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REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

MONDAY, JULY 11, 2011

2:00 P.M. and 6:00 P.M.

FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE JACKSONVILLE DOWNTOWN CAMPUS

JACKSONVILLE, 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 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: If we could
3 get everyone to grab their seats, we would like
4 to start here momentarily. Members, please
5 find your chair. Okay, if we could get
6 everyone to please grab their seats.

7 Thank you very much. Please call the
8 roll. Okay, we are not doing a roll yet, I'm
9 sorry.

10 Ladies and gentlemen, the Joint
11 Senate/House Redistricting Committee is called
12 to order. We are pleased to be joined today by
13 several members of both the House and the
14 Senate, and what we would like to do is to take
15 just a brief moment to allow each one to
16 introduce themselves to you.

17 They have come from near and far, many
18 from right here in Duval County, you've got a
19 great delegation here, but also we have
20 Legislators from all over the state of Florida.

21 We would like to just take a few moments
22 to allow them to introduce themselves, let you
23 know who they are and where they are from, and
24 I think we will start down at the end.

25 REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAMS: Good afternoon,

1 my name is Alan Williams, State Representative
2 from Tallahassee, Florida, and it is great to
3 see so many of you out here concerned about the
4 process.

5 REPRESENTATIVE CALDWELL: Thank you.
6 Representative Matt Caldwell, Ft. Myers, Lee
7 County, down in the southwest corner of the
8 state.

9 REPRESENTATIVE BOYD: Good afternoon, Jim
10 Boyd, Representative from Manatee County, which
11 is Bradenton, down below Tampa on the west
12 coast.

13 REPRESENTATIVE PASSIDOMO: Kathleen
14 Passidomo, District 76, which is Naples,
15 Everglades City, Marco Island.

16 REPRESENTATIVE CHESTNUT: Representative
17 Chuck Chestnut, District 23, a portion of
18 Gainesville and a portion of Ocala.

19 REPRESENTATIVE TAYLOR: Representative
20 Dwayne Taylor representing House District 27,
21 the world center of racing and the world's most
22 famous beach, Daytona Beach.

23 REPRESENTATIVE NEHR: Representative Peter
24 Nehr from District 48, Pinellas County, home of
25 another famous beach, Clearwater Beach.

1 SENATOR THRASHER: I am Senator John
2 Thrasher. I represent parts of Nassau, Nassau
3 here, Duval County, St. Johns County, Volusia
4 County and Flagler County, and we have some of
5 the greatest beaches in the world right here in
6 north Florida.

7 REPRESENTATIVE HOOPER: Hi, everybody. I
8 am Ed Hooper from District 50, which is
9 Pinellas County, predominantly Clearwater.

10 REPRESENTATIVE FRISHE: I am
11 Representative Jim Frishe. I represent the
12 beaches of Pinellas County, and we don't get to
13 compete for the world's best beaches anymore,
14 because we've been retired.

15 REPRESENTATIVE ADKINS: Hi, I am Janet
16 Adkins. I represent House District 12, which
17 is Nassau, Baker, Bradford, Clay, Union and a
18 bit of Duval, and it is wonderful to see so
19 many people here from the outlying rural
20 counties. Thank you for coming.

21 SENATOR MONTFORD: Thank you. I am Bill
22 Montford, Senator from District 6, which is 11
23 counties, Tallahassee is the center of it.

24 Obviously we have state government, but we
25 also have some of the world's most beautiful

1 beaches on the Gulf of Mexico, I believe, for
2 clarification.

3 REPRESENTATIVE LOGAN: Thank you. I am
4 Representative Ana Rivas Logan from Miami-Dade
5 County from the best beach in the world, South
6 Beach.

7 REPRESENTATIVE FORD: Clay Ford, I
8 represent District 3 in Pensacola, the other
9 north Florida anchor, other end of the state.

10 SENATOR DEAN: My name is Charlie Dean, I
11 am Senator, District 3. I represent all or
12 part of 13 counties. I represent interior
13 rural Florida.

14 We don't have any beaches. I go from
15 Baker County to the steps of the Capitol, down
16 to 98 and 19 just to the south end of Citrus
17 County. I am from Inverness, Florida.

18 SENATOR LYNN: I am Senator Evelyn Lynn.
19 I represent Clay, Marion, Putnam and Volusia
20 Counties, and we are so diverse from party to
21 nature, from beaches to jungle, you can't beat
22 it.

23 REPRESENTATIVE SCHENCK: Rob Schenck, I
24 represent the metropolitan areas of Hernando
25 County.

1 SENATOR BRAYNON: Oscar Braynon, Senator,
2 District 33, representing Miami-Dade County.

3 REPRESENTATIVE WEINSTEIN: Mike Weinstein
4 representing part of Duval, Clay and St. Johns
5 County, and thanks for coming.

6 SENATOR HAYS: Thank you all for being
7 here this afternoon. I am Alan Hays, State
8 Senator from District 20, which I live in
9 Umatilla, and it is 85 miles east and west and
10 55 miles north and south.

11 REPRESENTATIVE KIAR: Hello, everybody, my
12 name is Martin Kiar. I represent District 97
13 in the Florida House of Representatives, which
14 is all within Broward County, Florida. Thanks
15 for having us.

16 REPRESENTATIVE JULIEN: Good afternoon,
17 everyone. My name is John Patrick Julien
18 representing District 104, and Representative
19 Ana Rivas Logan told me that the entire
20 Miami-Dade County delegation represents the
21 best beach in the world, that being South
22 Beach.

23 REPRESENTATIVE HUKILL: Hi, everyone, I am
24 Dorothy Hukill. I am the State Representative
25 from District 28, which is southeast and

1 southwest Volusia, and I actually represent the
2 most number of miles of beaches in Volusia
3 County.

4 REPRESENTATIVE McBURNEY: I am Charles
5 McBurney. I represent District 16, which is
6 the greatest city in the state of Florida, the
7 City of Jacksonville, Florida.

8 REPRESENTATIVE THURSTON: Good afternoon,
9 I am State Representative Perry Thurston from
10 Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, District 93. We refer
11 to it as God's country.

12 REPRESENTATIVE RAY: Good afternoon, I am
13 Lake Ray. I represent District 17, kind of the
14 northeast quarter of the county here. It is a
15 pleasure to see everybody. And to my
16 colleagues, welcome to Jacksonville.

17 REPRESENTATIVE BERNARD: State
18 Representative Mack Bernard from West Palm
19 Beach, Florida.

20 REPRESENTATIVE ROGERS: State
21 Representative Hazelle Rogers from Broward
22 County, 1.79 million residents in Broward
23 County. It is good to be here.

24 REPRESENTATIVE YOUNG: Hello, and thank
25 you all for being here. I am State

1 Representative Dana Young, and I represent the
2 City of Tampa and surrounding areas, and we
3 just have little beaches, but we are close to a
4 lot of really good ones. Thank you for coming.

5 REPRESENTATIVE REED: Good afternoon, I am
6 State Representative Gwyndolen Clarke-Reed, and
7 I represent Broward County, northeast quadrant
8 of Broward County, where we have the best
9 beach, Deerfield Beach.

10 SENATOR EVERS: I am State Senator Greg
11 Evers, and I represent Senate District 2, which
12 encompasses north Escambia, Santa Rosa,
13 Okaloosa, Walton, Washington, Holmes Counties,
14 which is also referred to as God's country, but
15 yet also the great northwest, as far north and
16 far west you can go in Florida without being in
17 Alabama.

18 Okay. I am here representing the folks
19 that grow the best cotton and peanuts in the
20 state of Florida. Thank you all.

21 REPRESENTATIVE GOODSON: I don't think I
22 can pass that. My name is Representative Tom
23 Goodson. I represent District 29, which at one
24 time was the gateway to space, but after our
25 last shuttle, it is no longer that. But I go

1 from North Mims all the way down to the St.
2 Lucie County line, wonderful people and 300,000
3 cows. Thank you.

4 REPRESENTATIVE DRAKE: My name is Brad
5 Drake. I represent House District 5, which is
6 in northwest Florida: Okaloosa, Walton,
7 Holmes, Washington, Jackson. My district is
8 the only House District that borders two
9 states.

10 REPRESENTATIVE TRUJILLO: Good afternoon
11 and thank you for being here. My name is
12 Carlos Trujillo. I represent southwest
13 Miami-Dade County. It is a pleasure to be here
14 in Jacksonville.

15 REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Good afternoon,
16 State Representative Mia Jones, just thanking
17 you so much for being here in great numbers.
18 We are excited for the delegation members
19 across the state to hear from you, and so it is
20 a pleasure for me to be able to be here, and I
21 represent District 14, north and west of
22 Jacksonville.

23 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Good afternoon, my
24 name is Daniel Davis. I am the Representative
25 from District 13. I am proud to represent the

1 west portion of Jacksonville and Clay Counties,
2 and it is an honor to see all of my friends
3 here today. Thank you.

4 REPRESENTATIVE FULLWOOD: Good afternoon,
5 Representative Reggie Fullwood, District 15,
6 and we are happy to have you here in
7 Jacksonville where Florida officially begins,
8 right here.

9 REPRESENTATIVE CORCORAN: Representative
10 Richard Corcoran from Pasco and Pinellas
11 Counties. Thank you.

12 SENATOR ALTMAN: Thad Altman, State
13 Senator from east central Florida where we have
14 the Space Coast, but I have to put a big kudo
15 here for Jacksonville, because our first
16 commercially rated space center is right here
17 at Cecil Field, so we have a lot in common.

18 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: All right.
19 We were trying to set the record for the
20 Guinness Book of Records of squeezing the most
21 politicians into one room. We are close. We
22 are going to get an official count before the
23 end of the day.

24 But, no, seriously, members, thank you for
25 being here, and Senators, for taking the time

1 to hear from the constituents here in northeast
2 Florida. We are honored to be here.

3 And I want to make a special thanks to
4 Florida State College for allowing us to use
5 this beautiful facility. Thank you all for
6 taking the time to be here, because this is
7 important.

8 It is important, and the sole purpose of
9 what we are here for is to hear from you and to
10 give your input and to hear what you think the
11 legal standards that are set before the
12 Legislature and how those can be applied to
13 districts that represent you here in northeast
14 Florida.

15 My name is Will Weatherford, and along
16 with my colleague, Senator Don Gaetz, I will be
17 chairing today's hearing, which is being
18 webcast statewide by the Florida Channel over
19 the Internet.

20 I also want to make sure that everyone can
21 hear us okay. If you are in the back of the
22 room, can you hear us okay on the microphone?
23 Wonderful. Thank you.

24 Our procedures here today, ladies and
25 gentlemen, are very simple, but they are very,

1 very important. It is important that you sign
2 in so we can create an accurate public record
3 of all the attendees and speakers. Also, you
4 may opt to join our e-mail list so that we can
5 keep you informed about how the redistricting
6 process is working over the next several
7 months. If you have not signed in, please
8 raise your hand, and a staff member will give
9 you an attendance card for you to fill out. If
10 you wish to speak today, and you have not
11 filled out an attendance card, please also
12 raise your hand, and we will make sure we get
13 you a card so that we cannot miss your
14 testimony. It is the same attendance card
15 whether you speak or if you plan to sit, but
16 please raise your hand either way.

17 I also want to point out that the
18 microphone is kind of in the middle of the
19 room, it is a little different than the way we
20 have done it historically, but I think that is
21 the best-placed position. So as you are coming
22 up to speak and we read out your name, you will
23 go to this microphone.

24 But before we go to public testimony, I
25 would like to turn the microphone over to my

1 co-Chair, Senator Don Gaetz, who will explain
2 how today's hearing fits into the redistricting
3 process.

4 Senator Gaetz, you are recognized.

5 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
6 Mr. Chairman. I am Don Gaetz. I represent the
7 coastal counties of northwest Florida.
8 Jacksonville is, as my wife, Vicky, says, our
9 second home. It is where we met, it is where
10 we feel in love, and we love Jacksonville.

11 Let me just say that there is one person
12 here who -- let me depart, if I can,
13 Mr. Chairman, from the script to say there is
14 one person here who has not been introduced who
15 has served this community and served the State
16 of Florida effectively and well. He's now
17 moved on to another important assignment within
18 the City of Jacksonville. We are going to miss
19 him, and I want to recognize him, and that is
20 Senator Tony Hill. Senator Hill.

21 Mr. Chairman, and members, and members of
22 the public who are here, every ten years the
23 Legislature is required by our Constitution to
24 redistrict the state based on increases or
25 decreases or movements of population within the

1 state, and because Florida has grown more than
2 other states in the last ten years, we will
3 move up from 25 to 27 members of the U.S. House
4 of Representatives, and up to 29 electoral
5 votes in the presidential election.

6 Now, because some parts of our state have
7 increased or decreased disproportionately to
8 the rest of the state, many Senate and House
9 Districts will change, either adding or losing
10 population. You can see a chart over there on
11 the wall. A number of you have had a chance to
12 review it before we started. Please take a
13 look at it during the meeting, after the
14 meeting, and you will see the districts and
15 which districts have to gain or lose population
16 in order to be equal in size, which is one of
17 the requirements of law.

18 We also have displays at the front of the
19 room showing the current boundaries of
20 districts in this area of the state. Those are
21 the maps, the maps of our current districts, so
22 that is a good point of departure for those who
23 have testimony today to indicate if you believe
24 that there are changes that need to be made.

25 Those are the maps that we have right now, and

1 those are the same maps that we will be looking
2 at as your Legislators as we consider the
3 public testimony that has been provided around
4 the state. We are doing 26 public hearings.

5 When redistricting is completed,
6 congressional districts must be equal in
7 population, and each congressional district
8 must contain 696,345 people. Now, past law and
9 court cases have indicated that congressional
10 districts that are even 11 individuals
11 different, one from the other, are not equally
12 divided. So with congressional districts, it
13 is pretty important that each one be just about
14 on the money at 696,345 people.

15 The 40 Senate districts must also be
16 nearly equal at about 470,000 people each, and
17 our 120 House districts must be nearly equal at
18 about 156,700 people.

19 Equality of representation, though, is not
20 the only legal requirement that redistricting
21 plans have to meet. The laws and important
22 court cases governing redistricting are
23 explained in detail on the House and the Senate
24 websites. Those websites are listed in the
25 redistricting 2012 brochure that was available

1 to you when you came in, will be available to
2 you as you leave. Our redistricting 2012
3 brochure summarizes federal and state laws, and
4 outlines topics we hope that you will discuss
5 here today at our hearing. If you didn't get a
6 copy when you came in, our staff will be happy
7 to give you one. The brochure also lists the
8 House and Senate websites, and the websites are
9 packed with information about redistricting in
10 Florida. You will see that it is some what
11 complex and somewhat simple, but we urge you to
12 look at the websites and look at the laws that
13 governing redistricting. The two websites, the
14 House and Senate, are complementary and are
15 updated very frequently. Visit both, check
16 back often. It is a great way to stay current
17 about how your new congressional Senate and
18 House districts are taking shape.

19 The websites deliver to your fingertips
20 also all of the demographic information that
21 comes from the U.S. Bureau of the Census that
22 will be used in drawing districts, and the same
23 computer programs and the same computer
24 software that courts would be using or that
25 policy makers would be using are overlaid on

1 all the demographic information. This means
2 that any member of the public or any interest
3 group can participate by building plans or
4 seeing maps submitted by other interest groups,
5 other citizens or by Legislators themselves.
6 There have already been maps submitted.
7 Before, during and after this hearing, Senate
8 and House professional staff are available to
9 show anyone the simple steps to getting
10 on-line, building districts and submitting a
11 plan now or in the weeks to come, and you can
12 submit a plan for northeast Florida, for your
13 county, for your neighborhood or for the whole
14 state. If you would like to have direct input,
15 the most important thing you could do is to
16 say, "Here's how we think the lines ought to be
17 drawn to take care of problems or to make sure
18 there is equal representation in our area, in
19 our community." The submission of proposed
20 maps that makes sense for your community is the
21 single most effective form of public
22 participation in the redistricting process.

23 Now, the redistricting schedule that we
24 are operating under is imposed by the state
25 Constitution. We can't change it. Nobody who

1 testifies today can change it. The
2 Constitution does not permit the Legislature to
3 act on state legislative maps before the second
4 year after the census; in other words, before
5 2012. We have accelerated the process as much
6 as possible by moving up the 2012 legislative
7 session from March, when it usually starts, to
8 January, and by beginning our statewide
9 hearings five months in advance of the 2012
10 session.

11 Now, it's been suggested that the
12 Legislature ought to draw the maps first and
13 then ask the public to comment. We believe
14 that puts the answer ahead of the question.
15 There ought to be no preconceptions or
16 preconceived notions or pre-drawn maps created
17 entirely by politicians, but rather public
18 testimony should be free and unrestricted. In
19 fact, that is the position taken by the head of
20 the Fair Districts movement statewide who
21 testified before the House and Senate
22 committees, and she is on record as saying that
23 new maps should not be drawn until after the
24 public has had an opportunity to comment in
25 public hearings. And we agree with Ms. Freidin

1 in her public testimony that that is exactly
2 what should be done, and that is what we are
3 doing.

4 Our intent is to use the recommendations
5 made at the 26 public hearings and through the
6 input we receive on our Internet sites and
7 information that you might send us through
8 snail mail or input to your legislator as the
9 basis for developing one or more options for
10 district maps.

11 Now, here is the procedure: Once we have
12 public testimony and public input, we have
13 already gotten an enormous amount in the first
14 four hearings that we have held, we will hold
15 22 more hearings including today, then we will
16 develop options, and those options will be
17 available to the public, and before one single
18 vote is taken on any of those options, the
19 public will see them all. We will discuss any
20 option, any plan, any proposal, in open public
21 meetings before any votes are taken, even in
22 committee. Throughout the process, we will
23 solicit additional public input so that any
24 proposed maps can mature with the public
25 involved, all before the Legislature approves

1 any maps. Whatever the Legislature approves is
2 then submitted for judicial review to insure
3 that the final plans meet every single
4 requirement of law.

5 Because our purpose today is to hear from
6 you, all the time when I am finished between
7 then and four o'clock today, and then between
8 six and eight o'clock today, will be used to
9 insure that every member of the public who is
10 here and wishes to speak will have time to
11 present testimony and be listened to
12 respectfully, without interruption and without
13 argument. And you can see that if we let
14 politicians take over and talk, you know, we
15 would hear about beaches all over Florida until
16 tomorrow morning.

17 If after every citizen who wants to speak
18 has had his or her say there is time remaining,
19 if there is time remaining then before our
20 scheduled adjournment, then, of course, any
21 member of the committee may make any statement,
22 offer any proposal or any suggestion.

23 There, of course, is no gag order. Any
24 member of the Legislature, any interest group,
25 any citizen, may today or at any time propose a

1 map or a plan, and we will instantly make it
2 available to the public for your comment and
3 review.

4 And, Mr. Chairman, I hope this description
5 of our schedule and our process and our time
6 table helps set the stage for a successful
7 hearing.

8 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
9 very much, Senator, for that thorough
10 explanation of today's hearing.

11 I would like to take a brief moment. We
12 always like to save the best for last and the
13 most prestigious for last, and we also want to
14 make sure that there is a person who came a
15 very long way to be here and I think may even
16 have a vote to make this evening, and that is
17 our Congresswoman Corrine Brown.

18 Congresswoman, thank you very much for being
19 here this evening, we appreciate it. We are
20 going to have the opportunity to hear from the
21 Congresswoman soon, and so we appreciate your
22 participation here.

23 We are going to adjourn promptly at 4:00
24 p.m., but as the Senator stated, we will be
25 back at 6:00 p.m. Currently we have 51 people

1 who have signed up to speak. Ladies and
2 gentlemen, we would like to try to limit each
3 speaker to three minutes, if you possibly
4 could. We are not going to be overly strict
5 about it, but the further and further we get
6 down, we just want to make sure that every
7 person who has made the effort to be here has
8 the opportunity to speak for at least three
9 minutes, so please be cognizant of that.

10 Our first speaker today is going to be a
11 Mr. Michael Yost, and following Mr. Yost -- and
12 this is all in the order that people signed
13 up -- there will be Ms. Tammy Hardin.

14 Mr. Yost, the floor is yours and you are
15 recognized for three minutes. And just so
16 everyone knows, what we are going to do, as I
17 call out the name of the next speaker, I will
18 call out a name after that so you can kind of
19 get on deck and be prepared.

20 Mr. Yost, the floor is yours. Thank you
21 for being here.

22 MR. YOST: They said give me about five
23 seconds. Now it is working.

24 Mr. Chairman and Mr. Chairman, and members
25 of the House and Senate committee, I want to

1 thank you for giving me this opportunity to
2 address this meeting here today.

3 Ladies and gentlemen, sadly, there is an
4 issue in the state of Florida, and I think
5 nationwide, but sometimes we as legislatures
6 and also people who are in the public sometimes
7 wish to put blinders on and not think about,
8 and that is the issue of race in politics.

9 Unfortunately, it seems to have been a
10 division that has been created, for whatever
11 reason, in this nation, and I think we first
12 need to recognize that we are Americans first,
13 and that if we will keep these things in mind,
14 I think that redistricting will be something
15 that this committee and committees can do and
16 do in a way in which all people in the state of
17 Florida are properly represented.

18 Unfortunately, there have been some
19 Supreme Court cases that have come down the
20 pipe that are going to restrict you, and I am
21 going to try to address these very briefly.
22 The first one is Thornburg versus Gingles, and
23 I am sure you gentlemen are very familiar with
24 that, in which it sets three basic tenets that
25 must happen on a Section 2 Voting Rights Act

1 claim, 1965 Voting Rights Act, also as amended
2 throughout the years.

3 First of all, there must be a
4 demonstration that a majority group is large
5 enough and compact enough to constitute a
6 majority if they were placed in a single member
7 district. Secondly, they must demonstrate that
8 the minority group is politically cohesive.
9 And third, they must demonstrate that while a
10 white majority votes together in enough numbers
11 to defeat the minority's preferred candidates.
12 If those requirements are met, the court will
13 then examine the totality of the circumstances
14 to determine if a violation is -- it was --
15 occurred.

16 Voinovich versus Quilter also influenced
17 another Section 2 violation, I am sure you are
18 aware of that one.

19 Johnson v. DeGrandy was another Section 2
20 violation that was settled by the Supreme
21 Court.

22 The Lulac decision, this was a Section 5
23 that was also -- Section 5 and Section 2 was
24 addressed in both of that, which takes us then
25 to one other decision fairly recently was the

1 Georgia v. Ashcroft. I want to discuss that
2 for just a moment.

3 In that particular ruling, it was the
4 desire of the State of Georgia to unpack these
5 minority and majority districts in order that
6 minorities could better represent and have
7 better effectiveness throughout the State of
8 Georgia.

9 One thing that they discovered in the
10 State of Georgia by doing this, the minorities
11 became better represented, not worse. They had
12 a better influence throughout the political
13 spectrum.

14 Let's face some realities, and I want to
15 read the very last sentence in this analysis,
16 because I think it comes into play, and that
17 analysis came from none other than Chief
18 Justice John Roberts, and he said, "The most
19 effective way to prevent discrimination on the
20 basis of race is to stop propagating laws that
21 discriminate on the basis of race."

22 We need to be Americans, folks, first and
23 foremost, in which we have communities that are
24 represented by the district boundaries that are
25 drawn by these committees, and that we have an

1 effective representative voice in which whoever
2 is elected by the majority of the voters
3 represents all the people of these districts,
4 not just the ones who can cast a ballot for
5 you. And this is why the Barnett v. Strickland
6 ruling was so important. I am going to leave a
7 copy of the entire ruling with the committee
8 before I leave today, I think that it is
9 applicable in this case, in which that it
10 allows this Legislature to draw the types of
11 compact districts that these Fair Districts
12 amendments have put you under the onus of
13 having to follow. And I think that these
14 district boundaries can be drawn, and can be
15 drawn fairly.

16 I do not envy your job, particularly in
17 congressional districts in which you have to
18 put 697,345 people in one congressional
19 district, and you have to do that 27 times. So
20 I don't envy your job one bit.

21 I commend you. I believe that this
22 committee is doing the right thing by taking
23 public input, and I believe that if they will
24 take what the people are saying and apply those
25 beliefs and those feelings that we have, not

1 only as communities, but as Americans, I think
2 you will find that we will have better
3 congressional districts, we will have better
4 state House districts and we will have better
5 Senate districts. And we will have districts
6 in which the public debate becomes something
7 that, instead of dividing us, brings us
8 together and allows us to vote and elect
9 representatives of our choice which best
10 represents the views that we have and beliefs
11 that we have as Americans, and we can end once
12 and for all these racial divisions that have
13 continually seemed to infect our population.
14 Let's face it, we all love America.

15 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Mr. Yost, I
16 am going to ask you to try to wrap it up there.

17 MR. YOST: Thank you.

18 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
19 very much, sir. Appreciate your comments.

20 MR. YOST: Thank you very much.

21 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
22 Mr. Yost. Next up we have Tammy Hardin.
23 Following Tammy Hardin, we have Barbara
24 Wisnosky.

25 MS. HARDIN: How lucky am I to draw the

1 second one, right?

2 First, thanks for allowing the voters the
3 opportunity to voice our opinions and concerns
4 about redistricting. I am a St. Johns County
5 resident, and I would like to remark on
6 District 19, if I may.

7 According to the last census, District 19
8 needs to shed about 19,000 voters, while
9 District 16 needs to add a little bit over
10 16,000. In my opinion, the best and most
11 practical solution seems to be making the
12 geographical boundary to the north end of
13 District 19 at I-295. The trade-off almost
14 balances.

15 Here is my fear: That the Township of
16 South Mandarin, Fleming Island and Julington
17 Creek, and even parts of IGP, which is
18 International Golf Parkway, becomes disrupted
19 if any other option comes to the table. Having
20 a son who participates in Creeks Lacrosse and
21 Mandarin sports, and a husband who coached, I
22 know there is a sharing of resources in that
23 area, in District 19, like sports fields and
24 sponsorships for athletic programs.

25 A disruption could have also an economic

1 impact on the district. I will stick to sports
2 as an example. Just about a month ago, Fleming
3 Island held the lacrosse tournament, which had
4 an estimated impact on District 19 of over two
5 million dollars. District 19 cannot afford to
6 lose those businesses that support us, and, in
7 turn, we support them. The kids not only play
8 sports together, they attend schools, both
9 public and private. We shouldn't separate this
10 township and community that has been built
11 around not just sports, but businesses. The
12 redistricting board should do whatever it can
13 to preserve this working, thriving township
14 that has developed over the past years.
15 Families play sports together, shop and eat all
16 within their district, and it should stay that
17 way.

18 I know what happens personally when you
19 break up townships. Just within our school
20 district, there was a battle not too long ago
21 where we were separated by a road, and I know
22 the upheaval it caused, and I would like to
23 preserve District 19.

24 In short, since all these areas share in
25 so much, the district boundaries which affect

1 representation should mirror the community.

2 Thanks for your consideration.

3 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
4 very much, Ms. Hardin.

5 Next up we have Barbara Wisnosky, followed
6 by Ms. Helen Ludwig with the League of Women
7 Voters.

8 MS. WISNOSKY: Good afternoon. Tammy
9 Hardin and I are actual neighbors in our St.
10 Johns community, and we both feel very strongly
11 about how we live in a big town/small town.
12 Our community of St. Johns County, District 19,
13 consists of South Mandarin, Julington Creek,
14 County Road 210, and we have the International
15 Golf Parkway. And I can say I am a PTO mom and
16 I have been business liaison for our school for
17 the last almost four years, and when I go
18 looking at fundraisers and donations from local
19 businesses, I go to every single one of those
20 areas within our county, and they view the
21 schools in the area as one big community. We
22 are one tight community. We go back and we
23 thank all our businesses and we think of them
24 as our sponsors for this one tight area that we
25 participate in. Our children do go to the same

1 athletic activities, we shop in the same area
2 and it is all familiar faces.

3 It would be very disruptive to our
4 neighborhoods if we were divided, and as Tammy
5 stated, our proposal is that we cut off the
6 northern part of the county, 295 corridor, and
7 that would probably alleviate roughly 19,000
8 residents, and which District 16 needs probably
9 in that area, 16,000 plus residents. So that
10 would be a solution to both our districts.
11 And, again, that would be the least disruptive.
12 It would allow students in our community to
13 participate in the athletic activities that we
14 have, especially in Julington Creek. And
15 basically we would very much appreciate you
16 taking our comments seriously. And, again,
17 talking from a -- just a parent, a PTO mom who
18 really values our beautiful area, thank you,
19 and thank you for hearing our comments and our
20 recommendations. We appreciate it.

21 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
22 very much, Ms. Wisnosky.

23 Next up we have Ms. Helen Ludwig with the
24 League of Women Voters. Following Ms. Ludwig
25 will be our Congresswoman here, Corrine Brown.

1 While we are waiting for Ms. Ludwig to get up
2 there, I just want to mention earlier Mr. Yost
3 talked specifically about some court cases, and
4 there is a website you can go to,
5 Floridaredistricting.org, that will provide a
6 the lot of that background and information. So
7 for those of you who heard about those court
8 cases, or any other information you hear about
9 today, most of it can be found on-line at
10 Floridaredistricting.org. I just want to point
11 that out.

12 Mrs. Ludwig, you are recognized. Thank
13 you for being here.

14 MS. LUDWIG: Thank you, and I didn't take
15 as long as you thought I would.

16 Am I missing something? Is there some
17 reason why we are behind Arkansas, Colorado,
18 Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Minnesota,
19 Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada and Oklahoma in
20 completing or almost completing the maps for
21 redistricting? Is there some reason why you
22 doubt the intelligence of we, the citizens,
23 when we overwhelmingly passed Constitutional
24 Amendments 5 and 6? Does it seem right to you
25 to use our tax money to fight against complying

1 with 5 and 6? Does it seem right that you may
2 not have drawn the new districts in time for
3 the candidates to know which district they
4 should file for and campaign for the 2012
5 election?

6 I guess that after you have studied the
7 answers to these and other questions, we may
8 know just what thinking process you were using
9 to justify all this. Thank you very much.

10 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
11 very much, Ms. Ludwig.

12 Next up we have Congresswoman Corrine
13 Brown. Congresswoman, thank you very much for
14 being here. We are grateful for your presence
15 and look forward to hearing from you. You are
16 recognized.

17 CONGRESSWOMAN BROWN: Thank you very much,
18 and thank you all for having this listening
19 tour prior to making a decision of how you are
20 going to draw the districts.

21 I represent the Third Congressional
22 District of Florida, and I got to say it is
23 probably the most popular district, not just in
24 Florida, but the entire country, and so, you
25 know, I wonder why, because I look at some of

1 the other districts, it is not the -- I don't
2 have more counties than anybody else, you know,
3 I have nine. There are several districts that
4 have more than nine. The numbers are the same.

5 But the most important thing I want to
6 point out is that -- the law of the land, you
7 know. When you listen and -- to people talk,
8 you would think that I drew the district. The
9 district was drawn based on the 1965 Voting
10 Rights Act. And so I want to submit to the
11 record the votes of the members that
12 participate in the '65 Voting Right Act, and
13 that is the basis of, you know, how people
14 voted. And Florida has always been kind of
15 progressive, because during that time, we had
16 13 members. Seven of them voted against it and
17 six voted for it. And so -- but I can report
18 that all of the members voted to re-enact the
19 Voting Rights Act, all of the members of the
20 congressional delegation, which I think is very
21 important.

22 Let me tell you something. You all were
23 talking about the beaches. I don't represent
24 the beaches. When America have a cold, the
25 African-American community have pneumonia. We

1 have a high unemployment rate. And it is very
2 important that we remain in the room. I feel
3 very strongly about that. Basically I want to
4 put in the record -- where is -- where is -- I
5 have something that I want to give you. Ken,
6 where is it? Okay. Where is the book? I want
7 to give you a copy of the book. This book is
8 America -- *Black America in Congress from 1870*
9 *to 2007*, and there was a period of 28 years
10 when the United States Congress went dark,
11 meaning it was no African-Americans in
12 Congress. For Florida, it was 129 years when I
13 got elected.

14 I am committed that we will never go dark
15 again in the United States Congress, never.
16 And it is not just about the congressional
17 seat, because when you draw the congressional,
18 you draw the House, you draw the Senate, you
19 draw the school boards, you draw city council.
20 So everything is based on how you draw those
21 districts based on communities of interest.

22 And so I feel very strongly that the
23 paramount reason that when you start drawing,
24 that you consider communities of interest. I
25 am putting in the record the fact is how those

1 members -- you talked about Georgia, Florida,
2 the different states, how they voted in '65 and
3 how they voted to date, the last time we voted,
4 and I want to tell you, the reason -- one of
5 the reasons why they passed the 1965 Voting
6 Rights Act is because there was not one single
7 African-American in the southern states, all 11
8 of them. Now ten of them have had at least one
9 representation, one, but the rest of them had
10 absolutely none. To date, Arkansas still have
11 never elected an African-American. It was 129
12 years since we elected one, and that one was
13 from Gainesville. We will never go back.

14 It is very important when you draw
15 districts -- and let me clear something up for
16 my friends in the room. I want to elect
17 Democrats; in fact, I wouldn't care if all 27
18 of them was Democrats. Not quite true, I want
19 a few Republicans, but we got too many in
20 Washington right now. But the point is, that
21 is not what we are talking about. What we are
22 talking about is including the principles of
23 the 1965 Voting Rights Act when you draw those
24 districts. Yes, we have come a long way. I
25 know we all are excited that the fact that we

1 have an African-American as President. Well,
2 he didn't carry none of those southern states.
3 So keep in mind -- well, Florida don't think
4 they are a southern state, and I don't either,
5 but the point is -- but the point is that we've
6 got to make sure that when we draw districts,
7 that we consider the law. And nothing has
8 changed as far as the voting rights is
9 concerned, we just re-enacted it, and we did it
10 for 25 years after having hearings all over the
11 country because there was a need.

12 And so with that, that is my position
13 on -- as you draw districts, and we will be
14 monitoring it, and certainly, you know, a lot
15 of people wanted to imply that I have something
16 to do with drawing the districts. I haven't
17 been in Tallahassee in almost 20 years, so
18 clearly I have not had anything to do with
19 drawing of the districts.

20 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
21 Congresswoman.

22 CONGRESSWOMAN BROWN: The districts have
23 been -- you drew the districts based on the
24 law. Thank you.

25 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you

1 very much. Thank you very much for your
2 comments.

3 I apologize, I didn't read the name after
4 Congresswoman, but it is Mr. Jim Last. Jim,
5 you are up, and after Mr. Last, I apologize, I
6 cannot read the last name here, but the first
7 name, I believe, is Marcie. If that is right,
8 if there is a Marcie here, you are next, and
9 you are from Fernandina Beach, and we will try
10 to get to you next, but until then, Mr. Last,
11 you are recognized. Thank you for being here,
12 sir.

13 MR. LAST: Thanks. I just want to say
14 that John Thrasher is my Senator, and very
15 happy to have him, but the main thought I want
16 to get across here is that I would like to see
17 Nassau County be whole. When you redistrict, I
18 would like to see Nassau County be in one
19 district, not separated beach from the west
20 side.

21 I also wanted to say that I really -- and
22 this is so wonderful to get to follow Corrine
23 Brown for this -- I really think that
24 gerrymandering is bad for all reasons, and I do
25 not want you to do it. One of the things that

1 Mike Yost said about the Supreme Court ruling,
2 or one of the rulings, on the reason for
3 gerrymandering districts was that, you know,
4 you couldn't feel like white people would vote
5 for a minority. I think we can safely throw
6 that out the window now as a reason to
7 gerrymander.

8 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
9 very much, sir.

10 Next up, Ms. Marcie, it could be Mary, I
11 apologize. Is it Mary? Okay. No problem, no
12 problem. You are recognized. Thank you very
13 much for being here.

14 After Ms. Mary, we've got Sherry Behning.
15 Sherry, you will be next.

16 You are recognized.

17 MS. DOWNEY: Thank you very much, and
18 thank you very distinguished representatives,
19 my wonderful Senator Thrasher, my State
20 Representative, Janet Adkins.

21 We are here -- I wish to echo Jim Last's
22 comments and to say that we are all Americans
23 and we come from Nassau County, and our mission
24 is to keep it whole. So thank you again for
25 all of your time in giving up your summer for

1 us. Thank you.

2 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
3 very much.

4 Next up we have Ms. Sherry Behning,
5 followed by Katie Ross. Ms. Sherry, thank you
6 for being here. You are recognized.

7 MS. BEHNING: I appreciate you holding
8 these hearings ahead of time. It is very
9 important to me that you hear our voices, and I
10 believe you are.

11 I have lived in beautiful Clay County for
12 37 years. When I first came here, we were the
13 bedroom of Jacksonville, and over the time, I
14 have seen Clay County develop into its own
15 unique county, style, culture. We are a
16 community. No matter where we think Clay
17 County, we are of like mind, we want the same
18 things. We want certain things taken care of
19 within our community.

20 I believe that Clay County should be held
21 as a county, as one spot, keeping really
22 distinct boundaries, not dividing gated
23 communities and neighborhoods, because we are
24 so much on the same like mind.

25 I work in one of the biggest retail

1 salers -- stores in our community, and I can't
2 tell you how many times I have heard people
3 talk about we really need to have one voice,
4 one person, that we can feel like represents
5 us, Clay County. Thank you.

6 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
7 very much.

8 Next up we have Ms. Katie Ross, followed
9 by Linda Storey.

10 MS. ROSS: Thank you, ladies and
11 gentlemen, for allowing us to speak today, and
12 I want to thank also everyone in the audience
13 for caring so much about this issue.

14 My name is Katie Ross, and I am the
15 President of the League of Women Voters,
16 Jacksonville First Coast. The League of Women
17 Voters seeks to improve our systems of
18 government and impact public policy through
19 education and advocacy.

20 For the past 70 years, the League of Women
21 Voters has been working on the issue of
22 redistricting here in Florida. It is one of
23 the first issues we brought to the Florida
24 Legislature. There have been four petition
25 drives over the past years, and last November,

1 Amendments 5 and 6 were on the ballot, and they
2 passed by 63 percent.

3 The League worked with the coalition of
4 organizations, including the NAACP and
5 democracy to advocate on behalf of the
6 amendments.

7 Up until this past November, there have
8 been no rules in terms of redistricting. Now
9 there are guidelines, simple, simple
10 straight-forward rules as to how districts
11 should be drawn.

12 That being said, I urge you and your staff
13 to draw these districts as soon as you can.
14 The proposed timeline has the Legislature
15 reviewing the maps and voting the second week
16 of March. This does not leave enough time for
17 candidates to file for office, mount their
18 campaigns, accommodate a constructive review
19 process and any litigation that might occur.
20 We urge you to draw these maps soon and review
21 them in committee in the fall. That way, the
22 Legislature can vote on them the first week of
23 session, giving candidates plenty of time to
24 file and mount their campaigns. In the words
25 of one of your own attorneys, the current

1 timeline will cause chaos and voter confusion.

2 The Legislature says they want to honor
3 the voice of the people, and we appreciate
4 that, but I do ask you to stop using taxpayers'
5 money to fight redistricting in court. These
6 amendments were passed by 63 percent of Florida
7 voters. Stop these lawsuits.

8 Finally, these hearings need to be
9 productive. Citizens are expressing their
10 opinions, and we want to know what is on your
11 mind, too. Again, I encourage you to draw
12 these maps in a timely manner, and I appreciate
13 you visiting our fair city, Jacksonville,
14 today. Thank you.

15 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
16 very much, Ms. Ross.

17 Ms. Linda Storey, you are next, also with
18 the League of Women Voters, followed by Ben
19 Chavis. Ms. Storey.

20 MS. STOREY: Hi. Thank you again for
21 being here.

22 The most important thing I feel is that
23 the districts be contiguous. The communication
24 with your elected people is the most important
25 thing. Some districts have so much spaces in

1 terms of miles, that it is very hard to keep in
2 touch. I know you have -- it must be fair, not
3 only for the number of people, but also for the
4 amount of miles that each representative has to
5 represent. Sixty-three percent of the voters
6 voted for this, so I appreciate your efforts in
7 making it fair for the people and doing it in a
8 timely manner for the candidates that are
9 trying to run for the next election. Thank
10 you.

11 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
12 very much.

13 Mr. Chavis, you are recognized, sir,
14 followed by Mr. Spencer Meeks. Thank you for
15 being here.

16 MR. CHAVIS: Thank you. I am a resident
17 of Broward County. I have been involved in the
18 civil rights movement in the United States for
19 over 50 years. The Voting Rights Act was not
20 just enacted by the Congress of the United
21 States, but it came as a consequence of a lot
22 of sacrifice, a lot of struggle.

23 When each of you introduced yourselves at
24 the beginning of the hearing, I said to myself,
25 Florida is a very diverse state. I want to

1 thank you for having us here.

2 At the end of the day, it will be the map,
3 the map that we started with and the map that
4 you end with. The outcome of the new map
5 should reflect the growing diversity of the
6 state of Florida. It should not reflect less
7 diversity. It should reflect more diversity.

8 I am hoping, and I appeal to each of you
9 who are decision-makers in the state
10 Legislature that the redistricting not only
11 ought to be fair, but it ought to be
12 representative of the increased diversity of
13 the state of Florida.

14 Earlier a speaker mentioned race and
15 politics. I noticed some people kind of shook
16 their heads, but I don't think we should fear
17 what happened in the past, and I don't think we
18 should fear the future. Racial diversity is
19 not -- or should not be a huge hurdle. It
20 should be seen as a blessing. Some of you
21 introduced yourself saying, "I represent God's
22 district." This ought to be God's state, and
23 in God's state, all of God's children ought to
24 be treated fairly, without discrimination of
25 race, without discrimination of any other

1 barrier.

2 What we are hoping is that at the end of
3 the day, the new redistricting in the State of
4 Florida would not have any regression, would
5 not have less minorities being in the House or
6 being in the Congress of the United States. We
7 should start there. The congressional
8 districts should not be less minority
9 representation. They should be more.

10 We celebrate the journey that Florida has
11 just arrived. Let's move forward and not move
12 backwards.

13 The Voting Rights Act of 1965 is still the
14 law of the land as amended. The reason why
15 there are a lot of court cases, somebody made
16 reference, is because there are continuing
17 attempts to dismantle the Voting Rights Act,
18 and that is why the federal courts are
19 available to protect citizens' rights.

20 I commend this committee, and I hope and
21 pray that the state Legislature will do what is
22 right, and that is to pass and put a new map up
23 that will be more reflective of the diversity
24 and of the journey of the State of Florida to
25 insure equal voting rights for all of its

1 citizens.

2 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
3 very much, Mr. Chavis.

4 Next we have Mr. Spencer Meeks, Jr.,
5 followed by Andrew Curtin with the Nassau
6 Patriots Tea Party. You are recognized, sir.

7 MR. MEEKS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
8 First of all, I don't have a lot of statistics
9 to give you, but I want to just say two things.

10 One thing, I want to acknowledge our
11 Congresswoman, Corrine Brown, because I know
12 how dedicated she has been for equality in the
13 state of Florida. I know how hard she has
14 worked so many years to see that every
15 individual had a chance to be what they wanted
16 to be in the state of Florida.

17 Secondly, I would like to ask this board,
18 this committee here, to think about our future
19 and the future we are coming, that we have to
20 face that we do not leave an example of going
21 backwards. Whatever we do, let it be a
22 progress made forward, so that instead of
23 losing delegation, instead of losing
24 minorities, that we do all we can to build a
25 bridge to make and create more position for

1 minorities. Thank you.

2 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
3 Mr. Meeks.

4 Next up we have Andrew Curtin. After
5 Mr. Curtin will be Barbara Engle. Mr. Curtin
6 is with the Nassau Tea Party Patriots. Thank
7 you for being here, sir.

8 MR. CURTIN: Good afternoon. Thank you
9 very much for holding this meeting.

10 I am speaking as a long-time resident of
11 Nassau County. I would like to reemphasize
12 what Mr. Last and Ms. Downey said about the
13 integrity of Nassau County and the
14 redistricting process. We are located at the
15 far end of the state, and any events where we
16 get fragmented into multiple districts, I feel
17 that we lose the effectiveness of our
18 representation both at the state level and the
19 congressional level. So I would urge you,
20 whatever the redistricting process requires,
21 that the county be held -- because of the way
22 it is structured and the population -- be held
23 intact throughout the redistricting process.
24 Thank you.

25 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,

1 sir.

2 Ms. Barbara Engle is next, followed by
3 Raymond Chute.

4 MS. ENGLE: Good afternoon. Thank you for
5 this opportunity. I am here as a concerned
6 citizen and as an active member of the
7 Northeast Florida Chapter of the American Civil
8 Liberties Union.

9 The process and the hearings have been
10 troubling to me, and I am trying to understand
11 the process as best I can. I don't understand
12 why it takes so long to develop the maps. You
13 have had information from the census for
14 months. And I heard your comments earlier
15 prior to this portion of the meeting, but I
16 really don't feel that this is a conversation.
17 I would like to be able to meet and talk to
18 some of the people who will be running to
19 represent me, but you have to draw the maps and
20 draw the districts to let me know who they are.
21 I am looking forward to you making those maps,
22 to present it to the public to start a
23 conversation; otherwise, I am afraid we are
24 just wasting everyone's time.

25 The new rules overwhelmingly approved by

1 the voters last November mean that you can't
2 make a district to favor any political party.
3 I am troubled that so many of you opposed,
4 fought and continue to fight these
5 voter-approved fair district rules. Please
6 don't confuse fair districts with minority
7 districts. Remember, the Florida House's own
8 special council on redistricting told this
9 committee on April 28th that the intent of the
10 Fair District amendments is to enhance minority
11 protections beyond what is provided in the
12 Voting Rights Act. In fact, if followed
13 correctly, the Fair District amendments should
14 lead to more diversity and more districts being
15 represented by minorities, not fewer, by
16 placing significant numbers of minority voters
17 in more districts throughout the state rather
18 than the existing super-majorities that exist
19 in just a few districts.

20 Keep in mind that not only were the Fair
21 District amendments approved by 63 percent of
22 Florida's voters, they were also supported by
23 the state's leading civil and voting rights
24 groups: The NAACP, ACLU and League of Women
25 Voters as examples.

1 Why are you spending my money and that of
2 other Florida taxpayers to undermine my vote
3 and the vote of the overwhelming majority of
4 Floridians for a fair reapportionment process
5 and fairer districts? Maybe it would be better
6 to stop spending money on lawyers and just draw
7 fair maps. Thank you very much for hearing me
8 out.

9 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
10 Ms. Engle.

11 Next up we have Mr. Raymond Chute. After
12 Mr. Chute, we have Thomas Watson. You are
13 recognized, sir.

14 MR. CHUTE: Thank you, sir, and I would
15 like to thank the committee for holding these
16 hearings so that everyone can have a chance to
17 voice their opinions.

18 I would like to refer back to this lady
19 over here that lived on Fleming Island and
20 spoke about living there 35 years. Well, I
21 have been living -- she said 37. I have been
22 living there 35 years. And, unfortunately, I
23 live on the east side of Pine Avenue, which
24 runs down Fleming Island, and I am not in the
25 same congressional district as everyone else

1 who lives on Fleming Island. My daughter lives
2 on the other side of Pine Avenue, about a
3 quarter of a mile from me, and she has a
4 different Congressperson than I do.

5 Now, I can tell by looking at that and
6 after having read about it for so many years
7 that many of these districts are gerrymandered
8 to force a particular result whenever people
9 are voting. I don't think that gerrymandering
10 is a fair way of doing things. I think there
11 -- I agree with the lady about fair districts,
12 but I don't know that we are all -- when we say
13 "fair," I didn't know that we all have the same
14 definition.

15 I would like to see the redistricting maps
16 drawn so that they use -- make use of natural
17 boundaries, county line boundaries, city
18 boundaries, river boundaries, that sort of
19 thing, in so far as possible. I recognize it
20 can't happen totally in all cases, but it
21 should be something that is reasonable and
22 sensible, not this meandering district running
23 through Fleming Island.

24 Thank you for your attention.

25 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,

1 sir. We appreciate your comments.

2 Next up we have Thomas Watson, followed by
3 Sandra Jones. Mr. Watson.

4 MR. WATSON: Thank you very much. I am
5 another member of Fleming Island, and I live on
6 that little tiny strip that runs from Duval
7 County all the way down to Putnam County is in
8 my case, where I live, about 2,000 feet wide,
9 and I am completely divorced from all the
10 things that I do in Clay County. I beg you to
11 please get rid of that little strip of shame
12 and give me some representation back. Thank
13 you.

14 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
15 Mr. Watson, and we always give bonus points to
16 brevity, sir, so thank you very much.

17 Next up we have Sandra Jones, followed by
18 Chris Chambless. Ms. Jones?

19 Okay. We like that even better than
20 brevity, so thank you very much. We appreciate
21 that, Ms. Jones.

22 We have Mr. Chris Chambless. After
23 Mr. Chambless, we are going to have James
24 Minion.

25 You are recognized, sir. Mr. Chambless is

1 with the Clay County Elections Office.

2 MR. CHAMBLESS: Good afternoon,
3 distinguished members of the committee. I
4 certainly want to speak to you as the
5 Supervisor of Elections of Clay County, as well
6 as the Florida State Association of Supervisors
7 of Elections, District 5, Board of Directors.
8 District 5 represents eight counties in
9 northeast Florida and nearly one million
10 registered voters.

11 To that point, over 20,000 of those
12 registered voters are overseas civilian and
13 military absentee voters who continue to foot
14 the bill of freedom of this great country.

15 This afternoon I wish to take a -- take
16 the discussion to a different area of concern
17 than has been discussed thus far, a discussion
18 which focuses more on the process, specifically
19 the time lines, then the districting lines
20 themselves. I am asking that greater
21 consideration is given to the time lines of
22 redistricting, and where possible, that the
23 process be expedited to allow more time to
24 adjust precinct lines to the new district
25 lines.

1 To conduct elections efficiently and
2 accurately, election officials need time to
3 adjust precinct lines to the new districts,
4 gain approval of those districts and precincts
5 by the Board of County Commissioners, secure
6 additional polling locations, notify all voters
7 well in advance of election day.

8 If the Legislature, the Attorney General,
9 Supreme Court and Justice Department all
10 complete their work on schedule, elections
11 administrators will have less than two weeks to
12 adjust the records of Florida's 11 million
13 voters before the first absentee ballot must be
14 mailed. The calendar provided by legislative
15 staff indicates that final Justice Department
16 review of the new districts will likely be
17 completed after candidate qualifying. That has
18 the potential of confusing candidates and
19 delaying ballot printing.

20 In addition to that, I wish to discuss the
21 district lines themselves. Please respect
22 communities when drawing your district lines.
23 For the first time, in my opinion, legislative
24 staff worked with elections office and census
25 officials to establish the Voting Tabulation

1 Districts, or VTDs, which take into
2 consideration intact communities, traffic
3 patterns, physical boundaries. Please adhere
4 to these lines wherever possible.

5 Currently in Clay County, there are 291
6 different representation splits, which each
7 require a different ballot style in a primary
8 election, 97 in a general election. The best
9 place to draw a district line is along the
10 county line. Please divide districts along the
11 county lines whenever possible.

12 While there is much attention to Florida's
13 meandering districts, there are many more
14 examples of small cities that are being
15 separated into three or four districts, or
16 gated communities with district lines running
17 right through them. The best way to avoid this
18 is by following those established VTD lines.

19 I certainly appreciate your commitment and
20 your long-standing interest in this process, as
21 it is very important. Thank you so very much.

22 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
23 Mr. Chambless. We appreciate the input from
24 the elections office.

25 Next up we have Mr. James Minion from

1 Florida Prospers. After Mr. Minion, we have
2 Frank Farrell.

3 You are recognized, sir.

4 MR. MINION: Thank you very much, and I
5 would like to thank the entire committee for
6 appearing and touring the state in this way,
7 allow us all our input. But I will just simply
8 reiterate what many of the previous speakers
9 have said in that it was a super-majority of
10 Florida voters who did approve the Fair
11 District amendments for Congress and for state
12 Legislators. I would say that is a high
13 margin, it is a high standard, and I would say
14 it is tough to get elected with 63 percent,
15 don't you think?

16 So I think when I hear and I read things
17 about how the state at a time where Tallahassee
18 is telling us we cannot fund our schools, that
19 we are squirreling away millions and millions
20 of dollars to -- to attack these districts with
21 lawsuits or defend the maps that are drawn, it
22 just makes it seem like the process has gotten
23 off on the wrong foot, that you are kind of
24 preparing for the worst when you should be
25 engaged in doing the best.

1 And I would certainly concur with the
2 previous speaker that -- and some other
3 speakers that we do need -- as voters, we do
4 need a significant timeline. We have a
5 presidential election in the year coming up,
6 and the folks below that on the ticket have
7 enough trouble getting in front of their
8 constituents and their voters than to continue
9 to -- then to delay that timeline right up to
10 the -- right up to the horn, right up to the
11 gun, and it just doesn't allow us to even find
12 out who can run for the seats. We won't even
13 know who can run for the seats until you guys
14 are done. So we would appreciate the most
15 accelerated timeline you can provide.

16 And I would just also like to mention
17 something that is interesting, this for the
18 first time ever in the redistricting process,
19 we talk about a state that is slightly majority
20 Democrat, majority Republican in the House and
21 Senate, but what we have is a plurality now of
22 the fastest-growing party affiliation, which is
23 no party affiliation. We now have a couple of
24 million voters, about 22 percent of our
25 registered voters in the state are no party

1 affiliation. So I think that is something
2 important to keep in mind, I think, when you
3 are -- when you are putting the demographics
4 together in the districts. And, again, please
5 accelerate that timeline as fast as you can and
6 let's try to stay out of court. Thank you very
7 much.

8 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
9 very much, Mr. Minion.

10 Next we have Frank Farrell, who is
11 followed by -- I believe it's Arie Rodriguez,
12 could be Annie Rodriguez, I apologize if I
13 misstated that.

14 But, Frank, you are up. Thank you, sir.

15 MR. FARRELL: Good afternoon. My name is
16 Frank Farrell, and I live in Orange Park,
17 Florida. I have the privilege of serving as
18 the current Chairman of the Clay County School
19 Board, as Vice-Chairman of the Northeast
20 Coalition of School Boards, and on the Board of
21 Directors of the Clay County Educational
22 Foundation. In addition to that, I serve on a
23 number of other community-based boards and
24 committees. Thank you for the opportunity to
25 address the redistricting of the Florida

1 legislation.

2 As you know, Clay County is currently
3 represented in the House by five
4 representatives, Ms. Adkins and Messrs.
5 Weinstein, Daniels, Van Zant and Proctor, and
6 in the Senate by Mr. Wise and Ms. Lynn.

7 Clay County has its own unique
8 personality, if you will. We are urban and
9 very rural, spread over 661 square miles. Our
10 perspective, values, outlook and character are
11 old Florida, influenced, of course, by new
12 arrivals, and largely influenced by the number
13 of military, both active duty and retired. We
14 are fiercely patriotic and very supportive of
15 our military. Clay County folks are
16 conservative, church-going and family-oriented.
17 You will see these values celebrated at the
18 Clay County Fair, recently at our Fourth of
19 July celebrations throughout the county, and
20 literally in every observance of every holiday
21 throughout the year.

22 Now, we enjoy our proximity to
23 Jacksonville and Duval County and everything
24 that that has to offer by way of recreation,
25 sports, theater, restaurants, shopping, and, of

1 course, the beaches. We do not have a beach.
2 The pace is vibrant, sometimes too much so, but
3 always exciting.

4 As communities, we share many of the same
5 problems and many of the same challenges.
6 Others are unique to our own community.

7 There is a risk, and that risk is that
8 Clay County's issues and concerns and needs
9 could -- could become sublimated to those of
10 Duval County.

11 I would hope that Clay County citizens are
12 an important part and percentage of each and
13 every newly redrawn district, preserving our
14 perspective, our values, our outlook. The
15 voice of Clay County with responsive
16 representation in Tallahassee is my message and
17 my request to the Legislature. Thank you very
18 much.

19 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
20 Mr. Farrell.

21 Next up we have Annie Rodriguez, followed
22 by Lynn Watson.

23 I would like to take just a brief moment
24 to let everybody know where we are. We are
25 looking at 3:05. This is our 21st speaker. We

1 have just about 55 or 56 speakers, so were are
2 on a very tight time frame. I would ask you to
3 please try to keep your comments within three
4 minutes, and just so everyone knows, we will be
5 back at 6:00, 6:00 to 8:00, so if we do not get
6 to everyone, it will carry forward to the next
7 hearing.

8 But with that, Ms. Annie, you are
9 recognized. Thank you.

10 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. Thank you for
11 this opportunity. I moved to Jacksonville
12 about three and a half years ago, so I am
13 fairly new to the area.

14 When I hear us talk about the minority
15 community, that word really makes me tense. I
16 want to say if -- when we refer to the minority
17 community, I am assuming we are talking about
18 the people of color. If we were all to come
19 together, all those people that we keep calling
20 minority, will we truly be the minority? I
21 want to put that out there.

22 What I want to say is in the
23 redistricting, a lot of us are talking about
24 diversity, and I want to -- for you all to
25 consider the Latino/Hispanic community when you

1 are looking at the redistricting, especially
2 with the statistics showing that so many of us
3 are moving down south.

4 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
5 very much.

6 Okay. We have Lynn Watson. Ms. Watson is
7 followed by Carolyn Woods from the Atlantic --
8 who is an Atlantic Beach commissioner.

9 You are recognized, Ms. Watson.

10 MS. WATSON: I -- in the sake of brevity,
11 I will say just very few things.

12 One, I am a resident of Fleming Island,
13 the east side. Across the street is a totally
14 different district.

15 Fleming Island, a sliver of Orange Park,
16 the sliver of Fleming Island and the portion of
17 Green Cove Springs, all in Clay County, to
18 use -- to speak of Ms. Congresswoman Brown's
19 commonality of interest, it does not exist in
20 that sliver. We would like to be in Clay
21 County as one district. Thank you.

22 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.
23 Carolyn Woods, who is -- I should say
24 Commissioner Woods is next up, and after
25 Commissioner Woods, we will have Tamara

1 Pendleton.

2 Commissioner, you are recognized. Thank
3 you for being here.

4 COMMISSIONER WOODS: Thank you very much.
5 I want to thank all of you for coming out,
6 participating in this and allowing all of the
7 citizens to come and speak.

8 I agree with a lot of what has been said
9 today, and I just want to add one brief comment
10 to the subject of Amendments 5 and 6, and that
11 is basically that I feel it is one thing for
12 the people to sue the government, but it is
13 quite another for the government to sue its
14 people, and I am hoping that all of these
15 workshops and public gatherings are your good
16 faith effort to move forward with Amendments 5
17 and 6. Thank you very much.

18 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.

19 Ms. Tamara Pendleton, and after
20 Ms. Pendleton, we have Benetta Standly with the
21 ACLU of Northeast Florida.

22 You are recognized.

23 MS. PENDLETON: Hi, Tammy Pendleton with
24 the Nassau County Supervisor of Elections
25 Office. Thank you for the opportunity to speak

1 today.

2 On behalf of the Florida State Association
3 of Supervisors of Elections and the Nassau
4 County Supervisor of Elections Office, Vicki P.
5 Cannon, Supervisor of Elections, we would like
6 to submit the following input for inclusion in
7 the record: We echo the two important areas
8 and consideration regarding the redistricting
9 process, the first one being time. In order to
10 conduct successful elections in 2012, election
11 officials do need time to complete the required
12 tasks. To conduct elections efficiently and
13 accurately, election officials need time to
14 adjust the precinct lines to new districts,
15 gain approval of those precincts by the Board
16 of County Commissioners and notify voters well
17 in advance of election day. If the
18 Legislature, Attorney General, Supreme Court
19 and Justice Department all complete their work
20 on schedule, administrators will have less than
21 two weeks to adjust the records of Florida's
22 11 million voters before the first absentee
23 ballots must be mailed. The calendar provided
24 by legislative staff indicates that final
25 Justice Department review of new districts will

1 likely be completed after candidate qualifying.
2 This has the potential, of which you have
3 heard, that it could be confusing to candidates
4 and delay ballot printing.

5 As you are aware, there are many
6 activities that go into preparing for elections
7 after the redistricting process: Notifying
8 voters, securing polling locations, voting
9 equipment programming, typesetting ballots,
10 preparation and mailing of absentee ballots,
11 the law requires mailing 45 days prior to the
12 election to uniform service voters and overseas
13 voters who have requested absentee ballots, and
14 training poll workers are just a few. It is
15 our mission to ensure that the voters are
16 well-informed and prepared for the voting
17 process, and that the integrity of the voting
18 process is protected.

19 The second most important area, district
20 lines. Please respect communities when you do
21 draw the district lines. We greatly appreciate
22 that for this redistricting process,
23 legislative staff worked with election and
24 census officials to establish Voting Tabulation
25 Districts which take into consideration intact

1 communities, traffic patterns and physical
2 barriers. We respectfully request that you
3 adhere to these lines whenever possible.
4 Traffic -- I'm sorry. Much time and thought
5 was invested so that the best possible product
6 could be produced to assist in the
7 redistricting and election processes.

8 While there is much attention to Florida's
9 meandering districts, there are many more
10 examples of small cities being separated into
11 three or four districts, or gated communities
12 with district lines running right through them.
13 The best to avoid this is by following the
14 Voting Tabulation District lines. The best
15 place to draw the line, a district line, is
16 along county line. Please divide districts
17 along county lines whenever possible.

18 Again, thank you for the opportunity to
19 speak with you today and to provide our input
20 into the process.

21 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.

22 Ms. Standly, thank you very much for being
23 here with the ACLU of the northeast region.

24 Followed by Ms. Standly, we will have
25 Vincent Schuppert.

1 MS. STANDLY: Good afternoon. So my name
2 is Benetta Standly. I am with the ACLU of
3 Florida. I want to welcome those of you in the
4 Legislature who are not from Duval County here
5 to Jacksonville. Glad to have you. So I will
6 make my remarks very brief. I am going to
7 touch five quick points.

8 One, we need to protect minority
9 districts; two, you need to follow the will of
10 the voters; three, I need to know that this
11 process is deeply flawed; and also you need to
12 stop being wasteful of taxpayers' monies, and
13 you need to show me a map, quite frankly.

14 So as you know, Amendments 5 and 6
15 actually added minority voting rights
16 protections into the Florida Constitution. It
17 had never been there before. So it actually
18 adds two provisions of the Florida -- the
19 Federal Voting Rights Act.

20 However, we need information from you as
21 our elected officials on how many
22 majority/minority districts exist in Florida.
23 Where are they located and how will your map
24 address those? You all have a legal obligation
25 to make sure that minority voters have the

1 opportunity to elect the persons that they
2 choose.

3 Secondly, the new rules for drawing
4 legislative boundaries have been overwhelmingly
5 approved by the Florida voters. As you know,
6 nearly 63 percent of Floridians, including
7 myself, agreed to amend our Florida
8 Constitution so that no political party would
9 be favored. We need you, the Florida
10 Legislature, to follow these rules. We elected
11 you. You have to follow the rules we set
12 forward.

13 Quite frankly, I am disappointed that many
14 in our state Legislature are not trying to
15 follow the rules. You are simply opposing them
16 and you are fighting them.

17 Three, the political party in charge,
18 quite frankly, who will be drawing the maps, is
19 probably likely to draw lines that favor
20 themselves. That is absolutely not okay. The
21 entire purpose of Amendments 5 and 6 was that
22 voters choose the politicians, not the other
23 way around. This is not -- this is supposed to
24 be a fair and nonpartisan process. We do not
25 want fake public hearings. We do not want

1 shady back-room deals. We want a fair process.

2 Four, please stop wasting my taxpayer
3 dollars. Stop wasting our dollars and stop
4 undermining our vote and our voice, and just
5 draw the maps. It is just that simple, draw
6 good maps, draw fair maps, and perhaps the
7 lawsuits will cease.

8 Finally, my last point is, with all due
9 respect, where are the maps? This is not a
10 real conversation. You bring us here, you
11 invite public comment and you give us nothing
12 to comment on. You have had this data from the
13 census for many months. You need to bring
14 something forward and stop wasting time. There
15 are people who are going to run for office.
16 They don't even know what district they are in.
17 They can't even campaign. We need to speed
18 this process up.

19 So, again, this isn't a conversation, and
20 quite frankly, I see it as this traveling tour
21 around the state on my taxpayer dime.

22 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
23 Ms. Standly, for your comments, and a lot of
24 the questions that were brought forth I believe
25 Senator Gaetz is going to address at the end of

1 the hearing if they are not addressed before
2 that. So thank you very much for your
3 comments, and next up we have Mr. Schuppert,
4 retired from the United States Navy. Sir,
5 thank you for your service and thank you for
6 being here today.

7 MR. SCHUPPERT: Proud to be here. I am an
8 Orange Park resident of 29 years. I live along
9 the river with a one block neck of Congress,
10 U.S. Congress District 3, which was
11 gerrymandered to connect Jacksonville all the
12 way to Gainesville and Ocala. Unfortunately, I
13 now feel unrepresented. And if you reflect
14 just a little bit, my Congresswoman addressed
15 all of us a little bit earlier, very proud of
16 speaking about her representation of the
17 minority. Unfortunately, she never talked
18 about representing me. And so, therefore, I
19 feel, quite frankly, unrepresented, and that is
20 too bad.

21 The gerrymandered district has absolutely
22 no logical boundaries, and I am talking
23 Congressional District 3. We are symmetry in
24 its creation.

25 I have this suggestion for you in creating

1 the map, and that is we've got some fine
2 Florida universities, hand the project to them
3 and let them design and lay out the map. Thank
4 you.

5 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
6 Mr. Schuppert. We appreciate your comments and
7 your ideas.

8 Next up we have Dee Lansford, I believe.
9 Ms. Dee, thank you very much, and followed by
10 Ms. Lansford will be Marge Hutton.

11 MS. LANSFORD: Thank you so very much for
12 coming and seeing us, giving us your ideas and
13 allowing us to give you ours.

14 I am from Orange Park, I live there and
15 have since 1964. We are a unique, and I am
16 sure all of us for every county, our counties
17 are unique. They belong to us, and that is the
18 way we look at them.

19 We have been growing and we are looking
20 forward to where we don't have to borrow
21 representation from one of our neighboring
22 counties. But the last -- we gave you -- you
23 are borrowing our Lieutenant Governor, Jennifer
24 Carroll, and I've got a wonderful replacement
25 for him, so I can't really fuss at you about

1 that, but, anyway, it is just, you know, we
2 want to be our own people, we want to be our
3 own selves. I think we are strong enough to do
4 that, and I think our neighbors will help us as
5 we help them. And a lot of times people will
6 say, "Hey, I was elected because of Clay
7 County," so -- and a lot of you, I recognize
8 your face right now.

9 Remember us when you put your maps
10 together. Let us know, and let us know more
11 what we can do for you as well. We put you
12 there, but we need to keep giving you our input
13 so you will know what we want you to do. Thank
14 you very much.

15 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
16 Ms. Dee.

17 Next up we have Ms. Marge Hutton. After
18 Ms. Hutton, we have John Libby. Thank you for
19 being here.

20 MS. HUTTON: Hello, my name is Marge
21 Hutton, and I am a resident of Clay County and
22 Orange Park since 1975. My husband served 26
23 years with the United States Navy. I currently
24 sit as Town Councilwoman for the Town of Orange
25 Park, and I am also Chairman of the Clay County

1 Chamber of Commerce. So I bring a lot of
2 diverse reflections from Clay County.

3 I come today before you to say that we
4 have -- we request in your consideration to
5 consider Clay County with one voice, one
6 representation. We are a strong community. We
7 would ask that we have that reflection.

8 The next thing I would ask is please
9 didn't divide our community. We already heard
10 several people tell you how it has been divided
11 and has been for many years.

12 And then again, to echo the sooner rather
13 than later, not only for the consideration of
14 the people that are trying to run, but so that
15 the ballots get out in a timely manner, and
16 most importantly, so they get over to our
17 military that are asking for absentee ballots
18 so those votes can be counted, which are most
19 important.

20 And I thank you very much. I hope God
21 inspires you for the best opportunities and
22 decisions for the State of Florida. Thank you.

23 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.
24 Thank you, thank you.

25 Next up we have Mr. Libby. Followed by

1 John Libby, we have Darryl Register.

2 MR. LIBBY: This is a plan that I
3 submitted on Friday to the Florida House. It
4 is 27 congressional districts. The deviation
5 in population from the largest district to the
6 smallest district is three people. There are
7 11 districts that are ideal population. None
8 of the districts are under the ideal
9 population. Using the Fair Districts
10 principles that the voters of the State of
11 Florida approved last year, this is one
12 configuration of how our congressional
13 districts could look after redistricting.

14 Starting first at the county level, then
15 moving to the Voting Tabulation District level,
16 and only where necessary to the block level, I
17 redistricted, keeping counties intact, not
18 splitting consolidated communities, and
19 generally trying to find the little bits and
20 pieces of population that we -- were needed in
21 rural areas where you can go for miles and only
22 pick up one or two individuals.

23 So, as I said, these districts are exactly
24 equal in population, and I would like to focus
25 the attention on the two northeast Florida

1 districts. If you take Nassau County, Clay
2 County, St. Johns County, Putnam County and
3 Duval County, you have almost ideal population
4 for two districts. You need to remove about 20
5 people from someplace along the lines to come
6 up with different districts, or with two ideal
7 districts. In any case, the two districts on
8 this map are Districts 4 and 5 for northeast
9 Florida.

10 Now, I will say this about the plan. It
11 is regressive. District -- what is currently
12 District 3 under this configuration, which only
13 encompasses three counties, two of which are
14 intact completely, is roughly 31 percent
15 African-American voting age population. But as
16 we have heard from the various speakers today,
17 this is really where we face the metal meets
18 the road here in Florida, where under the '65
19 Voting Rights Act we need to have minority
20 access, and that needs to be defined by this
21 committee and both houses in Tallahassee.

22 Secondly, the Department of Justice has
23 pre-cleared our two constitutional amendments,
24 but there is still -- Florida still has to have
25 a review when our congressional plans were put

1 in, but I felt that at least people should have
2 an opportunity here in north Florida today to
3 see what a potential Fair Districts type of
4 plan would look like in regards to the
5 congressional districts. And like I said, the
6 deviation among the 27 districts is only three
7 people, so I think it meets all constitutional
8 criteria currently in effect under the Florida
9 Constitution, but it does run into the issue of
10 the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and whether
11 minority representation requires a
12 majority/minority population within a district.
13 Thank you very much.

14 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
15 Mr. Libby. Mr. Libby, I would just like to
16 point out -- I want to thank you again for
17 taking the time, not only to be here today, but
18 for the effort you put into producing these
19 maps. It is a perfect example of redistricting
20 in the 21st century. Before we were not able
21 to get input from the public like this, because
22 the technology did not exist, but today we can.
23 And, Mr. Libby, that is a gold standard in
24 regards to working with us and giving us input
25 and giving us options and giving us your

1 opinion, not only in the form of the spoken
2 word, but on paper as a map, and I just want to
3 thank you again for taking the time to do that.
4 I know that took a lot of effort.

5 Next up we have got Mr. Darryl Register.
6 Following Mr. Register is Eric Haeseler. I
7 hope I didn't say that wrong, but that is the
8 way I read it, Eric Haeseler.

9 So, Mr. Register, you are up, sir. Thank
10 you.

11 MR. REGISTER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
12 am a third-generation dairy farmer from Baker
13 County. I am also the Executive Director of
14 the Baker County Chamber of Commerce and the
15 Economic Development Commission.

16 I come before you today thanking you for
17 taking the time to come here to northeast
18 Florida, and I ask, as you draw the district
19 lines for the three distinguished governing
20 bodies that you are responsible for, that you
21 keep Baker County whole. We ask that we remain
22 as a single member of representation in the
23 three districts, and we ask, when possible, to
24 be grouped with counties of like demographics
25 with the small rural Baker County. Thank you

1 for your time.

2 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.

3 Great, thank you, Mr. -- Mr. Haeseler, did
4 I say that right? Okay, Mr. Haeseler, thank
5 you, you get bonus points today as well.

6 After Mr. Haeseler, we have Mike Griffis.
7 Mr. Griffis? Somebody told me Mike left. Oh,
8 he is here, he is here. Come on down, you are
9 the next contestant on the Price is Right.

10 MR. GRIFFIS: That is what I have been
11 waiting for.

12 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: And after Mr.
13 Griffis, we have Jimmy Anderson.

14 So, Mr. Griffis, thank you for being here,
15 sir, you are recognized.

16 MR. GRIFFIS: Thank you very much. And
17 first I want to thank you guys, thank you,
18 Florida Legislature, for coming out and taking
19 this tour across the state of Florida,
20 listening to the people that you represent.
21 Thank you very much.

22 And really, I am Mike Griffis again, a
23 resident of Baker County, and right now Baker
24 County is represented by Congressman Ander
25 Crenshaw, Representative Janet Adkins and

1 Senator Charlie Dean. And if we had our way,
2 we would like to leave things just like they
3 are, but if Baker County has to be
4 redistricted, as Darryl Register has already
5 said, we want to be a whole county, we want to
6 be represented by one representative from each
7 branch.

8 With a county like Baker County, which has
9 limited resources, when an issue, whether it is
10 a federal issue or a state issue, comes up, it
11 is certainly easier for us to talk to one
12 person than it is to try to talk multiple
13 people. So we would ask for that, along with
14 being grouped, as Darryl said, with counties of
15 like interest. I think someone said earlier
16 that Clay County is like a rural county. Well,
17 Baker County folks go to Clay County for
18 entertainment. So just keep us with counties
19 like us. Thank you.

20 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
21 Mr. Griffis.

22 We've got next up Jimmy Anderson.
23 Mr. Anderson, sir, thank you for being here.

24 Following Mr. Anderson is Wilbert River
25 Torres. You are recognized, sir.

1 MR. ANDERSON: I want to thank you for the
2 opportunity to speak here. I am Jimmy
3 Anderson. I am the Commissioner of Baker
4 County. And I just want to thank you for the
5 opportunity, and I echo basically what the
6 people before me said about Baker County. I do
7 think that we are God's country, but actually,
8 I think that the United States is God's
9 country, and I think -- I also wanted to say
10 that I like the single representation on all
11 three districts. I mean, it is just -- it's
12 the way to go. And I think that if we are
13 going to draw our lines, boundary lines, they
14 need to stay along your county lines as much as
15 possible.

16 Also, I need -- we need to get this
17 process done as quick as we can so, you know,
18 that the members can get out there and they can
19 try to drum up some support. And also I would
20 like for it to hurry up because I don't know if
21 y'all know, which I am sure you do, that when
22 y'all draw these lines, it is going to affect
23 each polling location. If Baker County gets
24 split, that means that Baker County
25 Commissioners are going to have to come up with

1 some more money to give to the Supervisor of
2 Elections to send out all the paperwork and
3 everything showing that their districts has
4 changed, and I would think and hope that y'all
5 would take that into consideration when you
6 split these small counties, that that is going
7 to be a cost that the small counties are going
8 to have to absorb if you split them. So that
9 is one thing.

10 And another thing, I want to say on a
11 personal note that it is sad for me to say that
12 we are here in 2011 and we still are talking
13 and speaking about the race card. My lord and
14 savior don't see color, and I don't think we
15 should neither.

16 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
17 Mr. Anderson.

18 Next up, Wilbert River Torres, followed by
19 Nita Crawford.

20 Mr. Torres, you are recognized, sir.

21 MR. TORRES: I am speaking on behalf of
22 the Hispanic community. A lot of people tend
23 to -- tend to disregard it, especially in
24 northeast Florida. Too many times like people
25 aren't realizing that the population is

1 increasing up here. There's a lack of
2 Spanish-speaking voters. So if you could
3 please speed up the process so that way we can
4 get adequate translators at these locations.
5 Thank you.

6 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
7 sir.

8 Ms. Nita Crawford is next, and following
9 Ms. Nita is C. J. Thompson.

10 MS. CRAWFORD: Good afternoon. I
11 represent Baker County as Supervisor of
12 Elections, and I would like to concur, first of
13 all, on what Chris, Supervisor of Elections of
14 Clay County, and Tammy, Assistant Supervisor of
15 Nassau County, had to say about the election
16 laws and how -- I know you've got a big job
17 ahead of you, but if there is anyway that you
18 can get your job completed in time to give us,
19 all of the Supervisors of Elections in Florida,
20 significant time to do our job, we would
21 appreciate it.

22 And also, I also concur with the other
23 members here representing Baker County that if
24 we could be left one district, then that way I
25 would not have to go back to Jim Anderson, our

1 county commissioner, and ask for more funds. I
2 would appreciate that.

3 And I would like to thank you again for
4 coming out and letting everyone give their say,
5 and you being patient and listening to
6 everyone. Thank you so much.

7 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
8 Ms. Crawford, and thank you for your public
9 service to Baker County and the State of
10 Florida.

11 We have C. J. Thompson up next, and
12 following C. J., we have Mr. Larry Dixon.

13 Mr. Thompson, thank you for being here
14 today.

15 MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
16 will keep it brief.

17 Like my fellow Baker County citizens, we
18 would -- obviously first we would like to keep
19 our current representation, if at all possible;
20 however, if changes are necessary, we ask that
21 we maintain our single representation and be
22 grouped with similar small, rural counties.
23 Thank you again for your time.

24 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
25 very much.

1 Mr. Larry Dixon is next, and then after
2 Mr. Dixon -- I am probably going to butcher
3 this name, but it is Doug Conkey, I believe. I
4 hope I have said that right. I got a thumbs
5 up, I said it right.

6 Mr. Dixon, you are first. Thank you for
7 being here, sir. You are recognized.

8 MR. DIXON: Thank you. I just want to say
9 that obvious in this process and all of the
10 difference of opinions, we are going to end up
11 with a bride and a bridesmaid, but hopefully,
12 you know, we can find some common ground in
13 this entire process. I think -- I am going to
14 be very brief. I have just three things I
15 think should be taken into consideration.

16 First, I want to thank you for the
17 transparency of this process. I think it is
18 important for everybody to be able to come
19 together and give their opinions in terms of
20 how the redistricting should take place.

21 I also think that it is important that you
22 do take time to get it as right as possible.
23 Obviously, it is a thing that everybody have an
24 opinion, different opinions, but I think it is
25 important that enough time is given to the

1 process that you can do it in the most
2 expedited time, but yet in fairness also to the
3 process.

4 And then lastly, I think one of the common
5 threads we hear individuals speaking of is
6 community. People want to stay connected in
7 terms of how you go about the redistricting
8 process. I think most people will find that
9 when you look east to west to your neighbors,
10 you develop a greater bond than sometimes going
11 too further north to south.

12 I think that you are doing an excellent
13 job of taking time to listen to the people
14 before you start drawing. I think that it is
15 going to impact the way you draw because you
16 took the time to listen to the people. So I
17 just want to thank you again for allowing me to
18 share my thoughts and continue to make the
19 process transparent in whatever way necessary.

20 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
21 sir.

22 Next speaker is Mr. Doug Conkey, and then
23 following Mr. Conkey we have Jay McGovern.

24 COMMISSIONER CONKEY: Thank you for
25 allowing me to be here, and to the gentleman

1 who offered the universities to help, I will
2 offer up the naval academy to help in that
3 service.

4 I want to thank you for your service and
5 for taking the time to reach out to the public
6 and provide opportunities for verbal feedback
7 and electronic feedback, as we have seen. Your
8 task is daunting, to say the least, given your
9 mandate to follow federal law, state law, and
10 traditional principles.

11 In northeast Florida, as with our state,
12 there has been much growth over the last
13 decade, especially in the outlying counties
14 surrounding Duval, such as Clay County. Such
15 exercises, like the First Coast Reality Check,
16 reveal the desire to have multiple growth
17 centers or job centers, so to speak. In this
18 growth, you have transitions of urban to
19 suburban to rural. With budding economic
20 engines such as Jax Port and the Cecil Airport
21 and their connections to other growth centers,
22 are they better represented by one or two
23 champions or several that may have to learn
24 multiple interests due to population and other
25 directives impacting their district size?

1 You can build areas of expertise such as
2 rural experts, suburban experts and urban
3 experts, along with economic engine experts.
4 This will help compact some areas, while other
5 areas may grow, such as a rural area. That
6 person becomes the rural area champion.

7 This has worked well in Clay County, for
8 the most part. In Clay, we are represented by
9 seven representatives -- seven Legislators, two
10 Senators and five Representatives, and they are
11 all wonderful. Would we be better served with
12 just two or three to become our experts or
13 champions while trying to operate within the
14 checklist constraints of the federal law,
15 Florida Tier I and II law, and traditional
16 principles? Not sure, but it would be worth a
17 look from the input that we are getting today,
18 and also from the taking into account the
19 possible inter-jurisdictional impacts you have
20 in other counties or possible growth centers.

21 I will say our current legislators have
22 been wonderful and professional, and I truly am
23 thankful for their service and dedication to
24 the citizens of Clay County and the State of
25 Florida. I want to thank you again for your

1 service and this opportunity to speak, and,
2 again, I want to thank all veterans and those
3 who currently serve who protect our freedoms to
4 allow us and do and exercise these rights, so
5 thank you again.

6 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
7 Commissioner. Thank you, and thank you for
8 your public service to the State of Florida.

9 Mr. Jay McGovern is next, and after
10 Mr. McGovern, we've got Clifford Johnson.

11 You are recognized, sir.

12 MR. McGOVERN: Thank you very much.
13 Thanks for coming.

14 I would like to point out that this
15 listening tour is the minimum required by law,
16 and of our leaders, of which most of us count
17 you, we expect more. We expect you to do more
18 than the minimum. As Doug was talking about,
19 we have men and women serving all over the
20 world who today are not doing the minimum that
21 was asked of them, they are doing so much more
22 than that, and we expect you to do the same
23 thing.

24 My second point is to stop fighting us
25 with our own money. We overwhelmingly approved

1 Amendments 5 and 6. We want you to follow
2 them.

3 Third point is you have talked about there
4 is no gag order, but your prompt end to this
5 hearing is in effect a gag order. Your not
6 showing us map is effectively a gag order. So
7 we really need you to do your jobs. We are
8 paying you for that.

9 And my fourth and last point is the
10 committee, by not speaking, is suggesting that
11 this whole issue is about black versus white,
12 and it is not. We don't see it that way. What
13 we see, the 800-pound gorilla in the room is
14 that it is about power and it is about
15 incumbents clinging to theirs.

16 The districts can be drawn, the districts
17 can be drawn responsibly, taking into account
18 the Voters Rights Act, but they just may not be
19 drawn so overwhelmingly for re-electing the
20 incumbents. So we really need you to get on
21 with drawing fair districts in accordance with
22 our Constitution, as amended. Thank you.

23 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
24 Mr. Johnson.

25 Next up we have Robert Henning with the

1 National Association of Letter Carriers,
2 followed by Joan Carver with the League of
3 Women Voters.

4 Mr. Henning, you are recognized, sir.

5 MR. HENNING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 A couple things that -- the Legislature
7 plans to pass district maps at the end of 2012
8 session. According to this timeline, new
9 district maps will not be finalized and
10 approved before qualifying for the 2012
11 elections closes, which closes on June 8th, and
12 they may not be finalized until August. This
13 means that the voters will be voting for
14 candidates they have little opportunity to get
15 to know.

16 One of the -- I represent 1,100 letter
17 carriers in northeast Florida. Every one of
18 those congressional districts over there, I
19 have letter carriers in that we have to visit
20 on issues. I can't speak on the redistricting
21 or maps without the maps. That is what the
22 voters asked for. We want to see the maps
23 before we can informatively talk on it. Thank
24 you.

25 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,

1 sir.

2 Next up we have Ms. Joan Carver with the
3 League of Women Voters, and then after
4 Ms. Carver is Alberta Espie.

5 You are recognized.

6 MS. CARVER: Mr. Chairman and members of
7 the committee, I am here to urge you to draw
8 the new Florida House and Senate districts and
9 the congressional districts without
10 consideration of protection of incumbents and
11 for partisan advantage. I might note that most
12 of our peer democracies that use single member
13 districts select their legislators through a
14 neutral commissioner.

15 Gerrymandered districts have long been one
16 of the things Americans like least about their
17 government. They have good reason for this
18 dislike. For elections and the resulting
19 governing bodies to have legitimacy, elections
20 should be fair. If elections are to have
21 legitimacy, they should reflect the divisions
22 within the state.

23 A review of recent election results in
24 Florida indicates that this is not the case
25 currently. In recent statewide elections, the

1 parties' candidates have divided fairly evenly.
2 In the last three presidential elections, for
3 example, Gore and Bush had virtually the same
4 number of votes, Kerry and Bush were just five
5 percentage points apart, while Obama received
6 50.9 percent of the vote. In the recent
7 gubernatorial election, the difference between
8 Alex Sink and Governor Scott was one percent of
9 the vote, 48.7 percent to 47.7 percent. Yet
10 the Florida House and Senate have veto-proof
11 Republican majorities, 28 of the Senate seats
12 -- of the 40 Senate seats, and 81 of the 120
13 House seats. We find a similar situation in
14 the congressional delegation with 19 of 25
15 seats being held by Republicans. The
16 difference between statewide votes and those by
17 districts suggest Florida is among the least
18 fairly apportioned states currently.

19 Elections have consequences, and
20 gerrymandered districts, beyond casting doubt
21 on the fairness of the process, can lead to
22 several electoral and policy results. Such
23 districts squelch the development of a healthy
24 opposition, important to real democracy. Who
25 wants to run in an election in which you know

1 you have little chance of winning?

2 It also can lead to Legislators who do not
3 engage in that key component of politics:
4 Negotiation and compromise. If you do not have
5 to take account of the opposition in the
6 district election, you don't have to take
7 account of them in policy terms. In fact, it
8 may be a disadvantage to do so, because this
9 could anger your key supporters. Result: The
10 kind of stalemate found today in Minnesota.
11 If, however, you have a veto-proof majority, as
12 is the case in Florida today, policies may be
13 enacted that are more extreme than most of the
14 state desires.

15 Thus, for fundamental fairness and to
16 follow the mandate of the electorate in
17 Amendments 5 and 6, I urge you to make Florida
18 a model of fair reapportionment by drawing the
19 lines for state and legislative and
20 congressional districts without favoring
21 incumbents or political parties. Thank you
22 very much.

23 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
24 very much.

25 Alberta Espie is next with the League of

1 Women Voters, and following Ms. Espie is Hanson
2 Gabriel.

3 You are recognized.

4 MS. ESPIE: I want to say thank you to the
5 Senate that made District Builder available. I
6 signed up and I already got an answer that I
7 can play with maps, too. That will be fun.

8 I am a minority. I might -- no, I am not
9 a minority, I am the majority. However, the
10 voter registration in the state of Florida is
11 46 percent Democrat, twenty -- 39 something
12 Republican, and growing, growing, the non-party
13 participation is 21 something percent. But our
14 state Legislature is -- got majorities for the
15 Republican party that are veto-proof. They can
16 do anything they want. And so I am a minority
17 because I am a Democrat and I have no -- the
18 Democrats that represent me have no chance to
19 do anything with the Governor. Nothing the
20 Governor wants -- anything the Governor wants
21 is passed, and I have very little voice. So we
22 do need fair districts.

23 One other point: We talked about --
24 several people mentioned all the states that
25 have already done it. Florida is hamstrung by

1 the fact that Florida's Constitution says that
2 you can't do it until the second year after,
3 you can't do it until next year. However, as
4 the President of the League of Women Voters
5 pointed out, you can do it in 2011 and act at
6 the very beginning of 2011, and that I beg of
7 you to do because -- well, so many people have
8 said it is so unfair, unfair to the military
9 and others who live abroad, just unfair to any
10 candidate. My party has not run in elections
11 because they -- in many districts because they
12 know that it is a Republican district, period.
13 I don't want it all to be Democrat, but I want
14 it all it be fair. Thanks.

15 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.

16 Next up we have Mr. Hanson Gabriel with
17 the Sierra Club of Northeast Florida, followed
18 by Rod Morrill with the Concerned Taxpayers of
19 Duval County.

20 You are recognized, sir.

21 MR. GABRIEL: Thank you very much. I have
22 been most active with the Sierra Club on the
23 Legislative Advisory Committee, which is the
24 statewide group that works with our lobbyist,
25 Dave Cullen, at the Florida Legislature. We

1 worked hard last year, along with several other
2 groups that we cooperated with, including the
3 League of Women Voters, to see that the issues
4 of our concern were paid attention to in the
5 Legislature, and I must say the outcomes were
6 terribly, terribly disappointing and a major
7 setback.

8 Now, I am -- all my life have been more of
9 a good government person than an
10 environmentalist, although I have been an
11 environmentalist all my life as well. I am
12 convinced through experience that you cannot
13 separate good government from good development
14 policy and good environmental policy, and that
15 is why I favor and worked for Amendments 5 and
16 6, and I am hoping that you will step up to
17 your responsibility and follow both the letter
18 and the spirit of the state law and these
19 amendments in the process of redistricting.
20 Thank you very much.

21 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
22 sir.

23 Next up we have Rod Morrill with the
24 Concerned Taxpayers of Duval County. After
25 Mr. Morrill, we have Deborah Courtney.

1 Thank you for being here, sir.

2 MR. MORRILL: Good afternoon, and I
3 prepared for this, and like so often when I go
4 before government bodies, I wind up rewriting
5 everything I am going to say by the people that
6 precede me, and this certainly is one of those
7 cases. So many times I have heard today, "This
8 beach is God's country." No, this country is
9 God's country, and I am going to tell you
10 something else, this country is my country, the
11 taxpayers' country, and that is who owns this
12 country. And the -- soon as the politicians
13 find out that they are the employee and not the
14 employer, we will get along a lot better.

15 The next thing, we talked about diversity
16 and the voting rights and so forth. I would
17 like to welcome you to someone that maybe you
18 can use as an example. Jacksonville and Duval
19 County is an extremely diverse location. We
20 have urban, rural, suburban, and racial
21 diversity like you won't find in too many other
22 places, and yet look at our elected officials,
23 look at the people that are in the community
24 and see how exactly diversely we are
25 represented here in Duval County. And you know

1 what, we didn't have to zig and zag and change
2 any boundaries to accomplish that. We just had
3 to involve the voters and get out in front of
4 the voters and win their respect. Then
5 equality works.

6 The other thing I would like to remind
7 you, that the Superintendent of Elections have
8 been repeatedly here, and they know how to set
9 up the districts. That is what they do.
10 Listen to them, listen to the boundaries, the
11 geographic boundaries, the voting boundaries.
12 They have been doing this, they have been
13 shuffling this for years. They know how. How
14 many months have you spent doing that? Listen
15 to them, follow those boundaries. They take
16 into consideration the groups, the people, the
17 geography, the importance of how you are
18 drawing the lines. When you decide that you
19 know better how to do something than the people
20 that do it, you've got your shoes on backwards.

21 Again -- again, this is my country. We
22 are the people. We develop and govern the
23 government, and for the government to sue the
24 citizens is one step away from democracy and a
25 Republican.

1 You had John Libby here that took the time
2 to develop the districts. You had someone say,
3 what about the universities, why aren't you
4 putting task force out to start volunteering
5 these maps and publicizing the maps that you
6 receive? You have the websites, I have been on
7 those, the district programs. You needed to do
8 a little better PR on those availabilities, and
9 you need to have meetings like this more often
10 than every ten years. Maybe you should come
11 and listen to us just a little more often than
12 once every ten years. That would help you do
13 your job. Thank you.

14 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
15 very much, sir.

16 Next up we have Deborah Courtney and Kevin
17 Hanley, I believe. I may be saying that
18 incorrectly, but Ms. Courtney, nonetheless,
19 thank you so much for being here. You are
20 recognized to speak.

21 MS. COURTNEY: Thank you, and good
22 afternoon, and I am a resident of Jacksonville
23 Beach. And ten years ago I stood before a
24 panel of Legislators at the last public hearing
25 on redistricting, and at that time, I asked the

1 leader of that panel, Stan Jordan, to make sure
2 that the Legislature ends gerrymandering and
3 draws the districts fairly, and he assured me
4 that the Legislature would do just that.

5 Well, this is an example of what I got for
6 my efforts. This is my Congressional District
7 4, which essentially stretches from
8 Jacksonville to Tallahassee. It spans
9 180 miles. And I would like to know what
10 Jacksonville and Tallahassee have in common.
11 So it makes a lot more sense to me to keep the
12 districts community based, and I really hope
13 that this time that this Legislature will do a
14 better job than they did last time.

15 And so here I am again asking the same
16 question, asking for you to please end the
17 gerrymandering and to draw the districts
18 fairly. But I do have to admit that I am a
19 little confused, because on the one hand, you
20 are doing such wonderful things, like you are
21 having these public hearings and you have the
22 software that I saw out in the hallway and you
23 are allowing citizens to submit their own
24 drawings, and that is all wonderful. And then
25 on the other hand, this same Legislature is a

1 party to the lawsuit against Amendments 5 and
2 6, which require the fair districting. So it
3 really makes me wonder about your commitment to
4 actually drawing the districts fairly. And I
5 would urge you to drop this lawsuit and listen
6 to the will of the voters and draw the
7 districts fairly like 63 percent of the people
8 of Florida do -- I mean want you to do.

9 So thank you so much for your time, and
10 just please know that the citizens of Florida
11 will be watching you.

12 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.

13 I apologize on this last name, but I
14 believe it is Kevin Hanley. Kevin, St.
15 Martin's Drive. I think we found him. After
16 Kevin, we've got Jacqui Lowe, okay. Jacqui,
17 you are recognized, and we will try to find
18 Kevin.

19 After Jacqui, we have Jeff Burgess, who is
20 a concerned citizen.

21 Jacqui, you are recognized. Thank you
22 very much.

23 MS. LOWE: Thank you. My name is Jacqui
24 Lowe, and I am a resident of Duval County. I
25 have been a resident for about 14 years. Thank

1 you so much for giving us the opportunity to
2 have our voices heard today. We appreciate all
3 of the open and honesty that you have allowed
4 us into giving us a little bit of insight into
5 what goes into drawing these maps. I
6 understand and appreciate the arduous task that
7 you have in front of you.

8 That being said, it feels like we are
9 putting the cart before the horse without
10 having an opportunity to see anything. I ask
11 that since Amendments 5 and 6 passed with over
12 63 percent of the vote, and is now law and
13 embedded into our Constitution, that we move
14 forward in a continued open and transparent
15 fashion, and that the maps are drawn in a
16 timely manner so that constituents and the
17 people that we are going to elect know who they
18 are running for and what they are supporting.
19 Thank you.

20 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.
21 Ladies and gentlemen, we have got about six or
22 seven minutes left. We are going to go right
23 up until four o'clock, and instead of allowing
24 members of the committee and Senator Gaetz and
25 others to address some of the issues, what we

1 are going to do is try to get through as much
2 public testimony as we can. There will
3 probably be 10 or 15 cards that we will not get
4 to that we will come back to at six o'clock, we
5 will hear from them and then we will also have
6 time, hopefully, for members of the committee
7 and my co-Chairman, Senator Gaetz.

8 So with that, Mr. Burgess, you are up
9 next. Following Mr. Burgess is Leslie Giller.
10 Jeff Burgess.

11 No, ma'am, not right now. We have six
12 minutes left, and we are going to try to hear
13 -- I -- ma'am, yes, we will try to do that, we
14 will try to do that, but first we are going to
15 hear from Mr. Burgess if he is here.

16 Mr. Burgess, are you here, sir? Okay,
17 Mr. Burgess is not here.

18 Leslie Giller. Ms. Giller, you are
19 recognized to speak. Thank you for being here.

20 MS. GILLER: Thank you. My name is Leslie
21 Giller, and I would like to address what was
22 said in the introduction, which made it sound
23 like to the public that you all weren't allowed
24 to have published the maps or the projected
25 maps until after the first of the year, and

1 that is incorrect. You could have had the maps
2 earlier, and these meetings, frankly, should
3 have been held earlier so that you could have
4 had public input, and we should be looking at
5 the maps now. And then you need to have
6 commentary about what we think about the maps.
7 So I object to how it was presented when we
8 started out where it was said that our
9 Constitution prevents you from being able to
10 have the maps at this point in time. That is
11 simply incorrect.

12 I wanted to also say that I am a white
13 woman who is in support of the Voting Rights
14 Act and is in support of the law, and that is
15 Amendments 5 and 6, which it stands now. And I
16 also do not appreciate that my government is
17 suing me for a law that has passed, and, you
18 know, when I don't like a law that is passed, I
19 obey it, but I might also try to work to do
20 something to have the law changed. That is
21 your all's business the next time you meet in
22 the Legislature. If you want to try to amend
23 the Constitution out of what we've passed as
24 citizenry, then that is your perogatory, but
25 you don't have the right to try to change the

1 law and use my money to sue me to get the law
2 changed.

3 The other thing in supporting diversity,
4 because diversity is a strength, and I don't
5 think you will ever find somebody that will say
6 that diversity is not a strength, and we have
7 diversity in our state, whether it is race,
8 whether it is sex, whether it is age, whatever
9 or not you want to say, whether it is religion,
10 we can name off all the projected classes, but
11 if the districts are drawn properly and the law
12 is followed, then the state Legislature will
13 reflect the diversity of our state. And in the
14 same percentage of existence, the same
15 percentage of diversity that is in Florida will
16 also be in the Legislature. Then you know you
17 have done the job right.

18 So please follow Amendment 5 and 6.
19 Please follow the Voting Rights Act. Thank
20 you.

21 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
22 very much.

23 Ladies and gentlemen, what we will do,
24 because we do understand there will be some
25 folks who cannot come back, we are not going to

1 get to all the cards. We are hoping if your
2 name has not been called, that you will come
3 back for the six o'clock hearing. We have run
4 out of time for this hearing; however,
5 Ms. Bruno actually made a good point, which was
6 to allow a member of the committee to address
7 some of the concerns that were brought up
8 today. I would like Senator Gaetz, who is
9 co-Chair of the committee, to take just a few
10 minutes to do that.

11 Senator Gaetz, you are recognized.

12 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
13 Mr. Chairman, and there will be an opportunity
14 after we hear from everyone who wishes to speak
15 at the second part of our hearing for any
16 member to comment, to offer any proposals, and,
17 of course, any member, any legislator, any
18 special interest group, any citizen, and we saw
19 that with Mr. Dixon, can offer any map, any
20 proposal, at any time.

21 The first question that I would like to
22 respond to -- and I am not going to be -- try
23 to debate those who provided information,
24 because the information today was so hopeful
25 and relevant, but just in terms of providing

1 some information that would assist in a little
2 bit of perhaps fact-checking. First of all,
3 the question was asked, will the Legislature
4 follow the Fair Districts amendments to the
5 Constitution. The answer is, they are in the
6 Constitution, we have sworn an oath upon taking
7 office to preserve, protect and defend the
8 Constitution of the United States and of the
9 State of Florida, and so we will. But as you
10 have seen today, there are differences
11 expressed in how those legal standards, which
12 seem so simple when they roll off the tongue,
13 there are differences expressed in this
14 audience today about how those standards ought
15 to be applied to communities, to counties, to
16 geographic barriers, someone talked about
17 growth centers, so that is why we need to
18 listen to your views and not just presume that
19 we know.

20 Secondly, as to timing, and Mr. Chairman,
21 as was noted at the beginning of the meeting,
22 the timing for the drawing of maps and the
23 voting on maps is set out in our Constitution.
24 If our Fair District friends wanted to change
25 the timing so that we could vote on maps

1 earlier than 2012, they could have included
2 that in the Fair Districts amendment. They
3 didn't. So we are -- you know, there are many
4 of us who have ideas now as we have heard from
5 voters, maybe people on this committee want to
6 propose maps, like Mr. Dixon has, but we are
7 obliged to follow the Constitution.

8 Now, there's been some suggestion that no
9 voting can occur until March on maps. That is
10 simply not true. We can vote as soon as there
11 are maps presented. The League of Women
12 Voters, for example, ten years ago presented
13 maps. So far they have decided not to. We
14 hope they will. Any group can present a map,
15 and it can become the focus or locus of a bill
16 that then can be voted on. We don't have to
17 wait until March to vote. We can vote as soon
18 as there are maps that are available, and we're
19 already getting maps presented to us.

20 One gentleman said, and I think rightly
21 so, that we ought to look to our universities.
22 We have. Florida students attending Columbia
23 University have already proposed maps, and
24 those maps are on our website.

25 Another individual said, "Gee, if you are

1 getting maps that are proposed, they need to be
2 shown to the public." They are. If you go to
3 Flsenate.gov/redistricting, you will see all of
4 the maps that have been proposed, including
5 Mr. Dixon's that has been proposed today.

6 Community college students, state college
7 students, university students have already
8 indicated that they are working on or will
9 present maps, so our universities have been
10 invited, and we would like to invite today the
11 University of North Florida to present any maps
12 that they would like to present.

13 Mr. Chairman, there has been some
14 suggestion that there is a gag order. Those
15 who would like to stay to the end of the
16 hearing, we will want to hear from the public
17 first, not politicians first, but those who
18 want to stay until the end of the hearing,
19 Mr. Chairman, we are going to give an
20 opportunity for any member of the committee to
21 react to any of the testimony that we have
22 heard today.

23 Finally, Mr. Chairman, there's been a
24 suggestion from three Supervisors of Elections
25 that there will be -- could be problems with

1 ballot printing and distribution if the Supreme
2 Court of Florida, if the Federal Justice
3 Department, take all the time that they are
4 allowed under federal and state law. We hope
5 they don't. We hope they will take the advice
6 that you are giving us, and that is as soon as
7 proposals are received, to act in an
8 expeditious fashion, in a thoughtful fashion,
9 but in an expeditious fashion. Members of
10 these two committees work together to pass
11 legislation, making it possible for our
12 overseas citizens, whether they are in uniform
13 or not, to be able to use the overseas absentee
14 ballot to make sure that their votes get
15 counted. So every effort will be made to
16 ensure that overseas voters are included, and
17 the Supervisors of Elections' information and
18 their testimony today was well-taken,
19 well-spoken, but there is no reason why our
20 federal and state courts have to take
21 100 percent of the time that they are allowed
22 to take, and we certainly will -- will begin to
23 entertain proposals, in the Senate, and I am
24 sure, Mr. Chairman, you will in the House, as
25 soon as any member presents any plan or any

1 (Whereupon, the six o'clock session of the
2 redistricting committee convened.)

3 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: If we could
4 get everyone's attention, please, to grab a
5 seat, we would like to start. Please grab a
6 seat. Lake Ray, if we could get the meeting
7 started. You always have to embarrass one
8 person.

9 Okay. Ladies and gentlemen, if we could
10 get everyone's attention. I know that we still
11 have people filtering into the room. Feel free
12 to grab a seat. We appreciate everyone being
13 here.

14 The Joint Senate/House Redistricting
15 Hearing is now called back into order. We had
16 meetings from two to four o'clock and had a
17 packed house and got a lot of great public
18 testimony, and we are excited about hearing
19 from you as well, and I think we have some
20 familiar faces from the earlier meeting, and we
21 welcome you back.

22 We first want to say thank you to Florida
23 State College for opening up this wonderful
24 facility, we are grateful for them and their
25 hospitality, but we also want to say thank you

1 to those of you who have taken time to be here
2 this evening to share with us your thoughts and
3 your ideas about what the state of Florida
4 should look like and what the districts should
5 look like. So thank you very much for being
6 here.

7 My name is Will Weatherford, and I
8 represent House District 61 down in Wesley
9 Chapel, which is in Pasco County, and I,
10 alongside with my co-Chair, Senator Don Gaetz
11 from the Panhandle, I will be Chairing today.
12 This entire process will be webcast on the
13 Florida Channel and over the Internet.

14 Our sole purpose here today is to hear
15 from you. It is to hear from you and to give
16 you an opportunity to give us feedback, to give
17 us input, and to make sure that this process is
18 open and transparent when it comes to public
19 input.

20 It is also important that we keep an
21 accurate public record of all attendees and
22 speakers. So we would ask that you -- you may
23 also opt to join our e-mail list so that we can
24 keep you informed about how the redistricting
25 process is working over the next several

1 months.

2 If you have not signed in, please raise
3 your hand, and a staff member will give you an
4 attendance card. Also, if you wish to speak
5 today and you have not filled out an attendance
6 card, please raise your hand, and we will make
7 sure that we get you a card to fill out so that
8 you can speak.

9 With that, I would like to just take a few
10 moments -- I know we have some new faces in
11 here, and I would like to take a few moments to
12 allow the members of the committee to introduce
13 themselves and let you know who they are and
14 the district that they represent within the
15 state of Florida. So, Chairman Gaetz, if you
16 could maybe kick us off and pass the mike.

17 SENATOR GAETZ: Sure. My name is Don
18 Gaetz. I am a state senator from the Panhandle
19 of Florida, the other side, northwest Florida,
20 coastal northwest Florida, and along with
21 speaker designate Weatherford, I Chair the
22 Senate Reapportionment Committee as he Chairs
23 the House Redistricting Committee.

24 Senator John Thrasher is here. He will be
25 back in a moment, he is doing an interview with

1 a Jacksonville TV station, but Senator Thrasher
2 represents northeast Florida and many of you
3 are very familiar with him.

4 REPRESENTATIVE HOOPER: Good evening,
5 everybody. I am Ed Hooper from Clearwater,
6 House District 50, and to speed the meeting
7 along, everyone here has great beaches and they
8 are all tied for number one.

9 REPRESENTATIVE FRISHE: I am
10 Representative Jim Frishe from Pinellas County,
11 and I do represent all the beaches in Pinellas
12 County, and I am the majority whip of the
13 Florida House.

14 REPRESENTATIVE ADKINS: Hi, my name is
15 Janet Adkins, and I represent Florida House
16 District 12, which is Nassau, Baker, Bradford,
17 Clay, Union and Duval, and thank you all so
18 much for coming out tonight.

19 SENATOR MONTFORD: I am Bill Montford from
20 Senate District 6, 11 counties, Tallahassee is
21 the center, everything around Tallahassee.
22 Glad to be here.

23 REPRESENTATIVE McBURNEY: I am Charles
24 McBurney. I represent District 16, which is
25 the great City of Jacksonville, Florida.

1 REPRESENTATIVE FORD: Clay Ford,
2 Representative from District 3, Pensacola, the
3 other end of the state.

4 SENATOR DEAN: My name is Charlie Dean, I
5 am State Senator for District 3. Start over
6 here at the county line in Baker County, go to
7 the courthouse, the Capitol steps on Monroe
8 Street, south to 98 and 19, and south central
9 Florida, I represent all or part of 13
10 counties. But the most important thing I
11 forgot to tell you a while ago this morning, we
12 were here this afternoon, and that's the fact
13 that I was born in Jacksonville.

14 SENATOR LYNN: Senator Evelyn Lynn. I
15 represent District 7, Clay, Marion, Putnam and
16 Volusia Counties, and it is very impressive to
17 see the crowds that we have here, not only this
18 afternoon, but tonight especially.

19 REPRESENTATIVE KIAR: Hello, everybody, my
20 name is Martin Kiar. I represent District 97
21 in the Florida House of Representatives, which
22 is located solely within Broward County. Thank
23 you so much for coming out tonight.

24 REPRESENTATIVE JULIEN: Good evening,
25 everyone. My name is John Patrick Julien. I

1 represent House District 104, which is in
2 Miami-Dade County, and it is a pleasure to be
3 here and it is great to see you all, looking
4 forward to hear what you have to say.

5 REPRESENTATIVE HUKILL: Hi, I am Dorothy
6 Hukill. I represent District 28, which is
7 parts of Volusia County, southeast and
8 southwest Volusia County, and I am so happy to
9 be here and grateful that all of you could come
10 out and talk to us tonight.

11 REPRESENTATIVE YOUNG: Hi, I am Dana
12 Young. I represent House District 57, which is
13 the City of Tampa and parts of Hillsborough
14 County. Thank you all for being here. We look
15 forward to hearing from you.

16 REPRESENTATIVE SCHENCK: Rob Schenck.

17 REPRESENTATIVE DORWORTH: He is from
18 Spring Hill on the west coast.

19 I am Chris Dorworth. I am from Orlando,
20 Florida, Seminole County and Orange County.
21 Thank you very much.

22 SENATOR BRAYNON: I am Senator Oscar
23 Braynon. I represent the central area of
24 Miami-Dade County, District 33.

25 REPRESENTATIVE RAY: Good evening, I am

1 Representative Lake Ray from Jacksonville,
2 District 17. It is great to see everybody out,
3 and I, of course, welcome my colleagues to
4 Jacksonville this evening. Thanks for being
5 here.

6 SENATOR HAYS: I am Alan Hays from Senate
7 District 20, which is parts of five counties:
8 Volusia, Seminole, Lake, Sumter and Marion
9 Counties.

10 REPRESENTATIVE THURSTON: Good evening,
11 everybody. I am Perry Thurston, District 93,
12 and that is Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Looking
13 forward to hearing from you.

14 REPRESENTATIVE WEINSTEIN: I am Mike
15 Weinstein, House District 19, the privilege of
16 representing Duval, Clay and St. Johns
17 Counties.

18 REPRESENTATIVE BERNARD: Good evening,
19 State Representative Mack Bernard, District 84
20 in West Palm Beach, Florida.

21 REPRESENTATIVE ROGERS: Good evening, I am
22 Hazelle Rogers representing District 94 in
23 Broward County, I would say eight cities in
24 central Broward County, one of the most diverse
25 counties, a million point eight nine -- 1.89

1 million folks in my -- in Broward County.
2 Looking forward to hearing from you. Thank
3 you.

4 REPRESENTATIVE REED: Good evening, I am
5 State Representative Gwyndolen Clarke-Reed,
6 representing House District 92 in Broward
7 County, which is the northeast part of Broward
8 County from Deerfield Beach down to Victoria
9 Park, Ft. Lauderdale. Good evening.

10 SENATOR EVERS: State Senator Greg Evers,
11 I represent District 2, which encompasses
12 Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton,
13 Washington and Holmes and a little bit north of
14 Bay County, so it is known as the great
15 northwest, as far north, far away as you go in
16 Florida without being in Alabama. Thank you.

17 REPRESENTATIVE GOODSON: Good evening, my
18 name is Tom Goodson, House seat District 29,
19 which is in Brevard County from Mims to St.
20 Lucie County. Thank you for coming.

21 REPRESENTATIVE DRAKE: Brad Drake, I
22 represent the Fifth House District, central
23 time zone, Okaloosa, Walton, Holmes,
24 Washington, Jackson.

25 REPRESENTATIVE TRUJILLO: Good evening, my

1 name is Carlos Trujillo, I represent southwest
2 Miami-Dade County.

3 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Good afternoon,
4 Daniel Davis. I represent Duval County and
5 Clay County.

6 REPRESENTATIVE CORCORAN: Richard
7 Corcoran, I represent Pasco and Pinellas
8 Counties.

9 REPRESENTATIVE LOGAN: Ana Rivas Logan, I
10 represent southwest Miami-Dade.

11 REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Good evening, State
12 Representative Mia Jones representing District
13 14, north and west of the city, and thank you
14 all so much for being here and showing your
15 commitment to being a part of the process.

16 REPRESENTATIVE FULLWOOD: Good evening,
17 Reggie Fullwood, representing Jacksonville,
18 District 15. Again, thank you for being here
19 tonight. We really appreciate your input.

20 REPRESENTATIVE CALDWELL: Good evening,
21 Representative Matt Caldwell, District 73 down
22 in southwest Florida, Lee County.

23 REPRESENTATIVE BOYD: Hi, I am Jim Boyd,
24 State Rep from District 68, which is Manatee
25 County, just south of Tampa on the south side

1 of Tampa Bay. Thanks again for coming tonight.

2 REPRESENTATIVE PASSIDOMO: Kathleen
3 Passidomo, House District 76, Collier County.
4 I represent the City of Naples, City of Marco
5 island, City of Everglades City and a gazillion
6 alligators.

7 REPRESENTATIVE CHESTNUT: Good afternoon,
8 Chuck Chestnut, House District 23, a portion of
9 Marion County and a portion of Alachua County.

10 REPRESENTATIVE TAYLOR: Good evening,
11 everyone. My name is Dwayne Taylor. I
12 represent House District 27, which is in
13 Volusia County. I am from Daytona Beach where
14 we have the world center of racing and the
15 world's most famous beach.

16 REPRESENTATIVE NEHR: My name is Peter
17 Nehr, and I represent Pinellas County and Pasco
18 County.

19 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Okay. Thank
20 you very much, members.

21 Before we go into the public testimony, I
22 would like to ask Senator Gaetz and recognize
23 him to explain how today's hearing fits into
24 the redistricting process and maybe explain a
25 little bit about the process that we are here

1 to do today and how it will be done. Senator,
2 you are recognized.

3 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
4 Mr. Chairman.

5 Every ten years, the Legislature is
6 required by the Constitution to redistrict the
7 state based on increases, decreases and
8 movements of population. Our Constitution
9 requires this to be done by the Legislature,
10 not by a commission, not by anybody else. That
11 is because we are elected by you, and you can
12 un-elect us. You can't un-elect somebody who
13 is not elected. So that is why our
14 Constitution sets it up that way.

15 Florida has grown in the last ten years
16 more than other states. So we have picked up
17 two additional members of the U.S. House of
18 Representatives. We will go from 25 to 27
19 members of the U.S. House of Representatives,
20 and also we pick up two additional electoral
21 votes in the presidential election.

22 Now, some parts of our state have
23 increased or decreased disproportionately in
24 population, and many Senate and House districts
25 will have to change, either adding or losing

1 population. There is a chart over there, some
2 of you were looking at it before we started.
3 You can look at it during or after our hearing.
4 And in that chart, you will see the districts,
5 the congressional and Senate and House
6 districts in this area, and by law, how many
7 additional people will have to be picked up in
8 those districts or be lost, be subtracted from
9 those districts. That is because when
10 redistricting is completed, congressional
11 districts must be equal in population and must
12 contain 696,345 people each. It doesn't matter
13 how many counties are covered, doesn't matter
14 how dense the population is, how widespread it
15 is, it must have 696,345 people by federal law.
16 The 40 Senate districts must also be nearly
17 equal at about 470,000 people, and our 120
18 House districts must be nearly equal at about
19 156,700 people.

20 Now, there are displays that are over on
21 my right side that you can see that have maps
22 showing the districts. So those are the
23 district maps. Those are the maps. They are
24 here. You can look at those maps and use them
25 as a take-off point for what is right, what is

1 wrong, what should be changed, where are there
2 aberrations, where are there areas or
3 neighborhoods or communities that are
4 appropriately within a House, Senate or
5 congressional district.

6 Equality of representation is not the only
7 redistricting requirement that we have to meet
8 legally. The laws and the important court
9 cases governing redistricting are explained on
10 the House and Senate websites. Those websites
11 are listed on the redistricting brochure -- the
12 redistricting 2012 brochure that you were
13 offered on the way in. If you didn't get one,
14 you can get one on the way out. That brochure
15 briefly summarizes federal and state laws, and
16 outlines topics on which we really need your
17 input. If you did not get a copy when you came
18 in, there will be plenty on the way out. Our
19 staff has them. The brochure lists the Senate
20 and House websites. These websites are packed
21 with information about redistricting in
22 Florida, including the explanation of all the
23 laws, federal and state, and the court cases
24 governing redistricting. The two websites, the
25 House and Senate, are complementary and will be

1 updated frequently. We hope you will visit
2 them often and leave your comments and your
3 suggestions as well. It is a good way to stay
4 current on how the redistricting process moves
5 forward.

6 The websites also deliver to your
7 fingertips all of the demographic information
8 about the people of Florida, the information
9 that the Bureau of Census gives to us.

10 Someone asked a very good question earlier
11 today, and that was, "Well, why is Florida not
12 finished with its redistricting? It appears
13 like we are just in the process when some other
14 states have already finished." Two answers.
15 One is, first the Bureau of the Census releases
16 census information in groups of states, and
17 Florida is in the very last group, so there are
18 some states that are finished because they got
19 their demographic information, who lives where,
20 months before Florida did.

21 A second reason is because Florida has a
22 much more interactive and open process where
23 you can attend public hearings, you can provide
24 input on the Senate and House websites, you can
25 propose maps of your own communities, your own

1 neighborhoods, your own counties, your own
2 parts of the state or the whole state, and
3 that's never been done before in the United
4 States through an interactive web process, and
5 it is not being done by most other states. So
6 that is -- those are two reasons why this
7 appears to be a more thoughtful process.

8 Before, during and after this hearing,
9 Senate and House professional staff are
10 available to show anybody the simple steps to
11 getting on-line, building districts and
12 submitting a plan now or in the weeks to come.
13 And I am pleased to say that we had a plan
14 submitted earlier today, and while we have been
15 in session today in this committee, three more
16 plans have been submitted by interested
17 citizens or groups around the state. So these
18 websites are working, people are submitting
19 their plans, Legislators are seeing your ideas.

20 Recommendations from citizens and groups
21 of citizens will all be made publicly
22 available. Any plan that is developed by any
23 legislator or any interest group or any citizen
24 will instantly be made available to the public
25 so everybody can see it, everybody can comment

1 on it, criticize it, offer amendments to it or
2 suggestions for how it can be made even better.
3 The submission of proposed plans for your
4 community is the single most effective form of
5 public participation in this redistricting
6 process. The redistricting schedule under
7 which we are operating also raises some good
8 questions that we heard today, and questions
9 which, you know, require factual answers.

10 The redistricting process, the timeline is
11 actually imposed by our state Constitution.
12 Our Constitution does not permit the
13 Legislature to act on legislative maps before
14 the second year after the census; in other
15 words, the Constitution says the Legislature
16 can't vote until 2012. Now, if the Fair
17 Districts folks who proposed a couple of
18 amendments that were passed thought that
19 schedule should be changed, they could have
20 included a change in the schedule, but they
21 didn't. So, factually, we are stuck with the
22 same schedule that we've had before. But that
23 doesn't mean we can't begin working now.

24 So we have accelerated the process as much
25 as possible by moving up the 2012 session of

1 the Legislature from March, when we usually
2 start, to January, and by beginning our
3 statewide hearings five months in advance of
4 the 2012 session.

5 We also can begin committee hearings as
6 soon as September, and we will, and we can
7 begin to hear, debate, discussion, see
8 proposals, anyone, any legislator, any member
9 of the public, any interest group, can propose
10 a map, and it can be discussed and debated as
11 early as September.

12 And there is absolutely nothing that
13 requires that we hold off voting in the
14 Legislature until March. Somehow that's gotten
15 out into the bloodstream, and while March would
16 be the last time we could vote, it is not the
17 first time we can vote.

18 A principle -- it's been suggested that
19 the Legislature ought to draw the maps first
20 and then ask the public to comment on those
21 maps. We believe, frankly, that that puts the
22 answer ahead of the question. We believe there
23 ought to be no preconceptions, no created maps
24 developed by politicians and then handed to you
25 as a *fait accompli*, but rather, public

1 testimony should be free and unrestricted and
2 ought to come first. And I am pleased to say
3 that the head of the Fair Districts group not
4 only agrees with us, but also testified before
5 the House and the Senate saying that no new
6 maps could be drawn or should be drawn until
7 after public hearings have been held. So we
8 are taking the Fair District founder's advice
9 and we are following that advise to the "T" in
10 that regard.

11 Our intent is to use the recommendations
12 made at the 26 public hearings and the input
13 that we are getting already through our
14 Internet sites as the basis for developing one
15 or more options for district maps.

16 We will then discuss those options in open
17 public meetings. You will see all of the
18 options. They will be available on the
19 Internet before the first vote is cast even in
20 committee. And throughout the process, we will
21 solicit additional public comment so that
22 proposed maps can mature with the public
23 involved all before the Legislature approves
24 final maps.

25 And then whatever the Legislature approves

1 is subject to judicial review. We can't simply
2 decide what we want to decide. First we have
3 to follow the Constitution and the laws and the
4 court cases, and then we have to submit
5 anything that comes through the legislative
6 process, Republicans and Democrats, House and
7 Senate working together, everyone with having
8 their own ideas, you having your ideas, all of
9 that when synthesized has to be given to the
10 courts for their approval.

11 Because our purpose today is to hear from
12 you, all of the time taken when I conclude my
13 brief remarks until eight o'clock tonight will
14 be consumed by hearing from the public. We
15 want to hear from you. Anybody who is here
16 from the public and wishes to speak ought to
17 have time to present their testimony.

18 Obviously we want to make sure that the last
19 person who signed up is given the same chance
20 as the first person to offer testimony and to
21 be listened to respectfully without
22 interruption and without argument.

23 Now, after every citizen who is here has
24 had her say or his say, if there is time
25 remaining before our scheduled adjournment, and

1 we hope there will be, then any member of the
2 committee can offer any comments, any
3 rejoinder, any discussion, any proposal, any
4 maps that they wish to offer, any Democrat, any
5 Republican, any House member, any Senate
6 member.

7 Mr. Chairman, I hope this description of
8 our schedule, our process and the method of
9 operation of this hearing will help us be
10 successful this evening.

11 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
12 very much, Senator Gaetz. Moving forward,
13 before we start the public hearing process, I
14 would like to just mention that we have two
15 distinguished guests with us here. First we
16 have an old friend and -- State Representative
17 Audrey Gibson. Audrey, it is really good to
18 see you. Thank you for being here today. A
19 former colleague to the House.

20 And, of course, we also have -- we also
21 have a dear friend and a -- Congresswoman
22 Corrine Brown, who is here as well. She was
23 here earlier today. We appreciate you being
24 here today, and thank you for your service to
25 the State of Florida and our country.

1 Okay. First up I am going to read two
2 names at a time. The name -- the first name
3 will be the person coming to the microphone
4 right in front of me, and then we will read the
5 next name, who will be the person on deck to
6 speak. We are trying to limit each person to
7 three minutes so that everyone has an
8 opportunity to speak, so please be cognizant of
9 the folks behind you due to the fact that we do
10 have a limited amount of time.

11 First up we have Marsha Dean Phetts, and
12 after Marsha, we have James Howell.
13 Ms. Phetts, thank you for being here. I know
14 that you wanted to speak earlier today, and I
15 apologize that we did not get to you, but we
16 are happy that you are here tonight.

17 MS. PHETTS: I am a resident of Duval and
18 Nassau Counties, Representative Weatherford and
19 Senator Gaetz, as well as the members of the
20 redistricting committee, I am very happy to
21 have this opportunity to share with you the way
22 I feel about the job that you are doing for me.

23 Also, I want to say that many of my
24 neighbors are not here who were here earlier,
25 but because of previous commitments, they are

1 gone on to other things, and I must leave, too.

2 About redistricting, I have heard the
3 speakers, the more than 20 speakers before me,
4 and they talked about many things, specifically
5 race and being an American. And, of course, I,
6 too, am an American, and race has been an issue
7 in America for more than 500 years, and so I
8 cannot ignore it.

9 I want you as my Representatives to
10 represent me, because you are my voice. When
11 you call me on the telephone and when you send
12 mail to me and shake hands and lobby and
13 hobnob, you are telling me that you will
14 represent me, and that is exactly what I want.
15 I want my fair representation. I want my
16 cultural and historical heritage
17 representation.

18 Today I've never heard the word
19 "gerrymandering" sound so bad. It is like the
20 "L" word and a few other words that I won't
21 say. Call it what you want. As I listened to
22 you from all of your districts, you have
23 multiple counties, and we're trying to get,
24 what, 700,000 people for Congress, and so --
25 for a congressional district. And I want and I

1 hear that we have increased from 25 to 27
2 Representatives in Congress. Don't erase me
3 and don't erase my community. There are three
4 African-Americans, there are Hispanics, and I
5 would certainly not want to see less. I don't
6 want us to repeat history in Florida
7 especially, and I don't want Florida to be
8 tarnished politically again, and so I plead
9 with you to do what is right by me and my
10 constituents, and thank you very much.

11 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
12 very much.

13 Next up we have Mr. James Howell. Is
14 Mr. Howell here? I didn't see him stand up
15 earlier. We will try to find Mr. Howell, but
16 we will keep moving.

17 Lee Harris. Is Lee not here as well? We
18 will save him as well and hope we can get back
19 to him.

20 We have, I believe -- I believe it is a
21 Mr. Bussard from the Duval County National
22 Executive Committee -- Democratic Executive
23 Committee. I cannot make out the first name.
24 Billee, is it Billee? Not here?

25 Okay. Arnett Girardeau, former Senator

1 Arnett Girardeau. I should have introduced you
2 earlier, sir. Welcome to the committee. Thank
3 you for being here, thank you for your service
4 to Florida, and you are recognized, sir. I
5 apologize for missing you earlier.

6 MR. GIRARDEAU: Mr. Chairman, I probably
7 was not here earlier, because I just walked in,
8 but I was here early this morning.

9 I am Arnett Girardeau, former State
10 Senator, and I came in --

11 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Senator,
12 could we just wait just a second while they
13 adjust your mike? We want to hear everything
14 you have to say.

15 Go ahead, sir.

16 MR. GIRARDEAU: Testing, one, two, three,
17 four, testing. All right. I will do the best
18 I can with what I have left.

19 I came in a little early and I noticed
20 that most people who spoke said that they
21 were -- their name and where they are from and
22 they have resided in Florida for so many years.
23 Well, some of the people said 35 years or 45
24 years, and I remember some of those years as
25 people who we welcomed into Florida, because

1 after World War II, Florida began to grow.
2 Florida was the seventh-largest state up until
3 that time, and now it is the fourth. The point
4 being I have been a Florida resident all of my
5 life, and that is only 82 years.

6 I have also participated in this process
7 of redistricting twice. That is why I came
8 this evening to tell you what I thought of your
9 job, first of all. I commend all of you for
10 taking the opportunity, responsibility and the
11 time to be here, because it is one of the most
12 daunting tasks you will ever have.

13 Now, why do I say that? Everybody talking
14 about fairness, fairness, fairness in the
15 election. And the fairness is in the eyes of
16 the beholder. What was fair 50 years ago is no
17 longer fair today. What do I mean by that?
18 When I was a boy, well, let's look, I haven't
19 changed colors, but at the same time, my people
20 could not vote in primary elections. It was
21 only toward the end that -- of the
22 desegregation plans of this country that we
23 were able to vote in primary elections. We
24 could vote in a federal -- federal election,
25 but not in primaries.

1 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Maybe another
2 couple of minutes.

3 MR. GIRARDEAU: Notice what change that
4 has made. Forty to 50 years later, you now
5 have an African-American President. You may
6 not like that, some of you might, but the point
7 is this: Our lady this morning said, "Why
8 should I vote for somebody" -- no, "Why should
9 I run for office that I know I can't be
10 elected?" You think about that. That is very
11 serious. Most whites, Caucasians or otherwise
12 did not know enough about non-whites or blacks
13 in order to feel comfortable with voting for
14 them. We have turned that corner now, and as a
15 result, we have gone to the extreme in both
16 directions. You have people who are on the
17 extremist conservative side, and those who are
18 on the most liberal side. As I recall, we had
19 one in Congress that passed the voting right --
20 the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act
21 that they call liberal, and they voted them all
22 out of office. All of the liberals were out in
23 the early '70s.

24 Now, at that time, Florida's parties were
25 controlled by the Democrats, Florida's House

1 and Senate. Look what has happened in that
2 time. In that time, it has completely
3 back-flipped, just like the arbiter.

4 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Senator, if I
5 could, I am really enjoying this, I've got to
6 tell you, but I just want to make sure, we've
7 got a lot of speakers, probably 30 or so to get
8 to, I don't want to rush you, but at the same
9 time, I want to make sure we get all your
10 comments in. So if you could --

11 MR. GIRARDEAU: You won't get them all in,
12 but I will give you a few. And the reason for
13 that is because, as I said, you have the most
14 daunting task before you ever.

15 The main thing is when you come down to
16 what is fair districting, you have to consider
17 the demography as far as Republican, Democrats,
18 Independents, et cetera, and what is right for
19 one is not always right for the other. But the
20 most important one, I think, the United States
21 government has these, and that has to do with
22 the racial equality.

23 Last point would be this: Although you
24 are -- you are about 15 million people now in
25 Florida, of which you have about 11 million

1 votes, but at the same time, you don't measure
2 -- you don't redistrict along lines based on
3 votes. You redistrict based on population.
4 That is why a lot of these pine trees that is
5 used to vote in the old elections are no longer
6 voting.

7 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Yes, sir.
8 Thank you, Senator, thank you for your service
9 to the State of Florida.

10 Next up we have Ms. Lisa Bruno, who was
11 here earlier. I do not see her now. We will
12 probably save her and try to get back to her if
13 she is here later.

14 We also have next Bishop McKinley Young.
15 Bishop? Not here?

16 We had also another Bishop, but I
17 apologize, I can't see the first name.
18 McKossick? McKissick? Not here.

19 We have Ms. Glorious Johnson, city council
20 member from Jacksonville, former city council
21 member. Thank you very much, Ms. Johnson, for
22 being here. You are recognized.

23 MS. JOHNSON: Good evening, everyone. Can
24 you hear me?

25 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Yes.

1 MS. JOHNSON: You know, as I used to be a
2 politician, we always have plenty to say, but
3 there comes a time when you are just -- just
4 hoping for the best. My thing is, and my
5 concern, and I think Mr. Girardeau,
6 Dr. Girardeau, my former dentist at that time,
7 and Congresswoman Brown, they had some points
8 from my research when it talks about the
9 gerrymandering.

10 I, too, am a long resident of
11 Jacksonville. This month, I will be 64 years
12 old, and I have been here 64 years. And the
13 gerrymandering at that time was supposed to be
14 set up where we would have the right
15 representation, or we would have an opportunity
16 to be represented by people who we chose to
17 represent us.

18 Yes, we have a President that is black.
19 He is an American. Yes, we have a mayor who is
20 black and from this city. But the point is,
21 there's still some things that must be done in
22 representation, and that is having an
23 opportunity for us to choose who we want to
24 represent us, and what we want, not saying that
25 as a race based, because I am one of the last

1 to pull the race card out if I have to, but the
2 point is there comes a time, and that is why it
3 was written in the two ballots that, first of
4 all, one thing that they want considered is
5 that districts shall not be drawn to deny
6 racial or language minorities the equal
7 opportunity to participate in the political
8 process and elect representatives of our
9 choice. If you do in the pocket-size, like the
10 compact, the contingency, like it says in here,
11 if you do work it that way, make sure under
12 whoever -- whomever the recommendation is for
13 fairness, who knows what fairness really is,
14 but within your heart do like Dr. Martin Luther
15 King stated, and he said, "Cowardice asks the
16 question, is it safe. Expediency asks the
17 question, is it politic. Vanity asks the
18 question, is it popular. But conscience asks
19 the question, is it right." And there comes a
20 time when one must make a position that is
21 neither safe nor politic nor popular, but
22 because conscience tells one it is right.

23 I hope that you do understand why we as
24 black Americans -- Americans, period -- feel
25 the way we feel and we want representation.

1 And if we decide we want to have an American
2 who happens to be black to represent us, let us
3 have that. If we decide we want a white,
4 Hispanic, Asian, whatever it is, let us be the
5 one, the voters, who make the decision. Thank
6 you very much.

7 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
8 Ms. Johnson.

9 Our next speaker is Sollie Mitchell,
10 followed by Judith Youngblood.

11 Ms. Mitchell? Mr. Mitchell, I'm sorry.

12 MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
13 and all of the representatives from the
14 different districts.

15 I am here to bring your attention to the
16 Voting Rights Act. As the new district lines
17 are drawn, to uphold the hard fought work that
18 we have made, it is absolutely an essential to
19 incorp the essence of the state Voting Right
20 Act into the way in which the State of Florida
21 political boundaries are drawn.

22 I am Sollie Mitchell, I live at 4009
23 Gillislee Drive. I am 93 years old. I
24 registered to vote in 1939, and have -- the
25 only time I missed voting was when I was in the

1 service, and I just want to thank the way that
2 you are operating now. I am energized,
3 energized to see what you are doing now.
4 Please, please, please. Thank you.

5 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
6 Mr. Mitchell. God bless you, sir, and thank
7 you for your service to our great country.

8 Next up we have Ms. Judith Youngblood,
9 followed by Bobby Burton.

10 MS. YOUNGBLOOD: My name is Judy
11 Youngblood. I am feeling younger by the minute
12 as I see Doc and Holly. Gosh, you know, I am
13 only 75, so I am feeling pretty good about
14 that. Been a registered voter in Jacksonville
15 since 1960. Would have been that sooner, but I
16 missed by just a few days' vote turning 21 for
17 the '56 election. I go back a long way in the
18 city.

19 One of the things that I have always been
20 concerned about is having representative
21 government. That is what we were given in this
22 country by our founding fathers, and
23 "representative" means that you -- we get
24 together and we meet people and we say, "You
25 would be good to represent me since I can't go

1 there, so you go and represent me, then I tell
2 you what I want, then you come back and tell me
3 what happened and I tell you what I want
4 again." This means that I need to know my
5 representatives. Many of you, I do know, I
6 have known -- I have known your folks, like I
7 went to high school with Lake's mom and -- Lake
8 -- Representative Ray's mom and others that I
9 have known for a long time.

10 One of the things about representation, if
11 you do a good job and people know you, you
12 don't have to worry about getting reelected.
13 You don't need incumbency. If necessary, back
14 in this -- and I went to the University of
15 Florida back in the early '50s with many of our
16 elected politicians, many of whom are now
17 retired. There is a solution for that. You
18 just move or buy another house, and then you
19 are in the district again. It is not a problem
20 with redistricting. It is a problem with you.

21 I have felt for quite a bit of time -- I
22 have been divorced for over 20 years, was
23 married for over 30, lived on the south side,
24 knew all of my representatives, didn't matter
25 if they were mine or not. If I had a problem,

1 I could go to any of them and they didn't say,
2 "Well, go to yours, I am not yours." They
3 said, "Sure." And that is the way things made
4 it good and you felt like you had
5 representative government.

6 Unfortunately, when I moved where I could
7 afford after divorce to the west side, I found
8 that I had a Congressperson who didn't
9 acknowledge me, and still doesn't, except when
10 I get a card when he is running again. I have
11 even gone down to his office in Orange Park and
12 taken information to try to get answers to
13 questions. Never got the answers. Got them
14 from the other Congressmen in the area who
15 didn't really represent me supposedly, but I do
16 my voicing at the ballot box.

17 So, once again, if you represent people
18 who know you, if you say, "Yes, I know you are
19 in my district," not saying, "Well, I don't
20 think I represent way up there," you -- you
21 will be treated fairly by the voters as you
22 treat them fairly. So please keep in mind when
23 you are redistricting.

24 There used to be an old joke about you
25 could take a Spirograph, remember those, and

1 you could draw your districts, because
2 populations do run somewhat in concentric
3 circles. Should be community based where we
4 can know each other, where people have the
5 opportunity to know who they are voting for,
6 where those people have an opportunity to
7 know -- get input from more --

8 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Ms.
9 Youngblood, we are running over a little bit.

10 MS. YOUNGBLOOD: Right. So that the
11 Legislators have the opportunity to get input
12 from more of the lobbyists to get them from the
13 electors. Thank you for your time.

14 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
15 very much.

16 Next we have Mr. Bobby Burton, followed by
17 Beth Davey, and before Mr. Burton gets up,
18 although I don't see him, I just want to remind
19 everyone we've got about an hour and a half and
20 we've got over 25 speakers, please be cognizant
21 of the folks behind you, and if someone said
22 what you planned to say, use brevity. We give
23 bonus points for that. So just be mindful.
24 Thank you very much.

25 Mr. Burton, is Mr. Burton here? Okay, we

1 will try to find him.

2 Ms. Davey, Beth Davey? Beth, thank you
3 very much for being here. Following Beth is
4 going to be Thomas Wing.

5 You are recognized, Beth.

6 MS. DAVEY: I just wanted to thank you
7 guys for coming to Jacksonville and allowing us
8 an opportunity to have input into this process.
9 I am coming more and representing hopefully
10 District 19. And my evaluation of this is as a
11 plan -- a possible plan would be to follow the
12 boundary line of I-295 and cut off everything
13 north of that and place it into District 16.
14 Given the fact that District 19 needs to lose
15 over 18,000 people and District 16 needs to
16 gain over 16,000 people, it would seem like a
17 help in both districts. This would also not
18 cause a ripple effect on either district. And
19 in keeping in line with Amendments 5 and 6, it
20 would allow northwest St. Johns and Mandarin
21 Township to stay together, which kind of goes
22 along with the lady that just spoke, it is
23 about keeping community together, and that is
24 my opinion. Thank you.

25 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you

1 very much.

2 Thomas Wing? You are recognized, sir.

3 After Thomas, we have Mr. Ray Alford.

4 MR. WING: Thank you very much for this
5 opportunity to speak to the panel and to the
6 citizens here of Jacksonville.

7 Justice is blind, except probably when it
8 comes down to the final decision as to where
9 the actual demarcations of the different
10 districts will be and that type of thing. Now,
11 I hope the gerrymandering, that type of thing,
12 which is so prevalent in some of the districts
13 will be stopped, but it will take political
14 courage to do that, of course. Most people, as
15 I have discovered in Tallahassee and that type
16 thing, don't have that.

17 I've heard the -- for both of these
18 sessions, I have heard the race card pulled so
19 many times. It is time to get over it. Mayor
20 Brown won the election, not by a whole bunch,
21 but, you know, we have to start accepting that
22 we have this situation in this city like we
23 have. We have 47 percent of these kids doing
24 horrible in schools. To me, that is more
25 important than playing the race card.

1 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Mr. Alford, I
2 would like to keep your comments focused on the
3 redistricting, if you could.

4 MR. WING: It is, it is, it is.

5 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Help me get
6 to it.

7 MR. WING: Okay. In politics, everything
8 is about power and control, and I would hope
9 that the panel, the decision-makers, the people
10 who do the final analysis and vote on where --
11 what is going to where and that type thing,
12 will do it based on that justice is blind.
13 Thank you.

14 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
15 sir.

16 Next up we have Ray Alford, and after
17 Mr. Alford, we have Mike Kuhn. Do we have Ray
18 Alford here?

19 Okay. How about Mike Kuhn, is Mike here?
20 Mike, thank you for being here, sir. You are
21 recognized.

22 MR. KUHN: Thank you. Thank you so much.

23 Senator Gaetz, I want to compliment you on
24 laying out the rules of the road and some of
25 the -- you did some good preemptive strikes, I

1 would say, on taking care of the issues that so
2 many people had during our first session.

3 I am Mike Kuhn, I am from a little
4 community called Orangedale, that is somewhere
5 in 19, and when I look at community, I guess I
6 look at it a little bit differently in the fact
7 where do I go to church, what is happening to
8 our St. Johns River, where do I go eat dinner,
9 and Representative Gwyn, she and I had to fight
10 over a chicken wing, I think, for dinner. When
11 I want to go to a fish restaurant, I go up to
12 Bonefish, which is just south of 295. If I
13 want to grab some quick Italian, I go across
14 the river and grab up some Olive Garden. And
15 if I want to fix something at the house, I go
16 to Home Depot. And when I go to church, I go
17 south to around World Golf Village, and that
18 church never was ever there before. And when I
19 want to go to the library, I go to a little
20 place around Fruit Cove. And so that is my
21 community.

22 And it is interesting, everybody that I
23 end up running into seems to have the same
24 concerns as I do. Is our properties being
25 taken care of, is the river being taken care

1 of, what's the education like, what is the
2 funding from the State, from the Feds, what are
3 the issues around the county? And so when I
4 look at the dilemma that you might face in our
5 arena, I look at 19, and there's, what, Mike,
6 16,000 extra that you've got sitting there, so
7 we could take that and move it into, what is
8 it, 16, Beth, I think, that would take care of
9 that issue, and everything south and everything
10 to my community over in Orange Park as it is
11 today all the way down to Fleming Island where
12 my Home Depot is, makes sense and we are all
13 very dumb, fat and happy.

14 So -- and Gwyndolen, all of my favorite
15 dining places are right there. I don't have to
16 go over 295, and all the sizing is correct.

17 And one thing I want to just share with
18 you all, sir, 93 years, wonderful, and the
19 history that some of our folks have shared with
20 us tonight is wonderful, and the traditions
21 that as a community you've all had. I come
22 from Colorado, so, my gosh, the Civil War, I
23 had to scratch my head on that one. But the
24 thing is, in my community, all of us take the
25 same approach in making sure that we want a

1 Representative who stands for the rights of the
2 people, who represents that all of us have a
3 proper place in our society, that we should all
4 be treated respectfully, and finally, we should
5 honor the individuality of each and every one
6 of us. And in my community, that is what
7 happens, and it doesn't make any difference
8 whether you are black, white, Ukrainian or
9 Hispanic, my community will represent all of
10 us, and that is what we expect. Thank you.

11 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.

12 Next up we have Mr. Richard Billings. I
13 apologize, Richard, I didn't give you a
14 heads-up. Thank you for being here. And after
15 Richard, we are going to have Jay McGovern.

16 Mr. Billings, you are recognized.

17 MR. BILLINGS: I am Richard Billings from
18 Fernandina, Nassau County, Representative
19 Adkins, and I want to score some points, so I
20 will be brief.

21 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Good.

22 MR. BILLINGS: Basically -- can everybody
23 here me? I just want to make one point and ask
24 one question. I would love to see when you
25 guys are done at the end of the day to have the

1 districts resemble something that it is either
2 geometric or follows natural boundaries. You
3 know, before the meeting, I was looking at the
4 Florida congressional districts, and I got a
5 chuckle out of District 3, look at that. And I
6 don't want to go into politics, but I hope we
7 don't see that when you folks are finished with
8 your deliberations.

9 The second thing -- and I hope politics
10 and party politics don't enter into the
11 equation, too much anyway. And my question is,
12 at the end of this session, can we get a little
13 update on Amendment 5 and 6, how will that
14 impact your thinking? If you could write that
15 down, if we have time. Thank you very much.

16 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.
17 To give you two quick answers, the first one to
18 your question is you can actually sign up on
19 this card and you can get updates via e-mail as
20 to what we are doing and the timing and
21 process.

22 Also, in regards to Amendments 5 and 6,
23 Senator Gaetz will touch on this at the end,
24 but to say it very briefly, we are going to
25 follow it. It is the law, it is the

1 Constitution and we will absolutely follow it.

2 Mr. McGovern, thank you for being back
3 this afternoon. You are recognized, sir.

4 MR. McGOVERN: Thank you.

5 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: After
6 Mr. McGovern, we have Jonathan Loesche. I hope
7 I am saying that right. Mr. Loesche, you will
8 be next from the Libertarian Party of Duval
9 County.

10 You are recognized, sir.

11 MR. McGOVERN: Thank you. There's been a
12 lot of talk about having individuals or civic
13 organizations submit plans, and I would
14 certainly suggest that people do that, as you
15 have. We want that public input. But it
16 doesn't preclude you from giving us a look at
17 what you guys have in mind as members of the
18 committee. I think that is really important.
19 I mentioned earlier about it is effectively a
20 gag order by you not communicating with me. It
21 is important that I communicate with you, but I
22 need you to communicate with me as well. I
23 don't think it is the job of civic
24 organizations to submit a plan for you guys.
25 It is your job. That is what we pay you for.

1 The other part of that is, as a citizen,
2 it suggests to me that I have to have a special
3 interest group to be represented, that I have
4 to have some civic group submit a plan that
5 fits my needs, or I won't be represented. So
6 that is why it is so important for me to see
7 your plan.

8 And then in the introductory remarks, you
9 talked about the timeline and you consistently
10 say that you have accelerated the timeline, but
11 I would please like to clarify that is only the
12 final enactment of the districts that has to
13 wait until 2012.

14 What we didn't see was enough early on,
15 you know. The Governor sort of slow-rolled the
16 census data, and we are off to a start now, but
17 it is a late start, and I think that should be
18 acknowledged. And there are things that you
19 can do to speed the process. We don't need to
20 depend on the courts to have a speedy process
21 after January.

22 So the last thing I would like to point
23 out is there's a couple of people who have
24 talked about fairness is in the eye of the
25 beholder. The purpose of Fair Districts

1 Florida was to define fairness, and that is
2 codified now in our Constitution, that fairness
3 is defined, as one guy was talking about,
4 compact, geometric, blah, blah, blah. So that
5 is codified. And the last point of that
6 fairness is these districts can be done meeting
7 the requirements of the Voters Rights Act. We
8 just have to pay less attention to Republican
9 versus Democrat constituencies. Thank you.

10 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
11 sir. Thanks for coming back.

12 Jonathan Loesche. After Mr. Loesche, I
13 hope I am saying that right, we have Craig
14 Shoup.

15 Jonathan, you are recognized, sir. Thank
16 you for being here today.

17 MR. LOESCHE: My name is Jonathan Loesche,
18 I am with the Libertarian Party of Florida, and
19 first off I just want to thank all of you for
20 making this process as seemingly open as
21 possible.

22 You know, like the other gentleman said,
23 it seems like the -- with the issue of
24 gerrymandering, this isn't an issue about race.
25 Somebody else said about District 3, the other

1 main thing about that district is that it is
2 almost primarily Democrat, and I would be
3 willing to wager that all -- I know at least
4 District 4 is Mr. Crenshaw, and I am not sure
5 about the others, but I am willing to bet
6 almost all of them are Republican, because
7 almost all the Democrats in this part of the
8 state are within District 3. As someone who is
9 a third party -- potential third-party
10 candidate, it is already tough enough for us to
11 try and get into the game and win a state like
12 Florida where it has one of the highest
13 incumbency rates in America, gerrymandering is
14 a real issue. So I just want to say that --
15 that is about it. So thank you very much.

16 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
17 very much.

18 Next we have Craig Shoup, and after Craig,
19 we've got Justin Taylor.

20 While we are waiting for Mr. Shoup, I just
21 want to take a moment to let everyone know,
22 unfortunately, the live webcast for this
23 meeting has failed due to a technical issue,
24 but we should be able to have video replay
25 available on the pod cast and on the web in the

1 next day or so. So we apologize for that
2 technical difficulty.

3 Mr. Shoup, you are recognized, sir.

4 MR. SHOUP: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
5 wanted to just express my gratitude to the
6 committee and to all of our Representatives and
7 Senators for this open process. I think we
8 have heard people talking that we need to have
9 openness, and I think you guys have listened
10 before anyone ever said anything about
11 openness, and creating this openness with the
12 web, let anyone be able to submit a plan, you
13 couldn't ask for a more open process. I just
14 want to say thank you for that and thank you
15 for coming over here to Jacksonville.

16 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
17 very much. Extra points for Mr. Shoup.

18 Justin Taylor is next. After Justin -- we
19 need you on the mike, because everything is on
20 the record. We want to make sure that you are
21 properly represented and your thoughts are
22 represented, sir, so go ahead.

23 MR. TAYLOR: Thank you. My name is Justin
24 Taylor, I am the President of the Nassau County
25 Young Republicans, and I just wanted to say

1 thank you very much for representing us and
2 thank you for all you do and for having this
3 night to hear testimony from the public, so
4 thank you.

5 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
6 very much, Mr. Taylor.

7 We next have Mr. William Wright, and after
8 William Wright, Roger Thomas.

9 Mr. Wright, you are recognized, sir.

10 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you very much. I am
11 using this little form that Congressman Stern
12 sent out, so he said make sure you tell him who
13 you are and all that kind of stuff. So my name
14 is William Thomas Wright. Most people call me
15 Tom. I am here representing myself; however, I
16 am a proud member of the First Coast Tea Party.
17 Then it says tell them how long. All right, I
18 have been here since I was ten years old and I
19 have been in Jacksonville for 57 years,
20 graduated from a local high school, married an
21 Englewood girl. I have five grandchildren, one
22 great-grandchild. And I was one of those
23 people when I was working for a living, I was
24 too damn busy for politics, but since I
25 retired, I decided I would try to dabble in it

1 a little bit and I got involved with the First
2 Coast Tea Party and I started going to events
3 and I started meeting people and I started to
4 get a little enthused, but I had a real
5 awakening in our last mayoral election. I was
6 a poll watcher, and I was assigned to precinct
7 four. I learned so much about political
8 activism. These people know what they are
9 doing. They took us to the wood shed,
10 basically what happened.

11 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Mr. Wright,
12 we would like you to focus on the -- comments
13 on redistricting, if you could.

14 MR. WRIGHT: I am getting to that. I am
15 getting to that.

16 Now, item one on this sheet says "compact
17 of districts." Then number three says,
18 "preserve existing districts." Boy, I don't
19 know how y'all are going to do that. I'll tell
20 you one thing, I wouldn't want to be in your
21 shoes. It is a heck of a job. And if you have
22 to stick to this 696,000, no wonder the thing
23 looks like a jigsaw puzzle.

24 So I ask you, please do your due diligence
25 as much as you can, especially with cutting

1 into two new districts, and I hope you have
2 divine guidance, because I believe you are
3 going to need it. Thank you.

4 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
5 very much, Mr. Wright. Appreciate your
6 prayers.

7 Next up we have Mr. -- Mr. Thomas.

8 MR. THOMAS: Good evening, ladies and
9 gentlemen. I --

10 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: And, excuse
11 me, Mr. Thomas, I'm sorry, after Mr. Thomas, we
12 have Donna Barrow, or Barrow.

13 You are recognized, sir.

14 MR. THOMAS: I am Mr. Roger Thomas, a
15 long-term resident of Jacksonville. I lived
16 down in Winter Park before that for many years.

17 I would say that the person that comes
18 closest to expressing my opinion tonight has
19 been Mr. McGovern, so that is just a second of
20 his position. I think the overall thing that I
21 have heard tonight is a request for fairness on
22 your part.

23 I can say that of the community here in
24 Jacksonville, that my experience as a campaign
25 worker was that some of my associates were run

1 out of some neighborhoods, and, therefore, to a
2 certain extent, representation fairly in
3 Jacksonville is still deficient. Whatever that
4 makes problems for you, Lake Ray or the other
5 people from Jacksonville, I'm sorry, but I do
6 know that it is not working as it exists now.
7 The Fairness in Representation Act needs to be
8 implemented in your absolute, most ethical and
9 scrupulous method that you can apply. Thank
10 you.

11 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.

12 Next up we have Donna Barrow, and after
13 that, we have John Libby who visited with us
14 earlier. Donna. Donna left, okay.

15 John? We would love to have you back
16 again, sir.

17 Are we going to put his maps up on -- if
18 we could. Give us one second, John, I think we
19 will get your maps up again.

20 Mr. Libby, for those of you who do not
21 know, submitted a full congressional map to
22 this committee as a -- now is probably a good
23 time to mention, in fact, just today we have
24 received three submissions of congressional
25 maps just today on-line, and one state Senate

1 map. So we are certainly appreciative of the
2 feedback we are getting, and Mr. Libby, we are
3 very grateful for yours, so you are allowed to
4 proceed.

5 MR. LIBBY: I just wanted to come forward
6 one last time and commend the committee for
7 holding these public hearings, and to suggest
8 to everyone that is present that the
9 opportunity exists here in Florida to have your
10 input and put it on paper, send it
11 electronically to these ladies and gentlemen
12 over in Tallahassee. And having been through
13 the redistricting process here in Florida in
14 1980, 1990 and 2000, we've never had this type
15 of opportunity as private citizens before. So
16 I would suggest as Americans we all take this
17 opportunity and be -- continue to follow this
18 process through to its conclusion, and
19 hopefully we will come up with districts that
20 everybody can live with and are agreeable to.
21 Thank you.

22 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
23 very much, Mr. Libby, and thank you for
24 submitting those maps to us. We are very
25 grateful, and we hope many more people will

1 follow suit.

2 After that, I believe we've got a Dwayne
3 Clarkson. Is that right?

4 MR. CLARK: Clark, Senior.

5 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Clark,
6 Senior. I'm sorry about that. Mr. Clark,
7 Senior, thank you very much for being here. We
8 welcome you, and after Mr. Clark, Senior, we've
9 got Brenda Simmons.

10 You are recognized, sir.

11 MR. CLARK: Again, my name is Dwayne
12 Clark, Sr. I am a resident of Jacksonville for
13 quite a few moons, and I would just like to
14 thank the Representatives and the Senators here
15 today for this transparent proceedings. And
16 also I would just like to mention, just to echo
17 what Dr. Girardeau said earlier, when you are
18 doing your redistricting, do it demographically
19 based upon the registered voters. That will
20 eliminate the gerrymandering, that will
21 eliminate the race issue, that will eliminate
22 everything and it would be -- everything would
23 be neutrally based upon that and your other
24 regulations that you are governed by, and I
25 think everything will be okay. God bless you.

1 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
2 sir.

3 Next up we have Ms. Simmons. Thank you
4 for being here. And Arlyn Dockery will be
5 after Mr. Simmons.

6 You are recognized, ma'am.

7 MS. SIMMONS: Thank you, Representative
8 Weatherford, Senator Gaetz and distinguished
9 ladies and gentlemen of the Legislature.

10 I rise this evening to speak in favor of
11 abiding by the letter and the tenets of the
12 Voting Rights Act, first enacted in 1965 and
13 expanded in 1975.

14 Indulge me for a moment as a articulate
15 from my perspective. I am an English
16 literature professor by trade, and today's
17 debate reminds me of a poem written by Dudley
18 Randall at the turn of the 20th century. The
19 poem was about two 20th-century icons, Booker
20 T. Washington and W. E. B. Dubois. In
21 Randall's widely anthologized poem, Booker T.
22 and W. B., Washington argues that
23 African-Americans should go about their work
24 quietly and save money to buy a house, among
25 other things, as part of a fictional

1 conversation with his contemporary. He said
2 something like this: "It seems to me, said
3 Booker T., that all you folks have missed the
4 boat who shout about the right to vote, and
5 spend vain days and sleepless nights in uproar
6 over civil rights. Just keep your mouth shut
7 and do not grouse, but work and save and buy a
8 house."

9 W. B. Dubois constantly disagrees with
10 Mr. Washington, citing education as the goal to
11 which African-Americans should aspire. W. B.
12 Dubois makes a very salient point relative to
13 today's topic when he says in his poem, "For
14 what can property avail if dignity and justice
15 fail? Unless you help to make the laws, they
16 will steal your house with a trumped-up
17 clause."

18 Amendments 5 and 6 in all its geometry are
19 the trumped-up clauses of today that will
20 summarily strip African-Americans and Hispanics
21 from the ability to appropriately be
22 represented in the Legislature. Enactment of
23 these amendments will destroy the communities
24 of interest that comprise the minority access
25 districts. I am firm in my belief, because for

1 the balance of my adult life I have lived in
2 districts that were represented by people who
3 look like me, some of whom are in this very
4 room this evening. These Legislators
5 understand, can interpret, and most
6 importantly, can do and fervently fight for the
7 issues important to me. There is an ease in
8 this relationship, because similar backgrounds,
9 interests and aspirations make for a
10 synergistic relationship between legislator and
11 constituents. After all, this is what
12 democracy is about, persons duly elected to
13 ensure that genuine interests of constituents
14 are not compromised.

15 I ask myself the question: If I began my
16 statement today citing a turn of the 20th
17 century debate covering a similar topic,
18 knowing full well that twice in that century,
19 in 1965 and 1975, the issue was confronted and
20 handled head-on, why is it that we are here
21 today in the second decade of the 21st century
22 still debating an issue that is so clearly one
23 that is regressive instead of progressive?
24 But, alas, we are here, and I register my
25 sentiment and strong opinion that blatant

1 violation of the Voting Rights Act through the
2 enactment of Amendments 5 and 6 and creating
3 districts that are not representative of
4 communities of interest is degenerative,
5 insulting and it erodes the progress made by so
6 many of America's foreparents.

7 In a word, let us continue to uphold the
8 Voting Rights Act and ensure that any
9 redistricting maintains minority access
10 districts. Thank you very much.

11 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
12 very much.

13 Arlyn Dockery. After Ms. Dockery, we have
14 Beth Davey.

15 MS. DOCKERY: Thank you. My name is Arlyn
16 Dockery, I have lived in Jacksonville for over
17 45 years, and I thank you all for representing
18 us, and I hope and pray that when all is said
19 and done and all the redistricting has been
20 re-graphed, that all the people will be fairly
21 represented, equally and geographically from
22 Jacksonville to Orlando. Thank you.

23 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
24 very much.

25 Beth Davey? Is Beth here? She already

1 spoke. We had her in here twice, okay. I
2 apologize for that. I thought I had seen that
3 before.

4 Robert, I want to say Sponsor, but I don't
5 think that is right.

6 SENATOR GAETZ: Lives on Forest Circle.

7 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Yes, on
8 Forest Circle. He left? Okay, he is not here.

9 Bruce Rockwell. Is Mr. Rockwell here?
10 Come on forward, Mr. Rockwell. You will be
11 followed up by the Vice-President of the city
12 council, Mr. Bishop. Mr. Bill Bishop, you are
13 next, sir.

14 You are recognized.

15 MR. ROCKWELL: Mr. Weinstein, you forgot
16 about us folks in Duval County when you
17 announced who you represented.

18 The young lady that just spoke before me
19 with the Voting Rights Act, we seem to forget
20 that we are all Floridians, we are supposed to
21 be representative of everyone. So my
22 suggestion to you gentlemen, which the State of
23 Florida residents voted for Amendment 5 and 6,
24 if you believe in democracy, then what is the
25 problem? What we need to do is have a computer

1 graphics giving us three or four choices,
2 leaves you gentlemen off the hook, and we do it
3 by population, not by black, white, green,
4 purple, Republican, Democrat or whatever you
5 happen to be. I am a registered Democrat, I
6 vote Republican, but I speak independently, so
7 I don't know --

8 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Sounds like
9 you got all the bases covered there, sir.

10 MR. ROCKWELL: Well -- and one last thing
11 that is not on subject. The Georgia-Pacific
12 redistribution of their waste into the St.
13 Johns River, you know, they are polluting
14 Wright's Creek, now we are all going to get a
15 little bit. Thank you for listening.

16 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
17 Mr. Rockwell, we appreciate your comments.

18 We've got the Vice-President of the city
19 council, Mr. Bill Bishop. Councilman, thank
20 you very much for being here, and following
21 Mr. Bishop, we have Ms. Audrey Gibson, former
22 Representative.

23 COUNCILMAN BISHOP: Thank you,
24 Mr. Chairman and members of the committee.
25 Thank you all for being here and conducting

1 this hearing. You truly do have a daunting
2 task, and I am glad I don't have yours. We
3 have our own little redistrict thing going on,
4 and it is nothing like this, so my hat is off
5 to you, but my comment will be very brief.

6 Speaking as a resident of several of the
7 districts that exhibit what one might call
8 creative geometric properties, my hope is that
9 compactness is a principle that ranks very high
10 in the decision matrix in which you conduct
11 your business going forward, and thank you very
12 much.

13 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
14 very much, sir.

15 Yes? I think we have time for everybody.
16 We would love to here from you, Ms. Gibson. It
17 is good to see you again in your neck of the
18 woods. And after Ms. Gibson, we have got -- I
19 am going to ask Senator Gaetz to help me with
20 this one. I think it is Celia --

21 SENATOR GAETZ: Miller.

22 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: -- Miller.
23 Celia Miller will be next.

24 Representative, thank you for being here,
25 and you have the floor.

1 MS. GIBSON: Thank you, and thank you all
2 for being here. I know it is very difficult to
3 leave family, particularly when session is over
4 and committees are over, so I appreciate all of
5 you all being here, and certainly all of you
6 all need to give yourselves a hand for being
7 here because you are interested in the process.
8 Go ahead and do that.

9 I just have a couple of comments. You
10 know I am a woman of many words, but I wrote
11 down today what I want to say, and I had some
12 dental work done, too, so that is going to cut
13 in really badly.

14 I think as you consider how the district
15 lines are going to be drawn, I hope that you
16 all will consider what is in the best interest
17 of all of the communities throughout this
18 state. Will the people who are drawn within
19 particular district lines have an opportunity
20 to elect someone who represents their
21 interests, the diversity of interests, where
22 the schools are going to be drawn, where the
23 libraries are going to be, and the trickle-down
24 effect of the lines that you draw on not only
25 congressional districts, but legislative

1 districts, school districts and city council
2 districts, and how that all plays into the
3 daily lives of the citizens of the state of
4 Florida.

5 I also would ask that you consider that
6 the census and redistricting is not only about
7 how many people there are in our state and
8 within district lines, but who those people
9 are. And, again, the overwhelming
10 consideration, I think, is whether or not they
11 have opportunity -- the opportunity to elect
12 people who represent their interests and their
13 needs, and then, again, remember the domino
14 effect. Thank you very much.

15 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
16 Representative Gibson.

17 We have Ms. Celia Miller next, and after
18 Ms. Celia, we have Lisa King.

19 You are recognized, ma'am.

20 MS. MILLER: Good evening, Representative
21 Weatherford and distinguished other
22 Representatives and fellow citizens. I am
23 Celia Miller, practically a life-long resident,
24 native of Jacksonville, and I would like to
25 thank the Representatives and those people who

1 are responsible for making this process very
2 transparent and the many opportunities that we
3 will have to have input.

4 I think most of the speakers have made
5 very valid points, and I concur with most of
6 them, and I think all of us want fairness so
7 that we will all be represented.

8 This is a democratic democracy, but some
9 people have their own interpretation about with
10 democracy is. Some see it as being fair, and
11 some feel it and interpret it as not being fair
12 since it is a democracy, but we live in a
13 capitalistic society. So we are not always
14 certain that our best interests are
15 represented, but the voting process allows for
16 that to be accomplished if everyone is to use
17 their best judgment, their best knowledge and
18 their most earnest consciousness to accomplish
19 what all the people would want. Whether half
20 feel it is wrong or half feel it is right, we
21 want to be able to represent all the people,
22 and that is basically what I wanted to say
23 tonight, and hopefully from my community, which
24 is in the heart of Jacksonville, we will be
25 submitting suggestions, maps and ideas for the

1 committee to consider. And I like the idea of
2 having the final draft include three options at
3 least from which the people will have to
4 decide. Thank you and God bless all of you.

5 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
6 very much, Ms. Miller.

7 We have Lisa King next, and after Lisa,
8 John Thomas.

9 MS. KING: Good evening.

10 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Good evening.

11 MS. KING: My name is Lisa King and I am a
12 native of Jacksonville, and I am here
13 representing little, tiny precinct 11-A, the
14 only precinct in Duval County that is in House
15 District 12, and -- all 315 of us. And we live
16 on Hecksher Drive, which is a 1920's toll road
17 that was built by a New York businessman. It
18 connects a string of islands. Out in my little
19 precinct, I have one gas station, the ferry, a
20 liquor store, a church, a surf shop and two
21 restaurants. However, we are -- yes, we do,
22 we've got the important bases covered. But
23 because of the way the district is drawn, our
24 Representative, who has, God bless her, more
25 counties than any one person should have -- and

1 I know some of you folks in the Panhandle know
2 what that is about -- we all work in
3 Jacksonville, we -- our children go to school
4 in Jacksonville. We really have no community
5 of interest with the rest of that district.
6 Our precinct has flip-flopped in between that
7 district and District 17. And I will never
8 forget meeting with Representative Davis one
9 time, God rest him, and arguing with him that I
10 was indeed in his district. He did not believe
11 me. I had to take out my voter card and show
12 him that I was indeed in House District 17. So
13 we would really like to be in House District
14 17. I am asking nicely.

15 Okay. That being said, trusting
16 government is at a record low. Florida is a
17 purple state, okay. We -- you know, we just
18 elected a Democrat president, a Democrat mayor
19 here in Jacksonville, barely, we have one U.S.
20 Senator who is Republican, one U.S. Senator who
21 is a Democrat. We have -- but yet the
22 Legislature, the makeup of the seats does not
23 reflect that kind of 50/50 atmosphere. That is
24 why we voted for fair districts. It was not an
25 accident. We knew what we were voting for. We

1 know that y'all can draw districts in a way
2 that reflects our voter performance, which kind
3 of goes back and forth, we are right there in
4 the middle, and also respects minority access
5 districts. We know it is possible and we
6 expect it from you.

7 We also expect that at this time where
8 money is so tight and we have such major
9 problems to deal with, we don't want to spend
10 our taxpayers' dollars watching you guys suing
11 yourselves. Enough, okay. So it is really
12 going to be really easy to judge the job y'all
13 are doing. So I just want you to know there's
14 a lot of folks watching you close. Thank you.

15 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.

16 We have John Thomas up next, and following
17 John is Tom Larson. Is John here? Maybe not
18 here.

19 Is Tom Larson here? Mr. Larson, thank you
20 for being here, sir.

21 After Mr. Larson, we have John Wehrung.

22 MR. LARSON: Thank you very much for
23 coming here from your far-flung districts
24 around the state. My name is Tom Larson. I
25 live in Jacksonville Beach. I am a life-long

1 American, though I am only in the Jacksonville
2 area for the last 13 years. I am here after
3 being in eight other cities following my
4 career, and I am glad to be here. I got here
5 as soon as I could.

6 I find the district shapes that we live
7 with today to be extreme. My Congressional
8 Representative has a district that spans from
9 the east side of Tallahassee all the way to
10 Ponte Vedra Beach. My state senatorial
11 district ranges from the Georgia border to
12 Ormond Beach, and it takes so long to drive
13 from one end to the other of these districts
14 that there's no way to know my neighbors. I
15 really urge you to undertake compact district
16 designs that reflect the community that people
17 live in and their interests that surround their
18 jobs, their schools, their families, and I hope
19 that you find the word "fair" to be your
20 mantra. I know that is subject to
21 interpretation, but we really seek a state
22 where we are all proud of the layout, we are
23 all proud to be represented by you, and urge
24 you to do your best to do us good service.
25 Thank you very much.

1 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
2 sir.

3 John Wehrung, and with the desire to earn
4 bonus points has decided not to speak, so John,
5 thank you very much for being here.

6 Raymond Pringle is next, and after Mr.
7 Pringle, we have Tanya Bison. I do want to
8 mention that Tanya Bison is our last speaker,
9 and so if there's anyone here who wishes to
10 speak, but has not filled out a card, please
11 raise your right hand now. We will get a card
12 to you and give you an opportunity to speak.
13 Sir, I see someone right here. Could have been
14 one of the ones that was absent earlier when I
15 called your name. We will come back and look
16 for you, sir.

17 But Raymond Pringle. All right. Good to
18 see you, sir. Thank you for being here. I
19 guess we are in Gator country tonight.

20 MR. PRINGLE: Yes, sir.

21 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Go Gators.

22 MR. PRINGLE: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
23 distinguished panel. Welcome to the bold city
24 of the south, Jacksonville. I see some of you
25 ladies and gentlemen up there that I have known

1 for a long time, and we sure do appreciate you
2 coming.

3 Our town is a great military town, and
4 we -- we are so glad that we have such a
5 wonderful city that we live in, and one of the
6 things that I am really concerned about is our
7 community is changing, and I am just wondering
8 if we are cognizant of just what is going on in
9 our communities in trying to draw out some of
10 these maps.

11 Equality is one of the things that is very
12 important, I think, to each one of us as we sit
13 here and I have heard a lot of folks talking.
14 I live in the Dinsmore area, which is very
15 rural, and our community is changing really a
16 whole lot, and our community has been competing
17 with -- the way the districts are drawn, our --
18 competing with a lot of the downtown district,
19 and a lot of the amenities that go into that
20 district are winding up downtown and not in the
21 area that we live in, and a lot of -- if you
22 see on our map, Jacksonville has a tremendous
23 amount of rural territory, such a big city that
24 we live in, and our services are very sparse,
25 especially transportation. We get a bus down

1 through Dinsmore one time a day, salute. And
2 that is something that we really are concerned
3 about.

4 And another thing, as I look at the
5 drawing of these districts, it reminds me of a
6 drunk chicken, and I don't -- as he maybe drags
7 his tail along with ink on it and going through
8 the lines, it is very hard to get a grasp on
9 just where you are at. Unless you have your
10 voter's card and it will tell you what's going
11 on, you have to be a genius with a map to do
12 so.

13 And so -- but with that, we appreciate you
14 sitting here and listening to all of us and our
15 concerns and maybe a little bit of griping and
16 growling, which all Americans love to do, but
17 we appreciate your ear and thank you very much
18 for listening to us. God bless you one and
19 all.

20 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
21 Mr. Pringle.

22 Okay, Tanya Bison. Ms. Bison, and then
23 following Tanya Bison, we have Kathy Davenport.

24 You are recognized.

25 MS. BYRON: Tanya Byron.

1 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Byron, I'm
2 sorry.

3 MS. BYRON: Yes.

4 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: My apologies.

5 MS. BYRON: I never wanted to attend one
6 of these things before, it is not what I wanted
7 to do, but when the decisions that you folks
8 are making in Tallahassee are affecting my
9 daily life, I start to pay attention.

10 I second this gentleman's thoughts that I
11 don't quite understand why we, the people, are
12 being asked to put all this effort into this
13 redistricting. We have the expectation that
14 you have the -- that you have the smarts and
15 the know-how and the tools to do this. I would
16 say keep it simple, do it concentrically and
17 keep it simple.

18 I am a property owner. I am busy trying
19 to make my mortgage. I don't have time to do
20 this. But, again, we want you to know that we
21 are watching, the citizens are aware, and I
22 think there is a level of distrust that has
23 made probably a lot of these people show up
24 that would rather be home with their families.

25 You guys have cut more than a billion

1 dollars from Florida schools while you are not
2 making big corporations pay their taxes. Key
3 growth management rules protecting our natural
4 resources have been dismantled lately.

5 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Ma'am, if you
6 could please focus your comments on the
7 redistricting and the map specifically, that
8 would be great.

9 MS. BYRON: Okay. Well, I think this talk
10 about gerrymandering is coming from that place
11 of distrust. That is really all I have to say
12 besides to keep it simple and try and be fair.
13 Thank you.

14 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
15 very much.

16 We've got Kathy Davenport, and after that,
17 Mr. Solomon.

18 Ms. Kathy, you are recognized.

19 MS. DAVENPORT: Thank you. Thank you very
20 much, and thank you all for your services.

21 This will be short. I just would like to
22 request that as much as is absolutely possible,
23 to keep Clay County all in one area, and not
24 broken up. I think it would be all in our best
25 interest.

1 And, also -- and I really appreciate you
2 folks working as fast as possible to get all
3 this done so that the information can get to
4 our soldiers overseas so they will have plenty
5 of time to vote and get back to the United
6 States. So thank you very much.

7 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
8 very much.

9 Mr. Solomon, I'm sorry if we missed you
10 earlier, sir, you are recognized, and thank you
11 for taking the time to be here tonight.

12 Mr. Solomon is our last speaker. If there
13 is anyone who would like to speak, we still
14 have time, please fill out a card and raise
15 your hand and we will get one to you. I see a
16 gentleman right here. I see two gentlemen. We
17 will get you a card. Thank you.

18 MR. SOLOMON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
19 definitely need to attend these kind of
20 affairs, because recently I find myself serving
21 on the North Florida Transportation and
22 Planning Organization, and one of the things we
23 do, we articulate concerns for the year 2050.

24 So we are talking about redistricting,
25 which is good, but one of the things that has

1 to be noted is that there is too much
2 astounding levels of apathy that exists, not in
3 this room, within the general community. And
4 at the same time, there is an imperialistic
5 attitude that exists in some of our
6 Legislatorsures. We need to have a commonality
7 of bond and realize the fact that we are all
8 here together.

9 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
10 Mr. Solomon.

11 We've got folks filling out cards right
12 now, so we will give them a minute to do so.

13 Go ahead and come up, sir. I will get
14 your name as you are walking up. Keith? I
15 will let you pronounce your last name for me.

16 MR. SEADORF: Seadorf.

17 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Seadorf.

18 MR. SEADORF: A little bit unique. I am
19 actually on the other end from most of the
20 people here. I have actually only been in the
21 Jacksonville area for a year now. I moved from
22 Atlanta.

23 My only thing is, I would just like to say
24 that I am an IT guy. I was a network engineer
25 for HP in my last job. I am now well on the

1 way to becoming a psychologist right now, so I
2 kind of switched careers, but the point I would
3 like to make from both sides of the House is
4 keep it simple, keep it very technical.

5 Concentric circles is what's been mentioned
6 before. I am sure something can come up with
7 it. That is it.

8 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
9 sir.

10 The last person, Randy Covington.
11 Mr. Covington, sir, you are recognized.

12 MR. COVINGTON: My name is Randy
13 Covington. I am a citizen living in District
14 19 in northwest St. Johns County.

15 The first thing I want to do, Chairman
16 Weatherford, Chairman Gaetz and all the members
17 of the distinguished committee here tonight, is
18 take the opportunity to thank you for your
19 service this past session. This is a period of
20 dwindling resources, budgets are stretched to
21 the limit, and everything that you did
22 reflected the best of what we as citizens of
23 this state expect from State Representatives
24 and State Senators. Thank you very much.

25 Beyond that, I want to say this: Fairness

1 is a very difficult thing to really describe.
2 What I will say is this: At the end of the
3 day, what anybody who will be involved in this
4 process will have to make their judgment on is
5 the very open process and all the wonderful
6 tools and paths to participation you have
7 provided the citizens of this state. It is
8 only through open engagement that people can
9 come to understand how difficult the process
10 is, and all of you, we know, have good
11 intentions and will do your very best to serve
12 us in that regard. Thank you very much.

13 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
14 sir.

15 The next speaker, the last name is
16 Pittman, I apologize, I can't make out the
17 first name, and after Pittman, we have James
18 Richardson.

19 Ms. Pittman? Thank you for being here,
20 ma'am.

21 MS. PITTMAN: Thank you so much. First of
22 all, I want to thank you all again for taking
23 time and including us in the process.

24 We hope that as you look at redistricting,
25 that you really be fair. We realize that over

1 the years what has worked in the community has
2 helped a lot of people and the residents in our
3 community. So we want you all to keep that in
4 mind, what has worked in our community, and we
5 want you to do this in a fair way that
6 represent and that is very inclusive of our
7 community. We want to thank you for your time
8 in being here, and thank you for giving us an
9 opportunity to speak and be a part of the
10 process.

11 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
12 very much.

13 Mr. Richardson, James Richardson, you are
14 recognized, sir.

15 MR. RICHARDSON: Thank you. I was born in
16 Jacksonville. I've lived in many other places,
17 mostly in Florida, and then here continuously
18 over the last several years, but one of the
19 reasons why I voted for the Fair District
20 amendments was because it has just become too
21 political and we have a situation where the
22 vast majority of members of the Legislature are
23 of a party that is actually a small -- is
24 actually an under 50 percent minority of the
25 total number of voters. And the reason that

1 can happen is that the few voters of the party
2 that are disapproved -- or the voters that are
3 disapproved by the people in charge are crowded
4 into a few districts where a few of their
5 members, a few of their citizens, can win
6 re-election very easily because of -- because
7 of the public sentiment in that area, whereas
8 the remaining members of the actually minority
9 party of voters are spread out over enough
10 districts to make sure that that -- the
11 minority party will win in almost every
12 district. They give a few incumbents of the
13 majority party and the majority interest, which
14 is the average working person, a few of those
15 people the plums of being able to constantly be
16 re-elected, maybe because of their racial
17 makeup or maybe because of various other
18 self-identification factors. And that doesn't
19 really help the people that belong to those
20 communities, because they get a few -- they can
21 point to a few inspirational members of
22 Congress and the State Legislature that always
23 get outvoted by the others, which doesn't
24 really do them any good. And I think it is
25 fairer to everyone, especially when

1 demographics do change periodically, to have
2 the voting districts drawn up without regard to
3 any demographics other than geographical
4 proximity and community of interest, as it is
5 called.

6 And as much as I love the fact that I, a
7 Caucasian, am in the district that -- where I
8 can vote for an African-American Congresswoman,
9 I would like to see more Congress people, more
10 State Representatives and more -- and more
11 State Senators that represent my views, because
12 so many of the people who represent my views
13 are spread throughout the state rather than
14 having a few that -- a few that always get
15 outvoted. Thank you.

16 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
17 sir.

18 Okay. Thank you all so much for your
19 comment. Before we move forward and allow
20 Senator Gaetz to close us out, I would like to
21 give members of the committee an opportunity to
22 either ask questions and/or give input. So at
23 this moment, any members of the committee that
24 wish to speak, we would love to give you that
25 opportunity. Representative Julien? Any

1 members?

2 Representative Frishe, you are recognized,
3 sir.

4 REPRESENTATIVE FRISHE: Thank you, Mr.
5 Chairman. Okay, now we are on.

6 Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much
7 for coming out. What we have heard today has
8 been very instructional. I don't come from the
9 Jacksonville area, and I am on the House
10 Subcommittee for Redistricting, and I have
11 learned a great deal about your interests here
12 locally. And I know I have a lot more to learn
13 about it, so please send your ideas in, send
14 your concerns in.

15 Freedom is a heavy lift, and as you
16 probably all know, we are part-timers up here,
17 we all have other full-time jobs that we try to
18 maintain. And as much as I love my job, my
19 wife likes me to earn a living, too.

20 So be involved, contribute to the process.
21 Freedom is a heavy lift, we need you to help.
22 But thank you very much for coming out tonight.
23 We appreciate it.

24 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
25 Representative Frishe.

1 Members, any other comments or questions
2 tonight? Not seeing any.

3 Senator Gaetz, perhaps maybe -- there were
4 some questions that were raised during the
5 hearing. Perhaps maybe you could shed some
6 light on those for us and for the members of
7 the audience. You are recognized, sir.

8 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
9 and thank you all for being here.

10 We just concluded a series of hearings in
11 Senator Montford's, Senator Evers' and my home
12 territory, the Panhandle, and now we are here.
13 And as I was listening to all the input we got
14 in the Panhandle, I was so glad that my
15 colleagues from the rest of the state were
16 there and listening, because how else could
17 they appreciate some of the nuances, some of
18 the idiosyncrasies, some of the little
19 irritations that we have dealt with over the
20 past ten years?

21 And I am so glad that I am here in
22 northeast Florida tonight with my colleagues
23 from elsewhere in the state, because while
24 there may be some who would say, "Why didn't
25 you just bring us the maps and we would have a

1 *fait accompli*, and then we could either say we
2 like them or don't like them," you know, there
3 is something to be gained by listening first
4 and then sitting down and drawing conclusions.
5 How else could we have heard about or learned
6 about the specifics of your neighborhoods, of
7 your communities? I have taken eight pages of
8 notes just about specific neighborhoods, about
9 where District 16 and District 17 ought to be
10 -- ought to be divided. We couldn't -- we
11 couldn't have possibly accomplished receiving
12 that sort of input if we would have just sat in
13 Tallahassee in an echo chamber and didn't have
14 the benefit of your involvement. So thank you
15 for taking the time.

16 Let me comment on a couple of things,
17 again, just so that we can do a little
18 fact-checking. There have been a couple of
19 comments made tonight and today about some sort
20 of a gag order, suggesting that you are
21 communicating with us, but we are not
22 communicating with you, and, therefore, there
23 is a gag order. You heard the Chairman offer
24 the mike to any member of this committee,
25 Democrat or Republican, House member or

1 Senator, to offer any proposal, and what I am
2 hearing is that most are like me, and that is
3 we want to hear from people in the 26 public
4 hearings before we commit ourselves to
5 something that might not work for your
6 neighborhood or your community. But, you know,
7 I learned a long time ago that when both sides
8 are talking at the same time, that is not
9 communication. First somebody has to speak and
10 somebody has to listen. And I think it is our
11 view in Senate and in the House that it is
12 better for you to speak and us to listen.
13 There will be plenty of time for us to
14 communicate back, as I indicated at the
15 beginning of this hearing. We will be back in
16 Tallahassee in September. We will be holding
17 open committee meetings. Members will use all
18 of the input we have received to make
19 proposals, to propose maps. Believe me, we
20 will be communicating back. You don't need to
21 worry about politicians not having enough
22 interest in talking and making their proposals.
23 It is remarkable we have been able to be this
24 still this long.

25 And a comment was made, "Well, you know,

1 gosh, why are there references to special
2 interest groups and why they haven't made
3 proposals, why does it take a special interest
4 group to make a proposal?" It doesn't. We've
5 already had multiple submissions of plans for
6 the Senate, for the House, for congressional
7 districts, for particular areas of the state,
8 made by individuals, including an individual
9 who was here earlier today and as well tonight.
10 We simply wanted to make it obvious and
11 welcoming that the special interest groups who
12 are following us from hearing to hearing with
13 the same preordained scripts are also welcome
14 to make proposals if they would like. They
15 don't have to. It is absolutely true, we're
16 paid that huge salary of \$28,000 a year to be
17 state Legislators, and you are darn right we
18 are going to propose maps and we are going to
19 offer up bills, but that doesn't mean that you
20 don't have good ideas that we shouldn't listen
21 to first. And we have heard -- as I said, I've
22 got eight pages of good ideas that's come out
23 of today.

24 Then someone made the comment that the
25 Governor slow-rolled the census data. Well,

1 let's do a little fact-checking on that. The
2 Governor doesn't provide census data. That is
3 the Bureau of the Census, that is a federal
4 agency, and they provided the census data in
5 groups of states. Florida was in the last
6 group that received census data. That was a
7 federal decision. They don't release all the
8 census data at once. And as soon as we
9 received the census data, within hours, we had
10 all of the demographic information on our
11 websites available to every Floridian. The
12 Governor didn't tell us to do it, didn't tell
13 us not to do it, had absolutely no role in it.

14 The Senate and the House, in response to
15 another question, did offer to the United
16 States Justice Department, Amendments 5 and 6
17 for pre-clearance. It took a little while to
18 make sure that we could put down the legal
19 arguments that we thought were germane as to
20 why 5 and 6 should be pre-cleared, and we
21 offered them for pre-clearance and argued that
22 they should be pre-cleared, and they were
23 pre-cleared based on our submission.

24 You know, there are some who say, "Well,
25 we should have come here with preordained maps

1 and just put them down and then said, 'By
2 golly, take it or leave it.' My guess is if we
3 would have done that, we would have had
4 criticism from people who said, "Well, why
5 didn't you listen first?" And, frankly, and I
6 don't mean to be cynical, we might have heard
7 that criticism from some of the very same
8 people who are saying, "Why in the world are
9 you letting citizens speak first, why don't you
10 just come and give us the answer?"

11 There's someone who suggested there ought
12 to be -- that redistricting ought to be based
13 on registered voters only. Well, federal law
14 won't let us do that. Federal law says that
15 districts must be based on population, not just
16 on people who choose to vote. People who
17 choose not to vote have just as much right to
18 be represented equitably as people who do vote.
19 So it can't be based on registered voters or on
20 people who decide to vote.

21 And then someone else had an idea that I
22 wish we could do. They said, "Why don't you
23 just have computer graphics, just program this
24 into a computer, let the computer draw the
25 maps?" Well, first, we have had groups of

1 students from as far away as Columbia
2 University look at redistrict in Florida and
3 offer maps based on computer models. But the
4 Constitution says that it is the Legislature,
5 not the computer, that has to vote, because you
6 can vote us out if you don't like what we do,
7 but if we just trust it all to a computer, will
8 the computer take into account all of the
9 concerns that you have laid out in our hearing
10 today? I am not so sure.

11 So computer models are welcome. If you've
12 got one, send it in. We've had several people
13 who have done it. We will be using computer
14 models. We have provided the computer software
15 that would be used by policy makers, it is on
16 the website and you can use it. So if you
17 think a computer model might be useful, go
18 ahead. But at the end of the day, there still
19 have to be accountable decisions made by people
20 whom you elect.

21 Then there was -- there have been a couple
22 of comments made, and I find this to be
23 interesting as well, I am sure all of us do,
24 and that is, "Well, we really have a state here
25 where, you know, the plurality of voters are

1 Democrats, and the next group either are
2 Republicans or non-party affiliated, depending
3 upon where you count, and then the
4 fastest-growing group of voters are non-party
5 affiliated, so why can't the Legislature just
6 be divided that way?" Well, the reason is
7 because we can't guarantee how people are going
8 to vote. There are 40 Senate districts, and
9 there are 28 Republicans in those 40 Senate
10 districts, we have 28 Republican Senators. But
11 Barack Obama carried eight of the districts
12 that are represented by Republican Senators.

13 Now, you know, should we force people, go
14 to the polls and say, "Well, now, look, you are
15 Republicans, you can't vote for Barack Obama"?
16 You know, what happened was that Barack Obama
17 had, you know, a better campaign, a more
18 persuasive campaign, a better message in the
19 eyes of many, many Independents and Republicans
20 who voted for him.

21 So we can't -- we can't guarantee results.
22 We still have to allow Republicans, Democrats
23 and that growing group of voters who are
24 Independents to make their own decisions. And
25 I can tell you this, that there are many people

1 who will vote for a Democrat for one office, a
2 Republican for another office, because they are
3 looking at the individual and the campaign and
4 the message and the issues. Very few people
5 now vote a straight party line. And so we
6 can't guarantee that the state is going to come
7 out numerically exactly the way the voting
8 population does, because we can't force people
9 to vote a straight party line. And there is no
10 way to draw districts to do that.

11 There have been a couple of references
12 today to a lawsuit and the government suing its
13 citizens. Anybody here been served with a
14 lawsuit about redistricting? Anybody here
15 gotten the sheriff to come to your door and
16 tell you you are being served on a lawsuit
17 about redistricting? I don't think so. The
18 fact is that the government is not suing its
19 citizens. The real fact is that there is a
20 lawsuit. The lawsuit has been brought by two
21 members of the United States Congress, a
22 Democratic member of Congress and a Republican
23 member of Congress. The lawsuit has nothing to
24 do with state redistricting. It has to do with
25 only congressional redistricting. And I am not

1 a lawyer, but as I understand it, the lawsuit
2 seeks clarification as to any apparent
3 inconsistencies between the Voting Rights Act
4 and Amendment 6. And anybody has a right to do
5 is that.

6 My guess is that that won't be just the
7 first lawsuit. That will be one of many
8 lawsuits that might be filed, because now we
9 are in a time when, arguably, more people will
10 feel like they have standing to file a lawsuit
11 when, as the Constitution now says, "No line
12 may be drawn with the intent to either favor or
13 disfavor any incumbent or any political party."
14 That is what Amendments 5 and 6 say: "No line
15 may be drawn with the intent to either favor or
16 disfavor any incumbent or any political party."
17 Now draw the first line. You see, there will
18 be people who feel that they have a standing to
19 file a lawsuit. Two members of Congress have.
20 That is the lawsuit that people are talking
21 about.

22 Now, it is true that the House of
23 Representatives is an intervenor in that
24 lawsuit to seek this clarification. The Senate
25 choose not to be an intervenor. But I think

1 it -- we probably need a little fact-checking
2 on the assertion that somehow there's millions
3 and millions of dollars being spent by the
4 government suing its citizens. That is not
5 true. The lawsuit is by two members of
6 Congress, one a Democrat and one a Republican.

7 Lastly, Mr. Chairman, there are several
8 people who have said, "Keep it simple." We
9 sure would like to, we sure would like to, but
10 imagine today, and my eight pages of notes bear
11 this out, I am sure others have notes as well,
12 there's not agreement in this room. We might
13 keep it simple and make you happy or make you
14 happy, but I am not sure we could keep it
15 simple and make everybody happy.

16 What we have to do is follow Amendments 5
17 and 6, they are in the Constitution, but as we
18 have seen today, there's a lot of difference of
19 opinion about what those terms might really
20 mean. We have to follow the Voting Rights Act.
21 We have heard differences of opinion today
22 about what that might mean. You know, is it
23 communities of interest? Is it geographic
24 boundaries? Is it political boundaries? We
25 heard today about growth centers. Maybe growth

1 centers, that is a new term, ought to be used
2 to define communities and districts.

3 That is why we are doing the 26 hearings,
4 to hear from you. That is why we have the
5 Internet sites up, because we want you to
6 propose what you think makes sense. We are not
7 asking you to do our job. We are asking you to
8 do your job as a citizen in a town meeting to
9 stand up and say what you think ought to be
10 done with something that is critical to our
11 democracy, and that is the determination of how
12 we will be represented, a determination that we
13 make once every ten years.

14 I just want to thank you again. We have
15 received extraordinary input, input we couldn't
16 have received any other way other than you
17 being here. So thank you very much. Thank
18 you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing all of this
19 input today. And we hope that if you have
20 further comments to make -- this is not your
21 last time to have input. This is your first
22 time. You can have input through the Internet,
23 through snail mail, through additional public
24 hearings. We are going to be in St. Augustine
25 tomorrow. If you are part of the traveling

1 road show -- we have some folks who travel with
2 us and give the same testimony at every
3 hearing -- you are welcome to come to St.
4 Augustine. But thank you very, very much for
5 being citizens who cared and participated.
6 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
8 very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you all, ladies
9 and gentlemen, for being here and for your
10 input, and Chairman Gaetz moves we rise.

11 (Whereupon, the proceedings were
12 concluded.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF FLORIDA)
COUNTY OF LEON)

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

That the foregoing pages 2 through 205 represent a true, correct, and complete transcript of the tape-recording;

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

Dated this 1st day of November, 2011.

CLARA C. ROTRUCK

Notary Public

State of Florida at Large

Commission Expires:

November 13, 2014