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REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22, 2011

11:00 A.M.

GULF COAST COMMUNITY COLLEGE

PANAMA CITY, 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 GATES: Thank you all for being
3 here this morning. The Joint House/Senate
4 Redistricting Hearing is called to order.

5 We want to first of all thank Gulf Coast
6 State College, the Board of Trustees and the
7 Administration for allowing us to use this
8 facility today.

9 And thank all of you for being here,
10 especially members of the public who have come
11 to help us by sharing your comments and your
12 recommendations to assist in shaping
13 Congressional Senate and House Districts in
14 Florida for the next decade.

15 My name is Don Gates. I Chair the Senate
16 Reapportionment Committee. My colleagues to my
17 immediate left is the Speaker Designate of the
18 Florida House of Representatives,
19 Representative Will Weatherford, he Chairs the
20 House Redistricting Committee, and together we
21 are chairing these hearings around the state.

22 This -- this hearing is one of a series.
23 We started in Tallahassee, then went to
24 Pensacola yesterday, then to Ft. Walton Beach.

25 Today we are fortunate to be in Panama

1 City, in Bay County, and then we will move on
2 to the rest of the state, and ultimately we
3 will be all of the way south to Key West. So
4 we will cover the State of Florida and hope to
5 hear from many, many people.

6 I would like to begin today so that you
7 will know who is here and where they have come
8 from, to ask the members of the House
9 Redistricting Committee and the Senate
10 Reapportionment Committee if they would just
11 state their name, whether they are a member of
12 the House or the Senate, and the community that
13 they represent.

14 And Mr. Guthrie, if you would hand the
15 microphone to our first member.

16 REPRESENTATIVE KIAR: Thank you,
17 Mr. Chairman. My name is Martin Kiar, and I
18 represent an area in south Florida called
19 Broward County, and thank you all very much for
20 giving us the opportunity to come and hear your
21 voices.

22 SENATOR MONFORD: I am Bill Monford. I
23 represent District 6, Senate District 6 and it
24 stretches from Madison County, that is Madison,
25 Jefferson, Leon, Wakulla, Franklin, Gulf,

1 Calhoun, Liberty, Jackson, Gadsden and a little
2 bit part of Bay, right down the street down
3 here.

4 So if you are my constituent, glad you are
5 here. If you are not, I wish you were. Glad
6 to be here.

7 REPRESENTATIVE ADKINS: Hi, my name is
8 Janet Adkins, I serve in the Florida House and
9 I represent Nassau County, Baker, Bradford,
10 Clay, Union and Duval Counties.

11 REPRESENTATIVE NEHR: Good morning, my
12 name is Peter Nehr, and I am from District 48.
13 I represent Pinellas County.

14 SPEAKER WEATHERFORD: Hello, my name is
15 Will Weatherford. I am in the State House of
16 Representatives. I represent District 61,
17 which is in Pasco County.

18 REPRESENTATIVE MARGOLIS: Good morning, my
19 name is Sandra Gwen Margolis. I represent the
20 east side of Miami Dade County and a little bit
21 of Broward, just a very little bit.

22 REPRESENTATIVE FORD: I am Clay Ford,
23 Representative for District 3.
24 Ninety-five percent of my district is
25 Pensacola, five percent is Gulf Breeze, and we

1 have got a beach up in that area, too, sort of
2 like Panama City. I feel at home here.

3 REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAMS: Good morning, my
4 name is Alan Williams, native, north Floridian.
5 I represent parts of Tallahassee, Leon County
6 and parts of Gadsden county. It is great to be
7 here.

8 REPRESENTATIVE COLEY: I am Marti Coley.
9 I represent District 7 here and the panhandle,
10 including Bay County and encompassing nine
11 counties in the panhandle.

12 REPRESENTATIVE HOOPER: Good morning,
13 everyone, I am Ed Hooper, Florida House, I
14 represent District 50, which is about one
15 fourth of Pinellas County.

16 REPRESENTATIVE FRISHE: Good morning, I am
17 State Representative Jim Frishe, I am from
18 District 54 which is the western edge of
19 Pinellas County, all of the beaches. I feel
20 right at home here.

21 REPRESENTATIVE CHESTNUT: Good morning,
22 Chuck Chestnut, District 23, a portion of
23 Alachua County and a portion of Marion County.

24 REPRESENTATIVE REED: Good morning, I am
25 Betty Reed, I represent part of east Tampa,

1 Hillsborough County, parts of Riverview, and a
2 snibbling of west Tampa, and glad to be here.

3 REPRESENTATIVE CLARKE-REED: Good morning,
4 I am State Representative Gwyndolen
5 Clarke-Reed. Don't let the New York accent
6 fool you, I am a native Floridian. I represent
7 House District 92, which is in Broward County,
8 representing the cities of Deerfield Beach,
9 Pompano Beach, Oakland Park, Wilton Manors,
10 Tamarac, and part of north Lauderdale, Victoria
11 Park area of Ft. Lauderdale. Thank you, I am
12 glad to be here.

13 REPRESENTATIVE CAMPBELL: Good morning, my
14 name is Daphne Campbell, I represent District
15 108, part of Miami, Dade County, and as we have
16 four municipalities, North Miami. We have four
17 municipalities, North Miami, North Miami --
18 North Miami, Miami Shores, El Portal and
19 Biscayne Park and I am glad to be here.

20 REPRESENTATIVE ROGERS: Good morning,
21 State Representative Hazel Rogers representing
22 areas of Broward County. Seven cities,
23 Lauderdale Lakes, Lauderhill, Oakland Park,
24 North Lauderdale, Tamarac, Sunrise, Plantation
25 and, of course, Broward County, 1.8 million

1 residents.

2 It is good to be here. We are State
3 Representatives, representing the entire State
4 of Florida, so I thank you for being here.

5 REPRESENTATIVE BURGIN: Hello, I am State
6 Representative Rachel Burgin from the Tampa Bay
7 area, representing District 56 in Hillsborough
8 County.

9 REPRESENTATIVE BERNARD: Good morning,
10 State Representative Mack Bernard, representing
11 District 84 in Palm Beach County.

12 REPRESENTATIVE JULIEN: Good morning, my
13 name is John Patrick Julien, proudly
14 representing the Florida House of
15 Representatives District 104 which encompasses
16 North Miami beach, North Miami, Miami Gardens,
17 Opa Locka, the City of Miami, the City of
18 Hialeah and Unincorporated Miami-Dade, and it
19 is truly an honor and a privilege to be here.

20 REPRESENTATIVE PASSIDOMO: Good morning,
21 my name is Kathleen Passidomo, House District
22 76, which is Collier County and it includes the
23 City of Naples, the City of Marco Island,
24 Everglades City and as I indicated, less than a
25 ton of alligators. Thank you.

1 REPRESENTATIVE GOODSON: Good morning, my
2 name is Tom Goodson, I represent House District
3 29, which runs from Mims, Florida through the
4 Space Coast, Brevard County down into Indian
5 River County. Thank you for having us.

6 REPRESENTATIVE HAYS: Good morning, and
7 thank you for being here. I am Alan Hays,
8 State Senator from District 20 which includes
9 parts of Volusia, Seminole, Lake, Sumter and
10 Marion Counties, right in the heart of Florida.
11 Thanks are being here.

12 REPRESENTATIVE BAXLEY: Good morning, I am
13 Dennis Baxley, a country undertaker from Ocala,
14 Marion County, representing District 24 there
15 for the folks there, fourth generation
16 Floridian. Love to be back in Panama City
17 today. Thank you for coming and talking to us.

18 SENATOR THRASHER: Good morning, I am
19 State Senator John Thrasher in District 8. I
20 live in St. Augustine, Florida, and I represent
21 parts of Nassau County, Duval County, St. Johns
22 County, Flagler County, and I end up at the
23 International Speedway in Daytona Beach, and it
24 is great to be here and thank you all for
25 coming this morning.

1 REPRESENTATIVE CRUZ: Good morning, I am
2 State Representative Janet Cruz. I, along with
3 my colleagues, Representative Reed and
4 Representative Burgin, represent a portion of
5 Tampa, Hillsborough County. It is an honor and
6 a privilege to be here. For those of you who
7 took time off of work, I appreciate you being
8 here.

9 For those of you that took time from your
10 golf game or time from the beach, I appreciate
11 you being here even more. Have a good day.

12 REPRESENTATIVE STARGILL: Good morning, I
13 am Representative Kelli Stargel from District
14 64, which is North Polk County and a lot of the
15 City of Lakeland.

16 REPRESENTATIVE TAYLOR: Good morning, I am
17 State Representative Dwayne Taylor from Daytona
18 Beach, Florida, where the world center of
19 racing and the world's most famous beach on the
20 Atlantic, on the Atlantic side.

21 CHAIRMAN GATES: He got in real trouble in
22 Ft. Walton Beach last night.

23 REPRESENTATIVE DRAKE: Thank you, I am
24 Brad Drake. I represent House District 5. I
25 live about 45 miles down the road in Walton

1 County. I have five counties here in the
2 panhandle, Okaloosa, Walton, Holmes, Washington
3 and Jackson. So thank you for letting me be
4 here with you today.

5 REPRESENTATIVE PATRONIS: Good morning.
6 Thank you all for coming today. Welcome to Bay
7 County, members. Constituents, I want to tell
8 you, this is probably the largest assembling
9 you have had of State Legislators in Bay
10 County's history, and please take your
11 opportunities to vet to them.

12 I am humble to have so many here in Bay
13 County and as I look at the audience, there is
14 members, you have the highest quality of folks
15 you are going to get testimony from here today,
16 and I am glad to be here with you.

17 I guess it would help, Peter Nehr pointed
18 out to me, I am State Representative Jimmy
19 Patronis, representing Bay County, proudly.

20 SENATOR EVERS: I am Senator Greg Evers, I
21 represent the northern portion of Escambia,
22 Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Washington,
23 Holmes and North Bay County. So I cover
24 everything between Senator Gates and the
25 Alabama line.

1 That is in District 2, and it is always a
2 pleasure to come to Bay County. I really enjoy
3 it. I guess I am from the what you call it,
4 the Sand Hills portion of Bay County is where I
5 represent. So thank you very much. It is a
6 pleasure to be here today.

7 CHAIRMAN GATES: Well, there are more than
8 one way to follow the redistricting process.
9 We have obviously a number of people who are
10 here today. We want to hear from you in a
11 couple of moments, but we also want to let you
12 know that the Florida Channel is broadcasting
13 these hearings, and there are literally
14 thousands of people following us on the
15 Internet.

16 We have had very heavy Internet traffic
17 for which we are immensely grateful, and if you
18 are interested in following the other hearings
19 on the Internet or through the Florida Channel,
20 before you leave today you might want to ask
21 one of the Florida Channel people for the way
22 to do that or check with one of our
23 professional staff.

24 Our sole purpose today is to hear from the
25 public about how you believe the legal

1 standards governing redistricting should be
2 applied in this community so that you can be
3 represented sensibly, fairly, equitably in
4 Washington and in Tallahassee.

5 Our procedures for today's hearing are
6 simple, but important. It is important that
7 you sign in so that we can create a record, an
8 accurate public record of all attendees and
9 speakers, and also you may opt to join our
10 e-mail list or our Snail Mail list so we can
11 keep you informed about the redistricting
12 process and how it will be working, and your
13 opportunities for further input.

14 If you have not signed in, please raise
15 your hand. If you want to speak, if you have
16 not filled out one of these speaker cards and
17 you would like to speak, we want to hear from
18 you.

19 So if you have not done that and you still
20 would like to speak, please just raise your
21 hand and we will have a member of our staff
22 come around and get you to sign a speaker card
23 so that we can add you to the list.

24 Is there anybody else who would like to
25 speak? We will ask later in case there are

1 some people who come in late and that often
2 happens.

3 Before we begin I would like to recognize
4 the Speaker Designate of the Florida House,
5 Representative Will Weatherford, and ask the
6 Speaker D to explain how today's hearing fits
7 into the redistricting process. Mr. Speaker.

8 SPEAKER WEATHERFORD: Thank you very much,
9 Mr. Chairman, and it is an honor to be here in
10 Bay County. We are very pleased with the
11 tremendous turn out that we have today.

12 We are wrapping up our tour of God's
13 country starting in the panhandle and we start
14 here and are working our way south, but we are
15 very happy to be here today in Bay County.

16 And I think it is important that we take
17 just a moment to walk everyone through why we
18 are here today and some of the laws and
19 specific things that we have to do as a body to
20 make these decisions and why we are here
21 listening to you first.

22 Every ten years the Legislature is
23 required by our Constitution to redistrict the
24 state based on increases, decreases and
25 movements in population. Because Florida has

1 grown so significantly over the last ten years
2 we are actually picking up two new
3 Congressional seats in the State of Florida.

4 Because some of our parts of our state
5 have increased or decreased disproportionately
6 in population, many House and Senate seats,
7 along with Congressional seats, will either be
8 adding population or losing population.

9 When redistricting is completed,
10 Congressional Districts must be equal in size
11 and each contain 696,345 people. The 40 Senate
12 Districts must also be nearly equal at 470,033
13 people and our 120 House Districts must also be
14 nearly equal at 156,678 persons.

15 There is a map at the front of the room,
16 right here behind us here, showing this area of
17 the state. The current boundaries of the
18 Districts and the numbers of persons which must
19 be added or subtracted from the current
20 Districts to achieve equal representation.

21 Equality of representation isn't the only
22 legal requirement that redistricting plans must
23 meet. The laws and important court cases
24 governing redistricting are explained in detail
25 on the House and Senate websites.

1 Those websites are listed on the
2 Redistricting 2012 brochure that was available
3 to you when you came in, and if you would like
4 a copy of that brochure and you do not have
5 one, this is what it looks like and we will
6 make sure that they are passed out to you as
7 well.

8 Our redistricting 2012 brochure summarizes
9 Federal and State laws and outlines topics we
10 will hope to be discussed here today at the
11 hearing. If you didn't get -- those same
12 websites have available to all of the public
13 the demographic information from the U. S.
14 Bureau of Census that will be used in drawing
15 districts and redistricting software that
16 Legislators will be using to draw maps.

17 These websites will allow any member of
18 the public to see all district maps proposed by
19 the Legislature and also citizens, themselves,
20 to propose their own district maps for their
21 own communities, or for the whole state using
22 the very tools that the Legislators are using
23 themselves.

24 Before and during this hearing Senate and
25 House professional staff are available to show

1 anyone the simple steps into getting on-line
2 and to making your submissions in the weeks to
3 come.

4 Every recommendation from the public will
5 be made available to the public, and in fact,
6 some public submissions have already been made
7 on the web. The submission of proposed maps
8 that makes -- that makes sense for your
9 community is the single most effective tool
10 that you can use to have a voice on how the
11 districts are drawn in the future.

12 The redistricting schedule under which we
13 are operating is imposed by our State
14 Constitution. The Constitution does not allow,
15 it does not allow us to act on legislative maps
16 before the second year after the census.

17 In other words, that means the 2012
18 legislative session. Now, this body and the
19 Legislature has accelerated that process as
20 much as we possibly can by moving the session
21 up from what is normally in March, up until
22 starting in January in 2012.

23 It has also been suggested that the
24 Legislature should draw maps first and then ask
25 the public to comment. And ladies and

1 gentlemen, we believe that that puts the answer
2 ahead of the question.

3 There should be no preconceptions created
4 by politicians, but rather testimony should be
5 free and unrestricted for you. Our intent is
6 to use those recommendations made at the 26
7 hearings around the state and through our
8 Internet sites and the base -- as a basis for
9 developing one or more of our district maps.

10 We will discuss those options in open
11 public meetings before any votes are taken on
12 the maps even in committee.

13 Throughout the process we will solicit
14 additional public comment so that proposed maps
15 can mature with the public's involvement. All
16 the public will have final approval and will
17 have final transparency before we vote on any
18 maps.

19 Whatever the Legislature votes on is then
20 submitted for judicial review to the courts to
21 insure that final plans meet every single legal
22 requirement.

23 Because our mission today is to hear from
24 you, 100 percent of the time between now and
25 1:00 p.m., will be used to insure that every

1 member here has the opportunity to speak and to
2 present public testimony and to be listened to
3 respectfully without interruption or argument.

4 If after every citizen has had his or her
5 say and there is time remaining before our
6 schedule is here for adjournment, any member of
7 the committee may make any statement or offer
8 observation.

9 Of course, any member of the Legislature
10 may also today or at any time propose a map or
11 a plan and we will make it available to you and
12 the public.

13 Mr. Chairman, thank you for indulging me.
14 I hope that this description of our schedule
15 and our process helps set the stage for a very
16 successful hearing.

17 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you very much,
18 Mr. Speaker, and let's get at it in terms of
19 public testimony. By Senate and House rules as
20 Representative Weatherford indicated, we will
21 adjourn promptly at 1:00 o'clock.

22 There are already over 20 individuals
23 signed up to speak. We hope more will sign up
24 to speak as we go. The last person who is
25 signed up to speak so far is Jamie Shepard, and

1 I am an advocate for Jamie Shepard.

2 I want to make sure she has just as much
3 time as Barbara Day, who is the first speaker.
4 And so what that means is that we ask you to
5 impose on yourself a polite and civil
6 respectful time limit of say, three or four or
7 five minutes. Try to get it said in that
8 period of time.

9 If someone else has said what you were
10 going to say, maybe you can think of something
11 else that might add value to the discussions
12 here today.

13 If we get closer to our adjournment time
14 and more people have come in and have signed
15 up, then Speaker Weatherford and I will
16 probably ask you to observe a tighter time
17 frame just so that everybody gets an
18 opportunity to speak.

19 Our first speaker, as I indicated, is
20 Barbara Day, and I am going to call two
21 speakers at once so that you will know who is
22 on deck and you can be ready.

23 John McDonald from the Bay County
24 Democratic Executive Committee is second, and
25 Ms. Day, representing the AARP, is first.

1 Ms. Day, thank you for being here today, and
2 you are recognized.

3 MS. DAY: Thank you. Good morning,
4 Chairman Gates and Chairman Weatherford and to
5 the Committee members.

6 My name is Barbara Day and I do reside in
7 Panama City. I appear today as an AARP
8 volunteer.

9 I urge the Legislature to make the
10 redistricting process to be all it can be. As
11 you exercise your constitutional duty to draw
12 voting districts for ten years, beginning with
13 the 2012 election, AARP urges you to insure
14 transparency of the legislative redistricting
15 process, every step of the way.

16 Keep transparency in place with
17 redistricting discussions among members and by
18 members should be noticed and open to the
19 public.

20 Also keep transparency in place, meaning
21 the public has the opportunity to comment and
22 to have those comments meaningfully considered
23 by the Legislature during all legislative
24 redistricting proceedings and redistricting
25 proposals, that is before Legislators make

1 decisions.

2 Insure timeliness of the redistricting
3 process and insure public input. The
4 Legislature has an obligation to meet the
5 Constitutional dictates as already expressed by
6 the Florida voters.

7 The Legislature owes Florida's residents
8 and voters professionalism and timely
9 completion of the redistricting process. The
10 Legislature should know the procedural steps
11 that redistricting plans will need to complete
12 in order for there to be a timely qualification
13 of the 2012 candidates, under the new district
14 and for vigorous campaigns before voters cast
15 their ballots.

16 That means the Legislature should complete
17 its portion of the process sooner than later.
18 Remember to take steps to insulate the
19 redistricting process from the appearance of
20 conflict of interest.

21 For example, subcommittees of Legislators
22 could research and develop alternative
23 redistricting proposals for the areas of the
24 state remote from subcommittee members.

25 Geographic residences, perhaps, example,

1 four areas of the state then refine and
2 reconciled for two halves of the state, then
3 refine and reconcile by the full chambers into
4 one state plan.

5 When it is time for your performance the
6 Florida voters will not favor undue expense and
7 delay in that performance. It is up to the
8 Legislator. What will it be, redistricting,
9 presentment or voter resentment?

10 I am confident that the Legislators, the
11 Legislature and its staff have the professional
12 competence and technical assistance to research
13 and propose new voting districts in accord with
14 all of the Constitutional and Federal
15 requirements. Wishing you good luck and you
16 make your best effort.

17 Thank you for your attention.

18 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you, Ms. Day. It
19 was great to see you again. And next we will
20 have John McDonald from the Democratic
21 Executive Committee, and behind John, Ray
22 Gagis, please. Please be on deck. Thank you
23 for being here and we look forward to your
24 testimony, you are recognized.

25 MR. MCDONALD: Thank you, Senator. I

1 appreciate this opportunity and I would just
2 like to introduce myself.

3 My name is John McDonald, I am a Panama
4 City native, and, you know, I don't have a
5 prepared speech or anything. I am pretty much
6 an average Joe and that is what I look out for.

7 I ran against Mr. Patronis in the last
8 general election, Jimmy is a good guy. I am
9 not here to talk politics. I just want people
10 to understand what is going on.

11 We have got -- we are spending a lot of
12 money on this right now. I mean, upwards of
13 \$30 million is being spent on this process. At
14 the same time, we got state workers, teachers
15 being laid off. We have got an attack on
16 social services, our law enforcement, you know,
17 I think this is unacceptable, because I live
18 here and I know what the economy is like, and,
19 you know, our state economy, our state workers
20 are a big part of this economy.

21 CHAIRMAN GATES: And John, I apologize.
22 We would love to hear your views on economic
23 issues and you can come at a delegation meeting
24 or contact any of us, but if you could possibly
25 work your comments back into the purpose of the

1 hearing, the redistricting just to be fair to
2 the others who are waiting to speak.

3 MR. MCDONALD: Well, I did get this in the
4 mail the other day and it is from Nature Coast
5 Conservatives, and it says that as Tallahassee
6 politicians decide our future it is time we are
7 heard, Bay County needs a voice. Bay County
8 deserves our own State Senator and
9 Representative, and with all due respect,
10 Senator, your family has representation in both
11 the House and the Senate, but Bay County does
12 not.

13 So what I am wondering here is what is
14 going to happen, you know, what is this process
15 going to lead to? I am just concerned once
16 again about, I grew up here, I want this area
17 to succeed, and I just don't want, you know, so
18 much money being spent on a process of drawing
19 maps when we have teachers being laid off. We
20 have law enforcement being threatened, and, you
21 know, I am just -- I am sorry. I hope you
22 listen and I hope you heed the word of the
23 common man. Thank you, sir.

24 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you so much for
25 being here. We appreciate your testimony, and

1 Ray Gagis is next and following Ray we have --
2 we have Larry who gave us his first name, but
3 not his last name. So we are going to ask to
4 know more about Larry when he speaks, but Ray
5 Gagis, you are up.

6 Would you please come down here, sir,
7 because we want to put you on statewide
8 television. No pressure, no pressure.

9 MR. GAGIS: No pressure, but don't say
10 nothing about me, because --

11 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you for being here
12 and you are recognized, sir.

13 MR. GAGIS: Well, I am like the last man.
14 I am not for people being laid off, because if
15 you look, the money today is troubling. It is
16 poured out in sacks from the government in
17 Washington, and I would say today, everybody,
18 everybody should cut back. If we don't, we are
19 going to go like Greek.

20 Now, we got a Greek man back there. I
21 never can get to him, but I am a Greek. I
22 didn't mean to say this much.

23 CHAIRMAN GATES: When you are a hole now,
24 quit digging.

25 MR. GAGIS: But if we don't and you are

1 redistricting, back to that, are we going to
2 get more Representatives? Why? Why not use
3 the same amount of Representatives or cut back
4 on them or cut back on their pay?

5 I am not against anybody getting fired
6 from anything, if they can't do their job, they
7 can go. They should go. I spent 20 years in
8 the Navy. I learned all I could about my job.
9 I done as much as I could for my job.

10 I have run a business for 26 years after I
11 got out. I have never found the time that I
12 could not get a job, never, and today, the
13 people that is fed that won't work should not
14 be fed. It is a fact. Should not be fed.
15 Welfare is eating you to death.

16 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you very much,
17 Mr. Gaggis and thank you for your service to our
18 country.

19 Larry, can we learn more about you?
20 Larry, we hardly knew you. We will come back
21 to you in case you would like to come out of
22 the shadows.

23 Jean Miller is our next presenter, and
24 following Ms. Miller is Carolyn Herrera, if you
25 would be on deck, please, Ms. Herrera.

1 Ms. Miller, thank you for being here
2 today. We appreciate your taking time and you
3 are recognized.

4 MS. MILLER: Thank you, sir. I appreciate
5 you having this hearing. The only thing I have
6 to say is I am a common citizen. Please, when
7 you redistrict, try to make the districts as
8 equal as can be with different groups of
9 people.

10 Do not make beaches one and farmers one,
11 because then you have unequal money that can
12 buy influence. Please remember this is for all
13 the state of Florida, not just one district or
14 one group of people. Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN GATES: Ms. Miller, thank you
16 very much for your testimony. Carolyn Herrera
17 is next, and following her Wayne Garnett,
18 please, Mr. Garnett, if you will be on deck.

19 Thank you, ma'am, for coming today. We
20 look forward to what you have to say and you
21 are recognized.

22 MS. HERRERA: Well, thank you very much
23 for having me here. I -- forgive the northern
24 accent, I will never lose it, okay. But I do
25 want to say that while you are cutting back on

1 everything, it needs to be cut back in
2 Tallahassee, too, as far as the government
3 goes.

4 But setting up the voting things I would
5 like to see it done by county. Keeping one
6 county together. I live in northern Bay
7 County, and I have no Representative, you know,
8 it is spread out over the whole area, and it is
9 very, very frustrating.

10 I would just like to see if they could set
11 like a block coming down from the Alabama
12 border to the Gulf of Mexico and fit in the
13 number of people that you need in that area and
14 then move over to the next block and do that so
15 we can keep as many counties together as we
16 possibly can, where the whole county has one
17 group. And that is all I would like to say.

18 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you, that is very
19 helpful. We appreciate it. And Mr. Garnett,
20 if you would come forward and behind
21 Mr. Garnett, Brenda Rees.

22 Mr. Garnett, we appreciate you taking time
23 from your day and you are recognized.

24 MR. GARNETT: Thank you, sir, I appreciate
25 being here. I thought I was signed up for a

1 drawing for a boat or fruit. I didn't know I
2 was really going to be on the program.

3 CHAIRMAN GATES: You are, you will see
4 Representative Patronis and his fellow Greek
5 afterwards.

6 MR. GARNETT: All right.

7 CHAIRMAN GATES: They have a bunch of
8 devalued drachmas for you.

9 MR. GARNETT: If I would have known you
10 was going to put me on television I would have
11 waited to come tomorrow, because I get better
12 looking every day.

13 CHAIRMAN GATES: And I thought we would
14 handle the jokes. Would you like to travel
15 with us?

16 MR. GARNETT: Well, in fact, I was just
17 looking at your itinerary. You are starting
18 off eating shrimp in Pensacola and you are
19 going to wind up eating conch in the Keys.
20 Now, that ain't a bad way to spend the summer.

21 CHAIRMAN GATES: Come on along.

22 MR. GARNETT: If you have time though, you
23 ought to stop by Tampa, go by Ebor City and get
24 you some Pompano and populi and some black bean
25 soup, black beans, white rice and onions.

1 I really, I came over here today because
2 when there is this many politicians all at one
3 place, you need to watch them. And I apologize
4 for the crowd because there is more of ya'll
5 than there are of us.

6 But I think what you are doing is a very
7 serious thing and I just want to say, just try
8 to do something that makes sense. That is all
9 I ask of you. Thank you very much.

10 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you, sir. We
11 really appreciate you being here. Next is
12 Brenda Rees, it is nice to see you again,
13 Ms. Rees, and following Brenda will be Roger, I
14 believe it is Straley or Stanley, if you will
15 be on deck, please.

16 Brenda, nice to see you, you are
17 recognized.

18 MS. REES: Senator Gates, Representative
19 Weatherford and Senate and House Committee
20 members, thank you for coming over to this part
21 of northwest Florida.

22 I live in Walton county, which is in the
23 middle, so part of my district is over there
24 and part is impacted over here, so I thought it
25 was important to come to both.

1 I will try to say something a little bit
2 different today and not the same testimony that
3 I gave last night.

4 But I am a Florida native. My family has
5 been here about seven generations, so there has
6 been a lot of map changes in the time that my
7 family has been in Florida, but thank you for
8 holding these statewide public redistricting
9 meetings. I believe you are getting
10 substantial evidence that you will be able to
11 use in your redistricting process.

12 I have lived in several states and have
13 witnessed several redistricting processes. In
14 Alaska I was on the State Redistricting Board
15 appointed by the Governor.

16 The five member Board redistricted, not
17 the Legislature. We had rules to follow just
18 as you. My brother is an NFL Referee. He was
19 the head referee for the Super Bowl this year.
20 He had rules to follow, and just like him, at
21 the end of the game I hope it is a good game
22 called, well done by the players in taking care
23 of the people at hand.

24 The ball is in the citizen's hand right
25 now and this is our chance to speak to you, so

1 thank you very much for giving us this
2 opportunity to come to you and give you our
3 opinions in developing the important
4 redistricting plans for the state of Florida.

5 I know how important redistricting
6 hearings are in Alaska. One day it was
7 50 degrees below zero and with had to go to
8 Fairbanks and the heat went out in the hotel
9 and people showed up. So I hope your weather
10 fares well for you in all of your meetings.

11 Follow the rules by adhering to one
12 person, one vote. The Voting Rights Act of
13 1964 as amended in 1965, that districts are
14 compact, contiguous and reflect communities of
15 interest as much as is practical as you heard
16 last night.

17 Follow the rule of 10 percent deviation
18 for the state Senate and House Districts. We
19 have 67 counties now in Florida. Well, we have
20 40 Senators, 120 Representatives and we will be
21 having 27 Congressional leaders. There is
22 going to have to be -- 29, have to be some
23 mixing of counties.

24 There is no way to divide 18 million
25 Floridians up with those numbers without some

1 cross counties. One vote difference for
2 Congressional will be challenging.
3 Redistricting by census block, what some people
4 don't understand is, you have to do it by
5 census block. The census wasn't by counties,
6 it wasn't by cities. It wasn't by other
7 municipalities. It was by census block.

8 So sometimes you may get that odd squiggly
9 little line that makes no sense, but you might
10 have to use it. I hope you can keep them as
11 compact as possible and contiguous, but the
12 public needs to understand, it is by census
13 block.

14 Thank you for providing maps, numbers and
15 extensive information. We know that our
16 Congressional District 1 is 2,000 short and
17 Congressional District 2 is 41,000 over the
18 ideal 696,000 ideal district. CD 1 is 2,000
19 short and CD 2 is about 41,000 over. So there
20 will have to be some adjustments made there.

21 Please try to keep South Walton. That is
22 where I live. I was born in Defuniak Springs
23 on the north end, but I live in South Walton on
24 the south end and it is a historical community
25 of interest.

1 It is -- I brought this picture here. It
2 is a beautiful little community, even Thomas
3 Hannah of Pointe Washington was a one time
4 Speaker of the House from Pointe Washington, a
5 little known fact. So we do, even though we
6 are small and we get juggled around a little
7 bit, we have had political importance.

8 Also, in redistricting South Walton it is
9 very important to keep us together as we are
10 down here, and what separates us from the
11 northern end is a large bay and also Eglin Air
12 Force Base which is one of the largest the Air
13 Force Bases in America and it is also a bombing
14 range. So sometimes roads are closed, so that
15 is just something to keep, keep in mind.

16 Congressional District 1, you heard last
17 night, should consolidate Okaloosa County as
18 much as possible, and Congressional District 2,
19 I have already discussed that.

20 You will eventually have to make the final
21 call on the redistricting plan going forth,
22 make the right call and follow the rules.
23 Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you very much,
25 Ms. Rees. We appreciate your testimony.

1 Mr. Roger, I believe it is Straley. I think,
2 could I possibly have that wrong. You are
3 going to help me out.

4 MR. STRALEY: It is Roger Straley.

5 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you, sir, welcome,
6 and you are recognized.

7 MR. STRALEY: I am from Bay County, a long
8 time resident of Florida. The only thing that
9 I would ask is it has been touched on here
10 before by previous people. Is that you would
11 make your districts based on common sense on
12 county lines, on geographic features that would
13 make sense and not consider the party
14 representation necessarily within the
15 districts.

16 I think that has been a great cause for
17 the spread out districts. No common sense at
18 all is purely political considerations, but I
19 would ask you to try to make them using common
20 sense and not political considerations. Thank
21 you very much.

22 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you, Mr. Straley,
23 we appreciate your comments.

24 Next is Dr. Rufus Wood, I believe, and
25 following Dr. Wood is Jim Anders.

1 Dr. Wood? As we are waiting for Dr. Wood
2 to approach the podium, President Margolis, our
3 former Senate President has admonished me to
4 point out that the maps that are behind us
5 which were in the front previously and will be
6 -- a number of people were looking at them and
7 they will be available later, are maps that
8 show the current districts, Congressional
9 Senate and House Districts, and those maps can
10 be used by you as a point of departure, a take
11 off point for where you specifically think
12 changes ought to be made.

13 Thank you very much, Doctor, for being
14 here, and you are recognized to speak, sir.

15 DR. WOOD: Thank you, Chairman and to all
16 of our Representatives and our Senators. We
17 are so delighted to have you in our community
18 and to all of the citizens who have come today
19 to share with, I appreciate this opportunity.

20 I am Reverend Dr. Rufus L. Wood, Jr. I
21 represent the Bay County Branch National
22 Association for the Advancement of Colored
23 People.

24 It was Dr. James Cone who once said that
25 we can never understand the political process

1 until we become active and be a part of that
2 process.

3 We are here today to that political power
4 is essential for all people in the state of
5 Florida and throughout this great nation. As
6 you all know, the 1965 Voters Right Act was a
7 landmark national piece of legislation which
8 was passed that outlawed discriminative
9 practices in the voting procedures, which had
10 been responsible for many years for the
11 wide-spread disenfranchisement of
12 African-Americans.

13 So we have come today to say again that we
14 believe that political power is essential for
15 African-Americans and, in fact, it is essential
16 for all of the citizens of the state of
17 Florida.

18 We appreciate this opportunity today to
19 appeal to our State Legislators, we want to
20 appeal to you first of all as you travel
21 throughout the great state of Florida to
22 conduct meaningful hearings. We want
23 meaningful dialogue.

24 Unfortunately, in Bay County and some of
25 our political forums that we have had here and

1 public hearings, we have had political leader
2 who have said, my mind is already made up. So
3 we are here today to request that your minds
4 are open to the input that is being given in
5 these hearings.

6 I believe that time is a gift from God.
7 Somebody once said yesterday is a cancelled
8 check, tomorrow is a promissory note, today is
9 cash, and that is all you have, so spend it
10 wisely.

11 So we hope and pray that as you travel
12 throughout the state that you will certainly
13 not waist the time of the citizens of the
14 various communities throughout this state.

15 Time is so important and is so valuable
16 and we hope that you are open to hear what is
17 being shared.

18 Secondly, we appeal to you, don't play,
19 with all due respect, don't play political
20 games with the citizens of this state. Certain
21 parties drawing lines to advantage themselves
22 and to benefit themselves, so that they are
23 more likely to have officials elected, so that
24 they are more likely to control the committee,
25 so they are more likely to control the

1 procedures.

2 So they are more likely to past the laws
3 which support their particular point of views.
4 So once again, with all due respect we do hope
5 and pray that you will not play games with the
6 citizens of the state of Florida.

7 Thirdly, we appeal to you to provide
8 equity in terms of representation for all of
9 the citizens of the state of Florida.

10 In Bay County, in the past ten years there
11 has been an increase in the African-American
12 population, 10 percent. There has been
13 114 percent increase in terms of the Latino and
14 Hispanic, and we certainly hope that as you
15 make plans to redraw the lines, that that will
16 be taken into consideration, and that there
17 will not be minority delusion in this process
18 as you redraw the lines in this state.

19 Finally, we appeal to you at the end of
20 the process that you again will remember all of
21 the citizens and we would love to have the
22 vital information which has already been stated
23 that after the maps have been drawn up, that
24 there still will be an opportunity for input.

25 We would like to know in terms of the

1 demographics, in terms of race, in terms of
2 national origin, in terms of the age, and in
3 terms of all of those people who will be
4 allowed and permitted to vote.

5 Thank you so very much, and as I go to my
6 seat, I always remember the words of the late
7 Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who once
8 said, injustice anywhere is a threat to justice
9 everywhere. So we only appeal to you to please
10 be fair in this process.

11 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you very much,
12 Dr. Wood. Our next speaker is Jim Anders.
13 Mr. Anders, and following Mr. Anders is Wanda
14 Raley, who is the Supervisor of Elections here
15 in Bay County. Jim, it is good to see you.

16 MR. ANDERS: Good to see you.

17 CHAIRMAN GATES: And you are recognized.

18 MR. ANDERS: All right, thank you. Again,
19 I am Jim Anders and I am from South Walton
20 County over to the county to the west, Seagrove
21 Beach, but I was raised in Blountstown. As a
22 matter of fact, Bill Monford over there, he was
23 Student Body President and I was a
24 Representative of his in that class back in the
25 60's, so -- but having grown up in the rural

1 areas in the Florida here, north Florida and
2 living along the coast, I see a need to keep
3 the issues separate.

4 That we have coastal issues that are
5 needed to be done by Representatives who are
6 familiar with the coast, and then we have the
7 rural areas that need to be represented by
8 people that have an interest and need in the
9 rural areas.

10 So I think that was what I really wanted
11 to say, having lived in this area all my life
12 and all, and so I would like to make that
13 statement.

14 But also I just like the process, the way
15 you all allow people to open up and come and
16 speak and all. I can remember 30 years ago
17 when we had and I was a support of his, Senator
18 Barron, he, back then, you know, I think he was
19 President of the Senate, and I think there were
20 three Senators in north Florida.

21 You had W. D. Childers in Pensacola, you
22 had Pat Thomas in Quincy, and you had Senator
23 Barron here in Panama City, and back then I
24 think you could push a button, and I think
25 Dempsey got 70 percent of the vote where he got

1 70 percent of the vote and it was his district,
2 you know.

3 So, I mean, it has changed a lot. I think
4 that was done I think all over, but back then
5 we didn't have the process like we have now,
6 and what I am saying is, thank you all for
7 allowing the people to come and have public
8 input and all. I think that is much needed.

9 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you very much, Jim.
10 Appreciate it. And now our Supervisor of
11 Elections. Thank you very much for taking time
12 from your day and we look forward to hearing
13 your testimony.

14 I know that our professional staff has had
15 an opportunity to meet with many of the
16 Supervisors of Elections and we look forward to
17 your guidance. You are recognized.

18 MS. RALEY: Thank you. First of all, I
19 would like to say that I am not the Supervisor
20 of Elections. I am representing him today.
21 Our Supervisor is Mark Anderson.

22 CHAIRMAN GATES: That is what I thought,
23 but I thought perhaps Mr. Anderson went fishing
24 and you -- there was a codetta or something.

25 MS. RALEY: While he was away.

1 CHAIRMAN GATES: Well, since there was no
2 codetta, please give, please give him our best
3 wishes.

4 MS. RALEY: I will.

5 CHAIRMAN GATES: And I am glad that -- I
6 am glad there was not a power struggle or
7 anything like that in the office, but you are
8 here representing him.

9 MS. RALEY: Yes.

10 CHAIRMAN GATES: And nonetheless, we are
11 delighted to have your testimony.

12 MS. RALEY: Thank you very much. He is
13 not able to be here so I would like to read a
14 prepared statement for him.

15 CHAIRMAN GATES: Please.

16 MS. RALEY: First I send my regrets for
17 being unable to attend this meeting. I am
18 currently at the State Association Conference
19 where Supervisors around the state are also
20 addressing redistricting issues.

21 For conducting elections, it is beneficial
22 to use large arterial boundaries, such as main
23 roads or county lines as much as possible to
24 ease and tabulation of voter population for
25 precinct districts.

1 With the current timeline and possible
2 legal challenges, as well as public concerns,
3 it is imperative to move as quickly as possible
4 to complete this task. This will allow
5 adequate time for my office to prepare for the
6 2012 primary election. Respectfully, Mark
7 Anderson, Bay County Supervisor of Elections.

8 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you very much, and
9 please give Mr. Anderson our best, and thanks
10 for your testimony today.

11 MS. RALEY: I will, thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN GATES: Next we have, I believe
13 we have someone who's handwriting is almost as
14 bad as mine. I think it is Richard, is it
15 Plant, or -- what is it, sir?

16 MR. PLANTEC: Plantec.

17 CHAIRMAN GATES: Plantec, okay. Well,
18 thank you very much for being here, and Danny
19 Smith is recognized following Mr. Plantec.
20 Thank you for taking time from your day. You
21 are recognized before the Committee.

22 MR. SMITH: Yes, I am retired. I could be
23 out at the beaches right now, but I came here
24 instead.

25 First of all I want to thank all of you.

1 I think this is a wonderful thing that you are
2 doing and I think it will really help your
3 process.

4 I know that the Constitution tells you to
5 consider geographical and political boundaries,
6 but I would also like you to think about
7 community boundaries, which may be different
8 from what some of the other people have said,
9 because I know for example, out on Panama City
10 Beach, parts of it are represented.

11 We have two wonderful State Reps and they
12 are both great, but parts of the beach are
13 represented by different ones. They are
14 basically, it is one community, you should have
15 one, one representative there.

16 By the same token, even the beach, Panama
17 City Beach and Panama City, Lynn Haven, are
18 part of the same community. People belong to
19 the same clubs, give to the same charities, go
20 to the same fundraisers and things. So there
21 is a lot in common beyond what the -- beyond
22 what the legal boundaries may be and the
23 geographical boundaries, and I would like you
24 to keep that in mind.

25 And also when you are grouping, you are

1 grouping communities together, group similar
2 communities together as much as possible,
3 because I have been around, I have seen a lot
4 of the Congressional District which is very
5 large so you have to diversify to a certain
6 extent, but I know like communities such as,
7 you know, the Panama City Beaches and the
8 Panama City downtown, it is still they have a
9 lot of the roots and the background with the
10 rural communities around here.

11 I see a lot less of a connection with
12 Tallahassee. You should keep in mind how the
13 communities blend, try to put people together.
14 I -- I guarantee you if you do this it will
15 make your jobs a lot easier, because you will
16 have those common interests together, and once
17 again I would like to thank you for this
18 opportunity.

19 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you very much for
20 your testimony. Very well said. Next is Danny
21 Smith and then after Mr. Smith is Tim Pugh.
22 Mr. Smith, thank you for coming, and you are
23 recognized.

24 MR. SMITH: Good morning, Senator Gates
25 and thanks for all of you for taking the time

1 to come here. I think you have put together a
2 wonderful process and I think most of us have
3 to remember that it is, you know, we really
4 want compact districts easy to understand where
5 you got to go to vote and all of that sort of
6 thing.

7 We don't want anymore of those snakes
8 along from one city to the other just to get
9 certain people in there, of course, and I know
10 you are not going to do that, because this
11 process that you have set up is really good and
12 it is open for everyone to speak.

13 Yes, it may be a little expensive to do,
14 but I think you are doing the right thing and
15 we appreciate the opportunity to come here and
16 just give you our little two cents worth, so
17 thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you very much, sir.
19 We really appreciate your time. Mr. Pugh?

20 MR. PUGH: Yes.

21 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you very much for
22 taking time from your day and you are
23 recognized to speak, sir.

24 MR. PUGH: Good morning, Senator Gates and
25 thanks for all of the communication, the

1 updated information that you give me all of the
2 time. I appreciate that.

3 Most everything I wanted to say was
4 already said today. The process should be
5 common sense, community based, and I hope that
6 through the whole process that gerrymandering
7 never comes up. We shouldn't have a bunch of
8 squiggly lines.

9 And the other thing I have to say is that
10 as an IT person, your online tools are
11 terrible. I mean, the interface is terrible,
12 and if there is anything we can do about that
13 to make it easier, because --

14 CHAIRMAN GATES: You are hired.

15 MR. PUGH: Huh? But, yes, it -- they are
16 just really clumsy at best.

17 CHAIRMAN GATES: Would you do us a favor?

18 MR. PUGH: Sure.

19 CHAIRMAN GATES: Since you are an IT
20 person and we have heard, you know, we had a
21 gentleman testify yesterday who said he spent
22 15 minutes with them and was able to navigate
23 easily and, in fact, had already drawn
24 Congressional and Senate Districts.

25 So would you -- where is John Guthrie? Do

1 you see that gentlemen right over there?

2 MR. PUGH: Yes.

3 CHAIRMAN GATES: Would you mind spending
4 10 or 15 minutes with him now or after the
5 hearing and share some of your concerns and
6 maybe he can offer you a couple of suggestions
7 as well, and I am sure you can have some
8 recommendations that will help us, because in
9 general we are getting very good responses, but
10 if there are difficulties and there are two
11 cites, a House cite and a Senate cite. So
12 anxious to have your help there, but please go
13 ahead, sir.

14 MR. PUGH: Okay, I will do, I will be with
15 you, but that is basically all I had to say,
16 just make sure it is a common sense approach
17 and that gerrymandering doesn't come up during
18 this entire process.

19 CHAIRMAN GATES: Okay, thank you, and if
20 you would spend some time with Mr. Guthrie,
21 that would benefit everybody.

22 MR. PUGH: Okay, thanks.

23 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you so much.

24 William Pritchard is next and then Candice
25 Harbison.

1 William Pritchard and then Ms. Harbison,
2 if you would be on deck, please.

3 MR. PRITCHARD: I thought I was going to
4 get the on deck sign ahead of time.

5 CHAIRMAN GATES: Well, it was my fault. I
6 was so wrapped up in trying to get some free
7 help here that I --

8 MR. PRITCHARD: Yes, I understand.

9 CHAIRMAN GATES: I am a conservative,
10 understand. Mr. Pritchard, you are recognized,
11 and thanks so much for coming today.

12 MR. PRITCHARD: Good morning, my name is
13 Bill Pritchard and I am representing myself, as
14 well as our Greater Bay Chapter of the ACLU of
15 Florida which I am President of.

16 Of course, you all know, everybody knows
17 that anybody that has been paying attention
18 anyway, that the majority of voters, in fact,
19 almost two-thirds voted for Amendments V and VI
20 to create compact, contiguous districts and to
21 put an end to gerrymandering no matter which
22 side you are on.

23 This is a non-partisan thing, it is
24 supposed to be anyway, and the thing that
25 bothers me about this process is that where are

1 the maps?

2 It is a good question, because all we have
3 is the old maps and ultimately you people are
4 going to draw the maps and vote on them, and I
5 think it would have been better had you
6 presented us with at least tentative maps that
7 we could comment on, because otherwise all we
8 can comment on here is the process.

9 And as some other people have said, they
10 have gotten right to work on this in other
11 states and why in Florida does it take so long
12 to develop maps of House, Senate and
13 Congressional Districts.

14 That information has been available for
15 months and if anybody can use the Internet to
16 draw a map, why can't you use the Internet to
17 draw a map so that we could see what your
18 intentions are?

19 But this is going to take too long, and I
20 understand that you can't vote on maps ahead of
21 time, but there is no reason why you can't
22 create some, because there is going to be a lot
23 of confusion and last minute problems because
24 people who want to run for office aren't going
25 to know what district they are in, and I won't

1 know who my Representative is going to be ahead
2 of time, and let me see here.

3 Another thing that I find as a problem
4 with this process is that after the maps are
5 proposed, are you going to conduct hearings
6 after that so that people can actually comment
7 on the maps that you are going to vote on?

8 I think people would want to know that.
9 The Florida process is one of the slowest and
10 most secretive in the country, and there is no
11 reason this needs to be like this unless the
12 goal is to keep people in the dark and confuse
13 them, and that leads us to more things about
14 Fair Districts Florida.

15 I am troubled that so many of you have
16 opposed, fought and continued to fight against
17 these amendments, and it is pretty much an
18 insult to the voters who overwhelmingly
19 approved these rules that you are trying to
20 ignore them or play games with them, and why
21 are you spending so much of my money and other
22 taxpayers' money to try to undermine my vote
23 and the vote of the majority of Floridians for
24 a fair process and fair districts.

25 I understand that there has been maybe as

1 much as \$30 million put away to try to work
2 against the Fair District Amendment. Still it
3 would be better to stop spending money on
4 lawyers and just to draw the maps.

5 If you are planning to spend that kind of
6 money to defend the kind of districts that you
7 are going to come up with in court, then people
8 are going to suspect that there is something
9 wrong with this process.

10 If you draw -- if you drew good fair maps
11 I think perhaps nobody would sue you, so that
12 is what I have to say.

13 CHAIRMAN GATES: Well, thank you,
14 Mr. Pritchard and you raised some very
15 interesting questions from your script that
16 others from the ACLU have raised and we are
17 going to ask the Speaker Designate to comment
18 on those because I think we want to make sure
19 that there are no questions of fact that remain
20 at the end of the hearing.

21 Thank you very much, Ms. Harbison, for
22 being here, and you are recognized to speak,
23 and behind you is James Gould.

24 MS. HARBISON: Thank you. I don't want to
25 sound like a broken record, but the reason we

1 are doing this now is because we have new
2 census data, and I don't understand why those
3 data weren't put together to draw up some
4 logical, sensible maps that we could all
5 comment on.

6 Perhaps this expensive process could be
7 drawn a little shorter and something more
8 meaningful to comment on could be proposed to
9 us.

10 Locally, a properly compact district would
11 not include a rat tail. It would not
12 concentrate special interests, but it would
13 represent the variety of interests in the
14 district.

15 It has been very confusing for the people
16 of Bay County to have been split up into
17 various districts. Unless there is a really
18 good reason for it, a county should be kept in
19 tact.

20 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you, and it is good
21 to see you again, Ms. Harbison. James Gould is
22 our next speaker and following Mr. Gould, Gary
23 Bechler, please.

24 Mr. Gould, thank you for taking time to
25 come, and we appreciate your presence today.

1 You are recognized.

2 MR. GOULD: Thank you all for coming and
3 opening up this to public comment. My name is
4 James Gould. I live in Southport, Florida.

5 My wife and I run a Tea Party and I would
6 just like to admonish you, the Constitution,
7 the Federalist papers say the end goal of the
8 Constitution is justice, that is justice for
9 all.

10 It also says that a Republic, which is a
11 form of government that we have, cannot stand
12 unless there is a self-reliant and virtuous
13 citizenry.

14 I admonish you as you go through this
15 process to put principle and high moral
16 standards above cheap partisan goals. Thank
17 you.

18 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you very much,
19 Mr. Gould. Good words for all of us. Gary
20 Bechler, please, and following Mr. Bechler,
21 Jamie Shepard would be on deck, and Jamie is
22 also with the League of Women Voters.

23 Mr. Bechler, thank you for coming, and you
24 are recognized.

25 MR. BECHLER: Thank you. I would also

1 like to ask where the maps are, why the other
2 states can get this stuff done and let their
3 constituents see what is being proposed or what
4 we are looking at. I feel like this is more or
5 less a farce.

6 We will not even get to comment on these
7 maps once you Legislators draw them up. So we
8 are being put out of the process, I feel like.
9 I feel like when you do redistrict you should
10 take into account how some of these counties
11 are split up.

12 As far as our Senate District here, if you
13 are not in the tourist industry you have no
14 representation. If the counties are kept more
15 whole you have the tourist industries in the
16 south of the counties, you have the farmers in
17 the north, you have, you know, other -- other
18 citizens involved. I don't even have access to
19 my State Senator, which is you, Mr. Gates.

20 By your own words, you know, I tried to
21 talk to you in Tallahassee when we had
22 sessions, after the sessions, when everybody
23 talks to their Representatives.

24 You flat out told me and my business
25 partner that you knew we were in the Union, you

1 knew we didn't vote for you, and you knew, and
2 you didn't have time for us.

3 CHAIRMAN GATES: Now, sir, sir --

4 MR. BECHLER: And I feel, I feel like no
5 matter what --

6 CHAIRMAN GATES: Excuse me. We are not
7 going to have an argument today, but --

8 MR. BECHLER: I am not having an argument.
9 I am making a statement.

10 CHAIRMAN GATES: Yes.

11 MR. BECHLER: I feel like rather I am an
12 Independent, a Democrat or a Republican. If I
13 vote, you know, if I am an Independent and I
14 vote Republican and a Democrat gets elected, I
15 should still have access to my Representative,
16 and I don't. That is all I have to say, thank
17 you.

18 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you for your time.
19 And Jamie Shepard is our next speaker, and
20 following Jamie Shepard we will hear from
21 Celia, I think it is either Fith or Fitz, and
22 Ms. Shepard is as well a representative of the
23 League of Women Voters. Nice to see you again.

24 MS. SHEPARD: Nice to see you.

25 CHAIRMAN GATES: Please, you are

1 recognized.

2 MS. SHEPARD: Thank you very much. On
3 behalf of the League of Women Voters of Bay
4 County and all of our citizens, we welcome the
5 committee.

6 We sincerely hope you will come back to
7 Patronis country. As you may very well know,
8 the League of Women Voters of Florida has been
9 front and center on this issue for 70 years.
10 We have been fighting for this for 70 years.

11 Fair election districts are a good
12 government, non-partisan issue, just like the
13 League. We have supported this measure,
14 regardless of which party was in control of the
15 State Legislature.

16 The League of Women Voters was, was not,
17 has not been and is not anti incumbent, because
18 we have a long history of opposing term limits
19 because we understand the importance of time in
20 office for clarity on the issues and
21 familiarity with the concerns of your
22 constituents.

23 We thank you for your website, Florida
24 Redistricting.org, which will allow us all to
25 monitor what the Legislature and our fellow

1 citizens are proposing, but we encourage the
2 Committee to go ahead and put something on
3 paper.

4 Everybody knows it is easier to edit than
5 create. We encourage the Committee to move the
6 timeline up as your own attorney suggested, to
7 preclude chaos and confusion in 2012.

8 This is kind of what we are paying you
9 for, and so as our Governor has succinctly
10 said, let's get to work on it. We encourage
11 you to drop your lawsuit. Sixty-three percent
12 of the voters has spoken, we passed Amendments
13 V and VI last fall. This is a waste of
14 taxpayer dollars to combat this.

15 What is the logic of this? Minority
16 districts are protected already, communities of
17 interest are a concern, but our compliance with
18 the national voting rights laws must take
19 precedence.

20 We thank you again for your time, your
21 time here across the state to listen to all of
22 us. Your consideration is truly appreciated
23 and we are hoping for the best. Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you so much for
25 being here, and it is good to see you again.

1 Now, Celia Fitz, nice to see you again. This
2 is like old home week, and Frederick, I think
3 its Croon or Crown may be next, please. You
4 are recognized, and thanks for being here.

5 MS. FITZ: I am a resident of Bay County.
6 I have been a citizen here for many years and I
7 just wanted to say a few things.

8 One, that Fair Districts was the will of
9 the vast majority of Floridians and I would
10 like very much for you to simply follow the
11 Fair District laws and to draw the maps first
12 before.

13 I know you have made up your mind and you
14 are going do this and I know I am not going to
15 change your mind, but I really wish you would
16 have drawn the maps first. I think it would
17 have made the process much more meaningful and
18 efficient.

19 And I am very concerned with the number of
20 cuts down to the bone for education and many
21 other agencies in Florida that we are spending
22 so much money. I assume taxpayers are paying
23 for all of you to travel all around the state
24 and do all of this, and that lady I am sure
25 gets paid quite well and other folks.

1 We don't have the money in Florida to be
2 just wasting it, and let's make the process
3 more meaningful and more efficient. Let's move
4 it forward. Let's move it along, and it will
5 be a real problem if we don't have these
6 districts drawn and in place in plenty of time
7 for people to decide who is going to qualify
8 for that district, what district, with won't
9 have any districts if you take until June to
10 make a decision.

11 The courts are going to have to review it.
12 So we really wish you would go ahead and draw
13 the maps and then let us speak on it. Okay.

14 Well, that was pretty much it, and also I
15 did want to bring up the legal challenges. I
16 have been very resentful of the State
17 Legislature using our tax dollars to go after
18 Fair Districts when it is the will of the
19 people. Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you, Celia, and I
21 should have, I apologize, I should have
22 mentioned that Celia as well represents the
23 League of Women Voters or is a member. I am
24 sorry, you are wearing your League button and I
25 apologize.

1 Frederick Croon, and following Mr. Croon,
2 Beth Oltman from the Panama City Beach Chamber.
3 You are recognized, sir, thank you for being
4 here.

5 MR. CROON: Thank you, good morning to
6 everyone. I am with the Union, I am Union,
7 too, so but irregardless, my number one thing
8 is I am a citizen of the United States and I am
9 definitely a citizen of Bay County.

10 This -- we appreciate ya'll coming. This
11 is very important. You can tell by the number
12 of people here that it is important, but really
13 I think it should be more people here.

14 Even the local news here evidently didn't
15 think it was important enough, because it is
16 not on the front page, it is not on the local,
17 but I request that this Committee put the
18 information out to the people of the state of
19 Florida that how important this is.

20 How this will subject to effect our way of
21 life in the state of Florida for the next 10
22 years or even longer, because right now by the
23 number of people here, local newspaper, et
24 cetera, the people don't think it is important
25 as it is, and you up here do know that it is

1 important on how we draw our district lines and
2 who our leaders are for the state of Florida.

3 And I live in Bay County. I live on the
4 southeast portion of the county, and we have
5 three Senators in Bay County, and most people
6 in Bay County do not have a clue who the three
7 Senators are, and the only reason I know who
8 they are, because I do visit Tallahassee pretty
9 frequently, and Gates, yes, you are my Senator
10 according to my residential location.

11 I think Patronis is for the Callaway area
12 and the Tyndall Air Force base is our
13 Representative, but earlier people spoke on the
14 part that it needs to be made equally fair
15 where the people of the counties or the cities
16 will actually know who their Representatives
17 are and who their State Senators are.

18 And I know Mr. Evers, who is a Senator and
19 he quoted earlier in his comment earlier, he
20 said but he have the Sand Hills of Bay County.

21 He lives in Milton, Florida. You live in
22 Pensacola, but irregardless where you live at,
23 we need to know who represents us, and
24 Mr. Monford, when I was in Tallahassee he is
25 the only one that I got a chance to talk to. I

1 didn't get a chance to talk to you. I didn't
2 get a chance to talk to Mr. Evers.

3 Now, last year, Mr. Evers, I did talk to
4 you when you was a Representative, but as a
5 Senator I did not, but the people needs to know
6 who their Representatives are, not just Union
7 members or the League Voters or people that
8 have groups or organizations, but all of the
9 citizens need to know who their leaders are.

10 So when you are doing these redistricting
11 and setting these boundary lines or the area
12 you cover, try to think about we need the
13 citizens to know who we are, who we can e-mail
14 to, who we can write a letter to if we are
15 having a problem, and, you know, some things
16 are gripes or some grievances or whatever you
17 want to say about the problem, but with need to
18 know who you all are.

19 So if ya'll would think about that while
20 you are traveling the state of Florida, that
21 the people need to know who their leaders are.
22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you very much,
24 Mr. Croon. And Mr. Croon raises an interesting
25 point, and just informationally, is Nick Abrams

1 here, Nick? Do you see the tall guy in the
2 back, Mr. Croon, Nick Abrams, right back here,
3 I apologize, sir.

4 If there is anybody here who would like an
5 appointment with either their Representative or
6 their Senator, and perhaps when they were in
7 Tallahassee they didn't get a chance because of
8 a committee meeting or a conflict, if you would
9 like an appointment to see Senator Evers or
10 Representative Coley or Representative Patronis
11 or myself, that tall fellow back there, just
12 keep him in mind, give him your name and
13 number, we will call and set up an appointment
14 for any of you.

15 Ms. Oltman, thank you very much for being
16 here, you are recognized.

17 MS. OLTMAN: Well, hello there. My name
18 is Beth Oltman, and I am the President of the
19 Panama City Beach Chamber of Commerce.

20 I actually live in Lynn Haven. I am a
21 very proud resident of Bay County, and I want
22 to thank all of you for coming to our beautiful
23 part of the state, and I, too, wish that I know
24 all of your intentions are very positive, but I
25 want you to show your true leadership skills

1 and try to expedite this process.

2 Make quick decisions for the entire state,
3 because I know you all can, take away the
4 self-interests and do what is best for our
5 state as a whole.

6 Now, speaking for Bay County, I do wish
7 that we would hold -- keep all of Bay County
8 together. As Bay County has changed throughout
9 the years we now have our airport, we are
10 growing economically. We have our beach, we
11 care so much about our education system.

12 We have many of us are moving into this
13 area from other parts of the country and are
14 very proud to call this home. So I, too, wish
15 to ask that all of Bay County stays together,
16 even though I love Marti and Jimmy and Don, all
17 of you, I sincerely hope that we can expedite
18 this entire situation and keep Bay County whole
19 so we keep our power and grow continually.

20 Thank you for coming once again.

21 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you very much, and
22 I should have said also that Senator Monford I
23 am sure takes the same view that if there are
24 any citizens here who may have attempted to
25 reach him when he was in Tallahassee, we get

1 called away a lot for votes on the floor or
2 committee votes and you couldn't reach him, see
3 the tall guy in the back, Nick Abrams, and he
4 will make sure that Senator Monford gets your
5 name and number so that you can get a meeting
6 with him if you would like.

7 Next is Alvin Peters, and following Alvin
8 Peters is Kristy Terry from the Calhoun Chamber
9 of Commerce.

10 Alvin Peters, if you are here, we would be
11 delighted to hear from you.

12 I am sorry I didn't give you as much of a
13 heads up as you might have liked, but you are
14 moving quickly to the floor here and we
15 appreciate that.

16 MR. PETERS: Thank you, Senator Gates, and
17 thank you all of you panel members for
18 attending Panama City's public forum. It is
19 great to see you.

20 It is impressive to see so many of you
21 putting so much time into listening. I think I
22 echo some of the other comments that you may
23 have heard, that this conversation might have
24 been a little more substantive if we had had
25 some proposals and then we could talk about how

1 this might specifically impact different
2 issues, but since we are on the general level I
3 guess we can't help but have the conversation
4 be fairly general.

5 And the good news I think for all of you
6 is that Florida has spoken in a bi-partisan
7 way, I think, to encourage you to draw
8 districts that are contiguous and that show
9 communities of interest. And that is a good
10 thing.

11 I think each of you will have to deal with
12 a little bit of the history of how Florida has
13 gotten to where it is, and one of the things
14 that I would urge you to do is to think of your
15 self as Judges.

16 How would a Judge decide this matter of
17 drawing districts. Think about it. Think
18 about how a Judge would do it, not a
19 politician, you know, and what factors would
20 you consider.

21 Obviously they are different, so if you
22 think of, for example, how would it effect me,
23 that might not be a real judicial approach to
24 deciding, you know, the proper drawing of a
25 line.

1 If you allow factors to effect your
2 consideration, such as how would it effect my
3 party, right, that wouldn't be something that a
4 Judge might realistically consider or properly
5 consider in drawing these districts.

6 So I would ask each of you to put on a
7 Judge's hat as you make these decisions of
8 drawing, you know, these lines. Think about it
9 as a Judge and think about it in a non-partisan
10 uninvolved fashion where you are basically
11 creating fair districts, and to do so in good
12 spirit, not contesting the constitutional
13 changes that mandate you to do so, so that is
14 the first thing.

15 The second thing I think that you need to
16 think about a little bit is how we got here.
17 Florida has drawn these districts. A lots of
18 districts have been drawn largely based on
19 party and race, and I haven't really heard
20 enough of that in this conversation so far
21 today and I would encourage each of you to
22 openly acknowledge the history of how these
23 districts have been drawn.

24 I think Senator Monford comes in to Panama
25 City to get a couple of precincts, and you

1 basically your district goes, was Al Lawson's
2 district and it goes down the train tracks of
3 231.

4 Many of you will leave town and you will
5 drive up 231 on your way out and you will be
6 passing Senator Monford's district. Now, no
7 one lives there, but it goes down the train
8 tracks to get to a couple of precincts that are
9 predominantly African-American in Panama City.

10 And so what you are going to be doing is
11 deciding how to reshape that, and it will make
12 some sense probably for Senator Monford's
13 odometer if he doesn't have to do that, but how
14 will that effect each and every, you know,
15 district and how will that then, you decide,
16 how does it effect me.

17 How does that effect the amount of
18 minority representation in the Florida
19 Legislature. To what extent is that an
20 important factor in deciding how to draw these
21 districts. To what extent should we just go
22 across the state of Florida and draw straight
23 lines every time we get, you know, the right
24 number.

25 To what extent should we create districts

1 that are actually communities of interest that
2 relate to like the beach. Mr. Anders was
3 talking for example, sensibly, you could draw
4 bubbles across Panama City and Panama City
5 Beach and say that is a community of interest.
6 Those people are interested along the coast,
7 they share a community of values, draw that
8 district. Let the rural areas and cut the
9 county in half if necessary on the northern
10 side or respect the county line to the extent
11 you can, which I think everybody says makes
12 some sense.

13 So I would encourage you to have an open
14 conversation about the history and how much
15 party and race have affected the drawing of the
16 current lines. How much the citizens of
17 Florida have spoken to you to do less of that,
18 to weight that less importantly. To create
19 communities of interest and give it a try.

20 Let's see how grown up, how responsible,
21 how open minded, how less subject to party and
22 race the current voters are and we will see
23 where it goes, and that is what I would urge
24 you to do.

25 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you so much for

1 your testimony. Good testimony. Next is
2 Kristy Terry, and next after Ms. Terry would
3 be, I think it is Betty, and she has lovely
4 handwriting, Betty Briard, is it Briard?
5 Ms. Briard will be after Kristy Terry.

6 Ms. Terry, thank you for being here. You
7 are recognized.

8 MR. TERRY: Thank you. I want to tell all
9 of you how much we appreciate you coming and
10 listening.

11 CHAIRMAN GATES: Would you pull your mike
12 up because that way all of Florida can hear
13 you.

14 MR. TERRY: Wonderful. Thank you all for
15 coming. We certainly appreciate your
16 willingness to sit through these and listen and
17 take into account everybody's opinions and how
18 they feel about this issue.

19 I am just here to ask you to as you move
20 through this process, to consider the rural
21 counties. We -- it works well for us that we
22 are all in districts where we can partner
23 together and have a stronger voice when we are
24 partnered together.

25 We are limited in our resources. It is to

1 our benefit that we are able to join together
2 and work as a stronger, a stronger voice, and
3 so I just ask that as you move forward you keep
4 that in the back of your mind, that we have a
5 voice, too, and we have to kind of group
6 together, but that works for us. So please
7 just consider that as you move forward.

8 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you very, very much
9 for being here and for your testimony. And
10 now, Ms. Briard, if you are still here, ma'am?
11 Did I pronounce your name correctly?

12 MS. BRIARD: Briard.

13 CHAIRMAN GATES: Briard, yes, okay.

14 Well, thank you for being here in any
15 case, appreciate it.

16 Next is Art Kimbrough with the Jackson
17 County Chamber of Commerce. Art, it is good to
18 see you. Thanks for coming all this way and we
19 appreciate your testimony. You are recognized.

20 MR. KIMBROUGH: It is always good to see
21 you, Senator, especially when we are not having
22 to battle over money.

23 CHAIRMAN GATES: That is right.

24 MR. KIMBROUGH: In a discussion we have
25 been through those wars before. My name is Art

1 Kimbrough, I am the President and CEO of the
2 Jackson County Chamber of Commerce up in
3 Marianna.

4 I was born and raised here in Panama City,
5 Lisnby Hospital just down the road longer ago
6 than I would like to remember, Jimmy, but I am
7 a seventh generation native of the panhandle
8 with roots in Jackson, Bay, Calhoun and Gulf
9 Counties.

10 So my family, my heritage, my history is
11 all about what we are trying to do today to
12 have good government and representing the
13 texture and culture of our communities.

14 I have got three messages that I have
15 crafted that are aimed at protecting and/or
16 strengthening the voice of Jackson County and
17 rural Florida in the Legislature.

18 These three positions or principles are
19 deliberately broad, but also very specific
20 and measurable in their goals, and I have extra
21 copies of this for you, Senator, for you to
22 take with you.

23 My basis for these messages includes years
24 of dialogue with Chamber members who have
25 watched the influence of rural Florida dwindle,

1 as well as discussions with our legislative
2 delegations and many other civic and business
3 leaders throughout Jackson County and beyond.

4 First, I believe rural areas do constitute
5 a community of interest that would benefit if
6 their influence is concentrated rather than
7 disbursed.

8 The beach economy, the bigger city markets
9 and rural markets each have unique needs and
10 concerns best served by the Legislators focused
11 on those needs and concerns.

12 Districts aligned according to these
13 communities of interest will be better equipped
14 to articulate their common cause and aggregate
15 the power needed to make sure their voice is
16 heard and their needs addressed.

17 Second, legislation and representation is
18 as much as about relationships as it is
19 district maps. Considering very personally
20 here, we have two Representatives in Jackson
21 County, Marti and Brad, and I can tell you,
22 they don't care where that line falls in
23 Jackson County in terms of representing Jackson
24 County in the state.

25 They don't know it. In fact, I can even

1 reach down and know that Jimmy Patronis, our
2 neighbor right there, he doesn't care about the
3 boundary either. If we need a voice I can call
4 on Jimmy just as well.

5 Senator Monford, you cover the whole
6 county, but Senator Gates I know I can call you
7 just as well. Those relationships are as
8 important into a community as the district
9 boundaries, but we do understand those district
10 boundaries play a key role and that is part of
11 what you are dealing with today.

12 But Jackson County currently benefits from
13 having two Representatives with a strong
14 understanding of rural needs. If we were to be
15 sent back to just one Representative for one
16 county it would further weakened the political
17 influence of rural areas like Jackson County
18 and shift more power to larger markets.

19 Without strong voices from rural
20 Representatives it is very easy for rural
21 concerns to be overrun by large market needs
22 and political power.

23 We need to maintain coverage by two
24 Representatives with a mutual focus on rural
25 needs.

1 Third, and last, two-mile wide, 200 long
2 winding districts with multiple environments,
3 rural, big city and beach, make it very
4 difficult for a Representative or a Senator to
5 stay closely connected to their constituents
6 and deliver a focused message.

7 Creating more compact geographical
8 districts is beneficial from a travel logistics
9 and access perspective so long as those
10 boundaries take into account the previous two
11 concerns.

12 Concentrations of communities of interest
13 and keeping our multiple representation in
14 Jackson County.

15 If the Redistricting Committee and the
16 Legislature adhere to these three principles,
17 the specifics of where the actual lines are
18 drawn will less likely be a cause for concern
19 and more likely be a cause for some
20 celebration.

21 On behalf of the Jackson County Chamber of
22 Commerce and myself, I respectfully request
23 that the spirit of these three principles be
24 incorporated into the strategic framework for
25 developing this plan for redistricting.

1 Thank you for your time and consideration.

2 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you, Art, it is
3 good to see you and excellent points.
4 Appreciate it.

5 MR. KIMBROUGH: Who would I give these to?

6 CHAIRMAN GATES: If you will give them to
7 me I will make sure that all members of the
8 Committee get them and we will post them on the
9 website so that -- okay, John will make sure
10 that we all get them. We will put them on the
11 website and that way everybody can see them.
12 Thanks a million, Art.

13 Our next two speakers are Kylel Hall and
14 Jerry Gerde. Kylel Hall?

15 MS. HALL: Actually, it is Kyle.

16 CHAIRMAN GATES: Kyle, you and I both need
17 to go back to penmanship school, I think.

18 MS. HALL: Yes, I am working on it.

19 CHAIRMAN GATES: Kyle, it is good to see
20 you notwithstanding that. And you are
21 recognized for your remarks to the Committee.

22 MR. HALL: Thank you. I was just looking
23 around the room and I noticed that there is not
24 very many college students that took advantage
25 of this great opportunity. Shame on them,

1 first of all.

2 But as a recent graduate from Gulf Coast,
3 then Community College, now State College, I
4 just wanted to kind of focalize my experience
5 that I heard from different students in some of
6 my classes, specifically in my state and local
7 government where we looked into great detail
8 the districting of Florida.

9 And the biggest comments that everyone
10 made, it is something very somewhat simple and
11 I know that there is reasons perhaps behind it,
12 but the biggest concern that the students had
13 was the complexity of the redistricting.

14 As many have mentioned, the snaking and
15 the -- it is very complex and I just wanted to
16 mention to you that as kind of representing the
17 Student Body, that was somewhat of a big
18 concern of theirs.

19 And then also just as a little side note I
20 would just like to say, because I don't know if
21 you hear it that much, that thank you for the
22 2011 legislative session and I was very proud
23 of all of you.

24 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you, and Kyle, we
25 just might mention that if you go on to either

1 the House or Senate websites you will see that
2 a group of students from Columbia University
3 took on as a project redistricting in Florida,
4 and they have already developed using our
5 websites, they have already developed
6 redistricting plans for our consideration.

7 We would welcome students that you know
8 doing the same thing either individually or as
9 a group, and if you would be interested in
10 doing that we would be very interested in that
11 input.

12 MR. HALL: It looks like I am going to
13 have to call them because they are not here.

14 CHAIRMAN GATES: Good, good, Jerry Gerde
15 is next, and following Mr. Gerde is Cecile, I
16 think it is Scoon. I apologize if I messed
17 that name up.

18 Mr. Gerde, thank you for being here, and
19 you are recognized.

20 MR. GERDE: Thank you, Senator, thank you,
21 visitors. I think it is important to recognize
22 that some traditions, such as judicial circuits
23 go back for, in some cases, generations, and as
24 all of you know, the 14th Judicial Circuit is
25 part of the web that binds Holmes and Gulf and

1 Bay, Jackson and Calhoun and Washington
2 together.

3 Those are established and functioning
4 entities. The judicial circuits have their own
5 budgets, they have their own, of course,
6 judicial staff, so that Judges who are -- who
7 reside in Panama City have duties in Poplar
8 Springs and Bethlehem, in Jacob and in the most
9 rural of areas of our circuit.

10 So that I encourage -- and there tends to
11 be a, we over use the word perhaps, community,
12 but there tends to be a sense of community.

13 For example, as all of you undoubtedly
14 know, the Circuit Judges every two years change
15 divisions and rotate through the divisions so
16 that the less desirable kind of work is only
17 borne for two years and the more desirable kind
18 of judicial work is enjoyed for two years.

19 So I encourage, I encourage you to think
20 of judicial districts, because it does bind us
21 together already and for the -- for the
22 Legislature in 2000, to have fragmented the,
23 particularly the Fourteenth and the Third
24 Circuits was harmful and tended to dampen the
25 sense of community.

1 I know Al Lawson had the eastern one
2 quarter by geography of Bay County. I think it
3 was really an eighth by population, but where
4 on Tram Road did that begin and end? I don't,
5 I expect Mr. Lawson and his staff knew, but
6 most of us didn't know.

7 So that I encourage you to look to the
8 Judicial Circuits as part of the fabric, in
9 which we function in our Sheriffs in our six
10 counties in our circuits tend to be, cooperate
11 and work together. The other judicial
12 officials do, also, so that is really one sense
13 of community that I encourage each of you to
14 give weight and respect.

15 And talk about compact, the Fourteenth
16 Circuit happens to compact. The first happens
17 to be about as compact as you can make those
18 western most counties as you know, and so there
19 was some sense given to the use of those
20 district boundaries in order to -- so that a
21 Circuit Judge from Marianna could cover a
22 matter in St. Joe or could cover a matter in
23 Panama City and so on.

24 So there is already some logic to the way
25 those Judicial Circuits were drawn and I

1 encourage you to consider that as you move
2 through this time consuming process. Thank
3 you.

4 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you, Mr. Gerde. We
5 appreciate you being here and your testimony.
6 Cecil, is it Scoon?

7 MS. SCOON: Scoon.

8 CHAIRMAN GATES: Scoon, I am sorry,
9 Ms. Scoon. Thank you for being here. We are
10 delighted to have your testimony and look
11 forward to it, and following Ms. Scoon would be
12 Jennifer Jones.

13 MS. SCOON: Good morning. I have to say
14 it is very exciting to see all of you here
15 today. It is a great opportunity for us in Bay
16 County to be in the presence of so much
17 leadership of our state. So I welcome you and
18 I am very appreciative.

19 I am a little concerned though that we
20 were not presented with even just a basic map
21 or of an idea for us to kind of discuss. I
22 think that would have been more substantive and
23 a better use of the time, and when I sit down
24 at some point I would like to hear exactly how
25 the public is going to have input after the

1 preliminary maps are drawn.

2 Because it was mentioned, but, I mean, it
3 with have been great to have the maps and have
4 that discussion, you know, at this time while
5 you are here, and I don't know if there is the
6 expense is going to be borne for you to come
7 back again for us to be before you, which is a
8 wonderful opportunity after the maps. So that
9 is really weighing on my mind very heavily.

10 A comment that I would like to make, I
11 think that any county that has three
12 Representatives, I think that is too much. It
13 is very, very difficult for citizens, local
14 citizens to get together efficiently and
15 effectively to talk and have the common
16 interests when you are split in three. It is
17 just kind of crazy.

18 I mean, you talk to people and you are
19 like, well, he is not -- she or he is not my
20 Representative. Boom. There -- that
21 connection, that ability to build and share
22 information is kind of blown away.

23 I respect what the gentleman said a few
24 speakers before. He gave the perspective of
25 what it is like for a rural county, and for

1 them, I mean, I guess that is something you
2 will have to weight, but I don't think we need
3 that in Bay County. I think we need basic -- I
4 would like to see Bay County be whole.

5 That would be my personal wish, and I
6 think you need to respect what people from the
7 rural counties, if it is better for them to
8 have two Representatives, then you need to take
9 that into consideration for them.

10 I am also would like someone to speak to
11 what is going on with the litigation that is
12 being, I guess involving the Amendment that was
13 passed by almost two-thirds of the voters, why
14 is there litigation?

15 It seemed that the Amendment was very
16 straightforward, it said compact, contiguous,
17 you know, basic and follow the Voters Rights
18 Act. I mean, basically that is my
19 understanding of what the Amendment stood for
20 and I am wondering what is the purpose of the
21 litigation, where is that going?

22 I mean, it seems like we are headed for a
23 really serious train wreck in terms of the maps
24 not being presented early for all of us people.
25 I am off my job. I work in a place where if I

1 am not in the office I lose money.

2 I mean, and I -- but this is that
3 important for me to be here and to be in your
4 presence and I really appreciate your being
5 here for me to take the time to do that.

6 My background is, I don't have seven
7 generations of Bay County. I was given a
8 little slip of paper by Catherine Wineberger.

9 I was active duty at Tyndall Air Force
10 Base and I was a Judge Advocate General. My
11 husband and I, when we looked at this
12 environment we got here 26 years ago, it was
13 very different from the home where we come
14 from, the D. C. area, but it was, people were
15 so friendly and so open and there was so much
16 that seemed to -- work to be done and things to
17 be done in the community we decided to stay and
18 raise our families.

19 So that is the perspective that I have and
20 we love this community and I think Bay County
21 being one voting block basically I think it
22 would be better for us, thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you so much, ma'am,
24 and you did raise a couple of questions that
25 the Speaker Designate I think will intend to

1 address at the end of the hearing, because I
2 think there may have been a little
3 misinformation planted.

4 Jennifer Jones is next. And Ms. Jones, if
5 you would just wait one second, Ms. Jones is
6 our last speaker who has turned in a card.

7 So now if there are people who, having
8 heard what you have heard, would like to speak
9 and you were a little shy maybe before and
10 weren't sure, we still would like to hear from
11 you. We will have time.

12 So if you would like to speak and haven't
13 had a chance yet, please raise your hand and
14 that gentleman right over there, let's give him
15 a speaker card, anybody else need a speaker
16 card?

17 The gentleman right over here in the red
18 tee-shirt, the AARP tee-shirt. Anybody else
19 would like to have an opportunity to speak?
20 Okay.

21 Thank you, Ms. Jones, for your
22 forbearance. I am sorry, there is a gentleman
23 over here, late breaking news, he would like to
24 speak.

25 Ms. Jones, thank you very much, and she

1 represents the Bay Arts Alliance. It is good
2 to see you and you are recognized.

3 MS. JONES: Thank you, I have several
4 Board members and former Board members here and
5 I think, unless I have just been
6 misunderstanding, I am going to say something
7 that hasn't been said.

8 So it is going to be maybe unpopular based
9 on the comments, so no tomatoes, if the State
10 Trooper will come stand right here.

11 CHAIRMAN GATES: You are well protected.

12 MS. JONES: Thank you. I -- my job
13 requires that I advocate for the arts in
14 Florida and in Bay County. I like having
15 several Representatives in the House and
16 Senate, because the odds of my Representative
17 being on a committee that has an impact on an
18 issue that influences me are greater.

19 I have a Representative on an education
20 committee, I have a Representative on a
21 transportation and economic and tourism
22 committee. I like knowing that I have got
23 several people I can call, because if I got one
24 and they are on a committee that has no
25 influence on the issues that concern my

1 industry, then you have no -- I feel like I
2 have no influence.

3 And this is politics, I mean, that is what
4 this is, right? So if you can operate
5 politically to further your cause I think that
6 is important, not just as a geographic
7 district, but as an industrial interest.

8 And I also believe that we should not
9 discount the value diversity in the districts.
10 It keeps our Representatives accountable to
11 several groups of people.

12 If they only have one interest, one
13 industry at heart, then you have winners and
14 losers when the session is over, and they may
15 be better able to weight the interest of
16 multiple groups within their district and be a
17 Solomon when it comes to making decisions, and
18 I recognize Senator Margolis.

19 Her name is very popular in my statewide
20 conference calls. She is -- she is a good
21 friend to the arts and I appreciate what our
22 Representatives have done this year for the
23 arts and education and I just, I want to say
24 thank you and I like having lots of people I
25 can contact, and maybe if it doesn't work out

1 that way, if we have, you know, common, the
2 little bubbles, the geographic lines that maybe
3 we should consider the region as our
4 Representatives in all of the districts also
5 come together and communicate as a region
6 because we are terribly diverse when you go
7 from north to south and east to west.

8 It is not just where the great population
9 exists that we need to have influence. Thank
10 you.

11 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you very much for
12 your testimony. We are glad to have you here.
13 Now we have some additional individuals who
14 wanted to testify, and I think, I think Larry
15 has resurfaced, and Larry, I apologize. I
16 can't, I can't do justice to your last name.
17 So if you will share it with us, that would be
18 helpful, but we are delighted to have you here.
19 What is your last name, sir?

20 MR. SUGGS: Suggs.

21 CHAIRMAN GATES: Suggs.

22 MR. SUGGS: S-u-g-g-s.

23 MR. SUGGS: I ain't got much education.

24 CHAIRMAN GATES: Are you a physician?

25 MR. SUGGS: No, I am a welder.

1 CHAIRMAN GATES: All right.

2 MR. SUGGS: I am a welding company owner.

3 CHAIRMAN GATES: Well, it is good to have
4 you here.

5 MR. SUGGS: Or must I say, used to be.

6 CHAIRMAN GATES: Used to be, well, it is
7 good to have you here and you are recognized.

8 MR. SUGGS: I still got -- I still got the
9 welding company and I named it Ark On Welding
10 and Crane Service, not Ark Off. So it spirally
11 went downhill since 2007, when I had 60
12 employees, and I also was taking in \$4 a year.

13 So we have got great Representatives
14 representing our area as far as I am concerned,
15 Mr. -- Ms. Marti Coley. I have spoken with her
16 on the phone several times when I actually got
17 kicked off of my county property I had my
18 welding company on.

19 And so now I am down to two employees and
20 that is my wife and myself. So I think you
21 guys need to speak to the bald headed guy in
22 Tallahassee and get us some work going like he
23 said we were voting him in for doing.

24 Instead of worrying about the regulations
25 of the land and all of this kind of stuff is

1 at, we need work in Bay County as well as
2 Florida and the guy in the office up there
3 ain't doing --

4 CHAIRMAN GATES: You mean Senator Monford,
5 right?

6 MR. SUGGS: No, I mean --

7 CHAIRMAN GATES: Just checking, just
8 checking.

9 MR. SUGGS: Scott, the Governor, so if
10 ya'll could put all of ya'll selves together
11 and go before him and get some work for this
12 area, I got an 11-year-old son I got to raise
13 and I am not taking in enough to even feed my
14 family.

15 So we need to look at these issues,
16 because I can't be the only one in Bay County
17 in this situation, and Bay County is down and
18 out. So I would appreciate any thought you
19 guys could give to that.

20 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you very much. We
21 appreciate you being here. And you are not the
22 only one. Patrick McGann is our next speaker,
23 Mr. McGann followed by Scott Kilpatrick.

24 Thank you for being here, Mr. McGann, you
25 are recognized.

1 MR. MCGANN: Thank you for offering me
2 this opportunity. I hadn't intended to speak
3 but there is something that hasn't been
4 stressed enough that I think needs to be
5 stressed at these hearings.

6 And that is that the people of Florida
7 like people all over this country are looking
8 for a level playing field. When they voted on
9 this, on these Amendments it was because they
10 wanted a level playing field and they wanted
11 everybody to work together.

12 I know and I think everybody in this room
13 knows that the -- all of you politicians who
14 are going to make these decisions in the first
15 instance are going to have to almost have a
16 stem cell injection, because you have to
17 overcome 175 years of history.

18 Gerrymandering has been business as usual
19 all over this country, as well, certainly in
20 the state of Florida throughout its history,
21 whether the Democrats were in power or the
22 Republicans were in power, the same thing
23 happens.

24 They draw the lines to advantage
25 themselves, and the inertia is huge to do the

1 same thing this year.

2 What the people of Florida, two-thirds of
3 the people of Florida, and I think it would
4 have been 100 percent if people knew what they
5 were voting for, really want, is a government
6 that works for them, not for interest groups.

7 We want the games to end. We want
8 fairness and we don't see fairness, frankly, we
9 are suspect. I certainly am suspect that there
10 will be fairness in this enterprise, because of
11 the inertia of 175 years of history.

12 This is something that I ask you to bear
13 in mind. I ask all of our audience to bear in
14 mind and I ask all of the people of Florida to
15 bear in mind, because we have to watch you
16 closely because we don't have any reason to
17 expect that you will be fair, because of your
18 history, and I hope you can appreciate that.

19 And that is why it is imperative that you
20 come out with maps as soon as possible so that
21 the people of Florida can react to those maps
22 and there can be a full and frank discussion of
23 what is taking place. That is all I have to
24 say, thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you very much.

1 Before you leave the podium, sir, would you
2 mind -- would you mind writing down your
3 residence here just so we can keep a record of
4 your appearance?

5 MR. SUGGS: I have another form that I
6 filled out.

7 CHAIRMAN GATES: Okay, just so we have got
8 your full contact information.

9 MR. SUGGS: I have E-mail and everything.

10 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you, sir, Scott
11 Kilpatrick is next, followed by Pam Dorwarth.
12 Scott, it is good to see you again and thanks
13 very much for being here.

14 MR. KILPATRICK: Thank you, thank you for
15 coming here today. I wasn't prepared to speak,
16 but after listening to some of the things that
17 were said, some of them I just want to repeat
18 in a way.

19 I am from Jackson County. There has been
20 a lot of changes affecting Jackson County and I
21 would like to ask that when you redraw these
22 districts, do what is right, not along
23 political and party lines, that is very
24 important.

25 The history is, you know, like it has been

1 said before, you know, we don't want -- we
2 don't want to repeat history on this, because
3 we want to do it the right way. We want to
4 follow the Constitution, and earlier you
5 mentioned this Committee was here and you
6 mentioned some of the rules you were following
7 from the Constitution.

8 I would like to ask that you follow those
9 throughout the process, and also follow the
10 Fair Districts. I believe that is very
11 important, because we are going to have to live
12 with these changes for ten years. It is not
13 something that goes away right away. It is ten
14 years from now that we will still be living
15 with it. On the maps, do you have a date that
16 the maps will be available?

17 CHAIRMAN GATES: The Speaker Designate can
18 remark again to the schedule. You might not
19 have been at the very beginning where he kind
20 of laid out what the schedule was, but we will
21 be happy to articulate it again before the end
22 of the meeting after everybody else had a
23 chance to speak.

24 MR. KILPATRICK: And also if maybe those
25 maps could be e-mailed to the people that left

1 their e-mail address, that way everyone would
2 know what is going on.

3 I wasn't aware of this meeting, except for
4 through some people that I knew told me about
5 it, but as far as, you know, in the paper or
6 the news or anything, I wasn't aware of this
7 meeting today. Just some other people told me
8 about it, so I came down.

9 I had a very interesting time a little
10 while back. I was in the Senate Chambers for
11 the last day of the legislative session and
12 there were a lot of changes there, and there
13 may be a lot of back lash from those changes.

14 I really think -- I don't think Floridians
15 wanted as much change as they are getting.
16 There are a lot of changes in that legislative
17 session.

18 We do need jobs, we don't need pink slips,
19 and in Jackson County where I live there are
20 some -- there is quite a few issues there. We
21 have got Sunland that has been in the news up
22 there.

23 The Dozier School I understand is closed,
24 and I know that some of you have worked on that
25 trying to help out the situation there. There

1 is a lot of prisons. So when you put those
2 three things together, Jackson County is going
3 to take a serious hit.

4 So we need some help up there with that,
5 and I am a Union member, I have been since
6 1977, and I think Legislators should work more
7 closely with Union members, make sure you do
8 talk to them when they come down there in a
9 legislative session or at any time.

10 Unions do provide a lot of good things.
11 We work hard to provide pensions and healthcare
12 for people and those are some of the same
13 issues that you are fighting right now is
14 pensions and healthcare. And there might be a
15 common ground there where everyone could work
16 together and make that work, and that is all I
17 got to say.

18 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you. Thanks very
19 much for taking the time to speak. And next,
20 Pam Dorwarth, and following Pam Dorwarth, John
21 Salak.

22 MS. DORWARTH: It is already on, thank
23 you.

24 CHAIRMAN GATES: Yes, ma'am, you are
25 recognized. Thank you for being with us today.

1 MS. DORWARTH: And I thank you for
2 accommodating me as ADA requires for my hearing
3 impairment and my other disabilities.

4 I have represented people with
5 disabilities for over 20 some years. I have
6 held five State positions and I was appointed
7 by the President, former President Bush to the
8 U.S. Access Board. I have been very involved
9 with my community.

10 Disabilities doesn't care if you are a
11 Union member, if you are a Democrat,
12 Republican, if you are a black, if you are
13 white, it hits everybody.

14 I represent a large body of people that
15 don't understand, they vote, but they don't
16 understand what you are doing today and the
17 importance of it. So I think it is critical
18 that you make it more understandable for
19 everybody on the process.

20 I was aware that there was Amendments
21 passed. Are you following those Amendments
22 that were passed in this process? I didn't
23 hear when I first came in, you are going to
24 address that, correct?

25 CHAIRMAN GATES: I think the Speaker

1 Designate indicated in the beginning that we
2 intend to follow every aspect of the
3 Constitution and he will reiterate that at the
4 end.

5 MS. DORWARTH: And the Voters Rights. I
6 just wanted to thank you all for being here and
7 recognize that you have a large body of
8 population. You have Floridians like myself
9 that don't understand this process and would
10 like to participate, but they don't understand
11 exactly what is going on and how they can voice
12 their opinions.

13 So if you could make that a little more
14 out there and not through the Internet. A lot
15 of people cannot afford an Internet, you know,
16 the computers and all of that. So your
17 newspapers are critical and any other way you
18 want to put it up in the grocery store or
19 whatever, a notice, I don't care how you do it,
20 but get it out to the people that also need to
21 speak and give you some advice.

22 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you.

23 MS. DORWARTH: Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN GATES: Yes, ma'am, thank you for
25 your contribution to this discussion. John

1 Salak, Mr. Salak?

2 Sir, thank you for being here. We look
3 forward to your testimony and you are
4 recognized.

5 MR. SALAK: Thank you, Senator Gates and
6 Representative Weatherford. I really
7 appreciate you all taking the time to do this
8 and to hear the voices of the people of the
9 state of Florida and what they have to say
10 about redistricting.

11 This is important and I did want to talk a
12 little bit about Amendment V and VI and the
13 impact that I view that it has on this.

14 I did not support V or VI. I liked some
15 of the ideas in it, but from a practical
16 standpoint, some ideas are good, but when it
17 comes down to actually executing it, it leaves
18 a lot of stuff that is well, well undefined.

19 Things like drawing district lines compact
20 along natural lines, I certainly agree with
21 that -- that concept, but from a legal
22 standpoint it is ill-defined, what is it?

23 It is whatever you happen to like on that
24 particular day, and unfortunately, these
25 situations, you know, we elect you to go out

1 there and draw these lines, not the courts to
2 sit here and decide whether this stuff is
3 right.

4 And all that this is really aimed at I
5 think in a lot of cases is getting us into
6 court and letting Judges make the decision
7 rather than the people and the elected
8 Representatives that the people have.

9 So in that respect I didn't support V and
10 VI, but I did like the idea of citizen
11 involvement and this is a great avenue for
12 getting the citizens' input.

13 As I mentioned, I would like to see our
14 districts redrawn along compact lines and to
15 follow natural boundaries. If you look at the
16 current -- the current situation you will see a
17 lot of the little carve outs, particularly
18 things like Congressional District II is a good
19 example where some of it extends into Walton
20 County and Okaloosa County, a very small part
21 of it, and, you know, that district is very
22 wide, about 200 miles wide.

23 And why we carved out that little bit and
24 don't go north, I am not sure why. So when we
25 redraw these lines I would like to see the

1 lines drawn to where it is a little more, you
2 essentially take a ruler, start at the west
3 side of Florida, draw a line from the north,
4 north border of Florida down to the coast and
5 say here is this district and keep moving, you
6 know, west and then down south and kind of take
7 that approach to it.

8 The main idea that I would really like to
9 see that is our districts not become
10 vulcanized. I think that is a very dangerous
11 political situation when we draw districts and
12 we say, all right, this is going to be a safe
13 Democrat district, this is going to be a safe
14 Republican district.

15 We have got this group we want in this
16 district and that group we want in that
17 district, and I think that is what some of the
18 language in V and VI was intended to do, and
19 that is what I really think from a political
20 standpoint, that is a very dangerous situation
21 for a democratic society to get into.

22 So I would like to see the lines drawn to
23 where we have a broad range of people involved
24 in these, you know, in particularly in western
25 Florida here in the panhandle, you know, we

1 have a lot of agriculture in the northern part
2 of the panhandle, and then along the coast it
3 is all tourism, or mainly tourism and then some
4 military mixed in with that.

5 So I would like to see the districts have
6 a good mix of representation so that you as
7 Representatives represent a cross section of
8 people, not just one particular group, and that
9 way when you go into the Legislature and make
10 decisions in the Legislature, you are having to
11 consider the farmers as well as the people that
12 own condos on the beach when you make a
13 decision.

14 I think that is a far better balance as
15 far as representation goes than having a
16 district and say, all right, this is all beach
17 people here and I am only going to interest the
18 interest of restaurants and the tourism
19 industry and, you know, the agriculture people
20 can take care of themselves. I think that is a
21 good example.

22 I would like to see the elimination of
23 these strange lines, you know. Panama City is
24 a good example, the Panama City annexation, if
25 you are not familiar, runs along the railroad

1 tracks for a number of miles to get to another
2 part of Panama City.

3 And it is a strange, it as very strange
4 looking map and a strange way to annex a city,
5 and I really don't want to see that happen with
6 these districts.

7 So hopefully, the other piece I would like
8 to mention is, I think the nature, particularly
9 in the panhandle here of a Democrat only or a
10 Republican only district is kind of a fallacy.

11 Most of the north Florida is majority
12 Democrat registration, yet just about all of
13 our Representatives are Republican and we vote
14 Republican in presidential elections, we vote
15 Republican in gubernatorial elections.

16 So I think, you know, when you look purely
17 at party, if you just look purely at party
18 affiliations, that is not really a good
19 indication of how the people are voting. So
20 that is, again, going back to V and VI, that is
21 not a good -- a good quality of those things.

22 Anyways, I hope you all do nice compact
23 districts and get a broad, a broad cross
24 section of people in them. So thank you very
25 much.

1 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you, John, very
2 good testimony. We appreciate it. Is there
3 anyone else who had not filled out a card who
4 would like to testify in today's hearing?

5 Well, if you are shy or if you wake up in
6 the middle of the night and say, gee, there is
7 something I really wanted to share, we still
8 would be happy to get your input all the way
9 through this process.

10 This isn't the end of public input. This
11 is the beginning of public input. If you
12 didn't speak, but would like to add your
13 opinion at any time in the future, you can
14 either e-mail to us, you can Snail Mail to us
15 at the address listed on your brochure and we
16 will place your comments on-line.

17 Yes, sir, did you wish to address the
18 session?

19 MR. HABER: Don, I just want to ask a
20 question.

21 CHAIRMAN GATES: Please come forward and
22 give us your name and we are happy to take your
23 question as testimony and see if we can answer
24 it if no one else wishes to testify.

25 MR. HABER: I filled out a card in the

1 front, but I didn't put down I wanted to speak.

2 CHAIRMAN GATES: Well, we are delighted to
3 have you anyway.

4 MR. HABER: My name is Wallace Haber.

5 CHAIRMAN GATES: Yes, sir.

6 MR. HABER: A 22-year resident of
7 Marianna, Florida. We have a terrific
8 Representative in Marti Coley and also in
9 Senator Monford.

10 I am sorry, I have got a Bachelor's degree
11 from the University of Miami, but I don't
12 understand why we are using State taxpayer
13 money to put aside the Amendments V and VI
14 which were voted on by the majority of the
15 registered voters.

16 It don't make sense to me anymore than us
17 suing the Federal government because Washington
18 put in a law about Medicare.

19 I mean, I don't understand this. How can
20 we take taxpayer money and sue the taxpayers,
21 and that is what we are doing. I am an
22 ignorant man. I have got a college education.

23 I just don't understand, who's side are we
24 on? Who's side are we on? Does anybody know
25 what is going on in Florida?

1 It is bad enough we are sending \$12
2 billion a month over to Afghanistan and we
3 don't know where that money is going on.

4 CHAIRMAN GATES: Well, we may be getting a
5 little far afield. Afghanistan is a little far
6 away from our redistricting.

7 MR. HABER: Let's stick to Florida. Why
8 are we suing to do away with Amendment V and
9 VI?

10 CHAIRMAN GATES: That question has been
11 asked and thank you for asking it again. I
12 think the Speaker Designate will take that
13 question.

14 MR. HABER: Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN GATES: And make sure that we
16 provide you with whatever information we have,
17 as well as the other questions that have been
18 raised.

19 But before we go to comments by members of
20 the House or Senate Committees, is there anyone
21 else who wishes to comment? If not, let me
22 make the offer again to you that if you have
23 comments or if you want to follow the comments
24 that others are making, you can go on-line if
25 you use on-line services, and the on-line

1 addresses are in the Redistricting 2012
2 brochure you were handed when you came in the
3 door.

4 You can Snail Mail to us at the Snail Mail
5 address that is listed on those brochures and
6 your comments will be included in the public
7 record and made public for all of the people of
8 Florida, including all members of the
9 Legislature who will have those comments at
10 hand.

11 All of the legal records from today's
12 meeting, the video, the pod cast, the
13 transcripts will be available in the coming
14 days via the Senate and Houses respective
15 redistricting websites and those cites are
16 listed on the brochure that you got when you
17 came in.

18 Now I would like to, before I go to the
19 Speaker Designate and ask him if any of his
20 colleagues from the House have any comments or
21 questions. Let me go to members of the Senate
22 who are here from the Senate Reapportionment
23 Committee to ask if they have any comments or
24 questions before we go forward.

25 And I apologize, I may not be able to see

1 all of our Senators.

2 Senator Thrasher, you are recognized.

3 SENATOR THRASHER: Thank you,
4 Mr. Chairman, and -- first of all, this is our
5 fourth visit, I guess, in the last two
6 and-a-half days, and again I said last night in
7 Ft. Walton, I thought the input tonight and
8 this morning was incredible and we appreciate
9 it.

10 We are here to listen to you for ideas,
11 and I think you gave us all a bunch of ideas on
12 how to get started in the process, and that is
13 what we intend to do.

14 I can tell you as one Senator and I think
15 I speak for everybody here, we are going to
16 follow the Constitution, but we are going to do
17 it in the right way. We are going to do it in
18 an effective way that meets the needs of the
19 people of the state of Florida.

20 When the day is over, I guarantee you, we
21 will have a good map, good maps. Remember, by
22 the way, we are drawing 40 Senate seats, 120
23 House seats, 27 Congressional seats for over
24 18 million people in the state of Florida.

25 Twenty-seven -- I said -- it is 27, okay.

1 But in any event, we got to take into
2 consideration 18 million people. A couple
3 hundred people were here today, a couple
4 hundred were there last night. We are going to
5 have 24 or 25 more of these hearings throughout
6 the state of Florida.

7 We are going to listen to the input of the
8 people of the state of Florida and at the end
9 of the day I promise you we are going to do the
10 best job we can under the constitutional
11 constraints that have been placed upon us by
12 the people of the state of Florida.

13 I remember somebody referenced earlier on,
14 Dempsey Barron. I knew Dempsey Barron. I have
15 been in and out of this process for a number of
16 years. I can tell you, 20 or 30 years ago, in
17 all due respect to the great Senator from this
18 area, when maps were drawn they were usually
19 done at the late night. They were usually done
20 at late session, very little input from the
21 people of the state of Florida.

22 This will be the most transparent process
23 in my opinion of redistricting that we have
24 ever had in the state of Florida, and it is due
25 because of your input and your concern and you

1 as citizens of the state of Florida who have
2 come out to give us your guidance and it is
3 very appreciated. Thank you very much.

4 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you, Senator
5 Thrasher. Other members of the Senate wish to
6 speak? Senator Monford, you are recognized,
7 Senator Monford.

8 SENATOR MONFORD: Thank you, Senator
9 Gates, and just to make it real brief, thank
10 you for your participation. I can assure you
11 that your voice has been heard today. We are
12 taking good notes. We will go back and we will
13 review those and we will take everything that
14 you have said into consideration, but you also
15 realize that some of you are conflicting here
16 today. Some of you want one thing and one
17 another. You can imagine what is going to
18 happen when we go from here to Miami.

19 There will be differences of opinion all
20 over this state, but I promise you, we will do
21 our dead level best.

22 Someone asked me, as a Democrat will you
23 have any chance, and I said I have total
24 confidence in my colleagues in the Republican
25 Party, and I believe and sincerely believe that

1 all of us are going to do what is best for the
2 people of Florida.

3 Thank you for being here and we look
4 forward to seeing you on down the road.

5 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you very much,
6 Senator Monford. Any other members of the
7 Senate? If not, let me turn to the Speaker
8 Designate.

9 Did somebody else in the back? See, this
10 is why we let you talk first, because in the
11 Senate there is no time limit. In the House
12 they put a time limit on them.

13 Senator Evers, you are recognized.

14 SENATOR EVERS: I just wanted to be sure
15 everyone understood that we did not have a gag
16 order, absolutely, because in other places we
17 have been asked that if we were scripted or if
18 we had a gag order and I just wanted to be
19 perfectly clear that there was no gag order.

20 And also, as a member of the delegation
21 that represents Bay County, in fact, thanks to
22 Jimmy Patronis, I am the Chair of the Bay
23 County delegation, make that perfectly clear,
24 and if you have a concern and you are a
25 resident of Bay County, or if you are a

1 resident of Jackson County, even though I do
2 not represent Jackson County, but if you need a
3 voice in Tallahassee, trust me, I am there.

4 But I would ask my Aide, Molly, to please
5 stand up, and if you need to have an
6 appointment with any of the delegation and you
7 feel like that, you know, you haven't been
8 represented and you need a voice, see Molly and
9 we will -- we will work through that process to
10 see that you have a voice in Tallahassee or in
11 this, in this redistricting.

12 We will see that you do have a voice. You
13 know, we are very fortunate here in the
14 panhandle that the delegations, whether it is
15 in Escambia County, whether it is Okaloosa,
16 whether it is Bay County, whether it is even
17 Washington and Holmes county and Jackson
18 County, that the delegations work hand in hand
19 here in the panhandle.

20 So, you know, it doesn't matter to us
21 where the district lines are. That has never
22 affected any of our decisions. We work as a
23 unit for you and we are proud to have the
24 opportunity to work together, to represent you
25 and take your plight to Tallahassee, and with

1 that, Senator Gates, thank you for the
2 opportunity to speak, and thank you all for
3 coming. You could have been on the beach or
4 fishing. Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you very much,
6 Senator Evers, and now I would yield to the
7 Speaker Designate of the House and ask him if
8 he would -- he has taken some notes during the
9 meeting, so that we can provide some answers to
10 some of the factual questions that were raised,
11 as well as maybe spike a couple of rumors that
12 may have crept into the process.

13 Mr. Speaker, thank you.

14 SPEAKER WEATHERFORD: My name is Will
15 Weatherford. Thank you. Thank you very much,
16 Mr. Chairman. Before I go into answering some
17 questions we had some tremendous questions and
18 frankly input today, but there was an
19 announcement that Representative Patronis
20 forgot to make early on this afternoon.

21 He and I were chatting earlier today and
22 he told me that anyone who actually sat through
23 this entire hearing got a free meal at Captain
24 Anderson's this evening, so congratulations.
25 What a guy.

1 Just -- just do me a favor and save me one
2 of those Scamp Imperials, would you,
3 Representative Patronis. You have not lived
4 until you have had a Scamp Imperial from that
5 wonderful restaurant.

6 But in all seriousness, it really has been
7 a pleasure today and what a pleasant group of
8 folks who have taken the time to be here and we
9 are just very grateful for that.

10 I am going to touch on a couple of things,
11 I am going to try not to talk too long, but I
12 certainly want to make sure everyone has
13 clarity on what we are doing and why the
14 decisions that have been made thus far about
15 this process are being made.

16 The first is there were several people who
17 mentioned money that was being spent, like a
18 \$30 million pot of money that is being spent.

19 There is no \$30 million pot of money.
20 That doesn't exist. Apparently some newspaper
21 wrote that somewhere some time ago and it has
22 continued to trickle into the process in the
23 conversation. There is no \$30 million and it
24 is not being spent. Your tax dollars are not
25 being spent on anything like that.

1 Certainly we have to have attorneys, this
2 process is legal in nature, we have to have
3 staff, so resources are being addressed, but
4 there is no large pot of money that is out
5 there that is fighting anything.

6 But also I want to talk a little bit about
7 the timeline. The timeline seems to be
8 something that everywhere we go we hear a lot
9 about in regards to why we are doing things in
10 the order that we are doing them.

11 First of all, the state of Florida is one
12 of the last states to have received its census
13 data. So you cannot even begin to draw maps or
14 do anything of that nature until you actually
15 have data from the Census Bureau.

16 We did not get that data until just about
17 60 days ago or so, and so we have been -- we
18 have just now finished putting together our
19 what we have in the House is My District
20 Builder, the Senate has a very similar format
21 that allows us to draw districts.

22 We are just now bringing those on-line as
23 of late, so we can start this process. So I
24 want you to know, it is not like we have been
25 sitting on data for a year and have chose to

1 ignore it. We have just recently been in
2 receipt of it.

3 Also in regards to the timeline, the
4 Constitution, and I said this earlier, but the
5 Constitution tells us that we cannot take
6 action on any maps until 2012, and what we have
7 already done is moved up our legislative
8 session by two months so that we can pass those
9 maps out as quickly as we possibly can to give
10 our Supervisors of Elections, to give our
11 constituents to have certainty in knowing who
12 they are voting for and what the districts are
13 going to look like.

14 That is very very important. So what we
15 are doing really in regards to a timeline, is
16 we are starting now, and we started this week
17 and we are going to spend three months on a
18 listening tour, and we are going to listen to
19 the desires, to the input, and to the counsel
20 of citizens across the state of Florida to tell
21 us what they think districts should look like.

22 We are going to let you start the
23 conversation and I don't know about you, but
24 historically when I have been around
25 politicians and politics, we seem to do all of

1 the talking and we are always asking everybody
2 else to do the listening.

3 This is one of the few instances I have
4 been around where we are letting you start the
5 conversation and we are doing the listening,
6 and I think that is what the citizens of
7 Florida want from their elected officials.

8 Also, in regards to the maps, we heard
9 several people say today, where are the maps.
10 We want to see the maps. It would have been
11 more productive if you would have put maps in
12 front of us.

13 Well, we do have maps here. They are the
14 current existing maps. They are not the new
15 maps, but the reason for that is, if we were to
16 show up with maps today and tell you, here is
17 what our maps are going to look like, everybody
18 would be upset and say, what do you want us to
19 do, rubber stamp with the decision that you
20 already made?

21 We have made the decision that we are
22 going to let you start this conversation and I
23 want to really, really put an emphasis on this.
24 The input that you will have on this process
25 does not end today.

1 As Senator Gates mentioned just a moment
2 ago, we are going to be gathering public input
3 in forums in Tallahassee, via e-mail, via Snail
4 Mail, everything, throughout this entire
5 process, so this is not the end.

6 This is only the beginning, and I want to
7 point out one other thing in regards to
8 Amendments V and VI, and that is this. The
9 drafters of Amendments V and VI, a lady by the
10 name of Ellen Freidin, who was the leader of
11 Fair Districts and a former Speaker of the
12 House, Speaker Mills, testified before a Joint
13 Hearing of our colleagues here, and
14 specifically stated when they were asked if
15 they could give us some examples.

16 We specifically asked them, could you give
17 us some examples of what you think a fair
18 district looks like.

19 Their comments under oath, I will tell
20 you, both of them, said, we would not even
21 begin that process until we had had public
22 hearings around the state of Florida. And so
23 now we are hearing after we are doing exactly
24 what they asked us to do, is to have public
25 hearings, now they are saying they want us to

1 produce the maps first, and frankly we just
2 think that that is putting the question ahead,
3 -- the answer ahead of the question.

4 In regards to litigation, there were
5 several questions about why are taxpayers
6 fighting Amendments V and VI that have passed.

7 Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart, who is a
8 Republican from Miami, Dade County, along with
9 a Democratic Congresswoman, Karen Brown, from
10 Jacksonville, actually are the ones who filed a
11 lawsuit only in regards to Amendment VI, and it
12 deals with a Federal constitutional issue.

13 It only deals with the Congressional maps,
14 and it is whether or not the U. S. Constitution
15 had been impeded -- has been impeded by that
16 constitutional amendment that passed in
17 Florida, and I won't get you into the details,
18 but we will give you all of the information on
19 that case if you want it.

20 But just so it is clear, the two
21 Congressmen, a Republican and a Democrat were
22 the ones who originally filed that lawsuit, and
23 I think that is very important. I think there
24 has been some misinformation out there about
25 that as well.

1 Long story short, to kind of put a bow on
2 everything, I want to go back to something that
3 Reverend Wood said.

4 Reverend Wood, thank you for being here
5 today and you made a comment, sir, early on in
6 your comment, in your thoughts that you wanted
7 to make sure that our minds were open and that
8 they were not closed and that decisions had not
9 been made.

10 And, sir, that is exactly what this is
11 about. This is the reason we are doing this,
12 the reason we are traveling the state,
13 Reverend, is because our minds are open, and we
14 are here to listen and we are here to make
15 decisions after, after we have heard from
16 everyone around the state of Florida.

17 I want to thank you for those words and we
18 will take those to heart as we go through this
19 process. You have my word. You have the word
20 of the Senator and the rest of this body that
21 we will abide by Amendments V and VI.

22 They are the law. We raise our right hand
23 every two years and promise to uphold and
24 protect the Constitution of the State of
25 Florida, and we will do so, and we will make

1 this process, as it has already been, the most
2 transparent, the most accountable and what I
3 believe to be the most open process it has ever
4 been and we will follow the law.

5 So thank you very much, Mr. Chairman,
6 again, for that indulgence. I hope that
7 cleared up some issues. If you still have
8 concerns, stick around afterwards, we will have
9 staff and many other people to talk with you
10 directly. Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN GATES: Thank you. Before we end
12 today, as we begin our hearing we thank Gulf
13 Coast State College for their generosity and
14 their hospitality in allowing us to use these
15 facilities.

16 We are delighted to be joined now by the
17 President of Gulf Coast State College, Dr. Jim
18 Curley, Dr. Curley, thank you so much for being
19 here.

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1 There being no more business to come
2 before this hearing, President Margolis moves
3 we rise.

4 (Whereupon, the recorded proceedings were
5 adjourned.)

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