. Baker
3 is Robert Rollo.

4 Mr. Baker, thank you for taking the time
5 to come before the Committee today, and we look
6 forward to your testimony. You are recognized.

7 MR. BAKER: Thank you so much. Thank you
8 for having this meeting to let the citizens
9 actually be involved and have some say. I
10 surely don't envy your task, because it reminds
11 me of a retarded school teacher mathematician
12 that says I am going to give you a test. You
13 have to give me the answer to these ten
14 numbers, but I am only going to give you seven.

15 So it is, you kind of got to get started
16 before you get started. So I don't envy your
17 process. All you need is a little magic.

18 I would like to say that in the interest
19 of public awareness that we, the notification
20 that I got of these hearings indicate that they
21 are going to be numerous and they are going to
22 go into the night. So the poor people that
23 work in the day time can also be heard if they
24 would like.

25 And I believe Senator Evers does have an

1 office here in Pensacola, down on Palafox and
2 he has been extremely responsive to any of our
3 needs, I believe.

4 I am here as a citizen. I have lived in
5 Pensacola for eight years, and the -- I am a
6 member and on the National Leadership Council
7 of the Social Citizens Group that numbers over
8 30 million people.

9 I have been at meetings with some of these
10 people at national meetings around the country,
11 and they all have the same problems that we are
12 having right here right now.

13 Everybody wants to be involved in the
14 process, but we want the process to be
15 completed so we can see what it looks like
16 before we get involved in it to see if we want
17 to be involved in it and it is kind of a
18 ridiculous situation.

19 So most of what I wanted to be said has
20 already been said and there is no need to
21 belabor that, but I do think that we should
22 give strong consideration to the farm industry
23 in the north end of our counties up here,
24 because they can't really move their farms and
25 come down to be included.

1 So I think we are going to have to give a
2 little bit and I would highly recommend strong
3 consideration to some east/west districts, that
4 the farmers are absolutely essential, and by
5 the way, I am not a farmer.

6 And in the interest of total disclosure
7 now that the Coffee Party has been recognized
8 here, our group here is the Tea Party. Thank
9 you so much.

10 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.
11 Appreciate your being here. Mr. Rollo, you are
12 up next and following that is Ronald McCollum.
13 Mr. Rollo, we appreciate your taking time to
14 come here today and you are recognized.

15 MR. ROLLO: Thank you, sir. My name is
16 Robert Rollo. I am a native of Santa Rosa
17 County. I didn't just come here over the
18 weekend to be a part of this thing.

19 I would like to say that I am here as a
20 member of the Tea Party. Like the Coffee
21 Party, the reason the Tea Party exists today is
22 we have not been totally happy with what our
23 elected officials have been doing.

24 I would say that I wrote several of you,
25 ya'll have responded nicely, I got no problem

1 with that, but the fact that you are having
2 these meetings, we don't have maps, we are
3 somewhat not informed as much as we would like
4 to be.

5 That is the reason the Tea Party exists
6 today. We exist to hold your feet to the fire
7 that you would do what you said you would do
8 during an election.

9 I for one am in favor of the east/west
10 districts, not up and down the county lines. I
11 think that would be a disaster for everybody.
12 I think that Representative Senator Evers is
13 doing a good job.

14 I think what happened last year was a sure
15 Bill to, the Septic Tank Bill tells me what
16 would happen if I had the municipal Pensacola
17 or municipal Gulf Breeze representing me.

18 Now I have got to dig up my septic tank
19 once every five years and have it inspected.
20 So I don't need no more of the city politicians
21 telling me.

22 I think you draw the districts to
23 represent the people, and as far as the people
24 I think they have the obligation to dig into
25 your backgrounds, all of the candidates and try

1 to find out how you would vote in similar
2 situations, educate the voters.

3 That is our responsibility, and I think we
4 should do it and then when politicians come
5 around knocking on our doors, we can ask them
6 educated questions about their philosophies and
7 try to determine how they are going to vote,
8 because so far we have been sorely
9 misrepresented.

10 I have been represented and everybody in
11 the state of Florida has, so they don't have a
12 problem with that, but I think there is a lot
13 of responsibility to be answerable to the
14 people and that is one of the reasons I am
15 here.

16 But I would like to challenge the audience
17 to get involved in the process and if you don't
18 like the way it is going, 2012 is when you have
19 your chance to make it right, and not only
20 that, people that ask for your vote in 2012,
21 they need to know that you are not going to
22 forget it and go home and go fishing, which I
23 love to do, or go hunting, which I love to do,
24 but I still want to know and am deeply
25 disappointed that I got to dig up my septic

1 tank every five years.

2 I don't have a problem with it, and I
3 don't like Tallahassee telling me I got a
4 problem with it, but I would just like to say
5 that I don't envy your job.

6 I have had the fortune or misfortune or
7 whatever it may be to be in sort of the same
8 situation, but I am looking forward to the
9 results. I personally would have loved to have
10 seen some kind of a map.

11 I think that would have been highly
12 helpful and I ask that you provide them as soon
13 as possible and then not go back to Tallahassee
14 and hold your hearings.

15 I attended hearings in Tallahassee over
16 the Septic Tank Bill, in the pecking order in
17 which people speak in Tallahassee is not what
18 it is in Pensacola or Ft. Walton Beach. The
19 lobbyists, the pecking order down there is
20 entirely different.

21 We were put at the end of the speaking
22 schedule and most of the time as you referred
23 to several times today, time cut us off. We
24 would have like 15 seconds to have our speech.

25 So I don't envy your job, but please take

1 into consideration the east/west, get the
2 Representatives to represent the districts such
3 as the farmers or what-have-you and I would
4 appreciate it very much. Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much,
6 Mr. Rollo, appreciate your comments. Next
7 Ronald McCollum, and after Mr. McCollum speaks
8 we have Martin Simmons, but before Mr. Simmons
9 speaks, after Mr. McCollum speaks we will take
10 a very short break.

11 We will take a five minute break for
12 members of the audience and Legislators to use
13 the facilities if they care to or stretch their
14 legs.

15 But right now, Mr. McCollum, we are
16 delighted you are here and you are recognized.

17 MR. MCCOLLUM: Thank you, Senator Gaetz.
18 In all of the years that I have been down here,
19 lived here, we moved here in '04, I have not
20 had any problems getting in touch with my
21 Senator or Representative, as some of the other
22 earlier speakers have.

23 When you look at the past history of this
24 nation we have always had gerrymandering
25 throughout the history of this nation. When

1 the Democrats were in power and those of you
2 who spoke earlier in this hearing who have a
3 Liberal view point. I used to be a member of
4 the Union, 34 years in a trade.

5 About midway I changed parties and now
6 consider myself a Conservative, but when you
7 look back at the Liberals they were promoting
8 gerrymandering.

9 We have Liberals here today who are
10 arguing about the way it is done now, and have
11 tried to work to change the laws. I have an
12 ACLU member right next to me here who is very
13 opposed to what is going on here, and I oppose
14 the ACLU.

15 I think we have a party in control of this
16 nation right out of the White House who is very
17 difficult to work with, and I just want to
18 thank each of you. I feel for what you are
19 going through. It is difficult times we are
20 living in, we are trying to get men to work,
21 people with jobs and stuff in the state.

22 We have expenditures that have grown
23 beyond what is coming into the state and I want
24 to thank each one of you for what you are
25 doing, the way you are working hard for this

1 state, and that is about it today. Thank you,
2 again.

3 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir,
4 for your testimony today. Representatives and
5 Senators, I would ask that we stay pretty
6 close, but we will take a five minute recess
7 and my clock says 11:42. So we will back here
8 at 11:47 and commence. This Committee stands
9 in recess.

10 (Brief recess taken.)

11 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Ladies and gentlemen, we
12 are going to reconvene. If you would all
13 please take your seats. If you will all please
14 take your seats we ask the Committee members if
15 they will find their spot as well. Thank you
16 all.

17 During the break there were -- there were
18 two suggestions just of procedure that were
19 made and we are going to follow those
20 suggestions.

21 The first was that there were folks who
22 thought that all of the people up here who did
23 not have name tags in front of them were staff.

24 That is not true. The fact is that
25 Speaker Designate Weatherford being a true

1 Conservative decided not to afford name tags
2 for the House members, but all of these folks
3 are members of the Florida Legislature.

4 They are elected Representatives or
5 Senators, and they have been chosen by their
6 respective presiding officers by Speaker Cannon
7 and President Haridopolos to serve on the
8 Redistricting Committee of the House and the
9 Reapportionment Committee of the senate.

10 So you may feel free to chat with any of
11 them about anything you would like after the
12 hearing or during any breaks we might take.

13 The second suggestion that was made to me
14 by several people was to ask that there be some
15 clarification at the end of the meeting, and I
16 will ask the Speaker Designate to do this.

17 A clarification as to the timeline of the
18 process, whether or not it is really true that
19 somehow it is preordained that maps would not
20 come out until the end of the process, to try
21 to provide a little information about that
22 since there seems to be some either
23 misconceptions or some scripts that were
24 written without knowledge as to -- as to what
25 the real facts are.

1 But now why don't we continue with our --
2 with our public testimony and Martin Simmons,
3 thank you very much for being here today, and
4 you are recognized.

5 MR. SIMMONS: Glad to be here. Thank you
6 all for being here. Full disclosure, I am
7 State Committee man for the Santa Rosa County
8 for the Republican party, but in my opinion on
9 this issue, I don't know if it is partisan or
10 not, because I haven't asked anybody, nobody
11 has told me anything about the lines, drawing
12 of the lines, the directions.

13 No matter where you draw the lines, north
14 or south, east or west you are going to have
15 Representatives and Senators that are going to
16 live in one county but have part of their
17 district that is in another unless you drew
18 them according to county lines.

19 For instance, Greg Evers, of course, as
20 Senator when he was Representative he lived in
21 Okaloosa County, but he represented the other
22 counties, did a fine job doing the same thing.

23 You are going to live, I know, Senator
24 Thrasher, you live in one county and others,
25 and no matter how you draw the lines, there is

1 not going to be county lines, east or west.

2 If the things are going correct now and
3 granted, we do have to trust that if you live
4 in one county and it is not our county, you
5 will still represent us, but I don't think that
6 drawing, changing the line direction is going
7 to change that much if any. Thank you very
8 much.

9 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.
10 We appreciate your testimony. Next we will
11 hear from Lee Smith and following Mr. Smith or
12 Ms. Smith, whichever it is, we will hear from
13 Jewel Cannada-Wynn. And so next, Lee Smith,
14 please, Mr. Smith, quite obviously.

15 You are recognized. Thanks for being
16 here, and we welcome your testimony.

17 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and
18 members of the Committee and staff. My name is
19 Lee Smith, I am a resident of Escambia County,
20 here not representing any group or
21 organization, as a private citizen.

22 However, I am a professional engineer, and
23 I am working today, I am approved leave so I
24 made time to come down here to be heard.

25 I am just, very briefly, wanted to speak

1 in support of the communities of interest of
2 the fact that coast communities have different
3 interests, different goals, different values
4 than the rural communities in the north.

5 Just the fact that I think the north part
6 of the county should have their own district
7 and this other their own. I wanted to thank
8 you all for allowing input before the maps are
9 drawn, but I would encourage you to make maps
10 available, you know, sooner than later. I
11 think the balance of having both is a good
12 thing.

13 Not wanting to be redundant I will
14 conclude and thank you all for your time.

15 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.
16 We really appreciate your comments today. Next
17 it is Jewel Cannada-Wynn, and following her,
18 Steve Bogan, please.

19 Thank you very much, ma'am, and you are
20 recognized.

21 MS. CANNADA-WYNN: Thank you, Jewel
22 Cannada-Wynn. Thank you so very much for
23 having this here and I know the question of the
24 process has been questioned. However, you have
25 to get all phases of opinions from everyone,

1 and thank you very, very much.

2 It had been mentioned in previous
3 speakers, they have covered most of the things
4 that I wanted to cover. This is not about
5 whether or not I can contact my Representative,
6 because I have contacted my Representative.

7 My Representative is Representative Clay
8 Ford, and his office has been very, very
9 helpful. However, the two main concerns that I
10 have is one, District III, a little history and
11 research on your part will go back to ten years
12 ago when that district was redistricted and you
13 took out a predominantly black district and
14 included the Gulf Breeze district which was a
15 predominantly white district.

16 I felt as a simple citizen that that was
17 wrong and that was a disenfranchise of my vote
18 personally that to have an opportunity for an
19 African-American to be elected from this
20 district was taken away from me by that
21 particular action by our State Legislature.

22 The second thing is the way in which the
23 districts are done now with the Senators. Here
24 in Escambia County sometimes I felt like we had
25 an absence of power to make things happen

1 economically.

2 I think the way the districts are run now
3 it impacts us economically. To our west we
4 have a state and counties who vigorously
5 support economic development in that area.

6 I feel like Escambia County does not get
7 its representation because of the way the lines
8 are drawn and focuses effort on increasing our
9 economic development so that we can be
10 competitive here in Escambia County when
11 compared to our sister county to the west.

12 Santa Rosa and Escambia County, we are
13 sisters, we do have many things in common and I
14 would hope that we can come together to have
15 one voice so that we can strengthen our
16 position in reference to economic development.
17 Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Ms. Cannada-Wynn, thank
19 you very much for being here today and for your
20 testimony.

21 Next, Steve Bogan. Mr. Bogan? We will
22 come back to Mr. Bogan in case he had to step
23 out for a moment.

24 Next is Anthony Washnool, Mr. Washnool.

25 And following Mr. Washnool will be Bessie

1 Vallianos, I believe and I apologize if I
2 butchered that name.

3 Mr. Washnool, thank you for being here.
4 You are recognized.

5 MR. WASHNOOL: May it please the public
6 servants and the public for which they serve,
7 D. Anthony Washnool, I am a trial attorney in
8 Arkansas, Tennessee and the state of Florida.

9 I reside in Chumuckla with my wife on a
10 family farm. Since the Spaniards occupied
11 Pensacola these people have been on this land
12 and I am humbled today to talk about the change
13 in a ten-year redistricting plan.

14 I think that over the last ten years the
15 logic for which the lines were drawn has
16 probably changed. I would ask that in the next
17 ten years we take greater concern for future
18 generations.

19 That we consider the economic
20 opportunities and growth. While dealing with
21 the actual line drawing, one of the things that
22 I noted from the charts that you had was that
23 for the most part in this north part of the
24 state, the districts aren't going to change
25 that much in terms of population.

1 I think the largest deviations in
2 populations are Districts III and IV in the
3 State House. The rest of it is pretty
4 standard, about the same. There is not a
5 tremendous need for redrawing the lines, except
6 under the considerations previously named.

7 And as an overarching principle I would
8 just have this prayer, that the special
9 interests not be the drive, that the actual
10 demographics be for a cross section of the
11 community and that our future generations are
12 considered when making any change, whether it
13 be specifically on redistricting or any other
14 vote for which you serve the public.

15 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you, Mr. Washnool,
16 we appreciate your testimony very much, and I
17 apologize, is it Bessie, V-a-l-l-i-a-n, I think
18 o-s? Is she here? We will come back to her if
19 she had to step out for a moment.

20 Our next speaker then would be Art Rucker,
21 and following Mr. Rucker would be Johnny
22 Blackman. Mr. Rucker, if you are here we would
23 be delighted to hear from you. We will give
24 you a moment to come down.

25 We gave you no warning here, I am sorry.

1 You are Mr. Blackman. Is Mr. Rocker here? All
2 right, we will come back to Mr. Rocker as well.

3 Mr. Blackman, you were recognized. We are
4 delighted that you are here today, and
5 following your testimony we will hear from Gail
6 Honea, please.

7 MR. BLACKMON: Johnny Blackmon, Escambia
8 County, Pensacola. I am here to speak on
9 something that I wasn't aware of until probably
10 now, because I wasn't aware of the fact that
11 Wedgewood and Lincoln Park was taken out of
12 District III, in which Gulf Breeze was added
13 and I am here I think Dr. Avant and Ms. Jewel
14 Cannada-Wynn spoke to this, so I won't go any
15 further, other than to say that I wish you
16 would put Wedgewood and Lincoln Park back,
17 which is a black voting district, heavily black
18 voting district.

19 I am not asking you to take Gulf Breeze
20 out, but I am asking you to put back Lincoln
21 Park and Wedgewood, thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much for
23 your testimony, sir. Next is Gail, is it Honea
24 or Honea?

25 MS. HONEA: Honea.

1 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you for being here,
2 and you are recognized before the Committee,
3 ma'am.

4 MS. HONEA: Thank you. My name is Gail
5 Honea. I am not here representing any group.
6 I worked in state government, actually, in
7 Virginia. I have worked in the private sector,
8 and I just retired from managing a non profit
9 in Escambia County for 15 years.

10 And when we were always worrying about
11 efficiencies, this is a little off the side,
12 but I would want to let you know that if you
13 want to have efficient people in office you
14 might want to try to recruit people from the
15 non profit sector, because they are the hardest
16 working and most efficient people I know.

17 For those of us who love and believe in
18 our democracy, we feel that enhancing the
19 ability for more citizens to participate in the
20 process of citizenship and feeling connected to
21 our government is a positive thing.

22 So I concur with previous speakers, that
23 districts should be drawn keeping counties
24 together and with folks that have something in
25 common together rather than the north/south

1 divisions that we currently have.

2 I would ask our elected officials to draw
3 lines that are conducive to citizenship
4 participation in government rather than
5 enhancement of the reelection of incumbents as
6 some folks feel is currently done.

7 This year unfortunately, our officials
8 have taken steps that many of us feel make it
9 each more difficult for citizens to vote and
10 feel connected to the process of citizenship.
11 And now that our elected officials are wasting
12 tax dollars fighting Amendments that two-third
13 of our citizens have passed, to me this shows a
14 disrespect for the citizens of the state of
15 Florida.

16 I hope that maps will be available sooner
17 than later so that we can see them and make
18 decisions and give you feedback.

19 I hope the process of giving feedback will
20 not be limited to Tallahassee where everyone
21 will have to travel in order to talk to you.
22 And while the work you have ahead of you is
23 difficult, I do remind you that you chose to
24 run for this office and do the work you have to
25 do. Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you, Ms. Honea.
2 Thanks for reminding us we are all volunteers.
3 Clorissti Mitchell, Clorissti Mitchell? Thank
4 you for being here, Ms. Mitchell, and behind
5 Ms. Mitchell is Rebekah Johanson, who will be
6 our next speaker.

7 Ms. Mitchell, we appreciate you taking
8 time from your day and you are recognized
9 before the Committee.

10 MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, I took the day
11 off, because at 10:00 I am usually at work. I
12 do respect that there is a lot to consider in
13 drawing the lines, and I am going to be very
14 brief because I really do hope that you guys
15 address and answer some questions at the end.

16 One, the state of Florida should ensure
17 transparency, fairness in compliance with the
18 Voting Rights Act and with equal protection.
19 You should ensure one person, one vote.

20 You should redistrict in a way that avoids
21 minority vote delusion which to me is what
22 happened with District III. You should avoid
23 drawing district lines so that minority
24 population is over concentrated or packed into
25 election districts.

1 You should also be careful to avoid
2 cracking or fracturing, which is drawing
3 district lines so that an area of concentrated
4 minority population which is large enough for
5 separate representation and that it could
6 constitute one or more majority, minority or
7 majority black district is divided and spread
8 among several districts that are predominantly
9 white.

10 I also respectfully request that you avoid
11 drawing lines, drawing plans that erode
12 minority rights relative to the status quo,
13 that is, that you avoid creating retrogressive
14 redistricting plans.

15 I am aware of the redistricting principles
16 outlined in Section 20 and 21 of the Florida
17 Constitution and they must be adhered.

18 Districts shall not be drawn with the
19 intent or result of denying or abridging the
20 equal opportunity of racial or language
21 minorities to participate in the political
22 process, or to diminish their ability to elect
23 a representation of their choice.

24 In addition, districts shall be compact
25 and contiguous. Additionally, I want to ensure

1 that the long established principles by our
2 Constitution and the Voting Rights Act of 1965,
3 are continued and we ensure one person one vote
4 and avoid minority vote delusion. That is all.

5 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much for
6 your comments. Next is Rebekah Johanson.
7 Ms. Johanson, you are our next speaker, and
8 then we are going to go back to those who we
9 missed.

10 Ms. Johanson, thank you for being here and
11 you are recognized.

12 MS. JOHANSON: Thank you. First of all, I
13 have to say, I live in Cantonment right now,
14 but I did grow up in Barineau Park. I think
15 Senator Evers might know where that is, but I
16 don't know if many of you do.

17 But it is north, it is in the north end of
18 the county, and I have to say that in contrast
19 to what a lot of speakers have said, there are
20 differences county to county, and I would
21 really like to encourage you all to keep that
22 in mind.

23 I live in Cantonment and when I go
24 downtown or when I go to the beach, I love that
25 part of my county, but I know it is very, very

1 different from where I live and from where many
2 of my fellow citizens live, and please keep in
3 mind the demographics and the interest of the
4 area and not just the arbitrary county lines in
5 moving forward, because it is very, very
6 different.

7 So you might be surprised to know this,
8 but I am not a farmer, I am a college student.
9 I just got my BA in Political Science Prelaw
10 and I am pursuing a Master's degree in
11 Political Science Public Administration, and I
12 find redistricting extremely confusing and
13 tedious and I -- you have my sympathy in moving
14 forward.

15 But please keep in mind that the vast
16 majority of the people you represent are most
17 likely going to be even more confused by this
18 process.

19 People don't choose to do this stuff and
20 the average citizen really doesn't know a lot
21 about what is going on as you, as you
22 redistrict. And so I would encourage you to
23 keep those concerns in mind while moving
24 forward. I am not here to complain.

25 I really appreciate you all being here,

1 but if I did have one complaint it would be the
2 time for now the fact that I am unemployed
3 during the summer until the fall term starts
4 has worked in my favor, but the majority of the
5 people my age, the people who are like me can't
6 be here because we do have jobs or class or
7 responsibilities.

8 So please keep that in mind while moving
9 forward. It is great to have this meeting, but
10 it would be even better if the average citizen
11 could attend. So do keep that in mind that the
12 citizens, the people are listening and we are
13 paying attention.

14 We are here to help, we appreciate the
15 chance to help, but we are also here to hold
16 your feet to the fire, because that is what you
17 elected us to do. I mean, that is what we
18 elected you to do, something like that. Thank
19 you.

20 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very, very
21 much, Rebekah, for your testimony. We would
22 like to go back now to those who we missed who
23 may have stepped out. We want to make sure
24 everyone has an opportunity. Steve Bogon, if
25 Mr. Bogon is here we will take his testimony.

1 All right, Bessie Vallianos,
2 Ms. Vallianos, are you here? I thought that
3 was you, Ms. Vallianos, you held us in thrall.

4 Art Rucker, is Mr. Rucker here? If not,
5 that concludes the public testimony for those
6 who have turned in cards.

7 Let me ask, is there anybody here who
8 would like to testify but didn't turn in a
9 card?

10 If you are a little bit shy but you have
11 heard the testimony and now you would like to
12 testify, we are here to listen, is there
13 anybody? If so, would you raise your hand, we
14 will get to you with a card and take your
15 testimony now. Is there anyone?

16 Well, if not we thank all of those who
17 have testified, and also point out that the
18 face-to-face hearings are not the only way that
19 people are following the redistricting process
20 or having input into the redistricting process.
21 We have a very active on-line presence by many,
22 many, many Floridians.

23 We are picking up scores more almost by
24 the minute who are following us on the web and
25 through the Florida Channel and are giving us

1 their views by e-mail, by Snail Mail and by
2 telephone. So we thank, thank them very much
3 for that.

4 We would like to now go to any comments or
5 questions from any members, any Representatives
6 or Senators who are here that you would like to
7 make.

8 Okay. I would like now to turn to our
9 Speaker Designate, and I have asked him to be
10 prepared to answer some of the questions of
11 fact that have come up. I realize that some
12 folks may have had a script prepared for them
13 or in advance of the meeting and may not have
14 had the chance to hear the Speaker Designate's
15 explanation of the process and the timeline and
16 the calendar that he gave at the beginning.

17 So I would ask him to reprise some of
18 those key points and respond to the points of
19 information that we have had raised by
20 testifiers today. Mr. Speaker.

21 SPEAKER WEATHERFORD: Thank you very much,
22 Mr. Chairman. I want to thank again the
23 members of the public who took time to be here
24 today. We got a lot of offers of sympathy, and
25 I wish I could get the same sympathy from my

1 wife being gone so much, but she is not quite
2 as sympathetic.

3 So I will tell you that the members of
4 this body and this Committee, we have dedicated
5 ourselves and sacrificed a lot of time and
6 effort to be here today with you and with other
7 people around the state of Florida, because we
8 recognize how important it is that we get your
9 input and we thank you for taking time from
10 coming from the north end of the county or the
11 south end of the county to be here and to be a
12 part of this process.

13 I would like to, if I could, Mr. Chairman,
14 answer a few quick questions that were brought
15 up during the hearing to see if I can't clear
16 up a few things.

17 The first thing is in regards to
18 Amendments V and VI. We heard that referenced
19 many times. Make no mistake about it, the
20 Amendments V and VI were voted overwhelmingly
21 by the public to pass.

22 The Senator and myself and every member of
23 this chamber, both the House and the Senate
24 swears every two years to uphold and defend the
25 Constitution of the State of Florida, we will

1 do that and we will faithfully uphold the
2 Amendments V and VI that have gone into law.

3 They are the law. They are the
4 Constitution, we will faithfully uphold it and
5 I want to make sure that is extremely clear.

6 The second thing is, there was a term that
7 was used a few times today and I want to be
8 very clear on this, and that was in regards to
9 a gag order, or that somehow members were asked
10 not to speak.

11 As you noticed just now, the Chairman of
12 the Committee asked if any member wanted to
13 speak or have thoughts or ask questions.

14 Yesterday in Tallahassee we had some
15 questions that were asked from members of the
16 Committee and we answered those questions.

17 There is no gag order. We have not asked
18 members not to speak, simply we have reminded
19 them that this is a listening tour. This is
20 one of the few times I have seen in politics
21 where you don't sit back and listen to
22 politicians give speeches or pontificate for
23 hours and hours on end.

24 This is your opportunity to give input to
25 us and you have done so in a very thoughtful

1 manner today and we appreciate that very much.
2 So there is no gag order whatsoever.

3 Thirdly, in regards to the maps. There
4 has been a lot of questions in regards to the
5 maps and why we don't have them here today, and
6 I just want to point out a few things.

7 First of all, we believe in the
8 Legislature that allowing the citizens of
9 Florida to start the conversation first about
10 what you think before we start drawing the
11 first line is of the utmost importance.

12 Imagine if we would have shown up today
13 and said, here are the maps that we have drawn,
14 you know, here they are, what do you think. We
15 would have probably spent an hour of people
16 saying, how did you draw these maps and why
17 didn't you ask anyone who lives here their
18 opinion first before you drew them.

19 So we feel it is of the utmost importance
20 to make sure that we seek public input first as
21 opposed to coming before you and asking for a
22 rubber stamp from the public on maps that have
23 already been drawn without input whatsoever.

24 I also would like to point out that in a
25 letter that was sent to the Legislature just

1 recently from the crafters of the Amendments V
2 and VI and Fair Districts, they asked us to
3 produce maps and to bring them to the public
4 hearings, and what was interesting about that
5 was over a year and-a-half ago when they
6 testified before the Legislature under oath,
7 they specifically said when we asked them if
8 they could help us draw fair districts, they
9 said they could not even attempt to do it, both
10 Ms. Freeman and Former Speaker Mills
11 specifically said they could not even attempt
12 to do it until they got public testimony from
13 the citizens of Florida.

14 So we are simply doing what they stated
15 two years ago, which is seeking the public
16 testimony from you, and we are grateful that we
17 have gotten it here today.

18 Lastly, in regards to the timeline which
19 is very, very important, and I want to make
20 sure that I am clear about this as well.

21 In regards to the timeline it is important
22 to know, we were one of the last states to get
23 the census data from the Federal government.

24 We did not get the official census data
25 until April, which were in the middle of the

1 Legislative Session that went into the second
2 week of May. So we were not able to do
3 anything with that data and start to have
4 public hearings until the summer, which we are
5 now doing.

6 On top of that, the Constitution says very
7 clearly that we cannot take action on any maps
8 until January of 2012. And so what we are
9 doing is we starting seven months before then.

10 We are taking three and-a-half months of
11 testimony in every pocket of the state of
12 Florida and then we are going to take the Bills
13 that are filed by members and by the Committees
14 and they are going to work their way through
15 the process with public input at every step of
16 the way.

17 And finally go when we get to January and
18 have our session, that we have moved up two
19 months just so we could do this early, we will
20 then take action on formal maps and plans.

21 I think those are very important things to
22 bring to the light. We encourage you to
23 continue to be a part of this process. This is
24 the most interactive redistricting process that
25 the country has seen.

1 We have websites, we have social media, we
2 have e-mail, we have public hearings and all of
3 this public comment will take place throughout
4 the entire process, not in the beginning, but
5 through the middle and all of the way up until
6 the very end, and lastly, Mr. Chairman, I will
7 just say this.

8 I believe it is incumbent upon this body
9 to make sure that politics and partisan
10 politics specifically is not a part of this
11 process. The Constitution is clear about that.

12 We do not believe that politics has any
13 reason to be a part of this process and I think
14 it is incumbent upon us as Chairs and the
15 members of this Committee to make sure that we
16 put the citizens first and that we put the
17 voters and the districts and what is right for
18 the state of Florida ahead of anything that is
19 political, and I know that you will do that and
20 I will work with you as well and I look forward
21 to working with you and your leadership and
22 thank you very much for having us here in God's
23 country today.

24 Thank you, members, for being a part of
25 this process. I can assure you, we heard you

1 loud and clear. Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN GAETZ: Thank you very much,
3 Mr. Speaker, and there being no further
4 comments from members, President Margolis moves
5 we rise.

6 (Whereupon, the proceedings were
7 concluded.)

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF FLORIDA)

COUNTY OF LEON)

I hereby certify that the foregoing transcript is of a tape-recording taken down by the undersigned, and the contents thereof were reduced to typewriting under my direction;

That the foregoing pages 2 through 117 represent a true, correct, and complete transcript of the tape-recording;

And I further certify that I am not of kin or counsel to the parties in the case; am not in the regular employ of counsel for any of said parties; nor am I in anywise interested in the result of said case.

Dated this 9th day of August, 2011.

CLARA C. ROTRUCK

Notary Public

State of Florida at Large

Commission Expires:

November 13, 2014