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REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

MONDAY, JULY 25, 2011

2:00 A.M.

POLK STATE COLLEGE

LAKELAND, 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 SENATOR GAETZ: If Committee members will
3 please find their seats, and those of you who
4 would like to testify or participate or just
5 observe, if you will find a place to sit down,
6 we will begin.

7 The Joint House/Senate Redistricting
8 Hearing is called to order. We are pleased to
9 be joined today by so many of you from the Polk
10 County area and from areas beyond Polk County.

11 Thanks to Polk State College and USF
12 Polytechnic for allowing us to use this
13 facility. We are very grateful to them.

14 Thank you all for being here, especially
15 members of the public who have come to share
16 your comments and recommendations to help shape
17 Congressional Senate and House districts for
18 the next decade.

19 My name is Don Gaetz, I am a member of the
20 Senate, and along with my House colleague, the
21 Speaker Designate of the Florida House,
22 Representative Will Weatherford, who is right
23 here, we will be chairing today's meeting,
24 which is being webcast statewide by the Florida
25 Channel over the Internet.

1 So that you will know who is here and
2 where they are from -- and we have actually had
3 a request, you know, everybody can make
4 requests, we have had a request that when
5 members introduce themselves and indicate what
6 part of the state they are from, if they would
7 indicate their party affiliation.

8 Typically we don't do that in legislative
9 hearings, because 90 percent of the votes we
10 take in the Legislature are bipartisan, but in
11 response to the request we have had, I happen
12 to be a Republican.

13 And, Senator, why don't we start with you.

14 REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAMS: Good afternoon,
15 my name is Alan Williams, State Representative
16 from Tallahassee, Florida. I represent Leon
17 and Gadsden Counties. I am a proud Democrat,
18 and I am also proud to have my daughter,
19 Adriana Williams, who is here with me as well.

20 REPRESENTATIVE HORNER: My name is Mike
21 Horner, I represent State House District 79. I
22 live in Kissimmee, but I represent Osceola,
23 Orange, Okeechobee and Polk County.

24 REPRESENTATIVE NEHR: My name is Peter
25 Nehr. I am a State Representative in north

1 Pinellas County, District 48. Thank you. And
2 I am a Republican, thank you.

3 REPRESENTATIVE GOODSON: Good afternoon,
4 my name Tom Goodson, I represent Brevard
5 County, Indian River County, House State
6 District 29, I am a Republican.

7 REPRESENTATIVE ROUSON: Darryl Rouson. I
8 represent House District 55, which is Pinellas,
9 Manatee, Sarasota and Hillsborough Counties in
10 the House, and I am a Democrat.

11 REPRESENTATIVE LEGG: John Legg, I
12 represent west Pasco, and I am a Republican.

13 SENATOR JOYNER: Arthenia Joyner, I am a
14 Democrat from Tampa. I represent Hillsborough,
15 Pinellas and Manatee, but I was born in Polk
16 County.

17 REPRESENTATIVE CRUZ: Good afternoon.
18 Thank you all for taking your time coming here
19 today. My name is Janet Cruz. I am a State
20 Representative for District 58, which is the
21 central part of Tampa.

22 I was actually born in Betty Reed's
23 district, which is Ybor City, most of you
24 probably know that district, and I am happy to
25 be here. Thank you.

1 SENATOR SIPLIN: Good afternoon, State
2 Senator Gary Siplin, Orlando, Florida. I
3 represent both Osceola County and Orange
4 County, and I am a Democrat.

5 REPRESENTATIVE CRISAFULLI: Good
6 afternoon, Steve Crisafulli, representing House
7 District 32, which is Brevard and east Orange
8 County, and I am a Republican.

9 REPRESENTATIVE BURGIN: Good afternoon,
10 State Representative Rachel Burgin. I
11 represent District 56, which is eastern
12 Hillsborough County and the City of Tampa, and
13 I am a Republican.

14 REPRESENTATIVE WORKMAN: Ritch Workman,
15 represent District 30, all in Brevard County,
16 thanks. I am a Republican.

17 REPRESENTATIVE DORWORTH: I am Chris
18 Dorworth, I am in the State House, representing
19 District 34 from Seminole and Orange Counties.
20 I am a Republican.

21 REPRESENTATIVE EISNAUGLE: I am Eric
22 Eisnaugle, I represent House District 40 in
23 Orlando. It is -- the district is all in
24 Orange County, and I am a Republican.

25 REPRESENTATIVE GRIMSLEY: Good afternoon,

1 I am Denise Grimsley, I represent House
2 District 77, which is Highlands, Hendry, Glades
3 and Collier County. I am a Republican and I'm
4 a proud graduate of Polk State College.

5 REPRESENTATIVE PLAKON: Scott Plakon,
6 State House District 37, Orange and Seminole
7 Counties. I am a Republican and the proud
8 father of Jamison Plakon, who is here today.

9 REPRESENTATIVE CHESTNUT: Good afternoon,
10 Chuck Chestnut, House District 23, a portion of
11 Alachua County and a portion of Marion County,
12 Democrat.

13 REPRESENTATIVE BAXLEY: Hi, I am Dennis
14 Baxley, Florida House, District 24, Ocala,
15 Marion County, Republican. I am on the north
16 side of the green swamp.

17 REPRESENTATIVE MCKEEL: And I am Seth
18 McKeel from Lakeland, District 63 here, and I
19 am not on the Committee, but I have a keen
20 interest in what you are saying. So thanks for
21 -- thanks for taking your time to be here.
22 Excuse me, I am a Republican.

23 REPRESENTATIVE BERNARD: Good afternoon,
24 State Representative Mack Bernard, Democrat
25 from West Palm Beach, Florida, and former

1 resident of Lakeland, Florida.

2 REPRESENTATIVE JULIEN: John Patrick
3 Julien, good afternoon. I am a Democrat,
4 representing House District 104, which is in
5 Miami-Dade County, and it is a pleasure to be
6 here.

7 REPRESENTATIVE KIAR: Hello, everybody,
8 thank you so much for coming out. My name is
9 Martin Kiar, and I represent District 97 in the
10 Florida House of Representatives, which is
11 located solely within Broward County, and I am
12 a Democrat. Thank you.

13 REPRESENTATIVE CLARKE-REED: Good
14 afternoon, and thank you for being here. My
15 name is Betty Reed. I represent District 59,
16 which is the eastern part of Tampa/Hillsborough
17 County, and I am a proud Democrat.

18 REPRESENTATIVE ROGERS: Good afternoon, I
19 am Hazelle Rogers from Broward County, one of
20 the most diverse counties in the state of
21 Florida, representing over 1.8 million voters,
22 residents in Florida, I'm District 94, eight
23 cities in central Broward County. It is good
24 to be here, and I am a Democrat.

25 SENATOR GAETZ: But not a proud Democrat?

1 REPRESENTATIVE ROGERS: A very proud
2 Democrat.

3 REPRESENTATIVE FRISHE: I am State
4 Representative Jim Frishe. I represent the
5 western edge of Pinellas County, all the
6 beaches. It is a tough duty, I've worn out
7 seven pairs of flip-flops. I am a Republican
8 and I was raised in Winter Haven.

9 REPRESENTATIVE HOOPER: Good afternoon, my
10 name is Ed Hooper, I am a Representative from
11 District 50, which is about one-fourth of
12 Pinellas County, and I am a Republican.

13 REPRESENTATIVE CLARKE-REED: Good
14 afternoon, I am State Representative Gwyndolen
15 Clarke-Reed, representing House District 92,
16 northeast part of Broward County.

17 REPRESENTATIVE BRODEUR: Jason Brodeur,
18 representing District 33, which is parts of
19 Volusia, Seminole and Orange Counties, and I am
20 a Republican.

21 REPRESENTATIVE JENNE: Evan Jenne,
22 District 100, that is entirely within southeast
23 Broward County, and I am a Democrat.

24 REPRESENTATIVE TAYLOR: Good afternoon, I
25 am Dwayne Taylor, serving in the House of

1 Representatives in House District 27, which is
2 Volusia County, I serve six cities in Volusia
3 County, and I am a fiscal conservative
4 Democrat, proudly. Thank you.

5 SENATOR GAETZ: Did we miss anybody?

6 REPRESENTATIVE STARGEL: Good afternoon, I
7 am State Representative Kelli Stargel. I
8 represent north Polk County and a lot of the
9 City of Lakeland, and I am a Republican.

10 SENATOR GAETZ: Have we gotten everybody?

11 REPRESENTATIVE CAMPBELL: Good afternoon,
12 everyone, Daphne Campbell, District 108,
13 Democrats.

14 SENATOR GAETZ: Okay. Thank you very
15 much. Anybody else? Okay. Just in time for
16 your introduction. No. When you are done, we
17 are done.

18 REPRESENTATIVE PASSIDOMO: Hi, I am
19 Representative Passidomo from District 76,
20 which is Collier County. I represent Naples,
21 Marco Island, Everglades City and a bunch of
22 alligators. Thank you. I am a Republican.

23 SENATOR GAETZ: Okay. Now you know who we
24 are, and our sole purpose today is to hear from
25 you, to hear from the public about how you

1 believe the legal standards governing
2 redistricting should be applied in your
3 community and this community, so that you are
4 represented in Washington and in Tallahassee
5 fairly, equitably and sensibly.

6 Our procedures today are simple, but they
7 are important. It is important that you sign
8 in so that we can create an accurate public
9 record of all attendees and of all speakers.

10 Also, you may decide to join, if you wish,
11 our e-mail lists so we can keep you informed
12 about how the redistricting process is working.

13 If you have not signed in, please raise
14 your hand, and we will give you an attendance
15 card. If you wish to speak today and you
16 haven't signed in, we want to hear from you.

17 So if you've not filled out an attendance
18 card and you want to speak, please raise your
19 hand, we will get you one of these cards and we
20 would be delighted to hear from you. We don't
21 want to miss your testimony.

22 It is the same card whether you wish to
23 just attend and observe or whether you want to
24 speak.

25 Before we begin, I would like to call on

1 the Speaker Designate, Representative
2 Weatherford, to explain how today's hearing
3 fits into the redistricting schedule and
4 process and laws. Mr. Speaker.

5 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
6 very much, Mr. Chairman. It is an honor to be
7 here. Again, my name is Will Weatherford, and
8 I didn't get a chance, I am from Pasco County.
9 My district is Pasco and Hillsborough County,
10 District 61, and very proud to be here today
11 with my good friends from Polk County.

12 I am going to try to set the table,
13 Mr. Chairman, if I could, for today's hearing,
14 and give everyone a perspective as to what we
15 are here to do.

16 I think you hit it in the very beginning,
17 which is our job here is to listen today. But
18 to give everyone a little baseline, every ten
19 years, the Legislature is required by the
20 Constitution to redistrict the state based off
21 of increases, decreases and movements in our
22 population.

23 Because Florida has grown so significantly
24 over the last ten years, we will move from
25 having 25 Congressional Seats in Florida to 27

1 Congressional Seats. Because parts of our
2 state have increased and decreased
3 disproportionately in population, many Senate
4 and House districts will change, either adding
5 or losing in population.

6 When redistricting is concluded,
7 congressional districts must be equal in
8 population and contain 696,345 people, 40
9 Senate districts must also be nearly equal at
10 about 470,000, and each one of our 120 House
11 districts must be also nearly equal at 156,700
12 people.

13 We have displays at the front of the room
14 showing the current boundaries of districts in
15 the area of the state and the number of persons
16 which must be added or subtracted from the
17 current districts to achieve that equal
18 representation.

19 Equality of representation is not the only
20 legal requirement that redistricting plans must
21 meet. The laws are important, and court cases
22 governing redistricting are explained in detail
23 in both the House and the Senate websites.

24 Those websites are listed on the
25 "Redistricting 2012" brochure that was

1 available to you when you came in. Our
2 "Redistricting 2012" brochure summarizes
3 federal and state laws, and outlines the topics
4 that you will hear today that we hope you
5 discuss.

6 If you did not get a copy when you came
7 in, they are available on the tables outside of
8 the meeting, and our staff would be happy to
9 get you a copy if you would just raise your
10 hand.

11 The brochure also lists House and Senate
12 websites. The websites are packed with
13 information about redistricting in Florida,
14 including explanations of laws and important
15 court cases governing redistricting. The two
16 websites are complementary and are updated
17 frequently.

18 If you visit both and check back often, it
19 is a great way to stay current about what is
20 happening in your congressional, Senate and
21 House maps.

22 The websites also deliver at your
23 fingertips all of the demographic information
24 that will be used in drawing districts over the
25 next six to nine months. The exact same

1 computer programs that Legislators and
2 professional staff use, you will have at your
3 fingertips.

4 Any number -- any member of the public can
5 participate in building plans or seeing maps
6 submitted to Legislators and to this body.

7 And, in fact, I would like to point, there are
8 six maps in the very back of the room.

9 If you look back there, you will actually
10 see different maps that have been drawn by
11 citizens all over the state just in the last
12 few weeks that have been submitted to us.

13 There are Congressional maps, Senate maps
14 and House maps, and we hope that before you
15 leave today, you will take time to see those.

16 Before and after this hearing, Senate and
17 House professional staff are available to show
18 anyone the simple steps of getting on-line,
19 building districts and submitting a plan in the
20 next few weeks.

21 Recommendations from citizens and groups
22 will be made publicly available, and, in fact,
23 many of them already are on our Web, as you
24 know. The submission of proposed maps that
25 makes sense for your community is the single

1 most effective way that you can communicate
2 with this body.

3 The redistricting schedule under which we
4 are operating is imposed by our State
5 Constitution. The Constitution does not permit
6 the Legislature to act on state legislative
7 maps before the second year after the census;
8 in other words, ladies and gentlemen, before
9 2012.

10 We have accelerated this process as much
11 as we possibly can by moving the session up
12 from what is normally in March, all the way up
13 into January in 2012.

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

18 There should be no preconceptions created
19 by politicians, but, rather, public testimony
20 should be free and unrestricted. And, in fact,
21 a member -- a principal author of Florida's
22 redistricting standards and Chairperson of the
23 Fairdistricts.org group, when they came and
24 spoke before a hearing actually spoke directly
25 to the fact that they thought in order for us

1 to draw good maps, we would have to seek public
2 input first, and we plan to follow that
3 recommendation.

4 Our intent is to use these 26 public
5 hearings and our Internet sites and all the
6 basis which we get information from you to come
7 up with good maps in the future that will move
8 through the committee process.

9 Throughout the process, we will continue
10 to solicit your public comment so that the
11 proposed maps can mature with the public
12 involved all before we take any final vote.

13 Whatever the Legislature passes, it is
14 then submitted for judicial review to ensure
15 that the final plans meet each and every single
16 legal requirement.

17 Because our purpose today is to hear from
18 you, between now and 5:00 we will use the
19 remainder of the time for the public who is
20 here who wishes to speak.

21 If after every citizen has had his or her
22 say, Mr. Chairman, and there is time before our
23 scheduled adjournment, any member of this
24 Committee may make any statement or any
25 observation.

1 Of course, any member of the Legislature
2 may today or at any time propose a map, a plan
3 or anything else, and we will make sure it is
4 available to you and the rest of the public.

5 Mr. Chairman, thank you for allowing me to
6 have a few moments. I hope this description of
7 our schedule and our process helps set the
8 stage for a successful hearing.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
10 Mr. Speaker. Those are kind of the ground
11 rules today and a little bit of upfront
12 information.

13 I would like to point out that two members
14 of this Committee who are Senators are not able
15 to be here today. Senator Jack Latvala is
16 recovering from orthopedic surgery. I spoke to
17 him this morning. He is recovering well, but
18 is in a great deal of pain, and his doctor
19 wouldn't let him get up on his hip. I think he
20 is about five days post-op.

21 Then Senator Evelyn Lynn, who is a member
22 of this Committee, was called yesterday to a
23 funeral in the Netherlands, a very important
24 member of her family, somebody she cares about
25 a great deal has died, and so Senator Lynn was

1 not able to be with us today.

2 Now, we are going to try to make it
3 possible for everybody who wants to speak, to
4 have a chance to speak, and if you don't get in
5 all the things you wanted to say, or if later
6 you think of something else that you wanted to
7 say, you can send that information to us.

8 It will be made available to every member
9 of the Committee. You can either e-mail it to
10 us or you can send it to us by U.S. Postal
11 Service. You can go on our website and you can
12 provide additional comments there as well.

13 Now, we have well over 30 people who have
14 already signed up to speak, and Karen Landers
15 is number 34, and so far she is the last
16 person.

17 I am an advocate for Karen Landers. I
18 want to make sure she gets a chance to speak.
19 So I would ask that you keep her in mind as you
20 speak so that we can make sure to get to her,
21 because I am sure she has good testimony for us
22 today.

23 We will impose a three to four-minute rule
24 on speakers so that we can be sure that we are
25 fair to everybody who is behind you.

1 So if you -- if you can abide by that
2 rule, then we can, I think, give everybody a
3 fair chance.

4 We are going to call people in threes. So
5 our first speaker will be Margaret Kara,
6 representing the Solivita Democratic Club, but
7 behind Margaret is Joyce Hamilton Henry
8 representing the American Civil Liberties Union
9 and Mary Jo Jarrett representing the League of
10 Women Voters.

11 So if Ms. Kara would come first and the
12 other two be on deck and ready to follow her,
13 then we can make best use of time.

14 Ma'am, you are recognized, and we are
15 delighted to have you here today.

16 MS. KARA: Thank you, sir, and thank you,
17 everyone, for allowing us to speak. And I live
18 in Solivita, which is a 55-and-over adult
19 active community in Poinciana.

20 We are very kind of isolated in Polk
21 County, because we are in a very one small area
22 and far away from everything.

23 With all due respect, you all know the
24 amendment that was voted for by 63 percent of
25 the people, and you don't really -- in my

1 opinion, you don't need the public to draw maps
2 for you.

3 The process seems as though it could go
4 more quickly if you would present the proposed
5 maps for discussion at this time. I understand
6 that, as you have said, that you can't vote on
7 anything until 2012. With that understood,
8 could it not still be debated?

9 What I am concerned about is taking up
10 precious time and money drawing maps according
11 to the law and then just make them available to
12 the public for comment then, and you can't
13 debate them this fall, but you can debate them
14 the very first thing in the new session.

15 The process seems to need to be completed
16 earlier, and my concern is for the Supervisor
17 of Elections and the timeline that they are
18 going to have, also for our candidates that are
19 going to be running for office, they won't know
20 their districts until so late that they won't
21 have the same advantage that the incumbents
22 have of making their names known to the public.

23 Please consider the fact that more time on
24 this -- on this step and less time is for the
25 Supervisor of Elections.

1 Since you are coming to the public for
2 answers, we would like to be able to interact
3 with you and get answers to our questions also.
4 As we are only allowed to talk, we may be
5 operating under false premises if you don't
6 reply to us.

7 Progress is made when ideas are exchanged
8 in conversation as instead of lecture. Thank
9 you very much.

10 SENATOR GAETZ: Ms. Kara, I apologize,
11 perhaps you weren't here when the Speaker
12 Designate indicated that after all members of
13 the public speak.

14 If you have any questions that you would
15 like to indicate now, we will make sure that
16 any member, Democrat or Republican, Senate or
17 House, can respond to any of your questions.
18 Did you have any?

19 Okay. Thank you very much. Thanks for
20 your testimony.

21 Joyce Hamilton Henry of the American Civil
22 Liberties Union, followed by Mary Jo Jarrett
23 with the League of Women Voters, followed by
24 Paula Mims from the League of Women Voters.

25 Ms. Henry, thank you for being here. We

1 look forward to your testimony.

2 MS. HENRY: Good afternoon. I am here, as
3 indicated, on behalf of the ACLU. I am with
4 the Mid-Florida Regional Office of the ACLU,
5 which is based in Tampa.

6 That office covers 20 counties, starting
7 with Marion, extending all of the way through
8 to Brevard and down to Hardee Counties, and I
9 will be attending all of the hearings in my
10 region.

11 And our position remains unchanged. We
12 are very concerned and troubled about this
13 process. I have indicated before that on the
14 surface, it allows for input, but real input
15 can be provided once we have the opportunity to
16 see the map, to be able to comment on it.

17 We are also concerned about the timeline
18 in which this is being done. We know that you
19 have the data since March of this year. You
20 have opened up processes to be able to provide
21 input, but we are also concerned that you will
22 not be able to really get information from the
23 general public to be able to incorporate in the
24 maps.

25 What has been provided to us so far are

1 maps drawn by individuals. We want the maps
2 drawn by you, the Legislators, and the
3 consultants that you hire to assist you in that
4 process.

5 We are also concerned about the time --
6 the cost in this process, the cost to this
7 process and cost to taxpayers that you are
8 engaging in. You have a mandate from
9 63 percent of Floridians, and the mandate is
10 that the maps should be drawn, that they should
11 be compact and contiguous and look out for the
12 interest of ethnic minorities, communities of
13 interest.

14 We want to make sure -- we want to make
15 sure that this process is fair and is
16 transparent.

17 And we are also concerned, and you have
18 heard it expressed and you will hear it
19 expressed by others, we are also concerned
20 about those of us who want to know who our
21 representatives will be, those who are running
22 for office who want to know what district they
23 will be running for, and you have heard and
24 will hear from Supervisors of Elections who
25 want to know the information as well so that

1 they can do their job.

2 So we implore you to please draw the maps,
3 make that available to us and do what
4 Floridians -- the 63 percent of Floridians have
5 mandated you to do, to make sure that the
6 process is fair, inclusive and also
7 transparent.

8 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, ma'am, very
9 much.

10 Next, Mary Jo Jarrett with the League of
11 Women Voters, then Paula Mims from the League
12 of Women Voters and then Jerry Weeks from the
13 League of Women Voters. I hope there's
14 somebody back at the office today.

15 MS. JARRETT: Welcome to imperial Polk
16 County, all of you, today.

17 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, ma'am.

18 MS. JARRETT: I am Mary Jo Jarrett. I am
19 the co-President of the Polk County League of
20 Women Voters.

21 The League of Women Voters is a
22 non-partisan organization. We are a political
23 organization that encourages informal and
24 active participation in government. We work to
25 increase understanding of public policy issues

1 through education and advocacy.

2 We are puzzled and we question why won't
3 the Legislature prepare the maps earlier,
4 debate them in the fall and pass them during
5 the first week of session.

6 The problem with the present Legislature's
7 timeline is that it is unfair to Florida
8 voters. Florida's maps will end up being
9 approved later than most every state in the
10 Union.

11 As districts may not be finalized until
12 August, the Legislature's own lawyer says this
13 will cause massive voter confusion. We do not
14 want to see Florida's election process become
15 the target of late-night comedy again.

16 The problem that needs to be solved has
17 been defined by the Legislators. The
18 Legislators plan to wait to finalize district
19 maps until at least the end of the session in
20 March 2012.

21 By law, the courts and the Department of
22 Justice have more than 90 days after passage to
23 review the maps.

24 The Legislators are saying they can do
25 nothing on redistricting until January, as the

1 Constitution requires them to draw the
2 districts during the 2012 regular session.

3 If the Legislature waits to finalize the
4 maps until the end of the session in March
5 2012, it is highly unlikely that districts will
6 be finalized and approved before the June 8,
7 2012, deadline for candidates to file their
8 paperwork.

9 The redistricting processing will include
10 not only the drawing of new district maps based
11 on the 2010 ten-year sentence, but
12 implementation of Section 20 and Section 21 of
13 the Florida Constitution, which contains
14 standards to be followed in the process.

15 The League believes that without violating
16 the Florida Constitution, the Legislature can
17 do the preparatory work to speed up the
18 process. In fact, Bills were filed last
19 session requiring that maps be drawn earlier
20 that didn't even get hearings.

21 The League proposes an open, transparent
22 work flow using another timeline. We propose
23 that the Legislature hold interim Committee
24 meetings from September through December and
25 use that time to present maps, allow for public

1 comment and prepare final plans to submit to
2 the full House and Senate before the
3 Legislature convenes in January.

4 We further propose that the Legislature
5 could bring the maps to the floor as a first
6 order of business, voting on them by the end of
7 the session's first week in early January.

8 This would create a real possibility that
9 the maps could be finalized and approved before
10 candidate-qualifying, and allow election
11 officials ample time to prepare by allowing
12 double the time for review by the courts and
13 the Department of Justice.

14 This would solve the problems created by
15 the proposed legislative timeline of a cold
16 start in January 2012. This would allow due
17 process procedurally to ensure all who have the
18 vote can participate substantially in the
19 elections of the redrawn districts.

20 This will improve greatly the timeline for
21 those the Legislature depends on to implement
22 and carry out the election process, the
23 Supervisors of Elections and their staff, and
24 those expected to participate in the process,
25 the registered voters and the candidates.

1 The League strongly believes that this is
2 a viable plan for implementing redistricting in
3 the Sunshine State. Thank you.

4 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much. Very
5 useful suggestions, Ms. Jarrett.

6 Next, Paula Mims from the League of Women
7 Voters, then Jerry Weeks from the League of
8 Women Voters and then Lynn Dell.

9 Ms. Mims, thank you for being here. We
10 sure appreciate your testimony.

11 MS. MIMS: Well, thank you so much, and
12 good afternoon. My name is Paula Mims, and I
13 am co-President of the League of Women Voters
14 of Polk County.

15 We certainly welcome you and are glad to
16 see so many faces here. We do hope you will
17 stop and spend a little money while you are
18 here before you head back to your various parts
19 of the state.

20 As you are well aware, our organization is
21 entirely nonpartisan, yet vigorously political
22 in defending what is now our constitutional
23 right as citizens of Florida.

24 And I ask, where are these sample maps? I
25 did have some time to speak with Jason outside,

1 and got a nice perspective, not that I come
2 with any ignorance to this hearing, but we
3 would really like to see some sample maps
4 produced by the Legislature so that we are able
5 to comment on those maps.

6 And I was listening as well to your
7 opening comments, and I do understand that any
8 Legislature -- Legislator can produce a map or
9 a plan to be considered, and we really have
10 seen none from the Legislature, to my
11 knowledge.

12 On the one hand, who better to set these
13 districts than those respected Legislators
14 running our state government who are keenly
15 aware of the nuances of your own districts, the
16 surrounding ones, as well as potential pitfalls
17 of dividing certain constituencies.

18 On the other hand, it really is a little
19 like the fox guarding the hen-house, is it not?
20 No offense, of course. But we hope that the
21 foxes are keen and wise and transparent.

22 We hope that the fact that the Legislature
23 and the Governor's Office are fully controlled
24 by one party will put an even greater
25 responsibility on you, the golden

1 cartographers.

2 You must rise above the clear conflict of
3 interest you have in this job, and it is clear,
4 you must rise above the clear vested interest
5 you have in protecting your own districts, your
6 own reelection, your job and your potential
7 primary opponents.

8 Where are the maps? I have to say it is a
9 little naive to believe that none exist when
10 there are clearly staff and equipment on hand
11 dedicated to this process, and none of you have
12 seen and worked on the maps that you can't
13 produce for anyone to comment on.

14 We beseech the Legislature to provide at
15 least some sample maps for public comment prior
16 to the end of the statewide public hearing
17 tour.

18 Some time ago I was involved in the
19 reworking of attendant zones with regard to
20 elementary schools here in Polk County. Talk
21 about a volatile issue, not sure if you have
22 done that before.

23 SENATOR GAETZ: Yeah. No, we've got
24 former School Board members here.

25 MS. MIMS: Yes, in doing so --

1 SENATOR GAETZ: That is serious stuff.

2 MS. MIMS: It is serious, very serious.

3 In doing so, we met with School Board
4 members and district employees with computer
5 tools to help navigate the complicated task of
6 moving neighborhoods, addressing transportation
7 issues, and balancing racial legal
8 requirements.

9 We had to start with the map provided by
10 the district. We had to have a starting point
11 drawn from their perspective and their wisdom
12 from which to make comments, suggestions and
13 give practical input to a job that could have
14 just been done by a computer.

15 You are charged with making fair
16 districts. It is not just a phrase. It is an
17 imperative constitutional part, a new part of
18 your job description, and you are
19 constitutionally bound to draw districts,
20 implying the need to produce maps and get
21 input, which you are clearly doing, and we are
22 impressed by the number of people coming from
23 your committees.

24 It is not impossible. For example,
25 California got its census data within two weeks

1 of Florida, has held input hearings, drawn
2 sample maps, is holding more hearings and will
3 have final maps, we believe, in August.

4 We are asking you today, as we have every
5 day since the census data was generated, to
6 give us a map or maps that have been produced
7 by the Redistricting Committee and to let us
8 work from there for the citizens.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: And, ma'am, just because
10 of all the people behind you, could I ask if
11 you could bring it in for a landing?

12 MS. MIMS: Absolutely. I have some
13 perspective on this job that you have before
14 you, because my husband was in the Legislature
15 during the 1990 redistricting. It is a big
16 job, and you now have a constitutional
17 amendment requiring the equality of
18 representation.

19 And I will also before I say my closing
20 remarks, you all have been doing this for some
21 time, so you are probably somewhat bored by the
22 repetitive comments that you will hear today.

23 But I must say to you, it is as important
24 that each citizen in this room gets to say
25 their three minutes, and I'm sorry that you are

1 going to have to listen to it over and over
2 again, but that is why it is a public hearing.

3 So I would ask that you are just as
4 interested in every single person who comes up
5 here, because we do not travel the state to say
6 these things to you.

7 And we ask that you at the very best -- at
8 the very least produce the maps by October,
9 which will give you ample time to take all of
10 the information that you have garnered, analyze
11 it and produce maps to allow citizens to
12 comment and work on providing the best possible
13 opportunity for the drawing of truly fair
14 districting. Thank you so much.

15 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you for your
16 testimony.

17 And now Jerry Weeks from the League of
18 Women Voters, and then Lynn Dell, please, and
19 then Bill Landes.

20 Mr. Weeks, thank you for coming, and we
21 are delighted to have your testimony today.

22 MR. WEEKS: And, don't worry, I won't ask
23 you where the maps are.

24 SENATOR GAETZ: Well, they are right back
25 there. They are right over there.

1 MR. WEEKS: My name is Jerry Weeks. I am
2 a proud member of the League of Women Voters of
3 Polk County, a nonpartisan organization that
4 has been fighting for fair districts for over
5 70 years.

6 We have had Republicans on our side, we
7 have had Democrats on our side, but never at
8 the same time.

9 I commend you for what you have done so
10 far. The website is very easy to deal with, it
11 is very informative. The hearings have been
12 open and transparent so far. I have followed
13 most of the hearings on the Internet, and think
14 you are getting pretty good input on local
15 issues.

16 You do have a public perception problem,
17 however. Much of the testimony throughout all
18 your meetings so far has reflected deep
19 distress and lack of faith that the process
20 will follow the intent of the new standards.

21 Part of that distrust is because the
22 Legislature has fought these standards in the
23 past and continues to fight them now.

24 My question is, why is the Legislature
25 continuing to spend money to oppose the will of

1 their constituents as expressed when 63 percent
2 voted for the Fair Districts standards?

3 In 2008, the Legislature fought approval
4 of the amendments for the ballot. The Supreme
5 Court ruled for the Fair Districts. In 2010,
6 the Legislature again tried in court. The
7 Supreme Court rejected that argument. Then the
8 Legislature tried to confuse voters by placing
9 Amendment 7 on the ballot. The Supreme Court
10 rejected that as misleading.

11 And this year, in 2011, the Florida House
12 joined a lawsuit filed by two Representatives
13 asking the court to strike down the Fair
14 District position, Amendment 6 and Florida
15 Constitution. Secretary of State Kurt Browning
16 is the Defendant in that case.

17 So Florida taxpayers are now both paying
18 to sue and to defend the same lawsuit. Members
19 deny they are spending money to avoid having to
20 follow the Fair Districts reforms.

21 They say they didn't bring the lawsuit,
22 they only joined it to seek clarification.
23 They say there is no \$30 million pot of money
24 for lawsuits.

25 Well, I did some fact-checking to find out

1 what reality is. PolitiFacts rates these
2 denials as false. *The Orlando Sentinel* rates
3 them as major malarkey. I have a handout that
4 I will provide to everyone up on the Committee
5 to find reference to those.

6 In summary, I am asking you and the
7 Legislature first to work to uphold the
8 constitutional provisions placed there by
9 63 percent of the voters, and not to spend our
10 tax money fighting it.

11 And secondly, to stop trying to get out of
12 following the Fair Districts standards and
13 apply them as the voters intended. Please
14 withdraw from the lawsuit. Thank you for your
15 efforts in these hearings and good luck.

16 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much.
17 Thank you, Mr. Weeks. Earlier today,
18 Mr. Weeks, I was up in the area of The
19 Villages, and someone came out of a building
20 and said that the Suntrust Bank had just been
21 robbed, and I am sure *The Orlando Sentinel*
22 headline tomorrow will be "Republicans Arrive
23 and Bank Robbed."

24 Lynn Dell, you are next, and following
25 Lynn, Bill Landes and then Danette May.

1 Ms. Dell, thank you for coming, and we are
2 very grateful you took time to give us your
3 testimony today.

4 MS. DELL: Okay. Thank you for letting me
5 speak.

6 I do agree with everything that has been
7 said before. I think that 2012 is much too
8 late for districts to be redrawn and for the
9 Election Supervisors to do what they have to
10 do.

11 I think it will wind up in massive
12 confusion. And to be perfectly honest with
13 you, I can't help but wonder if this is what
14 you want, because I really don't have much
15 faith in what is happening in the Legislature.

16 I feel I have no representation,
17 especially when you are spending taxpayers'
18 money to defeat what the voters wanted. And
19 between this and all I have seen you do with
20 the changes to the voter requirements, which
21 will also create confusion in another way,
22 possibly decreasing the number of people that
23 vote --

24 SENATOR GAETZ: Ms. Dell, could we keep it
25 to redistricting today just because we have so

1 many people --

2 MS. DELL: Okay, to redistricting. I want
3 compact districts. And because of the way you
4 are fighting and have been fighting the
5 redistricting, I really have great difficulty
6 believing that you are sincerely going to get
7 the job done.

8 And I really would like to see the
9 suggestions made by the League of Women Voters
10 done, because they are very, very good. It is
11 very important that this be done way before
12 2012.

13 We should have maps for the voters to see,
14 and then you get our input, because you have
15 much more familiarity with the districts and
16 everything else than we do.

17 I would like to see maps. Then I would
18 provide additional comment. Thank you.

19 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
20 ma'am. I appreciate your comments.

21 And we have been joined in the hearing by
22 Senator Ronda Storms, and Senator, we asked
23 each member of the Committee to introduce
24 themselves and also indicate the area of the
25 state that they represent, and there was a

1 request for an indication of party affiliation.

2 So, Senator, we will stop and defer to you.

3 SENATOR STORMS: I am Senator Storms, I
4 represent District 10, I am a Republican.

5 SENATOR GAETZ: And District 10 is, for
6 the record?

7 SENATOR STORMS: Hillsborough County, a
8 little bit of Polk County, near Wabash, if you
9 are familiar with it, and then a little bit of
10 Pasco County where Zephyrhills is. What's a
11 zephyr?

12 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
13 Senator Storms. Did we have somebody else?

14 REPRESENTATIVE THURSTON: Thank you. I am
15 State Representative Perry Thurston from Ft.
16 Lauderdale, Broward County, and I am a
17 Democrat.

18 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
19 Representative.

20 Bill Landes, you are up, and then -- oh,
21 somebody else. We've got them pouring in late
22 here.

23 REPRESENTATIVE DIAZ: Yes, I am State
24 Representative Jose Diaz from District 115 in
25 Miami, and I am a Republican.

1 SENATOR GAETZ: Anybody else? Going once,
2 twice. Because we want to hear from Bill
3 Landes, and behind Mr. Landes is Danette May
4 and then John Myrick, who says he represents
5 the AARP.

6 Mr. Landes, thank you for coming today.

7 MR. LANDES: I want to thank you for the
8 record. My name is Bill Landes. I live in
9 Lake Wales. I am a member of the Florida
10 Alliance Group.

11 First of all, I don't have a long speech.
12 I have nothing wrote down. I come here to say
13 thank you all for taking on this task. I know
14 that y'all with deep hearts will do your best
15 to make it ultimately fair to everyone.

16 We as a group throughout the state of
17 Florida and citizens really want it to be fair.

18 My question is, is this based on the count
19 of the census, and if so, how? Florida is
20 unique in so many ways. We are a state of many
21 opportunities and big in tourism, and with
22 tourists buying houses here, coming here and
23 buying summer houses and things like that from
24 Canada, UK, Australia, South America and all
25 that, are they counted in our census as voters?

1 Would somebody answer me that question,
2 because I am being told that the census is the
3 base of the redistricting?

4 SENATOR GAETZ: Representative Weatherford
5 and any other members of the Committee, we are
6 making a list of questions.

7 What we would like to do is see if we
8 can -- because now we are up way over 40 people
9 who want to testify. We will make a list of
10 questions and get to them at the end. We just
11 don't want to stand in the way of other people.

12 MR. LANDES: That is fine. I am cutting
13 it short anyhow, because I -- I just wanted to
14 get up here and say thank you all. I know the
15 job at hand is hard and y'all will be diligent
16 in it. Thank you.

17 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, and we will get
18 to your question.

19 Next is Danette May. Danette May? And
20 following Ms. May, John Myrick with the AARP
21 and then Esther Kirk.

22 Ms. May, we really are grateful you took
23 time from your day, and thanks for your
24 testimony.

25 MS. MAY: Well, thank you very much for

1 this opportunity to speak. I am going to speak
2 in terms of just general decision-making and
3 the quality of the decisions that are being
4 made and the ethics of the decisions that are
5 being made in terms of the redistricting
6 process.

7 Gaining power, wealth or any advantage by
8 any means possible regardless of direct injury
9 or collateral damage to others appears no
10 longer to be shameless behavior. Attempting to
11 do end runs around or circumvent the will of
12 Florida citizens as clearly defined and
13 expressed at the polls is shameless behavior.
14 This is not what we have endeavored to be as
15 Americans. It is not in keeping with the
16 Christian beliefs that so many of you ardently
17 profess to hold. Gaining advantage by any
18 means possible is not what most of us were
19 taught by our parents, nor is it what we, I
20 will go out on a limb to say, want to teach our
21 children.

22 The Florida Legislature is on probation.
23 Many citizens who are members of the majority
24 party are not happy with the product thus far.
25 It is not clear which spark will set the

1 citizens of this state ablaze. So as you move
2 forward with the redistricting process, know
3 that you have already run many red flags up the
4 flag pole with the 2011 legislative session.

5 Please think, if you can, in terms of the
6 larger impact that your behavior and
7 decision-making will have on our society, our
8 state and the process of government that we
9 hold dear in our country.

10 Thank you for your good services, and I am
11 going to leave you with this question: Will
12 your objectives and strategies be shameless, or
13 will they be of unquestionable integrity?

14 Again, I thank you for this opportunity to
15 speak. Thank you for being here.

16 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Ms. May. I
17 appreciate it very much.

18 John Myrick is next from the AARP, and
19 then Esther Kirk, and following Ms. Kirk,
20 Maureen Siebold, if you will be on deck,
21 please.

22 Mr. Myrick, glad to have you here today.

23 MR. MYRICK: Thank you, sir. I am John
24 Myrick, a life-long Polk County resident, a
25 volunteer and representing AARP, and we would

1 like to ask that as you move through this
2 process, that you focus on a lot of things, but
3 specifically three things: One, ensure
4 transparency of the legislative redistricting
5 process every single step of the way. This is
6 a good start today. Second, ensure timeliness,
7 and we know that is going to be difficult, of
8 the redistricting process and ensure public
9 input. And, finally, take steps to insulate
10 the redistricting process from the appearance
11 of any conflict of information.

12 We are excited about what you are doing.
13 My granddaddy use to say, "You don't have to be
14 Alexander Graham Bell to know when the
15 telephone is ringing." Ladies and gentlemen,
16 the telephone is ringing, and we are excited as
17 can be to hear what your answer is going to be.
18 Thank you.

19 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.
20 We appreciate your being here.

21 Esther Kirk is next, and Ms. Kirk,
22 following your testimony, we will hear from
23 Maureen Siebold and then Sylvia
24 Blackmon-Roberts with the Alpha Kappa Alpha
25 Sorority.

1 Ms. Kirk, thank you for coming today and
2 taking time from your busy schedule to be with
3 us.

4 MS. KIRK: I am retired, but, yes, I am
5 busy.

6 SENATOR GAETZ: Well, retired people have
7 the busiest schedules.

8 MS. KIRK: I don't represent any
9 particular group. I represent me. And I am
10 just here because when I look at some of the
11 districts, I am appalled. I live in Riverview,
12 and my Congressional Representative is this
13 fellow, Mr. Ross, over here, and I don't think
14 he knows anything about my area over in
15 Riverview, you know. You can see the map, and
16 I am over here, a little bit of his district is
17 here and then it kind of comes here and then
18 here is the major portion of it. I don't want
19 to see anymore of those. I want to see
20 logical, compact districts so that the people
21 who represent me know me, know my area. I know
22 Senator Storms represents me, and I have seen
23 her at meetings and so forth, so she does know
24 something about our area. I want everybody
25 that represents me to know me and my area.

1 Thank you.

2 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
3 Ms. Kirk.

4 And next, Maureen Siebold, if you will
5 give us your testimony, then
6 Ms. Blackmon-Roberts and then Karen Welzel.

7 Ms. Siebold, thank you for coming today.

8 MS. SIEBOLD: I want to thank each and
9 every one of you for taking the opportunity to
10 come and hear we, the people. We live in a
11 republic, and we, the people of Florida, are
12 speaking.

13 I am representing the Florida Alliance,
14 the Tea Party network, and I am also the
15 founder of the Lakeland Tea Party and 9-12
16 project, of which we have 386 members, most of
17 whom work and were unable to come today. So I
18 would like for you to take that into account
19 when you hear what I have to say.

20 I will be using Henry Kelley's maps that
21 have been drawn based solely on population.
22 You have 47 whole counties out of 67, which
23 means that 70 percent of Florida's counties can
24 be represented by one Representative.

25 SENATOR GAETZ: Ma'am, I don't mean to

1 stop your flow, but the maps that you are
2 referring to I believe are maps that are in the
3 back --

4 MS. SIEBOLD: Yes, they are posted in the
5 back.

6 SENATOR GAETZ: -- proposed by Mr. Kelley,
7 who is with the Tea Party?

8 MS. SIEBOLD: Yes, he is with -- yes, with
9 the Tea Party Network.

10 Seven counties are too large to do that
11 due to population. So drawing as tightly as
12 possible leaves 80 percent of the state
13 represented by a minimum of Representatives.

14 On the existing map, the map that we are
15 using now, only 40 counties are whole, or
16 59 percent of the state is whole, and add in
17 the other seven counties leaves 47 out of 67
18 whole, or only 70 percent of the state as being
19 compact.

20 The rest of the state is gerrymandered,
21 gerrymandered to take into consideration
22 parties, races. We are all -- we are all
23 Americans. I don't care if we are green with
24 yellow polka dots, we are all Americans first.
25 We belong to the United States of America. And

1 using these -- I'm sorry, that was a soap box
2 moment.

3 Using -- using Henry's maps, it would --
4 using District 3 -- U.S. District 3 standards,
5 we actually decrease the number of Democratic
6 districts in the state of Florida the way we
7 are doing it now. However, using only the
8 population for our basis, the Democrats
9 actually benefit. You increase the number of
10 the Democratic majority or Democratic leaning
11 districts, thereby reducing the number of
12 Republican districts.

13 The way the Polk County is drawn on
14 Mr. Henry's maps is it takes in a small portion
15 of Hillsborough County, which is Plant City.
16 Polk County and that Plant City therefore
17 become one congressional district. Polk County
18 is an agricultural county. Plant City, you
19 know, Plant City, is agricultural. Therefore,
20 all of our needs and all of our interests are
21 the same. So you would lump us all in as a --
22 you know, the -- with the same interests and
23 needs. And so using population seems to be the
24 fairest way to do this.

25 My main question to the committee is, does

1 the federal court have the right to affect the
2 lives of approximately eight to ten million
3 Floridians by something that is happening in
4 Jacksonville? And, finally, it oversteps the
5 bounds of the Tenth Amendment, which reserves
6 the rights not appointed to the federal
7 government, to the states. And since when are
8 we, the people of Florida, ruled by the Supreme
9 Court of the United States instead of the
10 Constitution of the United States and the
11 Constitution of Florida? Thank you very much.

12 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you. And,
13 Ms. Siebold, if there are people who are
14 interested in the maps that have been
15 submitted, Ms. Siebold, could you stay
16 afterwards and talk with folks if they are
17 interested in the map that you described?
18 Thank you.

19 Next we have Sylvia Blackmon-Roberts with
20 the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, then Karen
21 Welzel, I believe, and then Donna Kinsey.

22 Ms. Blackmon-Roberts, thank you for being
23 here, and you are recognized.

24 MS. BLACKMON-ROBERTS: Thank you very
25 much. Let me say Alpha Kappa Alpha is a

1 nonpartisan service organization. Our concerns
2 were with the process maps, as well as the
3 timeline, and that -- those concerns have been
4 expressed so well by some of the other speakers
5 that I will yield my time to hopefully at the
6 end hear the feedback.

7 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
8 ma'am. Eloquent testimony.

9 Karen -- in politics, we have a saying
10 that says we have reached the point of the
11 meeting where everything has been said, but not
12 by everybody. We say that about ourselves, not
13 about you.

14 Karen Welzel, then Donna Kinsey and then
15 Lori Edwards, the Polk County Supervisor of
16 Elections.

17 Thank you very much, ma'am, for being
18 here, and we look forward to what you have to
19 say with us.

20 MS. WELZEL: Thank you for allowing us
21 this time.

22 My name is Karen Welzel. I am the
23 Chairman of the Democratic Polk County Party,
24 and I live in the southeast side of Polk County
25 in Winter Haven. For me, it is partisan.

1 Polk County covers approximately 2,000
2 square miles. It is a large county
3 geographically with over 600,000 residents.
4 Residents here in Polk County are represented
5 by three Congressional districts. On the north
6 and east side, there is a small strip of the
7 county that falls under Congressional District
8 15. On the northwest side of Polk, a small
9 group of residents are in CD 5. And the
10 remainder of the county is in Congressional
11 District 12.

12 There are five House seats representing
13 the citizens of Polk County, two of whom are
14 not here tonight -- today. Winter Haven alone
15 is divided into two districts. That simply
16 should not be. Cities should not be split. It
17 does not provide a fair representation of the
18 residents in our area. Districts should be
19 compact and contiguous.

20 Additionally, I am very concerned with the
21 timeline for drawing the new districts. This
22 timeline is unfair to the voters who passed
23 Amendments 5 and 6 by 63 percent of the vote,
24 and is deliberately being drawn out to favor
25 the incumbents. If you take until March 2012

1 to have the maps drawn, that means that
2 Florida's maps will be approved later than
3 almost every other state in the nation. That
4 only gives three months for court approval.
5 Review by the Department of Justice will take
6 much more than three months. If this timeline
7 is followed, maps will not be finalized before
8 qualifying for the 2012 election closes on
9 June 8th. That will create massive voter
10 confusion. People who want to run for office
11 will not know which district they will be
12 running for. They will have little time to
13 start their campaign, and the voters will have
14 even less time to make an informed decision for
15 whom they will vote. Bills were introduced in
16 the last session to require that the maps be
17 drawn earlier, but those bills didn't even get
18 scheduled for hearings. Why is that?

19 And then there is the money. This
20 Legislature has spent over a million dollars of
21 taxpayer money to hire lawyers to fight the
22 very amendments that the citizens voted for.
23 This Legislature has been fighting this since
24 2008 before the amendments were even on the
25 ballot. They have already acknowledged that

1 there is over \$30 million ready to be spent to
2 continue the fight against Fair Districts.
3 They are using a lawyer from Speaker Cannon's
4 former law firm who bills at over \$300 an hour
5 to fight these amendments. They tried to place
6 a misleading and misworded Amendment 7 on the
7 ballot, but the Supreme Court said it was wrong
8 and had it removed.

9 The Florida House has joined a lawsuit
10 attempting to have the amendments declared
11 unconstitutional. The Legislature is using,
12 again, taxpayer money to attack and invalidate
13 the very provision that we approved.

14 In addition, the Secretary of State has
15 been named a defendant in that case. That is
16 the same Secretary of State who headed up the
17 opposition to Fair Districts during the
18 campaign. So now we, the taxpayers, are again
19 paying to sue and defend the same lawsuit. All
20 of this money is being spent while teachers are
21 being fired, social services for the poor and
22 the indigent are being cut, and not a
23 significant job has been created.

24 With all due respect, people have thanked
25 you for allowing them to express their opinions

1 about redistricting, and that is all well and
2 good, but I will say this: This hearing --
3 these hearings have no purpose other than to
4 make it appear that you are listening to the
5 people. If you really wanted to know what we
6 thought, you would have brought the maps with
7 you and moved this process along in a timely
8 manner that would benefit the citizens you
9 purport to represent. This is a waste of time
10 and money. Thank you.

11 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you for wasting your
12 time and money in coming here, we appreciate
13 it.

14 Donna Kinsey is next, then Lori Edwards,
15 the Polk County Supervisor of Elections, and
16 then Diana Sen with LatinoJustice.

17 Ms. Kinsey, thank you for coming.

18 MS. KINSEY: Yes. I don't represent
19 anybody but myself.

20 SENATOR GAETZ: Good for you.

21 MS. KINSEY: And I am here mainly to
22 express a degree of frustration that I have in
23 not even being able to find out who my
24 Representatives are locally.

25 Three years ago, I moved down here from

1 the state of Maryland where, you know, I was
2 able to know who represented me, I was able to
3 contact them, and when I came here, I don't
4 even know where Bartow fits in the picture, I
5 guess we don't count, at least that is how I
6 feel about it. And it looks like it is about
7 to happen again because of the timeline,
8 because I did not realize until coming to this
9 meeting how little time there is. I had the
10 impression that -- you know, that the maps were
11 going to be finalized long before they
12 apparently are, and I find that very
13 disturbing. Thank you.

14 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much. And
15 I hope, Ms. Kinsey, that you can stay to the
16 end of the hearing, because everybody -- this
17 is one of the great things about this country,
18 everybody is entitled to their opinion, but
19 everybody is not entitled to their own set of
20 facts. So we will hear some -- hopefully some
21 information at the end of this hearing that
22 will help disabuse you of maybe some of the
23 things put in the bloodstream by, you know,
24 folks who just have a different opinion.

25 Lori Edwards, the Polk County Supervisor

1 of Elections, thank you for your service to
2 Polk County, and we are honored to have you
3 here today, ma'am.

4 MS. EDWARDS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is
5 a pleasure.

6 As you mentioned, I am the Supervisor of
7 Elections for Polk County. I am also the
8 Reapportionment Chair for the Florida
9 Association of Supervisors of Elections, and as
10 a result, I am also representing them.

11 The first point that I would like to
12 address is time. To conduct successful
13 elections in 2012, election officials need time
14 to complete tasks that are required by state
15 law. Election officials need time to adjust
16 the precinct lines once we get the new district
17 lines, and then gain approval of those new
18 precincts from the Board of County
19 Commissioners.

20 Now, if the Legislature, the Attorney
21 General, the Supreme Court and the Justice
22 Department all complete their work on time,
23 election administrators will have less than two
24 weeks to adjust the records of Florida's
25 11 million voters. Then first absentees need

1 to be mailed.

2 The calendar that was provided by your
3 legislative staff indicates that the final
4 Justice Department review of new districts is
5 likely to be complete after, after qualifying,
6 and that, as has been mentioned a couple of
7 times, has the potential for confusing
8 candidates, in addition, of course, to voters.

9 I have just a list of the statutorily
10 created tasks that we must complete during that
11 two-week period in between when we get the
12 final and the first ballots need to be mailed.
13 We need to change all district lines in the
14 state on 67 different maps. We need to align
15 the precincts to the new districts. We then
16 need to submit those proposed precinct changes
17 to the Board of County Commissioners in 67
18 counties and have them approve those new
19 precincts. We then need to re-code every
20 voter's address with new district information
21 for Congressional districts, for state House
22 districts and state Senate districts. We need
23 to check and double-check that new voter data,
24 because computers do much of it, but they don't
25 do all of it. Then we need to issue new voter

1 registration cards, get those mailed, notify
2 voters of the precinct changes, order the
3 ballots and mail the absentee ballots all
4 within 15 or 16 days, best-case scenario.

5 The other point I wanted to address was
6 district lines. Please respect communities
7 when you draw those district lines. I think
8 you are probably well aware that your
9 legislative staff worked with election
10 officials, as well as the census, over the last
11 couple of years to establish for the first time
12 here in Florida voting tabulation districts.
13 They take into consideration intact
14 communities, traffic patterns, even physical
15 barriers that people working in an office in
16 Tallahassee probably wouldn't be aware of. So
17 please adhere to these lines whenever possible.
18 The truth is the best place to draw any of your
19 lines is along a county line. So please divide
20 districts along county lines whenever possible.

21 And, you know, there has been much
22 attention, not just during your public hearings
23 this go-round, but for years to Florida's
24 meandering districts. But there's many, many
25 more examples of small cities being separated

1 into three or four districts, small, little
2 cities get split apart into three or four
3 little districts, or gated communities have
4 state Senate lines running through the middle
5 of them. So although meandering is something
6 to worry about, the opposite of that can cause
7 just as clear of a problem to all concerned.
8 The way to avoid that, there is a way to avoid
9 that, that is what those voting tabulation
10 districts are about. So when you start
11 reviewing the maps that you are serious about,
12 please ask the question, are these aligning
13 with voting tabulation districts, that is all I
14 ask you to ask, are the lines on county lines
15 or are they aligning with voting tabulation
16 districts.

17 I do have a question for your list, and my
18 question to the committee is: If, as we
19 expect, the lines will be finalized around
20 June 16th, how do candidates, as well as party
21 precinct Committee people, qualify during the
22 qualifying period that your Legislature created
23 between the fourth and the eighth? If the
24 districts don't exist, how do they qualify for
25 a district? And I am just curious, I need an

1 answer to that at some point.

2 SENATOR GAETZ: Well, Ms. Edwards, I hope
3 you will stay, because I think, again, maybe
4 that somebody purposefully offered a little
5 confusing information or maybe there was
6 confusion coming out of some source somewhere
7 else, but there is no requirement that
8 best-case scenario maps are drawn in March or
9 that the process ends in June, but Speaker
10 Weatherford, I think, can explain that in more
11 detail.

12 But I have a favor for you. Ms. Kinsey,
13 who spoke just ahead of you, didn't know who
14 her State Representatives are and what voter
15 district she lived in. Would you mind talking
16 with her and helping her understand that,
17 please, ma'am?

18 MS. EDWARDS: I would be happy to. I do
19 want to remind you that the State Supreme Court
20 has 30 days to review the plans --

21 SENATOR GAETZ: Yes.

22 MS. EDWARDS: -- the Attorney General has
23 15 days, so that is 45 days, and then there's
24 60 days for the U.S. Justice Department. So I
25 think that the calendar does come out that way.

1 I have learned this, of course, from your
2 Mr. Guthrie.

3 SENATOR GAETZ: Well, all I would suggest
4 to you, and I don't mean to be argumentative,
5 is that there is -- ma'am, I don't mean to be
6 argumentative, but those -- some of those time
7 lines can run concurrently, and just as you
8 encourage us, rightly so, to move as quickly as
9 possible, we certainly would encourage those
10 review processes to move as quickly as
11 possible. We will count on you to contact them
12 with the same encouragement. And if you would
13 help Ms. Kinsey, we would be grateful.

14 MS. EDWARDS: Thank you.

15 SENATOR GAETZ: Thanks for your testimony.

16 MS. EDWARDS: Pleasure to be here.

17 SENATOR GAETZ: Sure. Diana Sen, with
18 LatinoJustice, and following Ms. Sen, Rita
19 Wings and then Tim, I think it's Heberlein.
20 And we have had a number of other people, and
21 we are delighted, sign up to testify, so we are
22 going to hold pretty tight to the three-minute
23 rule.

24 So you are recognized. Thank you for
25 being here.

1 MS. SEN: Thank you. Good afternoon. My
2 name is Diana Sen, and I am senior counsel to
3 LatinoJustice PRLDEF, formerly known as the
4 Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund.

5 LatinoJustice is a national,
6 not-for-profit, nonpartisan civil rights
7 organization that has conducted legal
8 education, advocacy and impact litigation since
9 1972.

10 We are promoting community participation
11 and monitoring compliance with the federal
12 Voting Rights Act throughout legislative and
13 Congressional redistricting in Florida. As you
14 know, we have brought numerous lawsuits
15 enforcing the Voting Rights Act. Most
16 recently, we sued Volusia County in 2008 for
17 not providing ballots in Spanish in violation
18 of federal law. That lawsuit was settled in
19 2010, with the county providing bilingual
20 ballots and additional language assistance.

21 We also in 2005 represented Hispanic
22 Kissimmee residents in a federal class action
23 lawsuit against the Kissimmee Board of City
24 Commissioners because their at-large election
25 process diluted the voting strength of

1 Hispanics.

2 These lawsuits are in addition to three
3 lawsuits filed by the Department of Justice in
4 central Florida, one against Orange County for
5 not having proper Spanish language assistance,
6 and two against Osceola County, one for hostile
7 treatment against Latinos, and another for
8 their at-large election process.

9 In addition to these lawsuits, you have
10 all heard from the community loud and clear
11 that Latinos need fair representation in
12 redistricting. The Voting Rights Act requires
13 Florida to protect minority voters from a
14 dilution of their voting rights.

15 While recent interpretations of the VRA
16 question the viability of minority districts
17 that are less than a majority, Florida is
18 required to provide opportunities to elect
19 districts to VRA-protected classes like
20 Hispanics.

21 Under Section 2, the Supreme Court has
22 said that minority dilution occurs if it is
23 shown by, one, large and geographically compact
24 majority districts; two, a politically cohesive
25 group; three, racially polarized voting. And

1 once those three jingles, preconditions, are
2 met, a totality of circumstances is viewed by
3 the court to see if minorities' voting strength
4 is being diluted.

5 In addition, there is Section 5 that
6 creates federal oversight of changes to
7 redistricting plans in parts of the country
8 with a history of discrimination.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: And, Ms. Sen, if I could
10 ask you to summarize just in fairness of all
11 the people who have signed up behind you.

12 MS. SEN: Florida's Latino communities
13 must have fair electoral opportunity. Their
14 rights and their ability to vote should not be
15 silenced.

16 Proportionality is a key factor in
17 redistricting, and the United States Supreme
18 Court in DeGrande has stated that
19 proportionality is important in redistricting,
20 because it links the number of
21 majority-minority voting districts to minority
22 members' share of the relevant population. We
23 urge that the state's legislative redistricting
24 maps be drawn that -- such that a proportionate
25 percentage of the total districts can be drawn

1 for majority-minority Latino districts.

2 LatinoJustice is working with Latinos
3 throughout the state. We are supporting the
4 creation of a Latino-anchored, central
5 Florida-anchored congressional district, and
6 are proud to unveil our plan this Wednesday in
7 Orlando.

8 We look forward to working with you all to
9 ensure that the Voting Rights Act is followed
10 and that Latinos are able to elect the
11 candidate of their choice. Thank you.

12 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, Ms.
13 Sen.

14 And next we will hear from Rita Wings and
15 then Tim, I think it is Heberlein, or
16 Herberlein, I apologize, and then Sidney
17 Rosen- -- and I'm sorry, it is my eyes, not
18 your writing, Sidney, with the Democratic Club
19 in Poinciana.

20 Ms. Wings.

21 MS. WINGS: Hi. My name is Rita Wings,
22 and I represent myself and my website,
23 coffeestraightup.com. I am here not only to
24 reiterate what other people said about how
25 there should have been maps for us to look at.

1 Forgive me if my assumption after watching you
2 fight our will in court, if my assumption is
3 that you will go out and take public testimony,
4 then do exactly what you please come next year
5 when there is no time to fix it. I make those
6 assumptions because one person, one vote, is
7 not just a Democratic ideal, it has
8 traditionally been a Republican ideal. The
9 Republican party should be hanging its head in
10 shame about what it has allowed the Tea Party,
11 which is controlled by huge corporate
12 interests --

13 SENATOR GAETZ: Ma'am --

14 MS. WINGS: -- to do to it --

15 SENATOR GAETZ: Ma'am, let's -- let's be
16 civil. Let's not -- let's not cast aspersions
17 on other people who speak. Why don't you keep
18 it to your opinion about redistricting. We
19 really want --

20 MS. WINGS: This is my opinion about
21 redistricting.

22 SENATOR GAETZ: Well, we don't want to
23 hear your opinion about other people, except
24 you can give your opinion about us. But we
25 would very much like you to talk about

1 specifically where you believe redistricting
2 laws and how they should be applied in this
3 particular case in this part of the state. You
4 are recognized for that purpose solely, ma'am.

5 MS. WINGS: And in your arrogance, you
6 will tell us at the end where we are all wrong
7 and put your spin on it as a fact.

8 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you for your
9 testimony, ma'am. And now --

10 MS. WINGS: And I will continue by saying
11 and summing up that it is extremely important
12 that these laws that you are trying to make --
13 this adds to our skepticism as well, that the
14 laws you are trying to make right now will
15 address a nonexistent problem of voter fraud by
16 limiting --

17 SENATOR GAETZ: Now, ma'am --

18 MS. WINGS: -- people's right to vote.

19 SENATOR GAETZ: Ma'am, I am going to ask
20 you --

21 MS. WINGS: You are not --

22 SENATOR GAETZ: Ma'am --

23 MS. WINGS: -- standing up for Republican
24 ideals, nor for one person, one vote --

25 SENATOR GAETZ: Ma'am --

1 MS. WINGS: -- which is inherent in --

2 SENATOR GAETZ: Ma'am, we want to thank
3 you -- we want to thank you for your testimony.

4 MS. WINGS: I will finish.

5 SENATOR GAETZ: Ma'am --

6 MS. WINGS: That is inherent in the one
7 person, one vote ideal.

8 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
9 ma'am, for your testimony.

10 Tim Heberlein is next. And Tim, if I have
11 mispronounced your name, it is because of my
12 bad eyesight, not your handwriting. And then
13 Sidney Rosenblatt, I think, or Rosenbent, and
14 then following Sidney, Debbie Hannifan.

15 Tim, you are recognized. Thank you for
16 being here.

17 MR. HEBERLEIN: Absolutely. It is
18 Heberlein, actually, it happens all the time.

19 SENATOR GAETZ: It is what, please, sir?

20 MR. HEBERLEIN: Heberlein. It is probably
21 my handwriting, but --

22 SENATOR GAETZ: No, no, it is my eyesight.

23 MR. HEBERLEIN: -- it's as German as it
24 gets.

25 Well, I would like to thank you all for

1 being here. This is a very important part of
2 the political process, especially
3 redistricting. Unfortunately, it is a very
4 politicized process as well.

5 I represent, and I apologize, I omitted it
6 on the form, but the Florida Consumer Action
7 Network, which is a bipartisan -- can you hear
8 me?

9 SENATOR GAETZ: Maybe, sir, if you could
10 speak right into the microphone, because there
11 are a lot of folks here, and they would --
12 everybody would like to hear your testimony.

13 MR. HEBERLEIN: How is this? Sound check.

14 SENATOR GAETZ: Much better.

15 MR. HEBERLEIN: All right.

16 SENATOR GAETZ: Much better.

17 MR. HEBERLEIN: I represent the Florida
18 Consumer Action Network, which is a nonpartisan
19 organization which protects the rights of
20 consumers, and we also do voter registration,
21 so we are very interested in this particular
22 process.

23 But I applaud the efforts of putting
24 together the software, the My District Builder,
25 you are allocating a lot of resources to these

1 public hearings, but you haven't done the
2 constitutional duty of drawing these maps. And
3 I can't emphasize how important that is to the
4 political process when it comes to public
5 participation is they -- a lot of times, I
6 personally don't even know what it is I am
7 supposed to make public comment on. I
8 appreciate that I think Kelley -- the
9 gentleman, Kelley, has produced these maps --

10 SENATOR GAETZ: He's produced one of them.
11 There are actually 12 maps that have been
12 produced over there, and then you have the
13 existing maps here, and you can speak to any
14 one of them or make any specific proposal of
15 your own, or any member of this committee can.

16 MR. HEBERLEIN: I propose that --
17 actually, I propose that the Legislature
18 produce the maps that is what I propose. It is
19 not Kelley's job. It is not my job to write
20 the software. Don't get me wrong, it is a
21 great software, you are doing a great job, but
22 it is not our job. You are asking for our
23 public input. My public input came last year
24 with Amendments 5 and 6. I actually went up to
25 Tallahassee -- thank you.

1 SENATOR GAETZ: Let's let him speak. You
2 are eating up his three minutes, sir.

3 MR. HEBERLEIN: I actually went to
4 Tallahassee because I opposed Amendment 7,
5 which was specifically put by the Legislature
6 to confuse voters and to basically negate
7 Amendments 5 and 6, and that was
8 unfortunately -- unfortunate part of this
9 politicized process.

10 So I encourage you to, again, I think
11 another speaker had mentioned it before, but
12 consider the fact of the -- the implications of
13 what you are doing with this process. And I
14 hope that, you know, come whenever these maps
15 are produced, hopefully it is not five months
16 before the 2012 election, that the headlines
17 read, you know, this was a fair process, this
18 was done appropriately. I would love to see
19 that. And I would please beg you to do
20 everything in your power to make sure that is
21 what the headline reads as soon as you afford
22 the -- produce these maps and vote on them and
23 make it official.

24 SENATOR GAETZ: I think it will be
25 "Republicans Arrived and Bank Robbed," but go

1 ahead.

2 MR. HEBERLEIN: Thank you.

3 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you so much for your
4 testimony.

5 And, Sidney, I've got to beg your
6 forgiveness.

7 MR. ROSENBERG: My name is Sidney
8 Rosenberg.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: Rosenberg, I could have
10 read that if I had been good.

11 MR. ROSENBERG: I live in Polk County.

12 SENATOR GAETZ: Go ahead.

13 MR. ROSENBERG: I represent the Democratic
14 Club in Solivita, Florida.

15 Most of the people in this room have come
16 up -- and I am not going to belabor the fact or
17 repeat the requests -- the requests of the
18 people of this state.

19 Sixty-three percent of the people wanted
20 change. They want these maps drawn correctly.
21 We have to have them drawn at a logical time so
22 that I can go out and say "I have a candidate"
23 or "I want to be a candidate." I don't see
24 this here. I don't see a time frame that is
25 logical, how a voter is going to know who to

1 vote for. And I am going to leave it at that,
2 there are other people that want to speak,
3 there is no sense in laboring over things.

4 But I am asking you, ladies and gentlemen,
5 please stop trying to fight the amendment. The
6 amendment was passed by the people. Thank you.

7 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you. Next we will
8 hear from Debbie Hannifan, then John Wing,
9 representing the Bahai faith, and then Ronald
10 Johnson.

11 Is it Ms. Hannifan, is that right?

12 MS. HANNIFAN: Yes, it is, thank you.

13 SENATOR GAETZ: You are recognized, and
14 thanks for coming today.

15 MS. HANNIFAN: Thank you very much. Thank
16 you to all of you for coming. I really
17 appreciate that. I am born and raised here in
18 Lakeland, Florida, and welcome to our city.

19 I want to, first of all, commend the
20 Committee for the use of technology. I've
21 recently heard on the news that we are among
22 the leaders in the country for the technology,
23 the website and the things that you are doing,
24 so thank you for that and allowing the
25 transparent process.

1 The other thing I would like to say is I
2 train advocates across the state, grass roots
3 organizing and coalition training for
4 individuals who are interested in becoming
5 engaged in the legislative process. So some of
6 you are familiar, and thank you for your help
7 along the years.

8 What I would like to say is we need to
9 make sure that we keep our eye on what this is
10 all about. It is very important that our
11 individual citizens have the opportunity to get
12 to know their Legislators, that they will be
13 able to become engaged when they have
14 individual issues, and some of the districts
15 have made it very difficult for your average
16 citizen to become engaged in that relationship,
17 because they do not live anywhere near their
18 districts, the constituency is not necessarily
19 close to the elected official. So we would
20 just ask that you would consider that when you
21 are drawing your lines, and try to keep to -- I
22 am not going to use the terms that we have
23 heard previously, but some -- you know, to
24 county districts, if at all possible, so that
25 people are not having to travel great lengths

1 to get to their legislator and that they will
2 be able to engage in that process a little bit
3 easier.

4 Also, people who are elderly, people who
5 have disabilities, who rely on public
6 transportation to get to their Representative's
7 office, should be fairly easy for that person
8 to do before work, after work, on their lunch
9 break, not necessarily having to take four
10 hours out of their day to travel a good two
11 hours, three hours, to get to an appointment.
12 So we would ask that, too.

13 The other thing is the financial impact of
14 that. Our Legislators or elected officials are
15 having to travel great deals to get to maybe
16 the areas where their constituency reside. So
17 that is a financial consideration as well.

18 And I think that is about it. I would ask
19 that you would consider maybe the common
20 threads that we have heard today, not
21 necessarily the drastic differences, but the
22 commonality. We are still asking for you to
23 make it a fairly swift process, to put them out
24 so that we are able to give input, and then if
25 there's a big variety of people who are not

1 able to come to the Committee meetings, please
2 consider our comments during your Committee
3 dialogue and discussion, because there are many
4 people across the state that will not be able
5 to come to Tallahassee in September to
6 readdress these issues with you again. Okay,
7 thank you.

8 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you. Thank you very
9 much.

10 Next we will hear from John Wing.
11 Mr. Wing, are you still here? Very good. And
12 after Mr. Wing, Ronald Johnson and then Warner
13 Squire with the Polk Democratic Party.

14 Mr. Wing.

15 MR. WING: Good afternoon. A couple of
16 Sundays ago, our congregation was discussing an
17 issue that some of the members wanted to
18 contact their Congressman, and not everyone
19 knew who their Congressman was, which is
20 understandable, considering if they live a
21 dozen or so miles one way, they were in a
22 second district, if they lived a dozen or so
23 miles the other way, they were in a third
24 district, and I says, "Well, okay, I will check
25 into it and let you know." Turned out to be

1 quite a bit of research, and at the end, I gave
2 information about the three Congressmen, and I
3 said, "As far as the lines are concerned, you
4 are going to have to either call one of them or
5 go on-line and find out who your Congressman
6 really is." And I know that the state
7 districts are more or less as convoluted as
8 that, and it makes it difficult to know who our
9 Representative is, and for our Representatives
10 to understand who he is representing. So I ask
11 you to draw the lines in reasonable fashion to
12 assure that y'all represent us rather than make
13 sure that you get reelected.

14 SENATOR GAETZ: Well, thank you. And,
15 again, it is one of those inconvenient facts.
16 None of us up here drew these lines. We ran in
17 districts that somebody else drew.

18 Ronald Johnson is next, and following
19 Mr. Johnson, Warner Squire with the Polk DEC
20 and then Dena DeCamp.

21 Mr. Johnson, thank you for coming, and you
22 recognized, sir.

23 MR. JOHNSON: Good afternoon, and thanks
24 for coming, and thanks to all the people in the
25 audience, we appreciate all of you guys being

1 here, too.

2 My concern is this: We want you guys to
3 be honest and we want you guys to put forth the
4 maps and do it the right way. The people have
5 already spoken, 63 percent. So go about your
6 business, create the maps, don't be so
7 concerned about your reelection. You are going
8 to get reelected if the people are behind you.
9 If they want to support you, they will. Don't
10 cut out the districts through the
11 gerrymandering process. You know, you heard
12 the word "contiguous," you have heard the word
13 "gerrymandering," we all know what those words
14 mean.

15 And, historically, I want to bring up Tom
16 DeLay. Remember what happened in Texas years
17 ago, what happened to Mr. Tom DeLay in his
18 redistricting thing. Don't let that happen to
19 you guys. Do it the right way. Represent all
20 of us. Remember what Ms. Lori Edwards said,
21 she gave you a lot of statistics, you know
22 those things. Do it the right way. You guys
23 are honorable, you guys are officials. Do it
24 the right way. Present the maps. Have
25 continuous, contiguous districts that looks

1 real, not a piece here, a piece there, don't
2 worry about the demographics, about who -- who
3 is here, who is there, Democrat, Republicans,
4 do it the right way. Be honorable. Do the
5 right thing for the people, and we appreciate
6 it.

7 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.

8 Warner Squire with the Polk Democratic
9 Executive Committee, and then Dena DeCamp, and
10 then Janell, I think it is Hedrin, although I
11 apologize if I have mispronounced.

12 Mr. Squire, thank you for coming, and you
13 are recognized before the Committee.

14 MR. SQUIRE: Okay. I just want to say
15 that -- it's like I've got to come down here,
16 adjust it, I don't want to take up my time. I
17 am new to this whole process.

18 SENATOR GAETZ: I think the mike will come
19 out there if you would like. There you go.

20 MR. SQUIRE: Okay. So, anyway, I am new
21 to the whole process, and I think that this is
22 very exciting, but at the same time, I think
23 that the concern that I had in reading about
24 this, following it in the paper, and a lot of
25 people have expressed today is fairness.

1 People want to feel like the Representatives
2 are treating the situation fairly, and at the
3 same time, we have to recognize that we send
4 you all to Tallahassee to win, or your
5 campaigns, the people who back you, we want you
6 to win. And so it is funny how at one point we
7 are saying be fair, but to our own
8 Representatives we are saying, stick it to
9 them, so to say. So I am asking you to kind of
10 hear that, but kind of let cooler heads
11 prevail, as they are saying on TV these days,
12 and not listen to the people who are saying use
13 your advantage against the people who were
14 against you. Do you follow what I am saying?
15 Just, you know, make it fair and win in a fair
16 way. And I am just thinking about how, you
17 know, back when I was growing up and the Tyson
18 fights were going on and everyone would get so
19 excited for the Tyson fight, and it would be
20 over in a minute or less. So I ask that, you
21 know, when you win, just win fairly and show
22 good sportsmanship. Thank you.

23 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you.

24 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Mr. Chairman,
25 I think what he meant to say is don't bite your

1 opponent's ear.

2 SENATOR GAETZ: We will add that to the
3 record. No ear biting.

4 Ms. DeCamp, and then following Ms. DeCamp,
5 Janell, I apologize, Hendreu or Hedrin, and
6 then Nancy Sweeney.

7 Ms. DeCamp, thank you for coming, and you
8 are recognized.

9 MS. DeCAMP: Thank you so much. My name
10 is Dena DeCamp, and I am President of the
11 Republican Women's Club of Lakeland, and I
12 serve on the Board of Directors for the Florida
13 Federation of Republican Women. And I want to
14 say, first of all, thank you all very much for
15 being here. It says a lot for how important
16 redistricting is to see a bipartisan panel
17 sitting in front of us, and it means a lot to
18 all of us that you are all here. Thank you so
19 much.

20 We heard a lot today about how we haven't
21 got any maps. I do want to make one comment
22 about that. If they had brought maps, people
23 would be standing in this microphone saying you
24 already had your minds made up and you didn't
25 give us a chance to give input. So I am going

1 to tell you thank you for not bringing the
2 maps, and we can live with the other.

3 One of the things that has been brought up
4 before and I want to reinforce is the county
5 line rule seems to be a good one. In Polk
6 County, a number of the members of my club have
7 an issue with us because Senator Storms is over
8 on the west side of the county, a little
9 sliver, and we have Congressman Rich Nugent up
10 on the north side of Polk County in a little
11 bitty sliver, and we almost never get to see
12 them, not that we don't invite them, but we
13 tend to kind of forget about them because they
14 have such a tiny little sliver of Polk County,
15 and the people in their districts feel a little
16 left out because we invite in the people that
17 have the biggest portion of those districts.
18 And so it would be better for these people who
19 don't know who their Congressmen or
20 Representatives are if we had a more defined
21 line and it wasn't chopping up counties. The
22 cities, I know, would be difficult, but the
23 counties, I think, would be an important way to
24 try and keep -- keep it easier for the
25 constituency to know who you are. I know who

1 all my elected officials are, but then I am in
2 politics to a certain extent and I made a point
3 of it. But if you voted on somebody, you
4 should know who that person is. So, you know,
5 I just think that that is a matter of the
6 person finding out who they are. You guys are
7 in your constituencies, you are out in your
8 districts all the time, even though you are
9 part-time Legislators, and we thank you for
10 that, we know you have another life other than
11 those months you spend in Tallahassee, we know
12 that the rest of the year you are out there and
13 you are trying to meet as many people as you
14 can, and we thank you for that. Thank you
15 again for being here. Y'all are doing a great
16 job.

17 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
18 Ms. DeCamp.

19 And Janell, I apologize to you, what's
20 your last name, ma'am?

21 MS. HENDREN: Hendren.

22 SENATOR GAETZ: Hendren, I had it right,
23 by golly.

24 And then following Ms. Hendren, Nancy
25 Sweeney and then Graham Moore.

1 Ms. Hendren, we are delighted you are
2 here, and you are recognized.

3 MS. HENDREN: Thank you, Senator. My name
4 is Janell Hendren, I am a resident of downtown
5 Lakeland, and I first want to thank everyone
6 that has come so far. I know you are from up
7 in the -- up in the Panhandle area, and you are
8 part-time Legislators, many people do not
9 realize that. The Representatives get paid
10 \$29,000 a year, that is it, they are part-time.
11 Some other people have mentioned other states
12 that have more advanced timelines on what they
13 do. They are full-time Legislators that -- by
14 the way, California pays their people over
15 \$100,000 a year, so you want to talk about a
16 waste of money.

17 Now, I want to say thank you for coming to
18 us --

19 SENATOR GAETZ: We are not worth that.

20 MS. HENDREN: I want to say thank you very
21 much for coming to us before you draw the maps,
22 because we all know how the human mind works,
23 and once your minds are made up, once the lines
24 are drawn, it becomes very difficult to say,
25 "No, we didn't really like this whole area,

1 let's redo this whole area." I would much
2 rather you have a blank slate to work from and
3 take our suggestions so that when you first
4 draw the maps, when you first set your minds to
5 how you want things to look, they are with our
6 opinions in mind, and I appreciate that.

7 I think I am going to be unique and give
8 the actual first suggestion that is Polk
9 County-specific and say please be careful when
10 you draw up Polk County. We have competing
11 economic interests between south Polk County
12 that is agriculture, east and west. And I feel
13 sometimes that the way that these districts are
14 currently drawn, that can be exacerbated, some
15 people feel a viable rate between Lakeland and
16 Winter Haven, and I would ask that the new
17 districts not make that situation worse with
18 the way that the districts are drawn. That is
19 all I have to say. Thank you for your time.

20 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, ma'am.

21 Nancy Sweeney is next. Ms. Sweeney, we
22 very much are -- appreciate your taking time to
23 come today, then Graham Moore, and following
24 Mr. Moore, Dr. Lydia Medrano.

25 Ms. Sweeney, you are recognized.

1 MS. SWEEZY: First of all, my name is
2 Nancy Sweezy.

3 SENATOR GAETZ: Sweezy.

4 MS. SWEEZY: S-w-e-e-z-y.

5 SENATOR GAETZ: I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

6 MS. SWEEZY: That is okay. You are not
7 the first person that's called me something
8 else.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: I have been called a lot
10 of things.

11 MS. SWEEZY: I have, too. I usually come,
12 whatever you call me.

13 I want to thank you all for coming. I was
14 surprised when I came here, this is the first
15 one I have been, but every year I have been
16 angry after the redistricting has been done,
17 and I wanted to come and have my say.

18 I am tired of the strange districts we see
19 through, and I would really like to see the
20 county not tore up as bad as sometime. I once
21 believed Polk County was divided into five
22 districts, so -- and it was split all over the
23 place like you wouldn't believe it. I know
24 that sometimes you can't put our county in a
25 district, you have to split places up, and I

1 understand that, but I would like you to really
2 consider trying to keep as much of the
3 population in an area together, because we do
4 -- each county has their own special problems,
5 and we would like you to, you know, consider
6 that if we have one legislator, he can listen
7 to us and our problems better than five people
8 who are only listening to a couple thousand
9 people in one corner, and five or six, because
10 they are worried more about the most of the
11 people than they are the small amounts, and I
12 understand that, too, but I would really like
13 to see a plan go together that the districts
14 are tried to be drawn as fairly as you can,
15 keeping the people together.

16 Somebody was saying that you didn't draw
17 the districts. I have voted in districts here
18 in Polk County that were Democrats and we put
19 Republicans in, and I voted in districts that
20 were Republicans, we put Democrats in, so I
21 don't find this that -- I have known this to be
22 a Democratic district, and I have seen
23 Republicans go sit right in there and take the
24 district out from underneath them, so I don't
25 find this, you know, is anything. I have seen

1 people of different races go into areas where
2 nobody said they would not elect a person of
3 that race, that color, that creed, that
4 religion, they go in there, they make an
5 impression on the people, the people vote for
6 them. All we want is a fair chance to vote for
7 our people who know us. And I thank you for
8 all that you are doing in these matters.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Ms. Sweezy.
10 Graham Moore? Mr. Moore, and then
11 Dr. Lydia Medrano and then Delma Rodriguez.

12 Mr. Moore, thank you for coming today.

13 MR. MOORE: Thank you. I would like to
14 first say thank you to all of you. I look
15 around this room and I see nothing but a
16 collection of citizens and activists who care
17 about issues that affect this state. I see our
18 Representatives sitting both up before me and
19 sprinkled throughout the rest of the room,
20 citizen activists, organizers, all who care
21 about this -- these issues, all who care about
22 what is represented by the two flags that are
23 behind you all, and I see that the parties,
24 mixed up amongst everybody and how we can all
25 sit together today. But that is today.

1 Next year when this issue is brought
2 forward into the State Legislature, when you
3 will be discussing this, it won't be the only
4 thing that will be discussed. Next year we
5 find ourselves in an election year when
6 early-on members of the Lincoln's party will be
7 battling amongst themselves to see who will
8 represent themselves in the great presidential
9 election. Next year when we see our current
10 President fight to put forward another
11 four-year vision for America, next year when we
12 see races amongst our -- for our U.S. Senate
13 seat, for our House seats, all battling, should
14 we really infuse the idea of redistricting in
15 that time period? Should we really battle a
16 bear when we are fighting a lion already? And
17 that is all I have to say.

18 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
19 Mr. Moore.

20 And now Dr. Lydia Medrano, and then
21 following Dr. Medrano, Delma Rodriguez and then
22 Norma Reno, please.

23 Dr. Medrano, thank you for coming and
24 giving your time today to this process.

25 DR. MEDRANO: Thank you. My name is Lydia

1 Medrano. I am a District Director of the
2 League of United Latin American Citizens, also
3 known as LULAC, and LULAC is the national civil
4 rights organization, it is the oldest Hispanic
5 civil rights organization. My district covers
6 Polk County and Hillsborough County. And I
7 want to thank all of you for being here and
8 listening to what people have to say. I want
9 to believe that people's feedback is taken into
10 account. But to tell you the truth, we are
11 kind of frustrated with the county
12 redistricting, because the community is saying
13 one thing, and the commissioners are doing the
14 opposite, you know.

15 But, anyways, I don't want to repeat what
16 many people already said, but I would just want
17 to say that in Tampa Bay, we have developed a
18 coalition of Hispanic organizations and are
19 determined to participate in the redistricting
20 processes. We are receiving advice from
21 several organizations like the LatinoJustice,
22 New York-based civil rights organization from
23 New York, LULAC and some local attorneys.

24 Latinos have significantly contributed to
25 the growth of the population in the state, and

1 because of that, we have -- we are getting two
2 new -- two additional seats. And Hillsborough
3 County, Polk County, Pasco, Pinellas, have the
4 combined Hispanic populations of almost
5 541,000, and because of that, as I said before,
6 Florida is getting two additional seats. And
7 the reason why I am here is that we expect that
8 at least one of those seats is going to be here
9 in central Florida. Thank you.

10 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Doctor.

11 And next, Delma Rodriguez, also with
12 LULAC, and then Norma Reno, also with LULAC,
13 and then Paul Anderson from the Sierra Club.

14 Ms. Rodriguez, thank you for coming.

15 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Thank you very much. I am
16 a native Floridian. I was born and raised in
17 Tampa, Florida. And to be very honest with
18 you, I am very proud of the state of Florida.
19 One of my responsibilities is voting, and I
20 have done that, I won't speak to that.

21 The other responsibility I think I have as
22 a citizen is to come here and to speak to you
23 about what is important to me, to LULAC, to the
24 council that I am President of, which is
25 Council 7069, and that is that you seriously

1 consider one of the two Congressional
2 districts, the new districts, that it be part
3 of central Florida, to include Hillsborough,
4 Pinellas, Polk, Manatee and the other one that
5 I can't remember at this time, but you get the
6 picture. We feel it is very important. We
7 have the count, we have the numbers and we ask
8 that you give us the district. Thank you.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
10 Ms. Rodriguez.

11 And next, Norma Reno with LULAC and then
12 Paul Anderson with the Sierra Club and then C.
13 L. Ergle.

14 MS. RENO: Good afternoon. My name is
15 Norma Reno, and I represent LULAC and I am the
16 Vice-President of Human Rights of Hillsborough
17 County and also the Director of Education for
18 the Hispanic Alliance of Tampa Bay.

19 I am here today to ask you to please
20 enforce the criteria of redistricting, which is
21 creating compact and contiguous districts,
22 trying to keep political units and community
23 within a single district and avoiding the
24 drawing of boundaries for purposes of partisan
25 advantage. It is the only way to avoid

1 manipulation of political boundaries,
2 gerrymandering and discrimination against
3 voters whose population has grown far more than
4 others.

5 The I-4 corridor represents the largest
6 growth of Latinos in the entire state. We
7 would like to have a more equitable
8 representation in the Florida Legislature.
9 Thank you very much.

10 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
11 ma'am.

12 And now Paul Anderson from the Sierra
13 Club. Mr. Anderson? Thank you, Mr. Anderson,
14 thank you for being here today. And then next
15 C. L. -- is it Ergle? Mr. Ergle, if I
16 mispronounced your name, I beg your pardon,
17 sir.

18 MR. ERGLE: That is correct. A lot of
19 people have a problem with that name. I am a
20 member of the REC, the Republican Executive
21 Committee, and I am here to get more organized
22 as to what my duties are going to be as a
23 district Committeeman in my -- and
24 incidentally, I am 83 years old now, and I have
25 been around in Florida all my life, so I know a

1 lot about what's been going on in this state.

2 One of the things that concerns me at this
3 point is our government is going away from the
4 Constitution, and that is one of the reasons
5 why I am here is to reinvigorate our
6 Constitution here in the state and the United
7 States. So it is very important to me as to
8 what my duties are going to be and how this
9 redistricting is going to come to me in doing
10 my job. So thank you for hearing me and --
11 very much.

12 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.

13 Next is Ray Dimbrath and then Karen
14 Landers and then Jerry -- I think it is Jerry
15 Showers.

16 Mr. Dimbrath, thank you very much for
17 being here today, and if you will come down
18 front, we would love to hear your testimony,
19 because it says you represent yourself, and
20 that is fantastic.

21 MR. DIMBATH: That is correct. I have
22 noticed -- this has been a very interesting
23 experience, because one thing, it seems like we
24 have a lot of what I would call special
25 interest groups that have been speaking and a

1 lot of -- a lot of pressure groups maybe, but I
2 just want to take the moment to thank all those
3 who came, those that are sitting out here and
4 those at the table up there.

5 I grew up in Miami. In 1964, I was 21,
6 and that is when you first were able to vote,
7 but I have always followed these things as much
8 as possible, and I think this has been one of
9 the most interesting and open discussions of
10 reapportionment I have ever seen in this state,
11 so I thank you for that.

12 Also, some people say it is hard to know
13 who their Congressman is. Mine used to be Adam
14 Putnam here in Polk County. Now we have Dennis
15 Ross, so I don't think that is so hard to know.

16 And, finally, I just -- I am a registered
17 Republican, but I wanted to thank Lori Edwards
18 here, who is our elections supervisor in Polk
19 County, she is Democrat, but she has done a
20 very good job, and a few years ago, I was a
21 poll worker -- I was a poll worker for one of
22 the elections, and I appreciate comments like
23 hers that were made, which I thought were very
24 well thought up and really addressed some of
25 the issues that are very important here. And I

1 can't help but say it seemed to contrast her
2 and then the other person who gets up and just
3 makes all these personal attacks on people they
4 don't like and disagree with. So, anyhow, I am
5 publicly thanking Lori Edwards for her job here
6 in Polk County.

7 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, sir.
8 Appreciate it very much.

9 Ms. Landers, you are up, and Jerry Showers
10 and then Steve Hall.

11 Ms. Landers, we appreciate your taking
12 your time to come before the Committee, and you
13 are recognized.

14 MS. LANDERS: Thank you. This issue I
15 have worked on since 2004, so it has been
16 longer than just what was on the ballot. It
17 has been a long, long process. We are thankful
18 to the voters of Florida for passing it with
19 63 percent of the vote. It was a heavy lift
20 that we didn't really, frankly, think we could
21 pull off, but it was done.

22 Now, I beg you to stop humiliating us
23 nationwide, late-night TV. Give us fair,
24 compact, contiguous districts, please.

25 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you.

1 Is it Gary or Jerry, sir?

2 MR. SHOWERS: It is Gary.

3 SENATOR GAETZ: Gary Showers, then Steve
4 Hall and then Casey Welch with Florida Citrus
5 Mutual.

6 Mr. Showers, thank you for coming.

7 MR. SHOWERS: And certainly, I live in the
8 City of Bartow, Florida.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: Would you hold the
10 microphone up so -- I know everybody would want
11 you to hear you.

12 MR. SHOWERS: I am a citizen of Bartow,
13 Florida. My Representative is Seth McKeel, and
14 certainly he is not a part of this
15 redistricting committee or the process now.
16 And I think the overwhelming consensus of
17 the -- most of the majority of the people here
18 in the audience tonight is to go ahead and
19 formulate the maps.

20 At the end of the day, certainly we can
21 have input from the citizens, but at the end of
22 the day, the Legislature is responsible for
23 drawing those maps, and in order to have any
24 intelligent input into the way those maps are
25 drawn, then we would need to see those maps.

1 So we are going to ask that the process be
2 expedited and give every other agency the
3 opportunity to debate that process and to give
4 it a rubber stamp, and that would be my
5 comments today.

6 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
7 Mr. Showers.

8 And next we are privileged to hear from
9 Steve Hall, then Casey Welch, and then if
10 Victor Story will be ready to speak.

11 Mr. Hall, we are grateful that you took
12 time to come today.

13 MR. HALL: Thank you. I appreciate the
14 time, and I also appreciate you all coming to
15 hear the public input about the redistricting.

16 But a lot of folks think that the
17 redistricting, in fact, is over, because they
18 voted for Amendment 5 and 6, and so a lot of us
19 are here today to just tell you all do what the
20 amendment said to do. That is why 63 percent
21 of the voters voted for it.

22 My concern is that the districts as they
23 stand today obviously are skewed. I remember
24 Dave Aronberg's district down in south Florida
25 goes all of the way from the east coast to the

1 west coast, with a lake in between. And it is
2 unreasonable to think that the constituents of
3 that district can go from one side of the state
4 to the other to actually talk to their
5 Representative without having to drive all the
6 way up to Tallahassee. So they need to be more
7 compact.

8 I supported Amendment 5 and 6, obviously,
9 and I have seen other states where they are
10 like that. It makes more sense. Our
11 districts, as they stand right now, don't even
12 make any sense.

13 But I am here today because one of my
14 biggest concerns is this \$30 million that was
15 appropriated to fight the districts that
16 everyone actually voted for. And then, of
17 course, on the other side, the State has an
18 obligation to defend the fight against
19 Amendment 5 and 6, but we passed the amendment
20 by 63 percent, that is more than most people
21 got in the last election, so obviously the
22 majority of the people want it done, and I
23 think that they've elected you all to do what
24 they want done and I think they have spoken
25 very loudly and we need to move on with it.

1 I disagree with anyone who doesn't think
2 that we should have example maps here today to
3 look at. I think that you could have brought
4 the maps so that we could look at what the
5 suggestion currently is in case there's any
6 problems, or would we have any problems with
7 the way any of the districts were drawn, then
8 we might could say, "Oh, well, maybe this one
9 shouldn't be that way, maybe the line should be
10 on the county line or on the ZIP code line or
11 some other line other than what you all may
12 have drawn the lines as," and then you could go
13 back and adjust them according to the input the
14 people give here in these hearings today and
15 throughout the state.

16 I applaud you for going around the state
17 and getting input, but it is hard for us to
18 look at the districts as we -- we feel they
19 should have been drawn the way we voted, as
20 opposed to just giving some input on something
21 that is not even there and just saying make
22 them simple. That is too easy. We would like
23 to look at the districts and have input as to
24 exactly how they are drawn.

25 But, again, I thank you all for coming. I

1 look forward to seeing you all again when you
2 get to Orlando, because I will be at theirs --
3 those too. Thank you.

4 SENATOR GAETZ: And, Mr. Hall, I hope you
5 can stay to the end of the hearing, because I
6 think some of the questions that you raised we
7 will be able to give some factual information
8 about that might help you.

9 MR. HALL: Okay, thank you.

10 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you so much.

11 Next, Casey Welch with Florida Citrus
12 Mutual, followed by Victor Story with Florida
13 Citrus Mutual, followed by Carl J. Strang, Jr.

14 Mr. Welch, thank you for coming.

15 MR. STORY: You are going to catch a
16 break. Mr. Welch has yielded to me. I am
17 Victor Story, and I am President of Florida
18 Citrus Mutual.

19 SENATOR GAETZ: Glad to have you here,
20 sir.

21 MR. STORY: Okay, sir. So I am here -- I
22 am here today, I am a citrus grower from
23 primarily the southeast part of the county. I
24 am, as I said, President of Florida Citrus
25 Mutual, I am also past President of the Polk

1 County Farm Bureau, and I have also served in
2 some other elected positions in Polk County in
3 appointed positions, and I would just like to
4 represent the interest of the agricultural
5 community here in the county.

6 You know, we've got a rather diverse
7 county. We've got two population centers in
8 Lakeland and Winter Haven, and then we also
9 have an emerging population center to the
10 northeast part of the county, and then the rest
11 of the county is relatively rural, dominated by
12 agriculture, and I would just like to encourage
13 you as you make your deliberations that we are
14 well-represented, I think we are
15 well-represented now, we have five members of
16 the House, we have three members of the Florida
17 Senate and we have three members of the
18 Florida -- I mean, excuse me, of Congress in
19 Polk County, and I would encourage you not to
20 dilute that representation, because we are
21 large and diverse. And I would encourage you
22 to keep the Winter Haven area, the Lakeland
23 area and perhaps the northeast area that has
24 emerged as a population center as distinct
25 areas, and then the northwest side of the

1 county and the south side of our county are
2 rural and agricultural, and I would encourage
3 you not to dilute those by including them in
4 other population centers.

5 Okay. I would encourage you -- as you
6 well know, during this last recession, the ag
7 community has kind of held the state of Florida
8 together. We have provided jobs, we have
9 provided economic activity, and I would
10 encourage you very much not to dilute our
11 influence in the State Legislature and in the
12 United States Congress. Thank you very much.

13 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Mr. Story.

14 Carl Strang is next, and then following
15 Mr. Strang is Andy, I think it is Crossfield,
16 and I apologize if I mispronounce that, and
17 then Rex Blenz.

18 Mr. Strang, thank you very much for coming
19 today. You are recognized.

20 MR. STRANG: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and
21 thank you and your colleagues for your patience
22 and your good humor in tolerating all of this.

23 SENATOR GAETZ: That is why we get paid
24 the big bucks.

25 MR. STRANG: The reason I am here is that

1 if I let you all perpetuate or carry on the
2 present ridiculous, egregious districting that
3 we've got now, then I would kick myself for
4 another ten years if I didn't at least stand up
5 here today.

6 I am really impressed by the great number
7 of people who are here today. I think it is
8 wonderful that this many people care about
9 government. It also scares me a little bit
10 that there are that many people who are very
11 unhappy with the ruling class.

12 I urge you mainly to produce a districting
13 map that is compact and that is fair and
14 balanced and that does not take into account
15 ethnicity or race or any other consideration.
16 We want to comply with the Civil Rights Act
17 of -- the Voters Rights Act of 1965, but be
18 fair.

19 I want to urge you to rise above your own
20 personal interest, rise above the interest of
21 political parties, rise above the rights of the
22 claims of the incumbents and give us a product
23 that is -- that is fair and equitable and
24 passes. The state of Iowa, I understand, has
25 done a wonderful job in their redistricting

1 efforts, and if Iowa can do it, then Florida
2 can do it.

3 SENATOR GAETZ: And they grow good corn
4 there, too.

5 MR. STRANG: That's right.

6 And, in closing, I would like to echo and
7 parrot what Lori Edwards says: Please be
8 mindful of the boundaries of existing political
9 bodies here, because what -- the status quo or
10 districting without regard to existing
11 political boundaries certainly confounds and
12 requires Herculean work by the elections
13 supervisors, but it makes things -- it confuses
14 the voters in an awful lot of cases, and I urge
15 you please to keep that in mind. And here
16 endeth the lesson, thank you.

17 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much. I
18 wish all epistles -- all epistle lessons were
19 that good.

20 And next -- is it Andy Crossfield? Did I
21 get that right, sir? Crossfield. And then Rex
22 Blenz and then Noah Bolin.

23 Mr. Crossfield, thank you for coming.

24 MR. CROSSFIELD: Thank you for coming. I
25 really appreciate the great turnout from the

1 elected officials in Tallahassee.

2 I am Andy Crossfield, I am the President
3 of the Lakeland Democratic Club, and I would
4 like to take issue a little bit with the
5 gentleman from Citrus Mutual. We do not have
6 good representation here in Polk County. There
7 are more registered Democrats here in Polk
8 County than Republicans, yet we have no
9 Democratic representation at all, have not for
10 years. Well, she is an elected official, but
11 not in Tallahassee, pardon me, from you guys
12 who make the laws up there.

13 My point though would be especially to
14 that, because you have seen how many people are
15 here?

16 SENATOR GAETZ: Could we have order?
17 Let's listen to Mr. Crossfield. He has
18 something he would like to say. Let's listen
19 to him.

20 MR. CROSSFIELD: You see how many people
21 are here? I hope that the rest of the meetings
22 that you have around the state are as well
23 attended, because this is a very important
24 issue. And the reason it is important -- and
25 let me illustrate how important this is,

1 because there are still more Democrats
2 registered in the state of Florida than
3 Republicans, and yet Democrats only make up
4 41 percent of the state houses, the House and
5 the Senate, and the all-important Chairs of
6 committees, Democrats are only five percent.
7 Now, this is wrong. We have to have more
8 representation. We have to have more
9 representation by party, we have to have more
10 equality in representation by race and we have
11 to have more representation in policy, because
12 there are people who live on the coast that
13 have separate understandings and issues than
14 the people who live in the center of the state,
15 as is to the insurance companies -- is it
16 Citizens Mutual or Citizens what -- there is no
17 reason that the people in the center of the
18 state should subsidize their insurance policies
19 to the people who live on the coast. We are
20 talking about -- we are talking about
21 representation.

22 SENATOR GAETZ: Andy, Andy, Andy, we would
23 love to hear your views about insurance, but
24 let's keep it to redistricting right now.

25 MR. CROSSFIELD: It all boils down to

1 representation. And if this is a fair and
2 transparent process, then we will all -- I hope
3 that everyone here recognizes how important
4 this is, and I will count this a success if the
5 results from the Legislature mirror the results
6 of the people who live in the state.

7 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
8 Mr. Crossfield. We appreciate it.

9 And next is Rex Blenz, and following Mr.
10 Blenz is Noah Bolin and then Wayne Guest.

11 Mr. Blenz, thank you for taking time to
12 come here today. You are recognized, sir.

13 MR. BIENZ: It is Bienz, B-i-e-n-z.

14 SENATOR GAETZ: Bienz, yes, sir.

15 MR. BIENZ: You got the L in there.

16 First let's forget about politics. I
17 would like to address the subject of the
18 census. The census identifies populations by
19 population -- by census blocks, which you can
20 use then to count the people. But it also
21 identifies living units. Living units may or
22 may not have people in them. You need to count
23 those. You are working for ten years ahead.
24 Those living units, which now say vacant,
25 reposessed, for sale, will have people in

1 them. They need to be counted or at least
2 considered when you draw your lines, because
3 those are people of the future that will be
4 there for the ten years that we are talking
5 about.

6 I tried to follow the three Bs of public
7 speaking: Be brief, be sincere, be seated.
8 Thank you.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you. Thank you,
10 Mr. Bienz.

11 Noah Bolin. Mr. Bolin, and then Wayne
12 Guest with the Ft. Meade Historical Society,
13 and then Carol Ann Sargeant.

14 Mr. Bolin, it says here you represent the
15 redneck party.

16 MR. BOLIN: Yes, sir, that is correct.

17 SENATOR GAETZ: Let's see your neck. You
18 are recognized. Thank you for being here.

19 MR. BOLIN: Okay. Thank you very much.

20 First of all, I would like to take a
21 little time to remind the Legislature of one of
22 its most important duties. That is constituent
23 service. That means serving your electorate,
24 not the other way around. Asking us to draw
25 the lines and to do your jobs is a slap in the

1 face to Florida voters. I would like to ask
2 the Legislature, rhetorically, of course, why
3 is it that you ask us to do your jobs and to
4 hear our voices now when you have been
5 reluctant to do so in the past such as the cry
6 of teachers and students when you passed the
7 merit-pay bill.

8 Furthermore, I ask the Legislature to step
9 up to the plate, provide us with sample maps,
10 maps, I would like to add, that elaborate -- or
11 maps, I would like to add, that are fair to the
12 people of Florida, and to stop using taxpayer
13 money to fight the will of the people for your
14 own interests, and to move the process forward
15 in a timely manner as it should. Thank you.

16 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Mr. Bolin.

17 Wayne Guest with the Ft. Meade Historical
18 Society, then Carol Ann Sargeant and then
19 Concepcion Scharan, I think, I'm sorry if I
20 mispronounced the last name.

21 Mr. Guest, thank you for coming, and we
22 are grateful for your testimony today.

23 MR. GUEST: Thank you, Senator. I need
24 more than three minutes, because I cannot
25 introduce myself in three minutes.

1 SENATOR GAETZ: Well, you got three, so
2 take your best shot.

3 MR. GUEST: My best shot is on
4 redistricting is to look at the districts and
5 look at the communities and look at the county
6 lines, all right. If you look at the
7 population of Polk County, for example, we've
8 got how many people now, approaching 600,000.
9 In this county, we've got 70,000 vets. If you
10 look at that population alone in this county,
11 we have a large group that's related to the
12 military, which our closest place is MacDill
13 Air Force Base. But if you look at the
14 districts and the way they should be drawn, and
15 the comments have been made earlier that if you
16 live in Ft. Myers, you got to go slap to the
17 east coast to see your Representative. If you
18 look at some areas of this county where it goes
19 from -- the state where it goes to Orlando to
20 Jacksonville, if you look at Polk County again,
21 how big this county is and the population and
22 the way we should be served by the folks we
23 send to Tallahassee, that is not happening,
24 period.

25 All I ask for is, number one, we have Fair

1 Districts. Those districts serve the
2 communities and the cities, and if you look at
3 Lakeland, Winter Haven, Haines City area
4 alone -- I am not going south in Polk County
5 where the agriculture is, because I was born
6 there. My grandfather was born down there in
7 1885, so I've got some roots here, I know
8 something about it.

9 What I see happening now at these hearings
10 and the way it is going, and I will sum up by
11 this, come next year, late spring, we are going
12 to be the same way in Tallahassee that we are
13 in Washington, DC, right now, very
14 dysfunctional. Look what's happened to our
15 national debt, what we're trying to do there,
16 and all of a sudden, we are going to
17 Tallahassee next spring, and redistricting is
18 going to be the same way because you won't do
19 it fair, and, therefore, I am going to send
20 money to somebody to take it to court to make
21 sure it is fair. It's got to be fair so that
22 we, the people -- if you notice my shirt with
23 the American flag on it, it says "United we
24 stand," I mean that. I have been shot at in a
25 foxhole more than once, and I believe we've got

1 to be together to do it, and right now we are
2 not. And if y'all do the redistricting wrong,
3 look at my shirt, we will not be united. Thank
4 you for your time.

5 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you for your
6 service. Thank you for service to our country,
7 Mr. Guest.

8 Next, Carol Ann Sargeant, and then
9 Concepcion, and I apologize to -- to her for
10 mispronouncing her last name. I think it is
11 Scharan or Shawn.

12 Ms. Sargeant, thank you for coming today.

13 MS. SARGEANT: Thank you. I just briefly
14 would like to say please -- everyone else has
15 said it -- be fair, be fast, let's not wait
16 around on this.

17 I would love to see the lawsuit dropped.
18 I think it is ridiculous when the people have
19 voted one way for the state to -- people in the
20 state to try to change that. I think the
21 people have spoken, and people need to listen
22 to what has been said.

23 I was born in this county and have lived
24 on the west side of the county growing up and
25 back here now, but in the meantime, I spent 35

1 years on the east side of the county. I have
2 also been involved in many political campaigns
3 and some independent forums for all candidates,
4 and it has been so frustrating when you see
5 people, I mean, all the way to the east coast,
6 all the way to the west coast. Again, it is
7 not fair to the people who are campaigning to
8 have such drawn-out districts, it is not fair
9 to the people who are being represented who
10 cannot contact easily their Representative on
11 particular issues if they want to go see them.

12 Again, I would urge all of you, it's been
13 urged before, to not go with your own little
14 agendas, but to look at what the people of the
15 state are asking you to do, to be fair, to be
16 contiguous and to do it soon. Thank you.

17 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
18 ma'am. Very helpful testimony.

19 And now I am going to make my apologies.
20 Concepcion, will you help me with your last
21 name, ma'am? I feel so badly that I can't read
22 it. It is my eyes.

23 MS. SCHARAR: It is a German name, and I
24 am from Cuba, so my pronunciation is Scharar.

25 SENATOR GAETZ: Scharar?

1 MS. SCHARAR: Yes, sir.

2 SENATOR GAETZ: Well, you are recognized,
3 and thank you very much for staying with us
4 during this hearing. We're delighted to hear
5 what you have to say.

6 MS. SCHARAR: Well, I really don't have
7 that much to say about the subject, but I do
8 have -- I do want to say, you know, I come from
9 Cuba, I was born in Cuba, I am an American
10 citizen, and I do not expect you or anybody
11 else to give me any special areas or any
12 special anything. All I want to do is to be a
13 citizen and to vote as a citizen of the United
14 States for people that are going to represent
15 them, represent me, who don't necessarily have
16 to be from Cuba, you know, because if they have
17 the same values and the same beliefs that I
18 have, that is all that I need. So when people
19 talk about all these civil rights and all those
20 things, I don't know what they are talking
21 about. As long as I have my right to vote, and
22 I have -- and I have -- I have always been
23 treated fairly in this country, and I don't --
24 I don't think you should have any special
25 districts going on race or national origin or

1 anything like that. Thank you.

2 And, by the way, to Andy, you know, who
3 was complaining that enough Democrats are in
4 the House and the Senate, maybe the Democrats
5 in this state are voting Republican.

6 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much for
7 your testimony.

8 We have reached the place in our hearing
9 where everyone who has signed up to speak has
10 had the opportunity to speak. Is there anyone
11 who would like to speak who's not -- who did
12 not sign up, but now that you have heard
13 others, you would like an opportunity to speak?
14 This is not an opportunity for second chances
15 if you have already spoken.

16 Would a member of the Sergeant's office or
17 the Reapportionment Committee give this young
18 lady a card, please? Please come forward,
19 ma'am. You can fill the card out later. We
20 just want to know who you are. Thank you for
21 sitting through the hearing and thank you for
22 taking time to come with us today and talk
23 about this issue.

24 MS. BAILEY: Thank you, Senator. I would
25 like to say that I, too, am from Polk County,

1 and I would like to see a district that
2 reflects all the people in the county.

3 I am Doris Moore Bailey. I am the Chair
4 of the National Congress of Black Women, so I
5 speak for this organization. We just started
6 in February with more than 110 plus members,
7 and so today I stand because we will work with
8 the coalition to make sure the lines are decent
9 and the lines will represent all of us.

10 Civil rights is important to us, and I
11 think each of you know that as well it's
12 important to all of us, and so we can't
13 disregard that, as was stated before, because
14 we have had people to die for their rights.

15 So we appreciate you being here today,
16 thank each of you for listening, and God speed
17 to do the right thing.

18 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, ma'am. Thank
19 you.

20 Is there anyone else who would like to
21 speak who hasn't had the opportunity? Ma'am,
22 would you come forward, and would a member of
23 our staff please give this lady a card so that
24 she may fill it out? And would you identify
25 yourself, please, ma'am, for the Committee?

1 MS. STANLEY: I'm Zita Stanley, and I
2 represent the computer illiterate.

3 SENATOR GAETZ: A large -- a large and
4 influential constituency.

5 MS. STANLEY: I can send an e-mail, I can
6 check out a book from the library, but that is
7 it. But it seems to me that there should be
8 computer programs that could generate on the
9 basis of county lines and population, and
10 relieve you of the responsibility of
11 accusations of slander, you know, of being
12 unfair. And I was just wondering if you have
13 started with a computer program.

14 SENATOR GAETZ: Well, since you are the
15 last speaker -- is there anybody else who
16 wanted to speak? That might be a good place
17 for answers to some of the questions that have
18 been raised. The fact is that there are
19 computer programs, and they -- a member of our
20 staff -- believe me, I am pretty techno-stupid,
21 and they got me in 15 minutes to a place where
22 I could use the computer program to do exactly
23 what you are talking about. But our
24 Constitution says that at the end of the day
25 our elected representatives have to draw the

1 maps, but they can use computer programs.
2 Those programs are available, and if a member
3 of our staff would please talk with this lady
4 and show her -- do the 15 minutes if you have
5 the time, and you, too, can draw those maps
6 using the very ingredients you just described.

7 MS. STANLEY: Thank you.

8 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you.

9 Let's go now to the part of our hearing
10 where we are able to have some feedback on some
11 of the questions or questions of fact that have
12 been raised, and let me first turn to any
13 members of the House of Representatives who are
14 with us today, any comments that you might wish
15 to make, any articulation of issues, any
16 proposals you might wish to make to this group.
17 Yes, sir, Representative Nehr.

18 REPRESENTATIVE NEHR: Thank you,
19 Mr. Chairman, and thank everybody for being
20 here today. I know there's lots of things you
21 could have been doing.

22 There have been some comments during the
23 meeting on questions about other states already
24 completing their redistricting plans, and the
25 question was why maybe -- why hasn't Florida

1 done the same thing, and I would like to
2 address those comments, if I could.

3 You are right, a handful of states have
4 already completed their redistricting, because
5 some of them have had odd-year elections, and
6 we have even-year elections, and that makes a
7 big difference. Or they also have very early
8 primaries, earlier than us, and they are
9 required, not because of expedient -- not
10 because they wanted to, just because they had
11 to do it out of necessity. And sometimes, I
12 just want to explain, that it wasn't always the
13 most open and transparent thing that was done.
14 States like Illinois, for example, where the
15 majority party went into a back room for a
16 couple of days, came out with some maps and
17 said, "Here's the maps, take them or leave
18 them," that was not very transparent at all,
19 did not allow any public input at all. You
20 know, Florida has one of the most public and
21 transparent process for redistricting in the
22 entire United States.

23 A VOICE: (Inaudible).

24 SENATOR GAETZ: Ma'am, now, we allowed you
25 to speak. Now, you have asked for feedback,

1 you have asked for questions to be answered.
2 We would appreciate your kindness in showing
3 the same respect the Committee showed to you.
4 Ma'am, ma'am, we would like to ask you to be
5 quiet for a moment, let the Representative
6 speak. We will let Representatives of both
7 parties speak, and then we will conclude our
8 hearing.

9 Representative Nehr, you are recognized.

10 REPRESENTATIVE NEHR: Thank you. The
11 Committee meeting has decided that we will have
12 what is called a listening tour to make sure
13 that everybody has an opportunity to let us
14 know how they feel that the districts should be
15 drawn. We are going to start our committee
16 meetings the first week in September, and as
17 one of the Chairmen of the Senate Redistricting
18 Committee, I can assure you that we will try to
19 get the maps done as quickly as possible to
20 give everybody an opportunity, not only the
21 Legislators, but also the public, to comment on
22 that, and we will also try to get the maps done
23 as quickly as possible so that we can vote on
24 them as soon as possible in the Legislature,
25 once it starts.

1 As it has been said before, and I just
2 want to reiterate, our Constitution does not
3 allow us to vote or act on the maps before
4 2012, and that is what we will do as soon as
5 possible. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Representative
7 Nehr.

8 Representative Legg, you are recognized.

9 REPRESENTATIVE LEGG: Thank you, Senator,
10 Mr. Chairman. First I just want to say thank
11 you for letting us start this process by
12 listening.

13 I come from west Pasco, and to be very up
14 front, I know very little about the
15 demographics of Polk County, you know, and I
16 have learned a lot today. I am hearing
17 especially individuals about how the county is
18 unique and from the north and the east and
19 west, how there's different populations, you
20 know.

21 I want to say thank you for letting us
22 start by listening first, listening, because I
23 feel as someone from west Pasco, I need to
24 listen to the people here in Polk County before
25 I produce or even look at anything on a map,

1 you know, before this Committee even started,
2 listening to people from Frostproof and Lake
3 Wales about how their community is a little bit
4 different than folks maybe from Bartow or from
5 Winter Haven or Auburndale. I greatly
6 appreciate the process of not forcing us to
7 come with a preconceived -- some hick from west
8 Pasco writing a map for someone in Polk County
9 without even listening to anyone here first. I
10 enjoy listening to the folks, and the first
11 time I ever heard that Polk County has some
12 unique communities that I've never heard of
13 before, and as I am learning this from this
14 community here, when I go back to Tallahassee
15 and as I start to put pen to paper, I have
16 learned a lot about how this community is
17 different and how they have some unique
18 representation that I didn't know before here
19 today. So thank you for letting us listen to
20 folks before we come with some preconceived
21 ideas.

22 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Representative
23 Legg.

24 Other comments from members of the House
25 of Representatives?

1 Comments from members of the Senate who
2 are here? Senator Storms.

3 SENATOR STORMS: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and
4 can I say thank you for your unflappability.
5 You are pretty unflappable and unfeelingly
6 polite, and I appreciate that about you.

7 I would just like to say that even this
8 very morning, I took the opportunity to work on
9 drawing the maps, and I -- and I listened to
10 some of the comments that folks have made, and
11 it seems that some -- maybe because you are not
12 familiar with the process, that you are kind of
13 cavalier about "Just go draw the maps, how hard
14 is it and be fair about it." Let me just tell
15 you, it is very difficult. The reason why we
16 are asking you to go draw the map, at least
17 from Senator Storm's perspective, the reason
18 why I am asking you to go draw the map is so
19 that you will know the difficulty of the job
20 that you have tasked us to do.

21 It isn't as easy as you say. For
22 instance, I was -- just, for instance, right.
23 So if you draw a congressional district, it has
24 to be -- we are trying to get it within plus or
25 minus one, one person, one person, one vote.

1 So in order to do that, you can't just pick up
2 a county. I mean, this morning when I was
3 doing it, you can't point at the county and put
4 that into District 1, point at the next county,
5 put it into District 2, point at the next
6 county, because next thing you know, you have
7 6,000 extra people in that district. So now I
8 got to lose 6,000 extra people. Well, how do I
9 do that? Now I've got to go down, I can't go
10 down to the county, I've got to change the
11 program and go down to what are called the
12 VTDs. Those are the voter tabulation
13 districts. They are bigger than census blocks.
14 So then I might be able to lose 600 people from
15 my VTD. So I pick up two of them, but wait a
16 minute, it took me out of a city, it took out
17 part of a road of a city. So now we don't want
18 to do that, because you want to keep your
19 cities together, isn't that right? Isn't that
20 what you have asked? And you want it to be
21 compact. So now I go back and I say, okay,
22 well, now, let me go down by census block. I
23 will leave that VTD alone, because census block
24 is drilling down even smaller, so I am going to
25 try and put in the census block into it, and

1 now that is what I am trying to do. And then I
2 find out that now that I am 200 short. Now
3 I've got to add people back in.

4 When I finish this whole thing with this
5 district, now I -- now since I have been in
6 this small, little -- I have magnified it,
7 right? Now I have to come back and take the
8 zoom view and see what the thing looks like.
9 Because why? You are going to look at it and
10 say it is not compact, because I've had to draw
11 it according to how the people are, right, to
12 get the population. Now I look at it, and I go
13 well, it's got this funky little squiggly thing
14 over here. How do I square it up? And so I
15 say to my staff, "Let's square that up, let's
16 lose this little squiggly thing, get that out
17 and make it square," and now I have to go back.

18 That doesn't even include the things that
19 you are asking me to do about minority
20 population districts. As I understand, 5 and
21 6, the primary consideration is you want
22 compactness and communities of interest. Is
23 that about the size of it, or have I
24 misunderstood what you have asked? Is that
25 about the size of it? Just nod your heads or

1 shake them no. Okay. So that means that I am
2 not starting with minority access issues. I
3 didn't look at race, I didn't look at it, I
4 just looked at pure population. And in order
5 to do this with my state, I said, okay, what do
6 I do, do I start in the middle, pick a county
7 in the middle and go out that way with my
8 districts? Or is it better to swap out, do one
9 from the top of the state, one from the bottom,
10 one from the top of the state, one from the
11 bottom? That way I will meet in the middle,
12 and the likelihood is less that I will have a
13 district with 32 people in it and I've got to
14 change the whole thing all over again. Do you
15 understand?

16 I am telling you all this only to say that
17 I am not coming here, you know, I am not -- I
18 am working hard to do the thing that you have
19 asked me to do. Nobody here is working with
20 me. I am not working on some secret plan to
21 overthrow the government. I haven't even
22 looked at my own district. I have started in
23 another part of the state, and it -- let the
24 chips fall where they may. But as I understand
25 it, what you are about to do is put yourself in

1 contravention to people in -- particularly in
2 the minority communities who are very concerned
3 about not just whether they have a voting
4 right, not just whether or not they can vote
5 the person that they choose to, but whether or
6 not it matters if they have enough Senators
7 that look like them, that speak like them. And
8 in my district, I represent Beesville.
9 Beesville was settled by emancipated slaves
10 when Lincoln signed the Emancipation
11 Proclamation. It matters to them. If they
12 have -- if they can point to their sons and
13 say, "There is Senator Gary Siplin, and he is a
14 black man, and you can be a Senator, too, he
15 looks like you," and if that does not matter to
16 you, I am just here to tell you that people
17 that I represent, it does matter to some of
18 them. But I am doing what the voters asked me
19 in 5 and 6, and I just -- you may not trust me,
20 you may not vote for me for dog catcher, I
21 don't know. But I will just tell you, I am
22 here to say to you I am working as hard as I
23 can to do what you asked me to do, and I am not
24 trying to, you know, do anything bad here. I
25 am just trying to do my job.

1 SENATOR GAETZ: We have made a list --
2 Speaker Designate Weatherford has made a list
3 of the other comments that were made so that we
4 can at least provide some factual information.
5 Sometimes things get put in the bloodstream.
6 And I come from a little town called Niceville,
7 Florida. It really is. We've got Doris' Cafe
8 in Niceville, and if you start a rumor in
9 Doris' Cafe, if you say something is true at
10 breakfast time, by the end of the day,
11 everybody in Niceville will swear to God that
12 it is true, even if we have said that we are
13 going to move Niceville out in the middle of
14 the Gulf of Mexico. So sometimes things get
15 put in the bloodstream, somebody gets an e-mail
16 that says, "Go to the hearing and say these
17 things," sometimes it is true, but sometimes it
18 is not. But, Mr. Speaker, you are recognized
19 to provide any concluding comments.

20 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
21 very much, Mr. Chairman. I just -- I want to
22 echo a little bit of what's been said, which is
23 the value of the feedback we've gotten today.
24 I also am another person who did not have a
25 great understanding of the difference of the

1 dynamics of Polk County, and I think today we
2 have learned that, and you have a beautiful
3 county here, it is a wonderful place and I've
4 got some close friends here and it has been a
5 real pleasure to learn more about it.

6 Mr. Chairman, I do want to take just a
7 moment to walk through a few things and clear
8 up a few inconsistencies that have come up
9 throughout this process.

10 And I also want to say there may be people
11 here who had a question that they didn't ask,
12 maybe you were too shy and you didn't want to
13 speak, or maybe a question has come up since
14 the hearing has gotten towards the close. If
15 you have a question that you have not had an
16 opportunity to ask, please, on your way out,
17 find a staff person, find me, find someone who
18 is here, and we will try to answer that for
19 you. You can also e-mail us. There's a
20 tremendous amount of ways to get in touch with
21 us. As individuals and our Committee staff, we
22 want to make sure that is available to you.

23 So, first of all, I want to thank our
24 Supervisor of Elections, Ms. Edwards, thank you
25 for being here. You had some tremendous input.

1 Really, it was very helpful. Thank you.

2 We are extremely sensitive to the
3 challenge that you talked about in regard to
4 the timeline. We are extremely sensitive to
5 that. One thing I would point out, and I will
6 make sure our staff get with you as well so you
7 can talk very directly with them, but one thing
8 is that on-line, when they talk about the dates
9 of when we have to pass maps, those are
10 deadlines, but not necessarily our goals.
11 Obviously we want to pass them in a very
12 meaningful time frame so that we do make sure
13 that we are not putting ourselves in a
14 situation where we are past qualifying and
15 putting our Supervisors of Elections in a
16 position where you can't do your job. We want
17 you to look good, we want to give you the
18 resources and the ability to do your job, and
19 everyone on this Committee is focused on doing
20 that. And so thank you for bringing that issue
21 up, it is a real issue, we are sensitive to it,
22 we are doing everything we can to make sure
23 that does not happen.

24 Also, in regard to the timeline in
25 general, I thought -- Representative Nehr, you

1 touched on it very briefly, but there are other
2 states who have done this faster than we have,
3 but the reason they have done it faster and
4 voted faster is because they didn't take the
5 time to listen to the people. They didn't take
6 the time to hear from the citizens of their
7 state about what they thought in regard to how
8 the maps should look.

9 As it was stated at the very beginning
10 when I gave my opening comments, maps cannot be
11 voted on, two of the three maps, the
12 legislative maps, cannot be voted on until
13 January of 2012, and that is with us moving
14 session up quickly. But, again, very important
15 for everyone to understand, we are not trying
16 to drag this out, we are not trying to make
17 this a long process. But what we are trying to
18 do is take the summer to go around the state.
19 We have a diverse state, it is a geographically
20 unique state, and we are trying to travel the
21 state all the way from starting in Pensacola,
22 which we were there about a month and a half
23 ago, finishing in the Keys, we are going to hit
24 every pocket to hear from citizens who have
25 different ideas, different views, and want an

1 opportunity to explain to us the dynamics of
2 their county just like you have done for us
3 today.

4 There's been a lot of discussion about the
5 chicken versus the egg debate about the maps,
6 right? Should the chicken come first or should
7 the egg come first or vice-versa? Well, I want
8 to give everyone a little bit of insight on
9 that.

10 The first is I believe that it is always
11 better to give the citizens of Florida the
12 opportunity to start the conversation, as
13 opposed to politicians. We start a lot of
14 conversations first and we ask you to comment
15 later, if at all, but this is one rare instance
16 where we are asking you to start it for us.
17 And I think that is a noble cause, and we are
18 going to hold firm to that. But, also, we have
19 some people who agree with us and who are some
20 advocates, and in 2009, one of the principal
21 authors of Amendments 5 and 6, which every
22 person up here has sworn to uphold and defend,
23 a gentleman by the name of John Mills, a former
24 Speaker of the House, wrote that the intent of
25 the new redistricting standards is for the

1 public to have the opportunity to comment
2 before and after the Legislature draws initial
3 maps. That is coming from one of the -- one of
4 the directors and originators of Amendments 5
5 and 6. In 2010, the Chairperson for
6 Floridafairdistricts.org, a Ms. Ellen Freidin,
7 told a Joint Legislative Committee that it
8 would be impossible, ladies and gentlemen,
9 impossible to draw compliant or appropriate
10 maps until after the Legislature had first
11 heard from the public. Ladies and gentlemen,
12 these are the very people who created
13 Amendments 5 and 6, which 63 percent of my
14 county and our state voted for, and they agree
15 with us in regard to listening to you first.

16 There was a question, a very good
17 question, about the census, and I want to be
18 very clear about this. The census is taken,
19 obviously, every ten years, and the way it
20 works is every ten years, or this year -- it
21 was in 2010, it was April 2nd -- if you resided
22 in Florida on April 2nd, you were counted. It
23 didn't matter if you were legal, illegal,
24 hanging out for three or four months, if you
25 lived here on April the 2nd, you were counted.

1 That is the way -- that is a federal law about
2 how census is done. The states don't have
3 autonomy when they do that. So that is the way
4 it works. Someone brought up the case about if
5 there's a vacant home, can we count vacant
6 homes, because people will be living there one
7 day. I'm sorry, sir, but we can't do that.
8 Federal law does not allow us to do that. We
9 only count living people who are here on the
10 day of April the 2nd. So that is very -- I
11 wanted to make sure I clear that up.

12 There's been some comments about
13 litigation and lawsuits, and all I am going to
14 say about that is this: There's always
15 litigation, there's always lawsuits. Our job,
16 and, Mr. Chairman, I believe our creed as this
17 Committee is not to pay attention to litigation
18 or lawsuits, but to make sure that we uphold
19 the law. And every single person on this
20 Committee raises their right hand every two
21 years to promise to protect and to defend the
22 Constitution of the United States and of the
23 State of Florida. Amendments 5 and 6 are on
24 the Constitution of the State of Florida. We
25 will protect them, we will continue to serve

1 them and we will make sure that as they are the
2 law, we will treat them like the law and we
3 will follow them. And I want to be very clear
4 about that, Mr. Chairman as well.

5 Lastly, I want to say there's always going
6 to be people who say that the process isn't
7 open enough, that it is not transparent enough.
8 Well, ladies and gentlemen, 26 public hearings
9 at a minimum, e-mail participation, Facebook
10 participation, which we are getting a
11 tremendous amount of feedback on, maps that
12 have already been proposed to the Legislature,
13 I think we have had three or four times the
14 amount of maps proposed to the Legislature just
15 this session already, more than we had ten
16 years ago in its entirety, we are getting
17 participation, we are getting people giving us
18 feedback, and the back-end product that we come
19 up with is going to be better because of that.
20 At any point in time, any member of this
21 Committee, any member of the Legislature can
22 propose a map. There is nothing or no one
23 stopping them from doing that. And if any
24 member of this Committee wants to do that, they
25 have the ability to do so, and any member of

1 our Legislature, Republican and Democrat, can
2 do so as well.

3 But I just want to thank you for giving us
4 the opportunity to be here to listen to you, to
5 listen to your story, and Mr. Chairman, thank
6 you for running a great hearing. I think
7 everyone on this Committee knows more about
8 central Florida, having been a part of it. So
9 thank you very much.

10 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

11 One final comment, and that is there was a
12 gentleman who spoke very eloquently about the
13 fact that 42 percent -- I think he said
14 42 percent of the population were Republicans,
15 a larger percentage were Democrats. I would
16 just go on and add, the fastest-growing group
17 of voters in Florida have no party affiliation
18 or classify themselves as Independents. So
19 then that eloquent gentlemen, I think he was
20 Chairman of the Democratic party, said -- well,
21 was he not? Okay, he identified himself as an
22 officer with the Democratic party. Perhaps he
23 misidentified himself. In any case, he was
24 eloquent. And what he said was -- what he said
25 was that he wouldn't be satisfied until the

1 same proportion of Representatives and Senators
2 were Democrats as the proportion of the
3 population.

4 Let me just offer a fact for your
5 consideration. There are 40 Senate districts,
6 40 Senate districts, 28 of them are held by
7 Republicans. So how in the world could that
8 have happened? Well, Barack Obama in 2008
9 carried 20 Senate districts. He carried eight
10 districts that elected Republican Senators.
11 Now, you can look at that through the looking
12 glass either way. You can say maybe it was
13 that President Obama had a better, more
14 persuasive campaign, maybe he messaged better,
15 because he was able to get eight districts that
16 otherwise elect Republican Senators to vote for
17 him for President. Or you could look at it the
18 other way, you could say there are eight
19 districts where a majority of the people voted
20 for Barack Obama, but then they crossed party
21 lines and voted for Republican Senators. Here
22 is the message that I get out of it, and that
23 is this: We will never be able to draw a map
24 that forces Republicans to vote for Republicans
25 and Democrats to vote for Democrats. And God

1 knows we will never be able to tell the
2 Independents what to do.

3 So I think -- I think that we are back to
4 the secret ballot. There are Democrats who
5 will vote for Republicans, there are
6 Republicans who will vote for Democrats,
7 because we vote often for the person and not
8 the party, and that is the way it ought to be.
9 So I don't know that we will be able to satisfy
10 that eloquent gentleman's template, but we will
11 satisfy the requirement that we come here, we
12 listen to your views. And this is not your
13 last chance to participate in this process.
14 This is only one of your early chances. As the
15 Speaker Designate indicated, you can continue
16 to comment on-line, you can continue to contact
17 your Representative or Senator, and if you
18 don't know who that is, Supervisor of Elections
19 is here, and she can sure tell you.

20 And the other thing is that when there are
21 maps proposed, and there are already 12
22 proposed, some of them are in the back, when
23 there are maps proposed, you can see them, you
24 can evaluate them and you can offer your
25 comments. And as the Speaker Designate

1 indicated, when we get to Tallahassee in
2 September, preparing to vote as soon as we
3 can -- and the first time we could vote would
4 be January by our Constitution -- you will have
5 the opportunity there as well to have input.
6 And, frankly, if I have my way, we will be able
7 to get as much public input as possible before
8 we cast any vote in -- even at the Committee
9 level. Every vote that is cast in any
10 Committee will be done publicly. It will be
11 done after there is an opportunity for people
12 to come forward and testify either by mail, by
13 e-mail, by phone call, by letter or in person.
14 And that is very different than having a group
15 of unelected people go in a back room and close
16 the door, that is what they do in courts, and
17 then come out and tell you what the results
18 are.

19 So we thank you for your time, for your
20 patriotism, for your concern, and
21 Representative Weatherford moves we rise.

22 (Whereupon, the proceedings were
23 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 140 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 10th day of November, 2011.

CLARA C. ROTRUCK

Notary Public

State of Florida at Large

Commission Expires:

November 13, 2014