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REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 17, 2011
10:00 A.M.
MIAMI DADE COLLEGE
MIAMI, 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: Ladies and gentlemen, if
3 you will please take your seats, we can begin
4 the hearing. We would ask members of the House
5 of Representatives, members of the Senate who
6 are here for the hearing to take their seats.
7 If you are in the audience, we would ask you to
8 take your seats as well.

9 Ladies and gentlemen, we will begin our
10 hearing with the Pledge of Allegiance led by
11 the former President of the Florida Senate,
12 President Gwen Margolis. This is her district,
13 and we are delighted to be here.

14 SENATOR MARGOLIS: I pledge allegiance to
15 the flag of the United States of America and to
16 the Republic for which it stands, one nation,
17 under God, indivisible, with liberty and
18 justice for all.

19 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you all very much
20 for being here this morning. The Joint
21 Senate/House Redistricting Hearing is called to
22 order.

23 My name is Don Gaetz. I am a member of
24 the Florida Senate, and I Chair the Senate
25 Reapportionment Committee, and we are pleased

1 to be joined this morning by the Speaker
2 Designate of the Florida House of
3 Representatives, Representative Will
4 Weatherford to my left, who will be chairing
5 this meeting with me, and Representative
6 Weatherford and I have co-chaired meetings
7 around the state, listening to voters' concerns
8 and questions and suggestions as we go forward
9 in the redistricting process.

10 We are pleased to be joined by a number of
11 members of the House Redistricting Committee
12 and the Senate Reapportionment Committee who
13 have come here to Miami-Dade to hear your
14 views, and we would like to have them introduce
15 themselves very briefly this morning.

16 We would like to begin with Representative
17 Carlos Lopez-Cantera, who will be officially
18 welcoming us to Miami-Dade County.

19 Representative?

20 REPRESENTATIVE LOPEZ-CANTERA: Thank you,
21 Mr. Chairman.

22 Mr. Chairman, members, it is so wonderful
23 to have you all here in Miami today to
24 experience our beautiful -- beautifully diverse
25 community and to hear from our community on

1 their positions and their desires as far as the
2 redistricting process goes.

3 So we know that our community will be very
4 hospitable to you and understand that you have
5 a meeting later this afternoon and we know that
6 that meeting will hopefully go well, and so
7 welcome and thank you for being here today, all
8 of you, thank you.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Representative,
10 and if you would pass the microphone, we would
11 like to ask each member of the Senate and House
12 Committees who are here to introduce themselves
13 and indicate what part of the state they
14 represent so you know who you are talking to.

15 SENATOR BRAYNON: Senator Oscar Braynon,
16 and I represent the 33rd Senate District here
17 in Miami-Dade County, which is the north
18 central area of Miami-Dade County.

19 REPRESENTATIVE JULIEN: Good morning,
20 everyone. My name is John Patrick Julien,
21 representing House District 104, which
22 encompasses North Miami Beach, North Miami,
23 Miami Gardens, Opa-Locka, a large chunk of
24 unincorporated Miami-Dade County, the City of
25 Miami and a small sliver of the City of

1 Hialeah. Welcome to Miami.

2 REPRESENTATIVE ROGERS: Good morning, I am
3 Hazelle Rogers, State Representative,
4 representing District 94, which is part of
5 Broward County, and I boast that we are
6 approximately 1.8 million after the last
7 census, and a very diverse county.

8 Cities that I do represent: Lauderdale Hill,
9 Lauderdale Lakes, Margate, Oakland Park,
10 Plantation, Sunrise and the City of Oakland
11 Park. I thank you very much. Thanks for being
12 here.

13 REPRESENTATIVE LOGAN: Good morning,
14 everyone, and welcome. I am Ana Rivas Logan,
15 Representative, and I represent the western
16 part of Miami-Dade County, part of Sweetwater
17 around FIU, East Kendall, South Miami Heights,
18 Miami Heights and part of the Falls.

19 REPRESENTATIVE CLARKE-REED: Good morning,
20 my name is Betty Reed, State Representative. I
21 represent part -- the eastern part of Tampa and
22 parts of Hillsborough County. Thank you for
23 being here this morning.

24 REPRESENTATIVE BERNARD: Good morning,
25 State Representative Mack Bernard from West

1 Palm Beach, Florida, District 84.

2 REPRESENTATIVE FRESEN: Good morning, Erik
3 Fresen, State House District 111. In most of
4 these meetings, I've just said "from
5 Miami-Dade," but since we are in Miami, I will
6 tell you specifically where in Miami.

7 I represent the entireties or portions of
8 the City of Hialeah, Miami Springs, Virginia
9 Gardens, South Miami, City of Miami, Coral
10 Gables and West Miami. Happy to have you here.

11 SENATOR DIAZ DE LA PORTILLA: Miguel Diaz
12 de la Portilla, State Senator, District 36. I
13 represent the heart of the City of Miami, parts
14 of Coral Gables, Palmetto Bay, Cutler Bay,
15 Pinecrest and South Miami and a little sliver
16 of unincorporated Dade along 87th Avenue.
17 Welcome, pleasure to be here.

18 SENATOR NEGRON: Good morning, everyone,
19 Joe Negron, I represent Senate District 28,
20 which is northern Palm Beach County and the
21 Treasure Coast.

22 SENATOR SOBEL: Good morning, everybody.
23 I am Eleanor Sobel. I represent southern
24 Broward County, I represent coastal cities,
25 Senate District 31. I represent Hallendale

1 Beach, Hollywood, Dania Beach, and then I go
2 out west and represent many of the cities in
3 Broward County, southern Broward County. Nice
4 to see you here.

5 REPRESENTATIVE WATSON: Good morning, my
6 name is Barbara Watson. I am the
7 Representative for District 103, which
8 incorporates the southern part of Miramar, the
9 great City of Miami Gardens and the great city
10 of Opa-Locka. Welcome.

11 REPRESENTATIVE STAFFORD: Good morning, my
12 name is Cynthia Stafford, and I represent House
13 District 109 here in Miami-Dade County. That
14 encompasses Liberty City, Brownsville,
15 Allapattah, Overtown, Midtown, Upper East Side
16 and a portion of Miami Beach. Welcome, and
17 thank you for being here.

18 REPRESENTATIVE CLARKE-REED: Good morning,
19 I am State Representative Gwyndolen
20 Clarke-Reed, and I represent House District 92,
21 which is in Broward County, the northeast part
22 of Broward County, Deerfield Beach, Pompano
23 Beach, Oakland Park, Wilton Manors, Ft.
24 Lauderdale, a little bit of North Lauderdale
25 and a little bit of Tamarac. Welcome.

1 SENATOR FLORES: Good morning, I am State
2 Senator Anitere Flores. I represent Senate
3 District 38, which is west portions of Dade
4 County. So if you live 87th Avenue west to
5 Krome, chances are I am your State Senator.

6 REPRESENTATIVE PASSIDOMO: Good morning,
7 my name is Kathleen Passidomo, I am a
8 Representative from District 76, which is
9 Collier County. I represent the City of
10 Naples, the City of Marco Island, the City of
11 Everglades City and all the alligators that
12 didn't make it over to Miami.

13 REPRESENTATIVE BAXLEY: Hi, I am Dennis
14 Baxley. I serve Florida House District 24 in
15 Ocala, Marion County, but I am also a former
16 resident of Hollywood and a graduate of
17 Miami-Dade College.

18 REPRESENTATIVE PLAKON: Good morning, I am
19 Scott Plakon, Florida House District 37, Orange
20 and Seminole Counties.

21 REPRESENTATIVE STEINBERG: Good morning,
22 Richard Steinberg, State House District 106.
23 It is a half -- the northern half of Miami
24 Beach, Surfside, North Bay Village, Indian
25 Creek, Bal Harbor, Bay Harbor, Sunny Isles

1 Beach, Golden Beach, Aventura, a portion of
2 North Miami Beach, a portion of North Miami and
3 some unincorporated Dade County. Thank you for
4 being here.

5 REPRESENTATIVE TAYLOR: Good morning, my
6 name is Dwayne Taylor. I represent House
7 District 27, which is in Volusia County. I
8 want to thank you all for being here, and go
9 Dolphins.

10 REPRESENTATIVE SCHENCK: Rob Schenck.

11 REPRESENTATIVE WORKMAN: Ritch Workman,
12 House District 30, Brevard County.

13 REPRESENTATIVE GONZALEZ: Good morning,
14 Eddy Gonzalez, I represent District 102. That
15 is Hialeah, Hialeah Gardens, Miami Lakes, PSN
16 Country Club of Miami all the way out to
17 Broward, and a little piece of the City of
18 Miramar in Broward. Thank you for being here.

19 REPRESENTATIVE HORNER: Mike Horner, State
20 House District 79, Osceola County.

21 REPRESENTATIVE CRISAFULLI: Steve
22 Crisafulli, House District 32, Brevard and east
23 Orange County.

24 REPRESENTATIVE BRODEUR: Good morning,
25 Jason Brodeur, State House District 33, parts

1 of Orange, Seminole and Volusia Counties.

2 REPRESENTATIVE ARTILES: Good morning,
3 Frank Artiles, Representative, District 119,
4 West Kendall, Sweetwater, Redlands and
5 Homestead.

6 REPRESENTATIVE BILECA: Good morning,
7 State Representative Michael Bileca, District
8 117 as Miami, South Miami, Coral Gables,
9 Pinecrest, Palmetto Bay and a little piece of
10 Cutler Bay.

11 REPRESENTATIVE DIAZ: Jose Felix Diaz,
12 District 115. I have parts of Westchester,
13 Pinecrest, Palmetto Bay, Cutler Bay and East
14 Kendall.

15 REPRESENTATIVE TRUJILLO: Good morning,
16 State Representative Carlos Trujillo. I
17 represent District 116, which is west of the
18 Turnpike from Blount High School all the way
19 south into the Hammocks.

20 SENATOR SIPLIN: Buenos dias. My name is
21 Gary Siplin, State Senator, District 19,
22 Orlando, Florida.

23 REPRESENTATIVE GARCIA: Good morning,
24 bonjour, buenos dias. I am Representative Luis
25 Garcia, and I officially want to welcome you to

1 District 107. You are sitting in 107 right
2 now. So this is our home district right here.

3 It represents all the way from Allapattah
4 to Pinecrest, including parts of Overtown,
5 Little Havana, downtown Miami, parts of Miami
6 Beach, Fisher Island, the most expensive ZIP
7 code in the United States, Key Biscayne, parts
8 of Coral Gables, Cocoplum and Pinecrest.

9 SENATOR MARGOLIS: Good morning, my name
10 is Senator Gwen Margolis, and I represent the
11 east side of Dade County, generally east of
12 across the street from here. East starting at
13 the county line on the east side of Dade
14 County, going all the way down to Deering Bay
15 at southwest 144th Street, and it is a long,
16 skinny district, including all the beaches, Key
17 Biscayne and everything that Representative
18 Garcia represents. I am delighted to be here
19 and I am delighted to welcome you here.

20 REPRESENTATIVE FORD: I am Clay Ford from
21 northwest Florida, District 3, Pensacola.

22 SENATOR GAETZ: And my district -- I am a
23 Senator. My district is Senate District 4,
24 which runs from Pensacola to east of Panama
25 City.

1 So you see you have people who are your
2 friends and neighbors from right here in
3 Miami-Dade, and you have people as far away as
4 you can get and still be in Florida, and we're
5 all here to hear your views and your
6 suggestions.

7 We want to thank Miami-Dade College for
8 allowing us to use this wonderful facility.
9 Typically we ask that the members of the Senate
10 and House committees not be on risers or on a
11 stage, because we think that you ought to be
12 able to look us straight in the eye and that we
13 ought not to be on a different elevation than
14 you unless we are lower.

15 But, nonetheless, we appreciate this
16 wonderful facility. Thanks to all of you for
17 being here, especially members of the public
18 who have come to share their comments and
19 recommendations to help shape Congressional and
20 State Senate and State House Districts for the
21 next decade.

22 Today's hearing, like all of our 26
23 hearings, is being webcast statewide by the
24 Florida Channel over the Internet, and we
25 welcome all those who are joining us through

1 that medium this morning.

2 Our sole purpose today is to hear from the
3 public about how you believe that the legal
4 standards governing redistricting, the federal
5 legal standards, the U.S. Constitutional
6 standards, Amendments 5 and 6 and the relevant
7 court cases, how you believe all of those legal
8 standards governing redistricting should be
9 applied in your community.

10 You don't have to be a legal expert to
11 testify to that -- on those issues. You just
12 need to share what you believe is appropriate
13 for your community and your neighborhood, so
14 that you are ably represented in Washington and
15 Tallahassee fairly, equitably and sensibly.

16 Our procedures today are simple, but they
17 are important. It is important that you sign
18 in, because we would like to create an accurate
19 public record of all attendees and speakers.

20 And also you may opt to join our e-mail
21 list so that we can keep you informed about how
22 the redistricting process goes forward after
23 today.

24 And if you have not signed in, we hope
25 that you would raise your hand, and a member of

1 our staff, either the House or Senate staff,
2 would come to you with a card so that you could
3 sign in.

4 It is the same card you would use if you
5 wish to speak. So if you wish to speak and you
6 haven't signed in today, please raise your
7 hand, and if you are just here to watch and
8 observe your friends and neighbors and learn
9 more about the process, we would love to have
10 you on our e-mail list so that we can keep you
11 informed.

12 Before we begin, the Chair will recognize
13 the Speaker Designate, Representative
14 Weatherford, to explain how today's hearing
15 fits into the redistricting process.
16 Mr. Speaker.

17 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
18 very much, Mr. Chairman, and honored to be here
19 in Miami-Dade County today. I want to give you
20 a quick overview just about what we are here to
21 do and some of the processes involved, and also
22 a little bit of background on redistricting in
23 general.

24 Every ten years, the Legislature is
25 required by the Constitution to redistrict the

1 state based on increases and decreases and
2 movements in population within our state.
3 Because Florida has grown more than other
4 states, we have actually picked up two
5 Congressional seats.

6 So we will no longer have 25 Congressional
7 seats, we will have 27 Congressional seats.
8 Because some parts of our state have increased
9 and decreased disproportionately in population,
10 many Senate, House and Congressional Districts
11 will change because of the loss or adding in
12 population.

13 When redistricting is completed,
14 Congressional Districts must equal in
15 population and contain 696,345 people, the 40
16 Senate districts must also be nearly equal and
17 at about 470,000 people, and our 120 House
18 seats around the state must also be nearly
19 equal at 156,700 people.

20 As you can see, we have displays in the
21 back of the room showing the current boundaries
22 and the current districts as they sit today in
23 the state of Florida.

24 We encourage you to look at those on your
25 way in or on your way out or even during the

1 hearing today.

2 The equality of representation isn't the
3 only legal requirement that redistricting plans
4 must meet, and that is very important.

5 The laws and the important court cases
6 that govern redistricting are explained in
7 detail on the House and Senate websites, and we
8 would encourage you all to go and look at
9 those.

10 Those websites are actually listed on our
11 "Redistricting 2012" brochure that was
12 available to you when you came in, and in fact,
13 our redistricting brochure summarizes both
14 federal and state laws, and outlines the topics
15 that we hope you will discuss with us here
16 today at the hearing. If you did not get a
17 copy of that brochure when you came in, if you
18 would raise your hand, we will make sure that
19 each and every person who wants a copy gets a
20 copy here this morning.

21 The brochure also lists the House and
22 Senate websites, and the websites are packed
23 with information about redistricting in
24 Florida, including explanations of laws and
25 important court cases governing redistricting.

1 The two websites are complementary, and
2 they are both updated frequently. Visit both
3 and please check back often.

4 The websites also deliver to you at your
5 fingertips all of the demographic information
6 that you will be using in drawing districts in
7 the exact same computer programs that us as
8 Legislators use ourselves as we draw districts
9 in the future.

10 Before, during and after this hearing,
11 Senate and House professional staff are
12 available to show anyone the simple steps to go
13 online and build a district and submit a plan
14 of your own in the coming weeks to the
15 Legislature.

16 Recommendations from citizens and groups
17 of citizens will be made publicly -- public
18 available, and in fact, as of today, we have
19 over 32 maps that have been submitted to the
20 Legislature of partial or complete maps, and
21 approximately 110 written ideas for maps that
22 are available on the web.

23 In fact, this week, in this week's
24 meetings at Stuart, Boca Raton and Davie,
25 Florida residents completed new maps for

1 submission right at the tables outside the
2 room.

3 So for anyone here who would like to do
4 that, we would encourage you to please
5 participate in that as well.

6 The submission of these proposed maps that
7 makes sense for your community is the single
8 most effective way that you can communicate
9 with us.

10 We certainly appreciate all of you who
11 have taken time to be here today and to give us
12 your ideas verbally, but we also think that a
13 great way for you to give us your ideas is to
14 put them down on paper and actually draw maps
15 that you believe would be good for the
16 Legislature to consider.

17 We have accelerated the process of our
18 session for a very specific reason. Many of
19 you know the Constitution does not allow us to
20 have votes on redistricting maps until 2012.

21 And so what we have done is we have taken
22 our session, which normally starts in March and
23 goes for 60 days, and we've moved it up to
24 January.

25 That is the earliest that we can vote on

1 legislative maps, and I want that to be clear
2 on the front end of that.

3 It has also been suggested that the
4 Legislature should draw maps first and then ask
5 the public for comment. Ladies and gentlemen,
6 we believe that puts the answer ahead of the
7 question.

8 There should be no preconceptions made by
9 politicians, but, rather, public testimony
10 should be free and unrestricted. In fact, the
11 principal author of Florida's New Redistricting
12 Standards and the Chairperson of Fair Districts
13 Campaign are on the record and in agreement
14 with the notion that the maps should not be
15 drawn until or after the public has had the
16 opportunity to comment. And I believe everyone
17 on this committee agrees with that as well.

18 Our intent is to use these recommendations
19 made at the 26 public hearings and throughout
20 our Internet sites as the basis for developing
21 one or more options for district maps.

22 We will continue those options in the open
23 public meetings before any votes are taken,
24 even in committee. In other words, what we are
25 literally saying is if you look at the maps

1 outside the room, the ones actually submitted
2 to the Legislature by Florida residents, we are
3 literally starting the legislative process with
4 those maps and other suggestions from you
5 today.

6 So if you want to know where we begin our
7 deliberations, it is with the public
8 submissions and it is with your testimony here
9 this afternoon.

10 Throughout the process, we will continue
11 to solicit additional public comment so that
12 proposed maps can mature with the public
13 involvement all before the Legislature approves
14 any final maps.

15 Whatever the Legislature passes, it is
16 submitted for judicial review to ensure that
17 the final plans meet every single legal
18 requirement.

19 Because our purpose today is to hear from
20 you, all the time will be used to ensure that
21 every member of the public who is here and
22 wishes to speak will have time to present their
23 testimony and be listened to respectfully,
24 without interruption or argument.

25 And, if needed, we may take, Mr. Chairman,

1 if it is possible, a short break to give the
2 members -- we have four hours allotted, 10:00
3 to 2:00, we may take a short break somewhere in
4 the middle there to give members a break and
5 also to give members of the audience a break as
6 well.

7 If after every citizen has had his or her
8 say, and there is time remaining before our
9 scheduled adjournment, any member of the
10 committee may make a statement or offer an
11 observation.

12 Of course, any member of the Legislature
13 may today or at any time, propose any map or
14 any plan, and we will make it available to the
15 public immediately.

16 Mr. Chairman, I hope that this description
17 of our schedule and the process helps set the
18 stage for a very successful hearing. Thank you
19 for your indulgence.

20 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
21 Mr. Speaker. A couple of housekeeping details.
22 As Speaker Weatherford indicated, we have a
23 four-hour time slot for this hearing.

24 Typically when we do a four-hour time
25 slot, in the middle, we will take a break, a

1 45-minute or so break. What I would like to do
2 with the committee's indulgence and the
3 audience's indulgence is because we have at the
4 moment 30 individuals who would like to speak,
5 I would like to see if we can make sure that
6 all of those persons have the opportunity to
7 speak, and we might be able to do that without
8 taking a break.

9 If we get a large number of additional
10 speakers, then with Speaker Weatherford's
11 indulgence, we will call an audible somewhere
12 in the middle and take a short break so that
13 all of you have the opportunity to use the
14 facilities or grab a bite of lunch or whatever
15 you would like to do.

16 Now, in order to move along quickly and
17 make sure everybody has a chance to speak, what
18 I would like to do is call the first four
19 speakers up, and there are four reserved slots
20 right in the front right for you.

21 So if I call your name, if you would come
22 up -- we will call this on the deck circle --
23 if you will get on deck, that way we won't
24 waste time having people come forward from the
25 audience, you will be ready to speak.

1 And to make sure that everybody has an
2 opportunity to speak and that we hear your
3 views, we would like you to hold your comments,
4 if you can, to three or four minutes. That
5 way, we can make sure everyone has an
6 opportunity to speak.

7 If you have extended remarks, if you
8 brought 15 minutes of good information you
9 wanted to share, we want it all, and just give
10 your printed or extended remarks or your script
11 that you brought or that someone gave you, give
12 that information to one of our staff.

13 It will go in the permanent record of the
14 committee, and it will be available and given
15 to every single member of the committee, House
16 or Senate.

17 With that said, I would like -- Ira Paul
18 is going to be our first speaker, and Ira, if
19 you would come forward, please, and behind Ira
20 is Jonas Georges, Henry Kelley and Michael
21 William Calsetta.

22 And so if those three individuals will
23 come forward in the on deck circle.

24 Mr. Paul, we are delighted that you are
25 going to lead off our hearing this morning. We

1 are anxious to hear your testimony, and you are
2 recognized.

3 MR. PAUL: Okay. I am going to be very
4 short, I am going to be less than the three
5 minutes.

6 My name is Ira Paul. I am a resident of
7 Palm Springs North, which is just slightly
8 northwest of the Hialeah-Miami Lakes community.
9 I reside in House District 102 and Senate
10 District 40.

11 I have lived in Miami-Dade, south Florida,
12 for over 50 years, and I am a retired
13 Miami-Dade County Public Schools mathematics
14 teacher.

15 I -- the talking points I have is
16 65 percent of the Miami-Dade community is
17 Hispanic, and that it is the constitutional
18 right of minorities to be able to elect
19 representatives of their choice.

20 In all fairness, I demand that a
21 sufficient number of districts be drawn to
22 offer Hispanics in these areas the ability to
23 elect representatives of their choice for both
24 the State House, State Senate and Congress.

25 It is important that the Hispanic

1 community be treated fairly and without any
2 regression of existing political power in both
3 legislative and congressional districting.

4 Areas with similar commonalities that
5 could form the basis of a district or part of a
6 district are Hialeah, Hialeah Gardens, Miami
7 Lakes, or Coral Gables, Coconut Grove and South
8 Miami.

9 Thank you very much for allowing me the
10 opportunity to speak, and thank you all for
11 being here today.

12 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
13 Mr. Paul, for your testimony.

14 And now Jonas Georges is next, and
15 following him, Henry Kelley, and then Michael
16 William Calsetta, and following Mr. Calsetta,
17 Gepsie, and I apologize, Metellus, Metellus,
18 with the Haitian Neighborhood Center.

19 Mr. Georges, you are recognized. Thank
20 you for coming today.

21 MR. GEORGES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for
22 the opportunity to speak to you and to the
23 committee. I am the Reverend Dr. Jonas
24 Georges, and I live and work in the northeast
25 city of Miami, the nerve center of my

1 community, the Haitian-American community.

2 I would like to spend my time today to
3 address the need for this committee to
4 emphasize and seek to preserve the integrity of
5 the ethnic communities that are the nerve
6 centers of our community in south Florida.

7 It is very difficult to conceive Miami,
8 for instance, without Little Havana or the
9 black communities of northwest Miami, like
10 Opa-Locka and Miami Gardens and so on and so
11 forth and many others.

12 And part of these neighborhoods and ethnic
13 communities is the -- is in the northeast area
14 of our city where Haitian-Americans like myself
15 do live. And within that community, there is a
16 center where the 17th Congressional District is
17 located, and the voters there are represented
18 in 34 precincts by people of Haitian-American
19 origin.

20 And I would like to impress you of the
21 necessity to continue the cultural expansion of
22 our culture, of our democracy, by preserving
23 that particular sector of our community.

24 We are very well-represented by a person
25 of our choice in that congressional community,

1 in the person of our Congressperson, Frederica
2 Wilson, but we do recognize that there are 34
3 percent of them -- of us voting in that
4 community that are from my ethnic group.

5 There is no point that this -- that
6 particular districts right now would require
7 about 51,000 persons, voters, to really make a
8 congressional community -- I mean, a district.

9 And our recommendation would be for the
10 committee to look to the north and northwest
11 area of the district in order to make up for
12 that number that is required, that is, 696
13 voters, and that would make it sure that the
14 majority of the people who live and work in
15 that area have a chance of representing
16 themselves, thus expanding the democracy that
17 we all love and serve, and allowing another
18 segment of our population to really show that
19 only in America that people who enter into this
20 country barely 30 years ago can live and work
21 and thrive, do business, go to school, pay
22 taxes and be able to represent themselves in
23 the Congress of the United States.

24 Of all the things that you will be doing,
25 which I know is going to be extremely

1 difficult, but I am calling to your sense of
2 leadership acumen, your sense of fairness and
3 your sense of adherence to the law of the
4 country, and your love also for the great
5 diversity of this country, to really make sure
6 that those of us who live in that district, the
7 17th Congressional District, do aspire to be
8 members of our community, but also to be able
9 to represent ourselves in the Congress of the
10 United States.

11 Thank you very much for the great work you
12 do, and I hope that you will take into
13 consideration these statements that I make on
14 behalf of us all living and working in this
15 community.

16 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
17 Dr. Georges.

18 Next we will have Henry Kelley and then
19 Michael Calsetta, then Gepsie Metellus. Say
20 again? Gepsie Metellus.

21 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: He must be a
22 popular guy, everybody knows him.

23 SENATOR GAETZ: Very. And then Janet
24 McAliley, former member of the School Board
25 here in Miami-Dade County. We would like to

1 have Ms. McAliley come forward, and then Larry
2 Thorson will be next.

3 Mr. Kelley, you have the floor.

4 MR. KELLEY: Thank you, Senator, and thank
5 you to the Committee again. I was going to
6 ask, is there a chance I can get map number
7 five pulled up? Okay, thank you.

8 Again, to the Committee, I appreciate all
9 the hard work, and I have -- as we -- I've
10 tried to catch up in the meetings, you know, I
11 have actually taken the time to draw two maps,
12 and today I wanted to focus on that, but I do
13 want to recognize the difficulty and the
14 decisions.

15 I have lived in Ft. Walton, Gainesville,
16 Jacksonville, Orlando and Margate in my
17 lifetime in Florida, and this morning, my
18 girlfriend's father lives in Senator Margolis'
19 district, and I was explaining to him why I was
20 moving one of his district lines, which gives
21 me very unique insight into the political
22 things when your girlfriend's father is yelling
23 at you.

24 But last night I had the opportunity to
25 show on the map that is number four by the

1 system where I started with the existing
2 majority-minority districts and was forced to
3 draw all the other districts around it, whereas
4 this map I took and drew while using the
5 software, which, again, I found very easy to
6 use my interpretation of Fair Districts and
7 some of the methodology that I used, my intent,
8 and because the Fair Districts is unclear on
9 this, my political boundaries was to minimize
10 the number of counties that were cut up. And I
11 achieved about an 80 percent success rate in
12 keeping counties whole.

13 The other thing that I tried to do was
14 avoid what I called a U-shaped district where
15 you have to drive from one end of a district,
16 go through somebody else's district to arrive
17 back in your own district. And this was really
18 the intent that I drew.

19 I tried to keep coastal communities
20 associated, the more rural areas aggregated
21 together as much as possible, but, you know, as
22 we have discussed the maps and we have
23 discussed the districts, you know, I put this
24 up because as you -- I've watched a lot of the
25 hearings, and the comments when people say,

1 "Well, where are the maps," well, here are the
2 maps, and any group can come out and produce
3 their own maps.

4 I did this in my spare time, I didn't
5 receive any money for it, but it can be done.
6 And these districts are all within a half a
7 percent of the intended number.

8 And I also have a Senate map and a House
9 map that will be submitted in a couple of days.
10 I just have to finish a few districts in Miami,
11 little tricky.

12 And the Senate -- you know, the Senate
13 map, again, with -- you can see in this one
14 that, again, because of the population
15 differences, you can see a greater variance
16 between the coastal communities and the more
17 interior districts, and, again -- but my
18 driving objective was to minimize the number of
19 counties that would be cut up.

20 And as I have said to the Committee, I
21 know you have sat through many hearings, you
22 still have a few more to go, but that if groups
23 or individuals submit maps, to afford us the
24 opportunity in the committee season to come in
25 and discuss each one at length and some of the

1 particular decisions we have made as to why a
2 particular district may be shaped in a certain
3 way or a certain line was put in a certain
4 place.

5 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, Mr.
7 Kelley. We appreciate your submission of maps
8 and your testimony.

9 Michael William Calsetta, representing the
10 Conservative Democratic Alliance.

11 Mr. Calsetta, thank you very much for being
12 here, and we look forward to what you have to
13 share with us.

14 MR. CALSETTA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
15 and ladies and gentlemen of the Committee.

16 Representatives of special interest groups
17 will come before you seeking to redraw the
18 legislative districts in such a way as to favor
19 multi-culturalism, some politically savvy
20 citizens will be looking for ways around the
21 Florida legislation preventing gerrymandering
22 for political advantage, and still others will
23 stress the need to separate themselves from the
24 majority of their fellow citizens.

25 Our founding fathers carefully crafted a

1 message to the world when we created the United
2 States. On our great seal is "E pluribus
3 unum," the translation from the Latin, "Out of
4 many, one."

5 Those seeking to divide us into what I --
6 what I call hyphenated Americans, or party
7 before principle robots, undermine our
8 political system. They make it impossible for
9 term limits, in my view, and we need term
10 limits desperately.

11 Part of the reason we are in such a
12 financial mess is because politicians are more
13 interested in re-election than the good of the
14 nation; again, in my opinion. We must reform
15 this system if we are to obtain term limits.

16 I implore you to use real, not artificial,
17 contiguous boundaries in the redistricting
18 process. We must not permit multi-culturalism
19 and/or gerrymandering to continue to divide
20 Florida the way it is today.

21 And by the way, my -- I was born in
22 Washington, D.C.

23 SENATOR GAETZ: And I apologize, sir, but
24 if I could get you to make your main points and
25 then conclude.

1 MR. CALSETTA: Okay. I came to Miami in
2 1948, so I've been around a while, off and on.

3 My point is simply that Congressional
4 District 22, in my view, is the most
5 problematic example of what is wrong and how we
6 need to fix that.

7 And I have an attachment, which I can
8 provide to the Committee. I know this to be
9 true, because I worked in District 22 in 2010.
10 I was another Democrat for Allen West.

11 SENATOR GAETZ: Sir, I am going to have to
12 ask you if you would conclude, please.

13 MR. CALSETTA: I will just give you -- I
14 will just provide a copy of the remaining
15 statement. I thank you for what you do -- are
16 trying to do, and I hope that you are able to
17 follow the previous speaker's advice and take
18 into consideration his maps.

19 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, and
20 please do give us the extended remarks that you
21 have.

22 It is Gepsie Metellus, is that right? And
23 you will correct me if I am wrong, I am sure.
24 Thank you so much for being here today.

25 MS. METELLUS: Thank you, Senator Gaetz.

1 Good morning, bonjour. In the spirit of E
2 pluribus unum, I want to thank you all for
3 being here and for providing an opportunity for
4 all of us to convey to you what our sentiment
5 and feelings are.

6 I don't come before you as an expert this
7 morning. I come to you as a dedicated, engaged
8 citizen of Miami-Dade County, one who is
9 concerned about the future of all of us. One
10 who is concerned about the need to have
11 diversity in our governing bodies, one who is
12 concerned that every single resident and
13 citizen throughout Miami-Dade County recognizes
14 his or herself and the leadership that they
15 choose to elect.

16 And so I simply want to implore you to
17 allow me an opportunity to elect someone of my
18 choosing, elect someone who will represent my
19 interests, my needs, my aspirations, my issues,
20 who represents me in terms of recognizing and
21 understanding my history, my traditions, who
22 represents me in terms of ensuring that my
23 interests, my needs and aspirations are not in
24 contradiction with those of my next-door
25 neighbor, someone who will, indeed, reflect the

1 growing population of Miami-Dade County's
2 Haitian-American population.

3 As you know, we are probably over 500,000
4 strong in south Florida. I believe Dr. Georges
5 mentioned that we, in fact, are about
6 35 percent of the voters, and specifically
7 Congressional District 17.

8 We have a 30-year presence in Miami-Dade
9 County, and very much willing to work towards
10 improving conditions for all of us.

11 And so I ask you to ensure that you
12 protect those political gains that we have made
13 over the past several years. I want to implore
14 you to indeed maintain the boundaries as they
15 are such that our interests are protected in
16 the manner that I have stated.

17 And I want to urge you to, of course,
18 have -- proceed with what the -- with the Fair
19 District standards as outlined in Amendments 5
20 and 6 such that, of course, no one's rights and
21 interests are in fact denied.

22 And finally, I want to encourage you to
23 come back and seek additional citizen and
24 resident input once you have drawn those
25 preliminary maps, such that we then continue to

1 be a part of this process.

2 I want to encourage you to ensure that we
3 are a part of the process and that you hear and
4 acquiesce to needs and issues put before you,
5 and I want to thank you again for your presence
6 here this morning.

7 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
8 ma'am, we appreciate your testimony.

9 And now the Honorable Janet McAliley, we
10 thank you for your distinguished service to the
11 people of Miami-Dade County and our state, and
12 following Ms. McAliley, Larry Thorson, and then
13 Dr. -- and I apologize, Doctor, I am afraid --
14 you represent the Miami-Dade Democratic
15 something at 4824 Northwest 15th Court.

16 And I apologize, Doctor, it is not your
17 handwriting, I am sure, and it is my eyes, then
18 Dan Espino, and then Rhonda Sibilialia.

19 Ms. McAliley, thank you for being here,
20 and we look forward to hearing from you.

21 MS. McALILEY: Thank you, Senator Gaetz,
22 and all of the -- all of your colleagues who
23 are here to hear what the people have to say
24 about redistricting in Florida.

25 My name is Janet McAliley. I live in

1 Coconut Grove. I am in a Senate district, a
2 House district, a city district, that runs
3 pretty much along the coast of this Dade
4 County.

5 It is a more or less affluent, white
6 district, and it has been drawn to keep
7 somebody like me in office. When I was on the
8 School Board from 1980 to 1996, we had to live
9 in specific geographic areas of the county, but
10 we all ran county-wide.

11 And it certainly sensitized me to the
12 needs of people all over this county. And my
13 district was Coral Gables, Coconut Grove,
14 Pinecrest. I spent more time in Liberty City
15 and West Perrine and other parts of the county
16 than I did in my own district, because I had
17 been trained through the electoral process to
18 know the needs of those counties.

19 So I am hoping that districts will not be
20 drawn to perpetuate political -- specific
21 political ambitions. I think it is -- in this
22 time in our country where we are so polarized
23 politically, and sometimes ethnically, we need
24 to be responsible for all people and be aware
25 of their needs and not draw political lines to

1 perpetuate the divisiveness that is in our
2 country today and in this state, too.

3 I think that it is important that the
4 people have time to review the maps that the
5 Legislators draw way ahead of the time when
6 they will be passed.

7 These kind of hearings should be held when
8 the maps are drawn and we can see what you all
9 have come up with. I don't have the expertise
10 to draw those maps, but I have very strong
11 feelings that they need to encompass people of
12 all sorts of backgrounds.

13 My respect for Gepsie Metellus is very
14 high, but I have to say I would like to know
15 that some of my interests are the same as
16 Haitian-Americans and native black Americans,
17 as well as the more affluent people whose
18 district I am in right now.

19 The whole process needs to have integrity.
20 We are so tired of the kind of power-broking
21 and warfare that exists in politics in this
22 country today, and I urge you to put personal
23 power ambitions aside and draw your districts
24 so that they will make us understand each other
25 and appreciate each other and know that our

1 future well-being is together, not divided as
2 we are so often in this country today. Thank
3 you.

4 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Ms. McAliley.

5 Next we will have Larry Thorson, please,
6 and because we have had now, fortunately, a
7 large number of additional individuals ask to
8 speak, we are going to be -- we are going to be
9 a little tighter on time, and after three
10 minutes, we are going to ask you to yield the
11 floor to your friends and neighbors who also
12 want to speak.

13 Mr. Thorson, and following him, the Doctor
14 from the Miami-Dade Democratic group, and then
15 Dan Espino and then Rhonda Sibilialia, and then
16 Terry Coble from the League of Women Voters.

17 Mr. Thorson, thank you for coming. You
18 are recognized.

19 MR. THORSON: Thank you. I am Larry
20 Thorson. I live in Miami Beach. Gwen Margolis
21 is my State Senator and Richard Steinberg is my
22 State Representative.

23 The -- some of the things that have been
24 said here today made me -- it intensified my
25 feeling about the word "fairness" that we are

1 talking about here.

2 We are talking about fair districts, that
3 is our -- that is our aim. And I said on the
4 form that I am representing retired people. I
5 am a retired reporter.

6 I worked for a long time for the
7 Associated Press, including about 20 years
8 overseas, and the word "fair" came through in
9 my experiences a couple of times.

10 The first time that it really hit me, I
11 was working in our Tokyo bureau and I was
12 listening to some of my Japanese colleagues
13 chatter along in Japanese, and I kept hearing
14 what sounded like the word "fair" coming out
15 pretty strongly.

16 And when they finished, I asked them,
17 "Were you using the English word 'fair' as you
18 were talking in Japanese?" They said, "Yes,
19 there isn't quite the word in Japanese that has
20 the impact, the meaning, the broad meaning,
21 that 'fair' does in English."

22 My next assignment was in Germany, I was
23 working in Berlin, and the same thing happened.
24 I was listening to my German colleagues chatter
25 along in German, which I understand fairly

1 well, and they, too, were saying, "Das ist
2 nicht fair," and I asked them the same thing --
3 well, there are words that are kind of like
4 this in German.

5 But, anyway, they had appropriated this
6 English word, even though both of those
7 countries, Japan and Germany, were occupied and
8 still are by American troops, which is not
9 always a pleasant experience, but they had
10 absorbed some important things about the United
11 States, which this is not in the Constitution,
12 you know, if you look for the word "fair" in
13 the U.S. Constitution, you won't find it.

14 But somehow it is a very important
15 concept, and it is what we voted for in very
16 large numbers last year in the election, even
17 though say the -- the left or the liberal side
18 of the -- of the voting public didn't come out
19 very strongly, if there weren't a whole lot of
20 Tea Party voters out there, they must have
21 voted pretty strongly, too, for the idea that
22 we need fair districts.

23 And it is the kind of thing that we voted
24 for in very large numbers, because it isn't
25 fair, it wasn't fair, it hasn't been fair for

1 some time.

2 We've got a system that is one of the --
3 acknowledged around the country as one of the
4 most gerrymandered. This is a system that
5 is -- in a way, it is against this very
6 important idea of what makes the United States
7 an important place, and it contributes to a
8 public distrust of politicians that I am sure
9 you are aware of, that if there are things
10 wrong between the public and the politicians,
11 the gerrymandered, the unfair districts are a
12 big part of it. So at the --

13 SENATOR GAETZ: And, sir, I am going to
14 have to ask you, if possible, to conclude.

15 MR. THORSON: I am. At the end of this
16 process, I just say we will be able to see
17 again whether it is fair, and we will judge you
18 accordingly. Thank you.

19 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Mr. Thorson.
20 And next -- and, Doctor, I am very sorry that I
21 was unable to read your writing. Can you help
22 us out with your name, please?

23 DR. CHRISTIAN: Good morning. That's how
24 doctors write sometimes. I developed my own
25 brief forms in terms of shorthand, because I

1 have so many classes. I'd like to say --

2 SENATOR GAETZ: And would you tell us your
3 name, ma'am?

4 DR. CHRISTIAN: I am getting ready to. I
5 would like to say -- I was going to address you
6 first.

7 SENATOR GAETZ: All right.

8 DR. CHRISTIAN: To the Senate Chair, House
9 Chair, to the Senate and House committee, my
10 name is Dr. Mae Christian, C-h-r-i-s-t-i-a-n,
11 like church.

12 SENATOR GAETZ: You could write
13 prescriptions with this. This is great.

14 DR. CHRISTIAN: I would like to also say
15 good morning to our voters that are present and
16 had an interest to be here.

17 As the President of the Miami-Dade
18 Democratic Black Caucus and a member of the
19 Miami-Dade Democratic Party Executive
20 Committee, I would like to say, in all
21 fairness, it is not fair to be taxed without
22 representation, and a lot of us live in
23 unincorporated Dade and in areas that are in
24 plight.

25 Recently a study stated that Miami is one

1 of the most plighted cities in -- is the most
2 plighted city and suffering city in America
3 with the highest unemployment rate.

4 And speaking for the African-American
5 community that is possibly in Overtown, Miami,
6 Miami Gardens, Opa-Locka, and some parts of
7 Coconut Grove and South Miami, that instead of
8 gerrymandering the drawings of this -- these
9 districts, I recommend highly that the
10 minorities, as you call some of us, that we
11 need those districts drawn fairly, that we can
12 be represented fairly.

13 And I also say that it is time for our
14 leadership and representatives that we voted
15 for to remember that we are the people that put
16 you there, and at this particular point,
17 whether it's the Haitian community, Hispanic,
18 African-American, that we need you all to
19 listen to our voice and let you know that we
20 have a right to have our voice heard. Thank
21 you very much.

22 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Doctor.

23 And next, Dan Espino, Councilman for the
24 City of Miami Springs, then Rhonda Sibilila,
25 then Terry Coble with the League of Women

1 Voters, and then Marlon Hill with the Caribbean
2 Bar Association.

3 Councilman, thank you very much for being
4 here, and you are recognized. Thanks for your
5 service.

6 COUNCILMAN ESPINO: Thank you, Chairman,
7 and thank you, Senators and Representatives for
8 your service as well, certainly for being down
9 here in south Florida, and for certainly
10 conducting these meetings and genuinely
11 listening to the public before the maps are
12 drawn.

13 My name is Dan Espino. I am a Councilman
14 for the City of Miami Springs. I am a
15 life-long resident of the City of Miami Springs
16 and Miami-Dade County. And when I am not
17 fighting crime and solving quality of life
18 issues on the council, I am a practicing
19 attorney.

20 I am Hispanic, and that is the point that
21 I come to bring to you today, the point of
22 ethnicity. Amendments 5 and 6 certainly
23 require neutrality as to party and incumbency,
24 but they cannot in any way call for the -- the
25 diminishment of Hispanic representation in our

1 State Legislature and in Congress.

2 As a matter of fact, it would call for the
3 opposite, and it is a constitutional right of
4 the minorities to be represented as such.

5 Miami-Dade County is a very unique place
6 in the state of Florida. We have 65 percent of
7 our population currently comprised of
8 Hispanics, but currently Miami-Dade's Senate
9 seats are comprised of less than 50 percent
10 Hispanics. So there is not adequate
11 representation in there.

12 What we need is compact districts that
13 adequately represent and reflect the continuity
14 of certain populations, that certainly seek to
15 minimize jumping chasms, jumping gaps into
16 other counties.

17 I think the goal should be to push forward
18 Hispanic representation as it reflects in the
19 community, to certainly avoid retrogression of
20 Hispanic votes and to amplify a popular
21 diversity in our representation.

22 I implore that all of you continue to do
23 the outstanding job that you are doing in
24 Tallahassee, but to keep in mind the diversity
25 of our community and truly what has been the

1 fuel of Miami-Dade County, of south Florida,
2 which has been the melting pot, the salad bowl,
3 the soup bowl, of our community coming together
4 and being able to adequately elect individuals
5 that represent our beliefs, our choices and our
6 way of life.

7 Thank you very much, and God bless you
8 all.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Councilman.

10 And now, Rhonda Sibilialia is recognized, and
11 we thank you very much for taking time from
12 your day to be with us, and look forward to
13 your testimony.

14 MS. SIBILIALIA: Thank you, and good morning,
15 ladies and gentlemen. You want to know my
16 story? Well, here's my story: I am a native
17 Miamian. I am a product of Miami-Dade Public
18 Schools and the State University System.

19 I have worked as a broadcast journalist in
20 government and corporate communications, and
21 Senator Gaetz, that includes a couple of years
22 at VITAS.

23 I currently work outreach for the
24 Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public
25 Trust, and, no, that is not an oxymoron. But I

1 am here as a private citizen, because I have
2 voted in every election since I was 18 and that
3 was a long time ago.

4 My home is in an unincorporated area of
5 Miami-Dade County commonly known as West
6 Kendall. The major concerns for the region are
7 smart growth, because there's been a lot of
8 dumb growth, the need for green space, we have
9 overburdened transit systems and other
10 attributes of rapidly developing suburbia.

11 My political districts, I think, are
12 horribly gerrymandered, and I would like to
13 explain why.

14 Congressional District 25 spans from
15 Homestead and West Kendall through Everglades
16 National Park and northwest to Immokalee. It
17 includes three very different counties:
18 Western Miami-Dade, mainland Monroe and a huge
19 section of eastern Collier.

20 Now, the concerns of the very good
21 residents of Immokalee are very different than
22 those of us who live in West Kendall. And I
23 appreciate that the alligators need some
24 representation.

25 So I think that for this Congressional

1 District, despite Mr. Henry's very good
2 intention, the boundaries, the Dade/Collier
3 line, should be the boundaries dividing that
4 Congressional District.

5 I am in Florida Senate District 38, which
6 runs north to south from the Doral city limits
7 to the Redland, and for those of you from other
8 parts of the state, that is the huge
9 agricultural basket that provides much of the
10 goods that fill our -- the nation's vegetable
11 basket during the winter.

12 So it includes the suburbs of West
13 Kendall, Sweetwater and Westchester to those
14 farms. And, again, our needs and interests are
15 very different.

16 Other parts of West Kendall, for example,
17 residents with whom I have much more in common,
18 the massive Hammocks community, are in a
19 paralleling district, 34, and, to me, that
20 makes no sense.

21 I am also in Florida House District 119,
22 and that stretches further south from the Doral
23 line to include Homestead. Now, the
24 Representative of this district was kind enough
25 to include a map with the recent flyer that he

1 sent out announcing these meetings, and I know
2 that you can't see this very well, but it is
3 very large in the bottom.

4 Then there is a skinny little line that
5 goes up north that includes just a very small
6 section of the county. District 119 apparently
7 is so strange that the elected Representative
8 doesn't even want to live there. Yes, sir.
9 Rumor is that he is waiting for his homestead
10 to be gerrymandered into this district.

11 Now, that being said, there is no reason
12 for these very expensive and time-consuming
13 public hearings to learn how we want
14 redistricting to take place. We told you with
15 overwhelming support of Amendments 5 and 6 that
16 require the consideration of municipal, natural
17 or obvious boundaries when redrawing districts,
18 and not to base it on political party or
19 candidate considerations.

20 SENATOR GAETZ: And, ma'am, because your
21 time has elapsed, could you bring it in for a
22 landing?

23 MS. SIBILIA: I am. I think this is
24 really a waste of our scarce tax dollars and --
25 by fighting the will of the people in those

1 amendments. I would like you to put those
2 supercomputers to work, get some actual
3 proposals on record, make them make common
4 sense and not political sense.

5 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you so much for your
6 testimony.

7 Next we will hear from Terry Coble with
8 the League of Women Voters, then Marlon Hill
9 with the Caribbean Bar Association, and then
10 Francesca Menes, I believe, with the Florida
11 Immigrant Coalition, and then we will have
12 Mayor Michael -- and I apologize, Mr. Mayor,
13 Michael Pisa -- Pizzi from the town of Miami
14 Lakes.

15 Ms. Coble, thank you for coming, and you
16 are recognized.

17 MS. COBLE: Good morning, Honorable Chair
18 and members of the Redistricting Committee. My
19 name is Terry Coble. I am the President of the
20 League of Women Voters of Miami-Dade County,
21 and a 20-year resident of the City of Miami.
22 Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to
23 speak before you today.

24 This year's redistricting is a historic
25 event, because it is the first apportionment to

1 occur after the passage of Amendments 5 and 6
2 by which Florida voters enacted standards to
3 guide the legislative redistricting process.

4 These standards prohibit districts drawn
5 to favor political parties or incumbents, or to
6 deny racial or language minorities the equal
7 opportunity to participate in the political
8 process and to elect representatives of their
9 choice.

10 While the League of Women Voters applauds
11 efforts to seek public input, the present
12 hearings are being held, we believe, at the
13 wrong time.

14 They should be held after the Legislature
15 has drawn proposed maps so that the public can
16 be heard on needed changes. The public has
17 already spoken on redistricting by enacting
18 Amendments 5 and 6 in November of last year.

19 It is now up to the Legislature to assume
20 its constitutional duty and to begin applying
21 these new standards without delay.

22 Although the leadership in the state
23 Legislature is on record as promising hearings
24 after the maps are drawn, there has been no
25 commitment to hold these hearings throughout

1 the state, as is the case for the hearings that
2 are being held now.

3 In addition, the proposed timeline for
4 legislative redistricting is also far too long.
5 Maps should be approved by the Legislature in
6 early January of 2012, so as to allow for
7 mandatory reviews and probable legal
8 challenges, while also giving enough notice of
9 legislative districts so that incum- -- so that
10 challengers can timely declare their
11 candidacies. Otherwise, the process will favor
12 incumbents, in violation of the requirements of
13 Amendments 5 and 6.

14 The League of Women Voters urges the
15 Legislature to adopt a timeline for
16 redistricting that makes sense, given existing
17 candidate qualifying and primary dates, and
18 that includes hearings throughout the state
19 after the maps have been proposed --

20 SENATOR GAETZ: Ma'am, could I ask you to
21 conclude just in fairness to those who are
22 behind you?

23 MS. COBLE: Yes, I am on my last sentence.

24 SENATOR GAETZ: All right. Fire away.

25 MS. COBLE: We hope that you will respond

1 to this request in a manner appropriate to the
2 seriousness of the issue, and, again, thank you
3 for the opportunity for allowing us to speak.

4 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
5 Ms. Coble.

6 As we are going through today's hearing,
7 you will notice that there may be some people
8 who ask specific questions about timeline or
9 something else, and what we will try to do,
10 time permitting at the end, is first to make
11 sure that any members of the committee have an
12 opportunity to address any comments they wish
13 to make, but then I will turn to Speaker
14 Designate Weatherford and ask him if he would
15 respond to any factual questions that are
16 answered so that we can all leave with the same
17 set of facts.

18 While the hearing has been proceeding, I
19 am pleased that we have been joined by two
20 leaders of the Florida Senate, the Democratic
21 Leader of the Senate, Senator Nan Rich, and
22 Senator Rich, if you would identify yourself
23 for the audience. Senator Nan Rich.

24 And the Republican Leader of the Florida
25 Senate, Senator Andy Gardiner from Orlando.

1 Senator Gardiner. So we've got -- we've got
2 them all, we've got both sides.

3 And now we would like to hear from Marlon
4 Hill with the Caribbean Bar Association, then
5 Francesca Menes with the Florida Immigrant
6 Coalition, and then Mayor Pizzi from the Town
7 of Miami Lakes, and then Elizabeth Pines, also
8 from the League of Women Voters.

9 Mr. Hill, thank you.

10 MR. HILL: Good morning, welcome to Miami,
11 all. Mr. Chair, Mr. Speaker Designate, first
12 let me just thank newly-minted President of the
13 Wolfson campus, Madeline Pumariega, for
14 allowing us this opportunity for being here
15 this morning.

16 Personally, my name is Marlon Hill. I
17 reside in West Kendall. I am glad to see my
18 State Representative here, Ana Rivas Logan, and
19 State Senator Anitere Flores here as well. My
20 Congressman, Mr. Mario Diaz-Balart is now
21 present.

22 Mr. Chair, we have an opportunity here on
23 our hands to really reset the values that we
24 have as a state. Some people may say that when
25 you come to a person's home and you see how it

1 is painted or what is inside, it is a
2 reflection of who they are as a family.

3 We will be watching very closely. I am
4 very glad for this opportunity and am very
5 thankful for the Redistricting Committee staff
6 for providing this opportunity for us to
7 participate in such a public manner, because we
8 are watching very closely.

9 And if you are not paying very close
10 attention to the radio waves and the
11 newspapers, folks are not really pleased about
12 any obstructionist behavior across the country.
13 We are not in the mood.

14 So we are going to be watching this
15 process very closely, and we are just imploring
16 that the Committee take into consideration that
17 the language of the amendments speak very
18 clearly, and words are very powerful, favor or
19 disfavor, incumbency or political party,
20 compact, equal, contiguous, and not to deny
21 racial or language.

22 But here in Miami-Dade County, I must tell
23 you, even in Broward County and in various
24 counties across the state, this state is very
25 complex. As you take a look at the U.S. Census

1 numbers, Mr. Chair, you will see that our
2 population is becoming increasingly diverse.

3 How do we know what fair looks like? How
4 do we know what equal looks like? How do we
5 know what denying racial or language barriers
6 looks like?

7 And, of course, this can go as far as to
8 the highest courts of the land, but we are
9 hoping that we can give you some guidance to
10 allow you to bring some balance to what racial
11 or language means.

12 Is it Creole? Is it a version of English
13 in terms of the heritage of my people from
14 another country in the Caribbean? It is going
15 to be very difficult for you to find what is
16 perfect in these boundaries, I must tell you.

17 But the road to perfection, Mr. Chair, is
18 filled with imperfections, okay, and we just
19 urge you to travel this road of imperfections
20 to a path of perfections.

21 For example, one of the most blighted
22 neighborhoods in Miami-Dade County, Mr. Chair,
23 is next to one of the most richest, half a
24 mile. A Representative could potentially --
25 one of the problems that we have is that

1 Representatives do not care, or we do not care
2 about our neighbor.

3 SENATOR GAETZ: And I would ask you if you
4 could conclude --

5 MR. HILL: I will conclude.

6 SENATOR GAETZ: -- out of respect to
7 others.

8 MR. HILL: I will conclude. I urge you
9 not to consider packing minorities in single
10 districts, because that would also
11 disenfranchise folks who are non-minority
12 packed in their own district, and I thank you
13 for hearing my comments.

14 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very, very much,
15 sir.

16 Francesca -- is it Menes? Francesca
17 Menes, and then the Mayor will be following
18 Francesca, then Elizabeth Pines from the League
19 of Women Voters, and then Thomas Gara, I
20 believe, and then Harold, I think it is
21 Fascer -- Foster, I'm sorry.

22 Thankfully I have the President sitting
23 next to me who can correct me -- from Miami
24 Beach, Harold Foster.

25 Francesca, thank you for coming, and you

1 are recognized.

2 MS. MENES: Hi, good morning, everyone.
3 Thank you for allowing me to speak. And I
4 would like to say good morning to my Senator,
5 Senator Gwen Margolis, and my Representative,
6 John Patrick Julien.

7 So I am just basically going to give kind
8 of like a quick overview and kind of like, I
9 guess, my feelings on everything.

10 I am with the Florida Immigrant Coalition,
11 but I am also a member of the Miami-Dade Young
12 Democrats and I also sit on the Miami-Dade
13 Commission for Women.

14 Districts can help, but they can also
15 harm. One of the tactics to fracture minority
16 populations into multiple districts is -- in
17 order to break them up is with their voting
18 power.

19 Another tactic is to consolidate as many
20 minority voters as possible in just a few
21 districts in order to limit their population
22 voting power in the Legislature as a whole,
23 also known as cracking and packing, and this
24 way can reliably limit minority representation.

25 The Federal Voting Act of 1965 was

1 designed to combat discrimination, used to deny
2 minority voters the rights to an effective
3 vote, including redistricting techniques like
4 those above.

5 As federal law, the voting rights
6 amendment overrides inconsistent state laws and
7 practices. Two sections of the Voting Rights
8 Act are particularly important to
9 redistricting, Sections 2 and Section 5.

10 Currently the Florida House is using
11 taxpayer money to attack and invalidate
12 provisions of the State Constitution that was
13 supported by 63 percent of the -- 63 percent of
14 the voters of the state of Florida. It is
15 spending our money to join lawsuits filed by
16 Representative Brown and Representative
17 Diaz-Balart asking the courts to strike
18 Amendment 6 from the Florida Constitution.

19 Secretary of State -- Secretary of State
20 Kurt Browning, who headed the "Nix 5 and 6"
21 campaign, is the defendant in the case. So
22 Florida taxpayers are actually now paying to
23 sue and defend the lawsuit.

24 All of this money is being spent while
25 teachers are being fired, social services are

1 being cut and not a single job is being
2 created. This is outrageous. Florida voters
3 should not and will not tolerate blatant
4 efforts to protect incumbents and undermine the
5 fair and competitive -- fair and competitive
6 elections.

7 We voted for Amendments 5 and 6 in the
8 past mid-term elections, and we ask that you
9 adhere to what the voters of the state of
10 Florida asked you to do. Thank you.

11 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
12 Francesca.

13 Mr. Mayor? Is Mayor -- is it Pizzi?
14 Mayor Pizzi, are you here? All right. We will
15 pass the Mayor for the moment and go to
16 Elizabeth Pines from the League of Women
17 Voters, followed by Thomas Gara and then Harold
18 Foster and then Greg Carney from the Venetian
19 Islands Homeowners Association.

20 Ms. Pines, thank you for being here, and
21 you are recognized.

22 MS. PINES: Thank you. Thank you for
23 having me.

24 I have been a resident of Miami-Dade
25 County for 30 years. I am also on the State

1 Board of the League of Women Voters of Florida
2 and of Miami-Dade County. I am also an
3 attorney.

4 I want to start by reiterating
5 Representative Scott Randolph's query regarding
6 the expenditure related to the lawsuit the
7 House has filed against Fair District
8 constitutional amendment.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: Ms. Pines, could you speak
10 more directly into the mike so everyone can
11 hear you?

12 MS. PINES: Yes, sir.

13 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, ma'am.

14 MS. PINES: Have you heard me?

15 SENATOR GAETZ: Yes, much better, thank
16 you.

17 MS. PINES: Okay. How much is this
18 costing us? Speaker Dean Cannon has refused to
19 provide this information, alleging that it will
20 divulge the Chamber's legal strategy. I ask
21 myself, will Representative Randolph have to
22 file another lawsuit in order for us to have
23 access to this public information?

24 Representative Diaz-Balart and Corrine
25 Brown have filed lawsuits challenging the

1 constitutional of Amendment 6. The House
2 has filed a complaint and intervention joining
3 them and requesting that this amendment be
4 declared unconstitutional under the elections
5 clause of the United States Constitution.

6 Why are we doing this? Amendments 5 and
7 6, as we have heard many times, has been voted
8 by Florida voters by 63 percent. Why are you
9 challenging the -- you know, our will, the will
10 of the people?

11 Why are we continuing to spend taxpayer
12 dollars on this lawsuit? It is time to stop
13 this. Dean Cannon, stop wasting our taxpayer
14 dollars on this. It is time to get to work on
15 what really counts.

16 Senator Gaetz and Representative
17 Weatherford, you have stated, and it was stated
18 in *The Miami Herald* that these public hearings
19 are to listen to the constituents, will listen
20 to us. Let's stop wasting our money and get to
21 what really counts.

22 I would like you to commit to three
23 things. Number one, adopt a working timeline.
24 For example, make October 3rd the deadline for
25 your proposed maps. This is sufficient time,

1 this is 30 days after these public hearings are
2 over.

3 In addition, you have the technology and
4 you will have the input of all the
5 constituents.

6 Number two, commit to complete all the
7 reviews by December 2011, and also allow
8 citizen review.

9 And number three, the most important,
10 please commit to have your final maps by the
11 first week of January, the first week of
12 session. That is January 13th, 2011. Thank
13 you very much.

14 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
15 Ms. Pines.

16 Next we will hear from Thomas Gara.
17 Mr. Gara, are you here, sir? You may fire when
18 ready, sir. And following Mr. Gara is Harold
19 Foster and then Greg Carney and then Jose
20 Rodriguez.

21 You are recognized, and thank you for
22 being here.

23 MR. GARA: Thank you very much. My name
24 is Thomas Gara, I am a resident of Miami, and I
25 grew up in Michigan. I lived in New Orleans,

1 Boston and San Francisco during my lifetime. I
2 have also traveled the world and lived in
3 Europe for four years and South America for
4 five.

5 I find myself here out of curiosity to see
6 just how a state gerrymanders and
7 re-gerrymanders its districts. And I have
8 listened to these good people come up and tell
9 you, "Oh, gerrymander it so the Haitians get a
10 benefit," "Gerrymander it so the Cubans have a
11 benefit."

12 I would like to ask you not to do any of
13 that. I would like to ask you to do districts
14 that are balanced politically. We have two
15 major parties, plus independent parties. You
16 should have a district that has an X number of
17 dominant party equaling the number of
18 non-dominant parties, and that will create a
19 political environment that will be issue-based
20 and not politically-based.

21 I'm sorry, but it will take away your
22 comfortable little districts that are easy to
23 win, but if we can change our political system
24 to one that has issues instead of political
25 parties, and we can look at our political

1 system as something that is building a country,
2 a state and the nation, it will be far better.

3 I'm sorry, but I don't think the Haitians
4 or the Cubans or any other minority in this
5 city have any more rights than me, a general
6 American.

7 When I was in Europe for three years, I
8 learned German and I spoke it well at the end
9 of three years. When I was in Brazil, I
10 learned Portuguese Brazil -- Brazilian
11 Portuguese, and I spoke it well at the end of
12 three years, and I lived there and worked as an
13 exporter for five. I submit to you that our
14 good immigrants need to do the same.

15 SENATOR GAETZ: Can we bring it back to
16 redistricting, please? That is why we are
17 here.

18 MR. GARA: Redistricting, well, that is
19 what I was talking about, redistricting,
20 because these people are all asking for special
21 benefits because of their special situation.

22 Their special situation is that they are
23 immigrants in another country, and they need to
24 adapt to the country, they need to adapt to its
25 language, its political means and whatever.

1 I did that when I was abroad. It is not
2 hard to do. It is nice to do. You learn the
3 culture, you learn the language, you get it on
4 in the country.

5 So I would ask you to redistrict according
6 to political party demographics so that each --
7 each district has a major party, and that is
8 equaled by the non-dominant parties involved,
9 that would be say Republicans and then
10 Democrats and Independents, or vice versa or
11 whatever.

12 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, your time has
13 lapsed. I appreciate your testimony very much.

14 Next is Harold Foster. Mr. Foster, and
15 then following Mr. Foster, Greg Carney and then
16 Jose Rodriguez and then Evan Ross, if you will
17 be on deck.

18 And we have an on deck circle up here if
19 you'd care to sit up there to make it easier
20 for you to come forward.

21 Mr. Foster, you are recognized. Thanks
22 for coming.

23 MR. FOSTER: Thank you very much. Good
24 afternoon. I also want to respect our own
25 State Representative, Carlos Lopez-Cantera,

1 President of our Miami-Dade delegation. We
2 have a fantastic Miami-Dade delegation that all
3 of us here in Dade County should be very, very
4 proud of. And this is a great room and forum
5 to speak.

6 I live in the state Senate district of
7 Gwen Margolis. She's been phenomenal. We
8 would ask that we keep the coastal areas kind
9 of unified in that sense.

10 I also live in State Seat 107. I also
11 have -- when I was Chief of Staff for
12 Commissioner Simon Cruz, I had the honor of
13 working alongside of Luis Garcia and Richard
14 Steinberg. I commend you both with the
15 phenomenal job you have done, but I couldn't
16 agree more, we're all one county, we're all
17 together, so we shouldn't be looking at Anglo,
18 Hispanic, Haitian-American.

19 It is really in the very best interest of
20 economic development of Miami-Dade County.

21 I would suggest that part of Miami Beach,
22 maybe the south part of Miami Beach be still
23 connected to Miami downtown, Coconut Grove
24 area, and I recommend that for tourism,
25 hospitality and also to keep a -- somewhat of a

1 communication between Miami-Dade County, the
2 City of Miami and the U.S. House, and that is
3 pretty much it.

4 I think you are all doing a brilliant job,
5 and let's hope this all works out for the best.

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

8 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: Next, Greg Carney with the
10 Venetian Islands Homeowners Association, then
11 Jose Rodriguez and then Evan Ross and then
12 Maria Rodriguez from the Florida Immigrant
13 Coalition.

14 Mr. Carney, you are recognized, and we
15 appreciate you taking time to come see us
16 today.

17 MR. CARNEY: Well, thank you very much.
18 As President of the Venetian Island Homeowners
19 Association, I have to say we appreciate the
20 fact that the community -- or the committee
21 here has schlepped -- that is a technical term
22 we use in Miami Beach -- has schlepped its way
23 down here to listen to us.

24 Venetian Island Homeowners Association is
25 one of many homeowners associations that exists

1 in Dade County. We happen to represent the
2 causeway that runs between Miami and Miami
3 Beach behind the Miami Herald building over to
4 South Beach in Miami Beach. We are maybe five,
5 six hundred families in that area. It is not
6 very big.

7 The message I wanted to bring here I think
8 echoes some of the other messages which you
9 have heard, which is we in Dade County are a
10 relatively large county and we have a fairly
11 dense population here.

12 We have enough population in Dade County
13 to have three, four U.S. Congressional
14 Districts that are contained within the county
15 itself.

16 Instead, we have a number of districts
17 that stretch all over the place. You know,
18 District 17 and District 21 are reasonable, but
19 you take a look at our district, which is
20 District 20, and it loops up around into
21 Broward County. District 23 is almost totally
22 insane.

23 If you take a look at that, it is actually
24 two discontinuous districts in terms of
25 population, although it kind of loops out into

1 the Everglades in order to kind of create kind
2 of a continuous map, I guess to meet the letter
3 of whatever the law is.

4 But the point I want to make to the group
5 here is that the compact, contiguous districts
6 make for better representation. If we, the
7 voters, can kind of physically get at you, the
8 Representatives, and know where you are and
9 know who you are and you know who we are, you
10 will meet our needs, you will listen to us.
11 That's been my experience as President of our
12 homeowners association dealing with various
13 political representatives that we have. You
14 will meet our needs.

15 Whether we happen to match you in ethnic
16 background or religion or skin color or
17 whatever, you will meet our needs if you know
18 who we are, we are relatively close to where
19 you are, that sort of thing.

20 So I would like to urge the Committee to
21 pay attention to the amendments that have been
22 passed, look at political bound- -- existing
23 municipal boundaries, if you can, in drawing
24 the districts, and try to get the districts,
25 especially in the United States Congressional

1 Districts, as compact as you possibly can.

2 Thank you very much.

3 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you so much,

4 Mr. Carney.

5 Next, Jose Rodriguez, then Evan Ross, then

6 Maria Rodriguez and then C. J. Ortuno.

7 Mr. Rodriguez, thank you for being here,

8 and we look forward to your testimony.

9 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. Jose Javier

10 Rodriguez, I am a resident of the City of

11 Miami. Thank you for listening to what we have

12 to say today.

13 For me, the Amendments 5 and 6 come down

14 to keeping our communities together, and what

15 that is all about is improving the quality of

16 our democracy when we keep our communities

17 together.

18 I live smack in the middle of my

19 neighborhood. I walk two houses down, and

20 there's a different State Rep district. My

21 neighbor and I speak the same languages, same

22 ethnicity, we are served by the same school,

23 same public transportation, and yet we have two

24 different State Representatives. And, again, I

25 live smack in the middle of my neighborhood.

1 I also work a lot with community-based
2 organizations, both privately and
3 professionally. I am at Legal Services and am
4 active in my community, and it makes it very
5 difficult.

6 Anecdotally, I will tell you that most
7 people do not know who their State Senator or
8 State Representative is. It is just a fact.
9 And what is even worse -- and part of that is
10 because of gerrymandering, it is not
11 exclusively because of that.

12 But one of the effects of that -- one of
13 the things that makes that even worse is that
14 even those who know who they are represented
15 by, most people can't guess or would have a
16 hard time guessing who else is in that same
17 district.

18 So, for example, in Little Havana, would
19 you be able to guess that you are also
20 represented by the same person as people in
21 Cocoplum? You might not be able to guess that.
22 And some of your introductions in terms of
23 listing all the different places you represent
24 I think communicates -- communicates that
25 probably better than I just did.

1 And I think, you know, the effect of what
2 would happen of keeping communities together is
3 echoing a lot of what has been said in prior
4 testimony is that it would create less safe
5 seats. And that is a good thing.

6 We as voters want competition, we want
7 choice. And, you know, if you look at the
8 statistics, a quarter of Miami-Dade County's
9 registered voters have no party affiliation,
10 and where would their voice be in there?

11 So I just want to echo a lot of what has
12 been said already, and really encourage you to
13 get this done quickly and get it done fairly,
14 and hopefully it won't have to go through the
15 Supreme Court and what-not. Thank you very
16 much.

17 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, sir.

18 Next, Evan Ross, and following Mr. Ross,
19 Maria Rodriguez and then C. J. Ortuno and then
20 Jonathon Fried.

21 Mr. Ross, thank you for coming very much.

22 MR. ROSS: Thank you for having me.

23 Good morning, my name is Evan Ross. I am
24 fortunate to be represented by Representative
25 Richard Steinberg and Senator Gwen Margolis.

1 After hearing those long lists -- the long
2 list of cities that each of you represent in
3 your introductions, I am very hopeful that when
4 this process concludes, we can significantly
5 shorten those lists, thereby giving each of you
6 the ability to better represent the people
7 within your districts.

8 I am going to attempt to keep my remarks
9 brief so that my remaining time may be used in
10 order to answer the two questions that I will
11 ask.

12 The first question is directed to all of
13 our Representatives on stage, and I will simply
14 ask for a show of hands to respond to it.

15 SENATOR GAETZ: I'll tell you what, we are
16 not going to do show-of-hands questions. You
17 can ask any question you want, and then at the
18 time remaining at the end of the hearing, we
19 will ask Representatives or Senators if they
20 wish to comment on any questions.

21 MR. ROSS: I understand. I would still
22 very much appreciate a show of hands being that
23 it will save us time.

24 Public records show that you have spent at
25 least a million dollars hiring lawyers to

1 oppose Fair Districts amendments. Now that you
2 are spending our tax dollars to have amendments
3 held unconstitutional that were passed by an
4 over 63 percent of the population -- the voting
5 population of the state of Florida, by a show
6 of hands, to all of our elected Representatives
7 here today, please raise your hand if you think
8 that the House of Representatives should drop
9 its legal challenge and attack on Amendment 5.

10 Thank you to our Representatives who have
11 raised their hands.

12 My second question I will direct
13 specifically to Senator Gaetz and
14 Representative Weatherford.

15 The Florida House has joined the
16 Diaz-Balart/Brown lawsuit and is trying to get
17 a federal court to declare Amendment 6
18 unconstitutional, once again, even though over
19 63 percent of voters in Florida supported it.

20 Are private funds being collected or used
21 to fund the House position in this lawsuit?
22 And I understand that the questions will be
23 answered at the end.

24 SENATOR GAETZ: We will do our best to do
25 that, yes. Any other testimony that you have?

1 MR. ROSS: Again, I would very much like
2 to thank those Representatives who chose to
3 acknowledge my first question, and I think by
4 the response of the room, I am not the only one
5 who very much appreciated your support for 63
6 plus percent of the voters of Florida, and I
7 thank you again for that.

8 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, Mr.
9 Ross.

10 Maria Rodriguez with the Florida Immigrant
11 Coalition. Ms. Rodriguez, thank you for being
12 here today.

13 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Good morning. Thank you.
14 Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you,
15 and thank you for the people who came here to
16 share our perspectives.

17 We played a role in the We Are Florida
18 campaign, and we did that to bring those most
19 affected to the decision-making bodies, to make
20 sure that many of the people who contribute to
21 this great state are seen so that we can deepen
22 democracy and enrich democracy. I know that
23 many of you witnessed those humble,
24 hard-working voices there.

25 I am here to say that this is also part of

1 that process, and, again, I appreciate the
2 opportunity to participate. I think that the
3 immigrant community in Florida as a community
4 of interest is undervalued, and we are facing
5 sharp attacks, partly because we don't have the
6 political representation that we deserve
7 throughout the peninsula.

8 It is obvious that in Miami-Dade and
9 southern Florida, there's large immigrant
10 communities, 588,000 naturalized citizens here
11 in Miami-Dade. But you know what? Immigrants
12 have been in the state of Florida since its
13 inception, as seen in the State Seal, as seen
14 in St. Augustine, Ybor City, Miami, Orlando,
15 and the one thing that I want as a take-home
16 message is immigrants and immigration have been
17 good for Florida and will continue to be good
18 for Florida when they are given an opportunity.

19 Whether it is Miami, Cubans, the
20 Jamaicans, Haitians in Miami, or whether it is
21 Puerto Ricans in Orlando, when people are given
22 an opportunity, they will give back to the
23 most. We do not want to exclude, we want to
24 include.

25 And I agree with the previous speaker who

1 said we want to help people integrate and we
2 need policies and leadership to help people
3 integrate, because that doesn't happen without
4 support. But there are immigrants throughout
5 the U.S. 27. There's been 40 years of Mexican
6 immigrants who have fed this state and fed this
7 nation for -- as an example of a community of
8 interest of farm workers who have no
9 representation, no Mexican representation in
10 the State Legislature, even though they have
11 been living down the U.S. 27 corridor for more
12 than 40 years, four and five generations, and
13 that is an important consideration.

14 Smaller counties, Collier County has
15 23,000 naturalized citizens, Brevard County has
16 26,000 naturalized citizens. It is important
17 to understand that the immigrant rights
18 movement is developing not only its breadth and
19 depth, but its political sophistication of
20 representation. We appreciate --

21 SENATOR GAETZ: Ms. Rodriguez --

22 MS. RODRIGUEZ: -- the opportunity to
23 speak.

24 SENATOR GAETZ: -- could I ask you to --
25 oh, thank you very much.

1 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Thank you very much.

2 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, you are just on
3 time.

4 C. J. Ortuno, and then Jonathon Fried and
5 then Daniel Granado and then Robert -- I'm
6 sorry, Ronald Fulton.

7 Thank you very much for being here, sir,
8 and we welcome your testimony.

9 MR. ORTUNO: Thank you. Good morning,
10 distinguished Committee members. My name is C.
11 J. Ortuno. I am the Executive Director of Save
12 Dade, the largest county-wide lesbian, gay,
13 bisexual and transgender civil rights
14 organization in Miami-Dade County.

15 It is estimated that our community
16 comprises more than 300,000 residents in the
17 county. Statewide, we are roughly two million.

18 People who are LGBT fully embrace the
19 privileges as well as the responsibilities that
20 come with being part of the great Floridian
21 mosaic. We are no more or no less American
22 because of our sexual orientation or gender
23 identity.

24 As you embark on the important work of
25 reapportionment, I want to leave you with a few

1 thoughts that will hopefully remain with you
2 throughout the endeavor.

3 I am a resident of the City of Miami
4 Beach. I live there with my wife and
5 three-year-old daughter. And as a resident, my
6 family and I have always been perplexed that
7 three districts -- State Representatives that
8 make up the City of Miami are split between
9 three distinct Representatives, three. Three
10 different individuals represent 85 blocks
11 within one city.

12 However, the opportunity to right a wrong
13 is before you. We see the goal of
14 redistricting to more fairly represent the
15 changes in our state's population and represent
16 communities of common interest.

17 The LGBT community is one such community
18 of interest that to date has not been
19 represented in Tallahassee. The citizens of
20 Florida have never elected an openly gay person
21 to the State House, to the State Senate, to the
22 Cabinet.

23 We have never elected a U.S.
24 Congressperson, no one, never. And let me be
25 clear, this has not been by choice; rather, the

1 gerrymandering of districts has proven to be a
2 burden upon openly gay candidates as they face
3 the daunting challenge of running in districts
4 that fail to bring together communities of
5 common interest, and this has to change.

6 LGBT Floridians live all over the state.
7 The 2000 census ranked us fourth of the highest
8 population of LGBT people in the country.
9 Jacksonville, according to the 2010 census, is
10 estimated to have one of the biggest
11 populations of gay parents, with nearly
12 30 percent -- 34 percent of gay people
13 parenting in that city.

14 Wilton Manors, Miami Shores and Key West
15 are third, sixth and eighth on the list of
16 cities with the highest concentration of LGBT
17 people, respectively.

18 Most alarming is the roster of states that
19 have had not -- have had openly LGBT state
20 officials so far. Vermont, Maryland, Alabama,
21 Arkansas, Nevada, even Texas and Utah are part
22 of this list.

23 And looking at the Voting Rights Act, I
24 leave you with these final thoughts: The LGBT
25 population is sufficiently large and

1 geographically compact --

2 SENATOR GAETZ: I need to ask you to
3 conclude, sir. You are out of time.

4 MR. ORTUNO: -- the LGBT community is
5 politically cohesive, and there is clear and
6 convincing evidence of racial block voting.

7 We must no longer deny the LGBT community
8 a voice in Florida state politics. Thank you
9 very much.

10 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you for your
11 testimony today, sir.

12 Jonathon Fried is next, and following
13 Mr. Fried is Daniel Granado, then Ronald
14 Fulton, and then I believe it is Badili Jones.

15 Jonathon Fried is not here? Then we will
16 pass him for the moment and go to Daniel
17 Granado. And then if the others will please
18 come forward to the first row and be on deck.

19 Mr. Granado, thank you for being here and
20 you are recognized, sir.

21 MR. GRANADO: Good morning.

22 SENATOR GAETZ: Good morning.

23 MR. GRANADO: One district I would like to
24 see changes, the (inaudible) district, which
25 includes Miami suburbs, you know, across

1 swamps, farms, all the way to Ft. Myers
2 suburbs. Does that make sense to you? So I
3 would like to see that change, maybe get some
4 of (inaudible) parts, which is heavily
5 gerrymandered.

6 And that is basically it, and I would like
7 to see term limits and persuade Mr. West to run
8 for Senate.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.
10 Got in a couple of commercials there at the
11 end.

12 Ronald Fulton. Mr. Fulton, are you here,
13 sir? Mr. Fulton has left, okay. I'm sorry?
14 Mr. Fulton?

15 A VOICE: He is in a wheelchair.

16 SENATOR GAETZ: Oh, Mr. Fulton yields his
17 time.

18 Is it Badili Jones? And I apologize if I
19 butchered that first name.

20 MR. JONES: Actually, you did a very good
21 job. I am Badili Jones. I live in Miami-Dade.
22 I want to say good morning to my
23 Representatives, Senator Braynon, I live in his
24 district, and my Representative Cynthia
25 Stafford. I am very proud of the service that

1 they have been providing to the district that I
2 live in.

3 I am the political officer for Florida New
4 Majority, and so the message that I bring is
5 not -- is a reflection on the consultations
6 that we have had with our members and with our
7 coalition partners throughout Miami-Dade.

8 In general, I just want to make sure --
9 reiterate that the State of Florida should
10 ensure transparency, fairness and compliance
11 with the Voting Rights Act with equal
12 protection.

13 And to just be more specific, we are
14 concerned that the communities of interest in
15 south Florida, south Dade particularly, Senate
16 District 39, that the African-American
17 community in Senate District 39 will continue
18 to be able to represent -- to be able to elect
19 a Representative of their choice.

20 In regard to Congressional District 25, I
21 don't have to restate what people have already
22 said.

23 We are concerned that that district is not
24 representative of communities of interest, and
25 has only been drawn to protect an incumbent or

1 a particular political party.

2 And then finally, I just want to say in
3 terms of Congressional District 17, our biggest
4 concern or the biggest response that we got
5 from our community is that institutions -- that
6 the lack of institutions within a district.

7 Congressional District 17 is one of the
8 poorest districts in the country, and that we
9 feel that if we add certain institutions, say
10 the Port of Miami or the airport, into
11 Congressional District 17, there will be more
12 investment in terms of infrastructural
13 investment, not simply in terms of jobs, but to
14 add pockets of opportunity into Congressional
15 District 17.

16 Finally, it is disappointing that the
17 state is using our tax dollars to fight
18 Amendment 5 and 6. We think that Amendment 5
19 and 6 is very helpful, and that as long as it
20 is applied in light of the Voting Rights Act,
21 we will have a fairer and more representational
22 -- representation in our Congress and in our
23 legislative body. Thank you very much.

24 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.

25 We appreciate your testimony. And -- sir? Not

1 at all, you are recognized, sir. We definitely
2 want to hear your testimony.

3 MR. FRIED: Appreciate it. I went out --

4 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you so much for
5 coming by.

6 MR. FRIED: -- to put money in the meter.

7 I -- it has been very interesting to
8 listen to the testimony here today, and it has
9 made me reflect a lot.

10 If we lived in an ideal world, I think
11 many of the comments would be very appropriate,
12 but, unfortunately, we don't live in an ideal
13 world, and this redistricting, you have a
14 tremendously difficult task of figuring out
15 what is fair and ensuring that different
16 communities of interest have -- are adequately
17 represented.

18 So I think it is perhaps easiest to say
19 what is not fair and the things that some of us
20 -- clearly -- obviously not fair.

21 Just to give you an example, let me tell
22 you a story. Years ago, I remember we visited
23 our newly-elected member of Congress, and he
24 told us how thrilled he was to represent our
25 city and that when he was a State Legislator,

1 he ensured that the district was drawn to
2 include our city.

3 Now, I think there's something wrong when
4 people are drawing their own districts and, for
5 whatever reason, are ensuring that a certain
6 place is included, whatever that reason is.
7 There needs to be really objective, fair
8 criteria. And, again, the difficulty is
9 figuring out what those fair criteria are.

10 But let me just say something else that
11 seems not right, and it is really hard to put a
12 finger on why it is not right.

13 District -- Congressional District 25 is
14 way spread out. It includes, you know, from
15 the Keys all the way up through Homestead, west
16 Dade, all the way to Collier County. And the
17 truth is it is possible to draw a Congressional
18 District that represents communities of
19 interest in Latino community, the
20 African-American community and the
21 Haitian-American community that would be more
22 contiguous, more compact.

23 And just another thing to say, even though
24 it is not in the criteria, I mean, Collier
25 County is a totally different media market. So

1 you are dealing with two different sort of sets
2 of media, two different -- really different
3 communities.

4 And so I would hope that you could really
5 take that kind of thing into account and at
6 least try to draw a district where at least we
7 are talking to the same press in that district,
8 even if it is in -- which is fine here in Dade
9 County, we love it in at least three languages.
10 Thank you very much.

11 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Mr. Fried. I
12 appreciate your testimony.

13 Our next speakers will be Jean-Pierre
14 Bado, Council-member Pete Cabrera from the City
15 of Doral and then Mark Bryant with the Florida
16 New Majority and then Ciro Espinel, I believe,
17 Espinel, and if you will come forward and take
18 your seats in the front row, we will hear from
19 all of you, we hope.

20 Jean-Pierre Bado. Jean-Pierre, are you
21 here? We will pass you for the moment then.

22 Councilman Pete Cabrera. Councilman,
23 thank you for your service to the City and to
24 our community, and you are recognized, sir.

25 COUNCILMAN CABRERA: Thank you very much.

1 Thank you to all of you, Mr. Chair, and all of
2 you here, many friends up there, for taking the
3 time to listen to the people. I apologize for
4 my voice, I've had a cold. Listen to the
5 people before you make these maps.

6 I believe we are in a nation that today we
7 are more ethnically diverse than anytime in our
8 history. I believe as a group of people, from
9 my experience, that are grateful to be in this
10 great nation.

11 I think they are proud to contribute to
12 this nation. And this diversity, I believe,
13 enriches all of us. At the same time, it
14 creates unique needs, needs that need to be met
15 so we can continue to grow as a community.

16 Some feel that by representing these
17 people or representing special groups, we
18 actually divide. I believe we unite, because I
19 believe the only way that we can grow as a
20 nation is to embrace this diversity and
21 understand it and represent it.

22 By drawing maps that represents -- and
23 Doral at the time of incorporation I believe
24 was the first city in the nation to actually be
25 primarily Hispanic at time of incorporation.

1 Seventy percent of the community were
2 Hispanic at the time that we incorporated. I
3 have seen that, I have seen the growth over the
4 last ten years, and this diversity enriches our
5 city.

6 I believe that needs representation. So
7 as an elected official from the city that is
8 primarily Hispanic, I believe that the maps
9 need to be drawn in a way that these
10 minorities, not just Hispanics, but all
11 minorities are properly represented.

12 So I thank you. I believe that by doing
13 that, not only will you adhere to the laws, but
14 I think we will all be winning, I think we will
15 all benefit from that. So thank you very much
16 for your time today.

17 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Councilman.

18 Mark Bryant for the Florida New Majority,
19 followed by, if I have it right, Ciro Espinel
20 and then Councilman Jesse Walters from the
21 Village of Miami Shores where I used to live
22 for ten years.

23 Mark Bryant.

24 MR. BRYANT: Good evening, good afternoon.

25 My name is Mark Bryant. I am a representative

1 of --

2 SENATOR GAETZ: Mr. Bryant, could I ask
3 you to speak into the microphone so everyone
4 could hear you?

5 MR. BRYANT: Thank you. My name is Mark
6 Bryant, and I am a representative of LIFT for
7 low income -- Low Income Families for --
8 Families Together in the City of Miami.

9 I have been a long resident of Liberty
10 City here in the City of Miami, and we -- I
11 live in Liberty City, which is a minority --
12 majority-minority district, and at the same
13 time, with a minority influence district.

14 We the citizens of Liberty City, we do not
15 want our district to be diluted in such a way
16 that it would deprive the citizens of the
17 opportunity to elect a candidate of choice --
18 of choice.

19 Voting dilution is prohibited under the
20 Voting Rights Act of 1965. It prohibits
21 minorities from making decisions that we feel
22 that best represent our community. Thank you.

23 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.
24 We appreciate your being with us.

25 Next, Ciro Espinel. Ciro? Not here?

1 Councilman Jesse Walters? Councilman, how
2 is everything in my second hometown, Miami
3 Shores? 800 Northeast 98th Street I was at.
4 Great city, great village.

5 COUNCILMAN WALTERS: Thank you very much.
6 It is a pleasure to be here with all of you,
7 and I appreciate everyone coming down to Miami
8 and hearing our testimony.

9 I am not only a Councilman in Miami
10 Shores, I am the Executive Director of the
11 Chamber of Commerce in Miami Shores as well.
12 So I have a unique perspective, I think, in
13 that I have just run for election and heard
14 many viewpoints from people, and I also hear
15 from members of the business community.

16 I want to applaud the collegiality and the
17 respect that I have heard from all the
18 speakers, as well as from the people on the
19 head table today. I think that is what we need
20 more of is mutual respect.

21 There is a lot of passion in the room, but
22 I think people have been kind to each other,
23 which I think is important.

24 Two anecdotes from when I did run for
25 election. I heard from one voter who said to

1 me, "They're just not going to let this happen,
2 are they?" And, of course, what she meant by
3 that was Amendments 5 and 6.

4 And I don't know how to answer that, but I
5 didn't get a good impression from what I read
6 in the paper that there is a will in
7 Tallahassee to honor what the people voted for.

8 And in Miami Shores, we voted for it
9 overwhelmingly. Eighty percent of the people
10 voted for it.

11 The second thing was, and this came from a
12 Republican who said to me, "Jesse, we have two
13 State Senators." Two excellent State Senators
14 who are right here at the table, I am pleased
15 to see. "Why -- I know I am not going to have
16 a Republican represent me as a State Senator,
17 but why do we have two State Senators in a town
18 of 10,000 people?" And these are hard
19 questions to answer.

20 So I would just respectfully ask those of
21 you who will be making this decision in
22 Tallahassee to consider what people are saying
23 and to honor the will of Amendments 5 and 6.

24 Thank you very much.

25 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,

1 Councilman.

2 Next is Jackie Colon, representing NALED,
3 and then Will Brown and then Bradford Brown
4 with the NAACP.

5 Jackie, are you here? Not here? Jackie?

6 MS. COLON: Yes, I am here.

7 SENATOR GAETZ: You are?

8 MS. COLON: Yes.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: Well, come on down. We
10 would be delighted to hear from you this
11 morning.

12 MS. COLON: Good morning. My name is
13 Jackie Colon. It is a pleasure to be here in
14 front of these distinguished ladies and
15 gentlemen. I represent NALEO. I am the
16 Florida Director for the educational fund.

17 It is a nonprofit and nonpartisan
18 organization that facilitates the full
19 participation of Hispanics in America for the
20 American political process.

21 I am specifically here to discuss central
22 Florida. We spoke before you there, and we
23 would like for you to consider creating a
24 Congressional District in the central Florida
25 area, specifically the Orange, Osceola and Polk

1 communities.

2 As you folks know, the growth has been
3 tremendous there in regards to Hispanics. It
4 grew by 30 percent in the last decade. And as
5 you folks know in the state of Florida, we went
6 from 2.5 million to 4.2 million, with Hispanics
7 being 55 percent of that growth.

8 So I would just like to thank all of you
9 for the time for listening to the community.
10 And to the gentleman who previously mentioned
11 in regards to being a general American, as he
12 put it, because I was listening, too, he is
13 looking at a general American.

14 I am an immigrant, I am a former Chairman
15 of the Board of County Commissioners in the
16 Space Coast, and I think that it is really
17 important for us to realize that this is our
18 country. We might be immigrants, and we are
19 proud to be Americans.

20 So, again, I thank all of you for your
21 time, for listening to us, and for having
22 compassion and the respect that everyone has
23 shown today. Thank you.

24 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, and thank you
25 for the map that your organization presented to

1 us. It was extraordinarily helpful to the
2 Committee. Thanks for your testimony.

3 MS. COLON: Thank you. We appreciate it,
4 Mr. Chairman.

5 SENATOR GAETZ: Sure.

6 MS. COLON: Thank you.

7 SENATOR GAETZ: Our next presenter is Will
8 Brown. Mr. Brown, are you here? Will Brown?

9 Bradford Brown with the NAACP. Mr. Brown,
10 thank you very much for your testimony, and you
11 are recognized.

12 MR. BRADFORD BROWN: Thank you very much,
13 and Honorable Representatives and Senators, I
14 appreciate your being here and this
15 opportunity, and I will leave my talking points
16 with you since I --

17 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you.

18 MR. BRADFORD BROWN: -- won't cover them
19 all here.

20 Redistricting is a very critical issue for
21 the NAACP, and I serve as Vice-President here
22 in Miami, but I am also on the State Executive
23 Committee.

24 And it is a critical issue because it is a
25 right that was won by blood, by blood in the

1 American Revolution, but got votes for
2 African-Americans in New England and the
3 northeast, through the Civil War, through the
4 martyrs of the 50s and the 60s.

5 And redistricting is what makes sure that
6 that vote actually counts and that actually is
7 meaningful.

8 We are very concerned, of course, that the
9 Voting Rights Act is strictly adhered to, as
10 was voted on and included in Amendments 5 and
11 6. Packing and cracking have already been
12 mentioned.

13 And I will just be very specific about one
14 issue everybody has talked about, Congressional
15 District 25, but in addition to going all the
16 way across the Everglades, it split the
17 communities of African descent in south Dade
18 into three Congressional Districts instead of
19 putting one into an area where their votes
20 could be of influence.

21 And I want to note this community of
22 interest is really the critical thing, and what
23 the courts have decided and what defines a
24 community of interest.

25 One is the extent in which non-members of

1 the group recognize that group as a community
2 of interest, the extent to which members
3 identify themselves with that particular group,
4 and even more particularly, the extent to which
5 members are affected by governmental action,
6 because that is what the voting is all about.

7 And we certainly want very much the
8 consideration of community of interest, and we
9 in the NAACP feel that the citizens of African
10 descent are one of the most important
11 communities of interest, along with others in
12 the state of Florida.

13 We do also want to urge you to come back
14 out to us when you have drawn your maps so that
15 we can comment on them.

16 And when you produce the data for those
17 maps, we would like to see it in precinct and
18 district level voting age population,
19 desegregated by race and national origin, and
20 also by those eligible to vote, because while
21 we divide them up on population, it is the
22 voters that actually determine who is going to
23 be representing them.

24 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.

25 MR. BRADFORD BROWN: So with that, I thank

1 you, and I will leave my remarks at that desk
2 over there.

3 SENATOR GAETZ: Please do, sir.

4 MR. BROWN: All right.

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

7 And our next speakers will be John
8 Laffitte with the King Jesus Ministry, Lisa
9 Sloat, Vivian Casals-Munoz and Kelly Greene.

10 And, happily, we have been able to get
11 even more people who would like to speak. That
12 means we will hear from more of you, but it
13 also means that in order to be respectful to
14 all of those who wish to speak, so we can hear
15 everyone and then have a chance to answer some
16 of the questions and factual points that have
17 been raised, we are going to be even tighter on
18 time.

19 So I am going to ask you if you can hold
20 it to two and a half minutes. If you have
21 extended remarks, we will be happy to include
22 those in the record.

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

25 MR. LAFFITTE: Well, thank you very much.

1 I want to thank the Legislature for their time
2 in coming here. My name is John Laffitte, and
3 I am a natural born citizen. My parents left
4 Cuba in the '50s to escape the Communist
5 revolution, and I have since -- lived since
6 1994 in Miami-Dade County.

7 I have been able to practice as a
8 professional engineer, adjunct faculty,
9 University of Miami and FIU graduate faculty,
10 but I am part of an associate -- I am an
11 associate pastor at King Jesus Ministry, which
12 today is one of the largest Hispanic churches
13 in the entire nation.

14 We serve over 18,000 people in Monroe,
15 Dade and Broward County, and we are here to
16 speak on behalf of the Hispanic community, and
17 in a representative government such as ours, it
18 is very important that minorities have the
19 opportunity to field and elect representatives
20 that will be able to speak and have a voice for
21 us.

22 Therefore, what we ask in this
23 redistricting process is that there be enough
24 districts to allow such candidates to be
25 fielded, as well as in places such as Broward

1 where there are few opportunities to field and
2 to have such candidates.

3 Finally, I would like to ask that there
4 would be no retrogression of Hispanic votes
5 and/or diluted in any way, shape or form. So
6 thank you very much for your time, and God
7 bless you.

8 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Mr. Laffitte,
9 for that testimony.

10 Lisa Sloat is next, followed by Vivian
11 Casals-Munoz, if I get that correct, and then
12 Kelly Greene, and then Lili Bach.

13 Ms. Sloat, thank you for being here, and
14 you are recognized.

15 MS. SLOAT: Thank you. My name is Lisa
16 Sloat. I was born in Jacksonville, Florida,
17 educated in the Florida public school system.
18 I have lived in Miami many years. So I have a
19 feel for north Florida and south Florida.

20 I wanted to say that some of the speakers
21 today really did a wonderful job of explaining
22 some of the issues that I have.

23 Janet McAliley in particular spoke about
24 the fact that we can elect public servants and
25 I say that specifically because public servants

1 are committed to serving their entire
2 communities, electing public servants versus
3 politicians who are beholden to an ideology or
4 a specific group.

5 I am a strong supporter of implementing
6 Amendments 5 and 6. I will repeat that they
7 were passed by 62 or 63 percent of the voters.
8 The money that was spent to promote and to --
9 and against Amendments 5 and 6 passing were
10 dollars spent by community people, not taxpayer
11 dollars that were sent to the State of Florida
12 to cover the expenses to take care of the
13 citizens of Florida.

14 So I also want to support what I think his
15 name was Evan Ross, who spoke about withdrawing
16 from the lawsuit. I believe that any monies
17 spent on the lawsuit is taking monies away from
18 the citizens of the state of Florida.

19 I'll also support that a response be given
20 to State Representative Randolph's request for
21 transparency in how any monies are used, and
22 that any monies that have been set aside to
23 fight the implementations of either Amendments
24 5 or 6 be returned to the people of Florida.

25 And, lastly, I want to say that -- well,

1 two things. Rhonda Sibiliala did a very good job
2 of describing the problems we have with
3 gerrymandered districts and how they are not
4 truly representing the people.

5 They are not represented by public
6 servants. They are represented by politicians
7 who drew them to support their own
8 re-elections.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: And could I ask you to
10 conclude, please, ma'am?

11 MS. SLOAT: Yes, and I will conclude with
12 the same points that the woman from the League
13 of Voters meant -- said. The timeline now
14 disenfranchises -- the proposed timeline
15 disenfranchises voters in the state of Florida.

16 I think that by allowing the time frame to
17 go too close to the time --

18 SENATOR GAETZ: Speaking of time frames --

19 MS. SLOAT: Yes.

20 SENATOR GAETZ: -- your time has elapsed,
21 and we thank you for your testimony.

22 MS. SLOAT: Okay. Thank you.

23 SENATOR GAETZ: Next is Vivian
24 Casals-Munoz, followed by Kelly Greene,
25 followed by Lili Bach and then Lida

1 Rodriguez -- I think it is Taseff -- Taseff.

2 Vivian, you are recognized. Thank you.

3 MS. CASALS-MUNOZ: Thank you so much.

4 Good morning. I am a Councilwoman for the City
5 of Hialeah, second-largest city in the county,
6 and I want to thank the Chair and all the
7 members that are here today for taking the time
8 to explain and get information from the
9 citizens before the maps are drawn.

10 That is so important, because usually we
11 get them after everything is done, and then
12 there are no time frames for change.

13 Again, I do represent the second-largest
14 city in the county, and I understand that
15 Miami-Dade County is a unique community, one
16 like no other community in the state of
17 Florida.

18 We are 65 percent Hispanic in the city,
19 and yet we are only represented by 50 percent
20 of the Senators. That needs to change.

21 I understand the need for the
22 representation that focuses on our community.
23 I am not trying to divide the communities. I
24 am trying to get the representations that will
25 understand the needs of each and every

1 community.

2 Our districts should be divided that we
3 have representation from similar communities.

4 We have -- right now, we have Hialeah
5 Gardens, Miami Lakes, Miami Springs, Medley, we
6 all have the same needs and the same -- and we
7 share so many of the same services.

8 The -- one of the things that is very
9 important is when we do the redistricting and
10 we are represented by our members in
11 Tallahassee, we have certain needs like the
12 Enterprise Zone and the HUBZone that we have to
13 make sure that stay together in the district.

14 We have to make sure that we have the
15 representation of the Hispanic community.
16 Again, we are not trying to divide our
17 communities, we are trying to unite them, but
18 we need to make sure that we have accurate
19 representation, and that the people that
20 represent us understand our needs.

21 Thank you very much, have a great day and
22 God bless you.

23 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
24 ma'am.

25 And next we will hear from Kelly Greene,

1 and following Ms. Greene, Lili Bach.

2 Ms. Greene, thank you very much for being
3 here, and you are recognized as well.

4 MS. GREENE: Good morning, Honorable Chair
5 and members of the Redistricting Committee. My
6 name is Kelly Greene of Northwest -- 12
7 Northwest 116th Street, Miami, Florida,
8 unincorporated Dade.

9 I represent people with disabilities
10 served by Center for Independent Living of
11 South Florida. There are 500,000 people with
12 disabilities in Miami-Dade, and we were part of
13 the more than 60 percent of the people that
14 voted for Fair Districts.

15 Yes, we voted, and we represent all of the
16 ethnicities and races, we are gay and we are
17 straight. And so whenever we look at our
18 representatives, we are really looking at
19 people, and we are looking at people who have
20 honesty and integrity.

21 We don't care, honestly, if you are a
22 Republican or a Democrat or an Independent. We
23 are looking for people that have a high degree
24 of integrity. That is what we want, and some
25 of you represent that.

1 We look at the actions of our Legislators
2 and how they voted on the issues. We vote
3 across party lines. Thank you.

4 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
5 Ms. Greene.

6 Lili Bach. Is Ms. Bach here? Thank you
7 for being here, Ms. Bach, and following Ms.
8 Bach is Lida Rodriguez-Taseff, I believe,
9 Taseff, and then Mayor Daisy Black from the
10 Village of El Portal.

11 Ms. Bach, thank you for coming, and you
12 are recognized.

13 MS. BACH: Good morning. Thank you so
14 much.

15 SENATOR GAETZ: And you can raise that
16 mike if you would like, ma'am.

17 MS. BACH: Okay. Thank you very much. I
18 want to keep it as short as possible in the
19 interest -- so that way everybody here can
20 maybe go back to Tallahassee and come up with
21 the maps.

22 So in the interest of time, this has been
23 said that this Town Hall is for the sake of
24 listening to the people. I believe that the
25 people have spoken overwhelmingly.

1 And just fundamentally, back in the day in
2 high school, I believe it was taught just, you
3 know, one voice, one vote, so I would like that
4 to be exercised.

5 Anyway, moving forward, I would like to
6 know just how much of the taxpayer dollars are
7 being spent on these Town Halls and why can't
8 that money be used for job creation and to
9 better improve, you know, Florida as a whole.

10 And, lastly, I just would like to know,
11 where are the maps? You have put us to work in
12 using these site-building sites, but I don't
13 think that is our job, I thought that was your
14 guys' job.

15 So I would just like to know where are the
16 maps, and to just please stop playing that
17 political game, you know, like I think all of
18 us can say here that we're sick of it, and, you
19 know, in the best interest of everybody from
20 all across, please just stop playing party
21 politics and do your job, and let's come
22 together and make this happen. So thank you
23 very much.

24 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Ms. Bach.

25 Next we will hear from Lida Rodriguez, and

1 I am pronouncing it correctly, Taseff?

2 MS. RODRIGUEZ-TASEFF: You are absolutely
3 pronouncing it correctly.

4 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, ma'am, and you
5 are recognized.

6 MS. RODRIGUEZ-TASEFF: Thank you very
7 much, members of the Committee. Lida
8 Rodriguez-Taseff, I am a lawyer. I am also a
9 long-time resident of south Florida. I am the
10 Co-Chair of South Florida Jobs with Justice,
11 which is a labor community coalition that
12 represents and works to improve the lives of
13 working Miami-Dade County residents.

14 I am also on the Board of Latino Justice,
15 which is a National civil rights group. And I
16 live on Miami Beach. Senator Margolis is my
17 representative, as is Representative Garcia.

18 I am here to focus us in a little bit on
19 the issue of the unjustified dispersion of
20 racial minorities and communities of interest.

21 This unjustified, unnecessary splitting of
22 racial minorities and communities of interest
23 is happening vis-a-vis Districts 21 and 25,
24 Congressional Districts, and that is really
25 what I want to focus on.

1 Later today, members of this community
2 will be presenting you with a map for how to
3 redraw District 25 in order to keep our
4 communities of interest, our racial minorities,
5 together.

6 One of the goals will be to eliminate
7 Immokalee from the representation, and also
8 Naples, because they really do not reflect the
9 same issues and concerns and need for
10 representation that, say, for example, the
11 people of Kendall need.

12 And we will be striving to keep Kendall
13 together, because the people of Kendall don't
14 need three different Representatives, they need
15 one.

16 And our goal here, because the most
17 important focus of the activists involved in
18 civil rights is the protection of the very
19 important gains that were made as a result of
20 the Voting Rights Act.

21 And I know that none of you will be
22 forgetting that, and I know many people have
23 spoken today about the importance of the
24 passage of the Fair Districts Amendment 5 and
25 6, but the equal importance is to be given to

1 the protection of the rights of racial
2 minorities that was provided by the Voting
3 Rights Act.

4 And I know that you, in drawing these
5 communities, will take into account the fact
6 that people in Miami-Dade County who are one
7 community, racial groups that vote together,
8 that have common issues, common schools, common
9 highways, common bus lines, common churches,
10 need to stay together, and we appreciate the
11 fact that you are here listening to us, and we
12 will be providing you with maps and we will
13 continue to be providing you with concrete
14 input for how you can keep our racial and
15 ethnic communities of interest together. Thank
16 you.

17 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
18 ma'am. We appreciate that testimony.

19 Next we will hear from the Honorable Daisy
20 Black, Mayor of the Village of El Portal.
21 Madam Mayor, thank you for your service to the
22 community, and you are recognized.

23 MAYOR BLACK: Thank you all for being here
24 today, and it is an honor for me to be here and
25 I thank you all for putting this on.

1 I am from one of the cities in Miami-Dade
2 County, not the largest, but the best, okay. I
3 am here representing these same cities, the
4 small ones and the large ones in Dade County
5 who are divided by several, as some of my
6 predecessors have said, many -- not many, but
7 at least more than one District Representative,
8 whether it is the House or the Senate.

9 And this seems to dilute what kind of
10 clout we have in Tallahassee, because if we got
11 to go to two or three different people to get
12 something done, sometimes that hurts us.

13 Okay. I am not going to repeat a lot of
14 the things that I have heard, because I agree
15 with a lot of the people who spoke before me,
16 but Florida, and in particular Dade County, is
17 a multi-ethnic state as well as county.

18 It's been that way since Florida was
19 discovered by Christopher Columbus, who was a
20 Hispanic, and also by General Basu, who was a
21 Haitian who fought in the St. Augustine War
22 with the Spanish American War.

23 So our community and our state is a
24 multi-ethnic community and a multi-ethnic
25 state. We cannot get past that. But there

1 are --

2 SENATOR GAETZ: Excuse me, Madam Mayor,
3 just out of respect for you, I would like to
4 ask the Committee members if they will give the
5 Mayor complete attention, please.

6 Thank you, Madam Mayor, please go ahead.

7 MAYOR BLACK: Okay, I talk loud. Okay.

8 All right. So what we are trying to say
9 is we are representative of everybody. There's
10 historical representation in Dade County with
11 all different groups, and that includes the
12 Anglos, and I want to address the guy who
13 thought that he was left out, because I am
14 saying no, you are not.

15 I grew up in Overtown and Liberty City. I
16 grew up here before I-95 went through Overtown
17 and Liberty City. So I know what the city was
18 -- how it can be broken up, and then you lose
19 the people that you respect and love.

20 So I am just saying, please do not divide
21 us anymore than what we have to be divided.
22 Back in 2000, before redistricting, Overtown
23 and Liberty City, the majority part of Liberty
24 City was District 108.

25 Now it is divided between 108 and 109, and

1 I want to give honor to my -- one of my State
2 Representatives, Cynthia Stafford, Ms. Campbell
3 who is not here, my State Senator Braynon.

4 But the thing I am saying now is when we
5 get over to 109, 109 goes from Overtown, one of
6 the most impoverished communities --

7 SENATOR GAETZ: Madam Mayor --

8 MAYOR BLACK: -- to Miami Beach. My time
9 is up?

10 SENATOR GAETZ: Yes, ma'am, with great
11 respect.

12 MAYOR BLACK: Thank you.

13 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you for your
14 testimony.

15 And Will Brown had stepped out for a
16 moment when we called his name. Is Mr. Brown
17 here? Mr. Brown, would you come forward? We
18 would love to have your testimony, please.

19 And following Mr. Brown, Charlotte -- I
20 believe it is Kleiman or Kleman, then Hank
21 Klein, and then Jack Lowell, if you would come
22 down to the on deck circle, please.

23 Mr. Brown, thanks for coming.

24 MR. WILL BROWN: Thank you. Thank you for
25 having this forum and this hearing. I am with

1 the Martin Luther King Voters League, and we
2 are a group in Liberty City that is just
3 starting up, and this is an event that is
4 particularly in our interest, and we just
5 wanted to speak on the topic that my research,
6 or our research has said that there's 41
7 percent Democrats in the entire state of
8 Florida versus 36 percent Republican,
9 20 percent Independents and 30 percent minor.

10 And so the point there is that whenever
11 you talk about redistricting, those are how the
12 districts, in our opinion, that is how they
13 should reflect.

14 They should reflect the voting population
15 and the voting makeup of the entire state. So
16 anything short of that would be an injustice to
17 our community. So those are the views that I
18 wanted to put forth in the debate.

19 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
20 Mr. Brown. We appreciate your being here
21 today.

22 Now, Charlotte -- it Kleiman or Kleman?

23 MS. KLEIMAN: It is Kleiman.

24 SENATOR GAETZ: Kleiman. Ms. Kleiman,
25 thank you for being here, and you are

1 recognized.

2 MS. KLEIMAN: It is my pleasure.

3 I come here as a representative of John Q.
4 Public, as a resident of Miami-Dade for more
5 than 45 years, and as a daughter of immigrants.
6 I come here for the -- just wait one moment.

7 There are two points, two major points, I
8 would like to -- there are many remarks I would
9 like to make to this committee; however, there
10 are two major points to make to reflect the
11 attitude of millions of voters.

12 Number one, we are appalled that our taxes
13 are being used to oppose amendments we voted
14 for.

15 And the second, we implore you to follow
16 the spirit and the substance of Amendments 5
17 and 6 so passed by more than 63 percent of the
18 voters.

19 Thank you very much, sir.

20 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you so much for that
21 testimony.

22 Next we will hear from Hank Klein, and
23 following Mr. Klein, Jack Lowell, and then Lida
24 Mari, please.

25 Mr. Klein.

1 MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am
2 very, very proud to call many members that are
3 up here today my close personal friends, and on
4 both sides of the aisle.

5 Mr. Chairman, we are practicing democracy
6 today. I happen to have lived in Miami for 54
7 years. I am very involved in the community. I
8 am the past Chairman of the Greater Miami
9 Chamber of Commerce.

10 I spent eight years on the Board of
11 Miami-Dade College as the Vice-Chairman, having
12 been appointed by Governor Bush. I take my
13 role and responsibility as a voter quite
14 seriously. I am an independent thinker.

15 When I found out about Amendment 5 and 6,
16 I looked into it, and I determined after
17 investigation and after reading newspaper
18 editorials from both sides for all the way from
19 Jacksonville and Pensacola to Miami and Ft.
20 Lauderdale, I determined that this was the best
21 thing for the state of Florida. So I voted for
22 Amendments 5 and 6.

23 I didn't vote for a law, I didn't vote for
24 a rule, I didn't vote for a regulation, I
25 didn't vote for an ordinance. I voted to amend

1 what I considered to be sacrosanct. I voted to
2 amend the Constitution of the State of Florida.

3 But much to my dismay, it appears that we
4 might not be amending the Constitution of the
5 State of Florida.

6 It is time for us to look at
7 redistricting, and it is time for us to look at
8 redistricting in a fair fashion. I am not
9 naïve. I understand the political process. My
10 very good friend, and I am proud to call him my
11 good friend, Mario Diaz-Balart, has filed suit.
12 He has that constitutional authority and duty
13 to do that. But I cannot agree with him in
14 this.

15 We will work our way through this, but I
16 will tell you what bothers me more than
17 anything, ladies and gentlemen of the
18 Legislature.

19 What bothers me more than anything is that
20 in a time of economic stress, in a time of
21 economic hardship, that we have allocated in
22 excess -- I shouldn't say "we" -- you have
23 allocated in excess of \$20 million to fight
24 this amendment -- these amendments to the State
25 Constitution, and that is disappointing to me.

1 It is disappointing to me personally as a
2 resident of Florida, and it is disappointing to
3 me as a voter.

4 I ask you to please reexamine, to look at
5 this more clearly, and please rule on this
6 fairly and please do not spend that
7 \$20 million. There are others that need that
8 money. Senator, thank you.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, Mr.
10 Klein.

11 Next we will hear from Jack Lowell, and
12 following Mr. Lowell, Lida Mari and then Diane
13 Lawrence with Fair Districts, and then Lynn
14 Wheeler. So if you will all come down to the
15 deck circle, we would be grateful.

16 Mr. Lowell, you are recognized. We are
17 glad to have you.

18 MR. LOWELL: Good morning, Mr. Chairman.
19 I am Jack Lowell. I live in Coral Gables. I
20 am Chair of the Beacon Council, which is our
21 economic development council here in Dade
22 County.

23 I am also on the Board of the Florida
24 Chamber of Commerce. But I am speaking
25 individually, this is my personal opinion.

1 I think it is imperative that this process
2 produce more balanced districts in our state.
3 When we have all of our decisions made in the
4 primary portion of the election, we get
5 ideology running our state instead of ideas
6 that are carefully thought out and rationally
7 debated in our legislative process.

8 And I urge you to follow the intent of our
9 Constitutional Amendments and come up with more
10 balanced districts so when we debate in the
11 Legislature, we can do the issues and not
12 ideology. Thank you.

13 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.

14 And next we will hear from Lida Mari. Did
15 I do that right? Thank you very much, and
16 then --

17 MS. MARI: Well done, thank you.

18 SENATOR GAETZ: Then Diane Lawrence and
19 then Lynn Wheeler and then Eufaula Frazier, I
20 believe.

21 Ms. Mari, fire away.

22 MS. MARI: Thank you. Thank you.

23 Senators, Representatives, thank you for
24 being here. I particularly want to thank
25 Representative Carlos Lopez-Cantera. I don't

1 see him here right now, but thank you very much
2 for being here.

3 I was born and raised here. My parents
4 came from Communist Cuba, and they were
5 immigrants, obviously, but I was raised here
6 and I am raising my children here in Miami-Dade
7 County.

8 I would sincerely like to thank you for
9 the effort and the time that you have taken and
10 the honest attempt to use citizen input to
11 apply the amendments of both our U.S. and
12 Florida Constitutions to select the new
13 district boundaries.

14 Thank you for coming down here and giving
15 us the opportunity to participate more easily
16 in our Republic and representative government.

17 After having watched numerous hearings
18 throughout the state, it is quite clear that
19 many have concerns about the definitions of the
20 words of our Fifth and Sixth Amendments.

21 I am a speech and language pathologist. I
22 would like to participate and contribute to
23 those definitions.

24 They have also given you criticism that
25 you do not have prepared maps to present to us.

1 It is our duty and responsibilities as citizens
2 to define those words for you and to present
3 you with maps.

4 And in keeping with the spirit that you
5 represent us, we, the people, have voted for
6 the amendments, and, therefore, you have no
7 business in fighting these wishes with lawsuits
8 or otherwise.

9 It is your responsibility to represent our
10 definitions and the district boundaries we
11 present to you in our maps.

12 I would like to first address the issue of
13 defining the words in the amendments. There is
14 particular concern among citizens with the
15 words "compactness," "contiguous" and
16 "fairness."

17 SENATOR GAETZ: And, ma'am, because of
18 time and the many people behind you, I would
19 like to ask you if you could conclude in just a
20 few seconds, please.

21 MS. MARI: Absolutely.

22 SENATOR GAETZ: And we will be happy to
23 take your written testimony.

24 MS. MARI: Absolutely. Thank you very
25 much.

1 Well, basically "compactness" is defined
2 by "the smallest perimeter around an area of
3 population." "Contiguous" is "having no
4 islands." We don't want our representatives
5 having to cross around a district to get to our
6 citizens.

7 And "fairness," it is defined by
8 "providing citizens with the opportunity to
9 have access to our elected representatives as
10 closely as possible and to get to them as
11 easily as possible."

12 I want to sincerely thank you for coming
13 out here, and I would also like to respectfully
14 request that you allow us the opportunity to
15 present to you the maps, which I, for one, have
16 been working on, but I don't have them fully
17 completed.

18 And thank you very much for coming down
19 here.

20 SENATOR GAETZ: Yes, ma'am, and as soon as
21 you finish any submission that you have or any
22 idea you would like to provide, you can either
23 provide it to us over the Internet or you can
24 send it to us by U.S. Mail. And then we will
25 make it available to everyone in Florida to

1 look at.

2 MS. MARI: Thank you very much.

3 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you so much.

4 And next, Diane Lawrence from Fair

5 Districts Now. Is Ms. Lawrence here?

6 Ms. Lawrence, following your testimony, we will

7 hear from Lynn Wheeler and then Eufaula Frazier

8 and then Nelson Hernandez and then Councilman

9 Oliver Gilbert.

10 Ms. Lawrence, thank you for being here,

11 and you are recognized, ma'am.

12 MS. LAWRENCE: I am a victim of the

13 extreme gerrymandering of Congressional

14 District 25, so much a victim that in 2006, I

15 filed with the Federal Elections Commission to

16 run against Mario Diaz-Balart. Why?

17 Because I was sick of going into the

18 voting booth and seeing the one name. I had no

19 desire to be a Congresswoman, and within six

20 weeks, I dropped out, because it was really too

21 rough for me.

22 But I hope that if you will follow these

23 petitions that I worked on, I got signatures

24 and got people to vote for them, that you will

25 follow what they say.

1 Thank you.

2 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, and if you have
3 information, petitions and other things you
4 would like to present, we would love to have
5 them for the record.

6 Next is Lynn Wheeler, and following
7 Ms. Wheeler, Eufaula Frazier.

8 Ms. Wheeler, you are recognized and we
9 look forward to your testimony.

10 MS. WHEELER: Thank you, and thank you for
11 being here.

12 Gerrymandering has been going on, it has
13 been a problem for many, many years, no matter
14 what party is in power in our Legislature --
15 that's who does it, our Legislature
16 gerrymanders the districts.

17 But when the Fair Districts Amendment 5
18 and 6 were passed by 63 percent of the people
19 of Florida, that's not just 51 percent, it
20 didn't just barely pass, it is a clear
21 63 percent, it was passed by Democrats and
22 Republicans.

23 So you all are now supposed to implement
24 that, and we wanted to see some maps, we
25 expected to see some maps so we could have

1 something to say.

2 The other thing about your not presenting
3 maps is it doesn't allow someone who wants to
4 run against one of our Representatives to do so
5 very quickly. They will have to get their
6 campaign together very fast, because they won't
7 have time to figure out where their district is
8 and who they have to appeal to.

9 So that was bad enough that we have not
10 progressed with that, but then to go and use
11 our government money to fight what we just
12 voted 63 percent for, that is unconscionable.

13 And I did not realize it was \$20 million
14 y'all were spending. That is really
15 ridiculous. So that is all I have to say.
16 Thank you.

17 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much. And
18 Ms. Wheeler, please, if you can stay until the
19 end, I think that you will probably get some
20 answers to those questions.

21 Sometimes things get put in the
22 bloodstream and people actually believe that
23 they are true, but we are going to provide some
24 information at the end that will be helpful, I
25 think.

1 Next, Eufaula Frazier.

2 MS. FRAZIER: Yes, thank you for allowing
3 me this opportunity. I am Eufaula Frazier,
4 retired, but still active. I have been a
5 community activist, not only for Dade County,
6 but throughout the state of Florida, and I
7 stand here this morning to ask you to keep in
8 mind the voters' choice.

9 They voted for Amendment 5 and 6, and I
10 encourage you to keep that in mind when you
11 start to drawing the line. Not only draw the
12 line for us, but let us be involved in the
13 process to let you know what is needed.

14 Florida is growing so fast, you cannot
15 stand here and say today that you are going to
16 draw the line for any specific group, special
17 group, but keep in mind that you are drawing
18 the line for the next ten years, and remember
19 the voice of the people. Thank you.

20 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
21 ma'am.

22 Next, Nelson Hernandez, representing the
23 Town of Miami Lakes. Mr. Hernandez, thank you
24 for being here, and we look forward to what you
25 have to say.

1 COUNCILMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you very
2 much. I am actually a Councilman in the Town
3 of Miami Lakes, and I decided to come here and
4 represent my town here today.

5 I thank you all for coming. I know it
6 takes a lot to come here and sit for several
7 hours to listen to our concerns, and thank you
8 for your patience.

9 Just a little background: I represent the
10 Town of Miami Lakes. We are a fairly young
11 city. We have only been around for about ten
12 years. We were incorporated in the year 2000,
13 which might have been either right before or in
14 the middle of the last redistricting session.

15 We are about 70 percent Hispanic, so we
16 are pretty diverse as far as ethnicity is
17 concerned; however, we are a pretty homogenous
18 community when it comes to our socioeconomic
19 status, and which brings me to my next point.

20 Currently in the State House, our town is
21 divided by two districts down the middle. So
22 that causes a lot of confusion for my
23 constituents. They have always asked me who do
24 I reach to for my State Representative, and so
25 I always have to ask them where they live. So

1 I think it might be easier, not only
2 logistically for myself and for the other
3 members of my City Council, but also as far as
4 actually representing the interests of my
5 community, you know, with one solid member in
6 the State House.

7 We are currently covered by one -- by --
8 our entire town is only covered in its entirety
9 in the State Senate by Senator Rene Garcia, and
10 also in our County Commission. That is it.

11 So I think it is important for me to come
12 up here and just plead my concern to you all
13 and see if we can consolidate our city into one
14 district for the Florida House, and I think
15 that would be a great service for my community
16 and my town, and I am sure they will be
17 grateful for that. Thank you very much.

18 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Councilman, and
19 thanks for your service to the city.

20 Councilman Oliver Gilbert from the City of
21 Miami Gardens. We are delighted to have so
22 many local officials here to give us
23 information about your communities that we just
24 couldn't get in an echo chamber in Tallahassee.
25 So, Councilman, we appreciate your testimony

1 and look forward to it.

2 COUNCILMAN GILBERT: I thank you for being
3 here, and I would just like to recognize my
4 State Senator, Oscar Braynon, my State
5 Representative, Barbara Watson, and all my good
6 friends. I see Frank Artiles is up there and
7 Hazelle Rogers there, and my Mayor who is in
8 the audience, Mayor Shirley Gibson.

9 I will be very brief. My interest is that
10 you keep Miami Gardens together as a city. We
11 incorporated seven or eight years ago, and
12 we -- we are 110,000 people, approximately. We
13 deserve to be in one Senate seat, one State Rep
14 seat. That is generally my interest and that
15 is what I am speaking on.

16 And I would just add this one point. I
17 have been listening to the comments about the
18 Fair District Amendments, and I think that you
19 have every right to challenge them in court.
20 That is what courts are for.

21 I would just ask that you do it with your
22 own money. I would just -- because there is
23 something profoundly wrong about using public
24 money to fight against the implementation of
25 amendments that were voted on by the public.

1 We actually had a chance to decide, so you
2 are going to take money out of my pocket to
3 fight something that I said I wanted. That is
4 probably wrong. The courts are there for a
5 reason, but you don't need taxpayer dollars for
6 that. Thank you for coming down.

7 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Councilman,
8 very much.

9 Laverne Holliday with Curly's House of
10 Style. And if there is anything I need, it is
11 style, so if Laverne is here. Not so much, I
12 guess. Missed my chance. Are you here?

13 MS. HOLLIDAY: I am here, but I decline.

14 SENATOR GAETZ: You decline?

15 MS. HOLLIDAY: Yes.

16 SENATOR GAETZ: Well, if you could consult
17 with me later, I need some style help, too,
18 I'll tell you.

19 Christopher Norwood is our next speaker,
20 and following Mr. Norwood, I believe it is
21 Gihan Perera with the Florida New Majority, and
22 then Georges Daniel with the Haitian-American
23 Coalition.

24 Mr. Norwood, thank you for being here and
25 please give us your testimony.

1 MR. NORWOOD: Senator Gaetz, I am very
2 happy to be here, and I just want to say to the
3 members of this Committee the awesome
4 responsibility that you have.

5 I want to speak directly to my members of
6 the Dade delegation, and there are several, I
7 won't even start to name, including my Senator
8 Braynon, Ms. Stafford, Miguel Diaz de la
9 Portilla and so many others.

10 I also am an adjunct professor at Florida
11 Memorial University, and I teach a class on
12 state government.

13 And one of the problems I always have when
14 I get to that section dealing with
15 redistricting is how to explain to my students
16 how it is done. I don't envy you at all by the
17 responsibilities that you have, but imagine
18 trying to explain this process to members who
19 are creating districts in which they run in.

20 And it is a very difficult task, and I
21 don't have the answers. But what I do know is
22 that I hope that you use your common sense, try
23 to keep communities intact, especially
24 municipalities, and just, you know, do what you
25 feel is necessary in order to keep this

1 community as whole as possible through a
2 process that inherently divides us, right?

3 And so that's really all I have to say
4 today, and I thank you very much for all the
5 service, and including Representative Garcia,
6 who is a friend, and many other Dade delegates,
7 Ms. Logan, who has always been very supportive
8 as well. Thank you very much.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Mr. Norwood,
10 for your testimony.

11 And then I believe it is -- is it Gihan
12 Perera?

13 MR. PERERA: Yes.

14 SENATOR GAETZ: Are you here?

15 MR. PERERA: Yes.

16 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much.
17 Appreciate your being here, and you are
18 recognized.

19 And following Gihan Perera's testimony,
20 Georges Daniel and then Jean Robert Lafortune,
21 I believe it is.

22 MR. PERERA: Thank you, everyone that is
23 here. Thank you, Senator Braynon.

24 I have three things to say today. I am
25 with Florida New Majority. A number of our

1 members have been here.

2 We are a statewide organization that does
3 both voter turnout and on issues affecting low
4 income people and minority communities. We
5 have done work on unemployment, on immigration
6 and on voting.

7 And what I wanted to say in this hearing,
8 particularly around what is happening in south
9 Florida, is three things.

10 One is that we are very concerned to make
11 sure that in south Dade, that the
12 African-American communities in south Dade
13 continue to get political representation
14 throughout this process.

15 The communities down in Perrine, Cutler
16 Ridge, those areas, we are concerned that the
17 drawing of the lines here cuts out their
18 political representation.

19 That representation is very important now
20 for those communities, and we wanted to ensure
21 that those communities continue to get the
22 representation that as a community of interest
23 that they deserve.

24 Similarly, our organization does a lot of
25 work in Liberty City and the Liberty City area.

1 We enjoy representation now in the Liberty City
2 area. There's lots of issues there that need
3 to be addressed, and particularly in the State
4 House Districts where those issues,
5 particularly around jobs and taxation issues
6 and infrastructure, are going to be very
7 important for us to have representation in
8 Liberty City.

9 And, finally, our organization represents
10 people who are largely moderate and low income
11 folks. In District 17 in the U.S. Congress,
12 that district has some of the highest
13 unemployment rates and child poverty rates.

14 The demographics in our district in
15 District 17 have a lot of non-English speakers,
16 immigrants, African-American, Hispanic folks.
17 We love our constituencies.

18 One of the most important things in those
19 constituencies is for us to be able to leverage
20 federal dollars that come into those districts,
21 into District 17 in particular, to be able to
22 actually improve the conditions in that
23 district.

24 Right now the institutions that could be
25 leveraged to support improvement in those

1 districts, especially the airport and the port,
2 are currently not within that district, and we
3 think it is a shame that if you have basically
4 an island of economic disparity, that the
5 institutions that are right next to those
6 districts that could provide economic
7 opportunities and an economic engine are not
8 included in those districts.

9 So we would strongly encourage, as these
10 lines get drawn, to not just look at the
11 people, but also look at the institutions, and
12 we highly encourage putting the port and the
13 airport into that district. Thank you.

14 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.
15 We really appreciate your comments.

16 And next, Georges Daniel, and if I
17 butchered that first name, I apologize. I am a
18 redneck from the Panhandle.

19 MR. DANIEL: Georges Daniel, that is my
20 name.

21 Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman. Good
22 afternoon, member of the Commission and
23 everybody who are our Representatives.

24 We are here and we have been talking about
25 fairness and homogenating. Our district where

1 Asian-American is more concerned, and as a
2 group that we are here, we have come here this
3 afternoon from the Asian-American Coalition,
4 who are civil organization and pastors with us.

5 What we are interested is the integrity of
6 District 17. Now, we know District 17 has a
7 deficit of 41,000. It is this more or less
8 district on to add the 41,000, it has to
9 increase.

10 We would like to be on the record
11 requesting that it be increased to what the
12 north -- northwest part of the district,
13 meaning we could be attached to District 21 in
14 the Miramar -- west Miramar section, or go over
15 District 20 on the north side.

16 We know also that District 20 and District
17 21 are also deficit -- have a deficit of 2,005
18 and 4,000, but it is toward District 23 or
19 District 25 where they will increase their
20 numbers, or District 19, which has a plus
21 40,000.

22 So, therefore, we will put a map on the
23 record, we don't have the full map with us, but
24 we will put it on the record requesting those
25 change, if change has to be made.

1 Otherwise, we will appreciate that the
2 district stay the same as it is.

3 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir,
4 and we look forward to your submission, and
5 that kind of help is particularly useful to us.

6 Next, Jean Robert Lafortune, and then C.
7 C. Reed.

8 MR. LAFORTUNE: Good morning, Mr. Chair
9 and everybody in the panel, and also especially
10 good morning to Senator Margolis.

11 And we want to take this opportunity to
12 acknowledge the way that you have been of
13 support to our community when you were at the
14 Commission where we get to vote yes to have
15 fair representation for Haitian-Americans in
16 2002, and we are still at the front line with
17 the fair representation issue before you today.

18 Our aim today is basically to drive home
19 the message of the Haitian-American community
20 here in the context of District 17. As the
21 comrade just mentioned, our recommendation, the
22 recommendation of the Haitian-American Task
23 Force is for you, policy-makers, who are
24 entrusted to redraw district line, is to
25 maintain the integrity of District 17 as is at

1 this time.

2 We are in the process of advocating for
3 representation. We are witness how segments of
4 the Haitian-American community in 2002, 2001,
5 were basically divided up in the City of North
6 Miami in four different districts.

7 Our message today is not to attempt to do
8 this kind of artifice or with the Congressional
9 District 17.

10 Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and I see
11 that you have in your hand the separation of
12 the King Solomon in the old times with the
13 Bible.

14 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you.

15 MR. LAFORTUNE: And good luck with that
16 mission.

17 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much. I
18 remember King Solomon, at least in the movie,
19 raised the sword and never had to use it.

20 Next is C. C. Reed with -- who represents
21 Now Our Way. Thank you very much for being
22 here, and you are recognized.

23 And following Mr. Reed is Paulette -- I
24 believe it is Darau. Great, I got it. Please
25 come on down, Ms. Darau, and you can be next.

1 Please go ahead, sir, you are recognized.

2 MR. REED: Good afternoon. As the
3 qualified 2010 gubernatorial candidate, I am
4 here to make a statement basically upon the
5 redistricting.

6 Please, if you can, keep it accountable
7 for the needs of the people, because we know
8 that the census is done every ten years, and we
9 need jobs.

10 Basically this -- what I've seen the
11 percentages of making up these districts, they
12 have to be able to include the economic factors
13 in all the different communities of the state
14 of Florida, and I am wishing that this
15 Commission would be able to honor and respect
16 the people that basically put you where you are
17 at. Thank you.

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

20 Next, Paulette Darau. Ms. Darau, thank
21 you very much for taking time to come and speak
22 with us today. You are recognized.

23 MS. DARAU: Good morning, everyone. I am
24 delighted to see everyone.

25 My focus is fairness for us all. It's

1 been many, many years, and people that
2 represented me and look like me, we are
3 forgiven, we are absent, and no more can we --
4 can such be subjected to us.

5 So while you guys are here, I want to make
6 sure that the people that look like me in my
7 community is not absent from the circum-front.
8 It is a new day now, and we must be included.

9 So with this thing called redistricting,
10 make sure that my community is in the
11 circum-front. And this is why I am here. I am
12 out in the community, we register people to
13 vote, they vote. But I want to know, no more
14 should we be excluded, we must be included.
15 And I want to make sure such is given. Jobs is
16 the next thing.

17 So when we redistrict, don't just exclude
18 us, include us. It is a new day. I want to
19 make sure such is given. Be blessed, and I'm
20 going to make sure accountability is given.
21 Peace out.

22 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
23 Ms. Darau. And now we had a number of folks
24 who may have stepped out and may have come back
25 in.

1 So let's go back through that list.

2 Jean-Pierre Bado? Jean-Pierre, are you here?

3 Would you like to testify?

4 Ronald Fulton. Did Mr. Fulton come back
5 in? Okay. And I think we got Jonathon Fried.

6 Mayor Pizzi, the Mayor of Miami Lakes.

7 Mr. Mayor, sorry you had to step out, but we
8 are glad you came back, and thanks for your
9 service to the community. You are recognized,
10 sir.

11 MAYOR PIZZI: My name is Michael Pizzi, I
12 am the Mayor of the Town of Miami Lakes. I am
13 also the Town Attorney for the great Town of
14 Medley. I am also an attorney.

15 I would like to say that I would like to
16 make a plea on behalf of I think all the
17 citizens of the state.

18 I think that the Constitution and all of
19 the laws governing redistricting are really a
20 plea for nothing more than common sense.

21 I think the people should be able to look
22 at a map with some common sense and figure out,
23 you know, where the lines are going to be
24 drawn, and I just think what we really need in
25 redistricting, I don't think districts should

1 be drawn to help or hurt any elected official
2 or any group of people.

3 I think that the -- you know, the maps,
4 there's going to be a lot of different people
5 who want it drawn to help this person or help
6 that person.

7 I think the maps should be drawn based
8 upon an application of the law with common
9 sense. I think that -- let's not lose sight of
10 something. The job of the Florida Legislature
11 is to follow the U.S. Constitution, follow the
12 Florida Constitution, and apply that law in a
13 fair and common sense way.

14 And I think that -- so when you look at
15 the map, what I want you to do, and I think
16 most people in the state want you to do, is
17 people should be able to look at the map in a
18 common sense way and figure out where the lines
19 are going to be drawn, no different than the
20 way you draw the lines for municipalities when
21 you're -- I mean, it is not rocket science.

22 When you draw the lines for
23 municipalities, they've got to be contiguous.
24 When you draw the lines for other things like
25 cities, it is just -- it is pretty simple.

1 I would say -- so I would ask that you
2 simply follow the law and engage in a common
3 sense approach, and I think people -- I want to
4 see a day when you can look at the map and
5 people could figure out -- nobody should look
6 at the map and not be able to figure out by
7 application of common sense who their Rep or
8 Senator or Congressman is going to be.

9 Now, I think if you redraw the lines and
10 you have all these crazy, squiggly lines, and
11 neighbors are represented by different people,
12 and you can't figure out who your rep is based
13 on common sense, then you will have failed.

14 I am going to look at the map when it is
15 finished, and if I can't base -- if it doesn't
16 make sense to me, then this process has been a
17 failure.

18 One final point. With regard to Miami
19 Lakes, you know, when you carve up
20 municipalities, you dilute their voting
21 strength and sometimes you render them
22 irrelevant.

23 The Town of Miami Lakes, the home of the
24 former Governor Bob Graham, still my most
25 famous constituent, the Town of Miami Lakes has

1 always been carved up. We have always had two
2 State Representatives. We have always had two,
3 in some cases three, Congressional
4 Representatives.

5 So the average resident of Miami Lakes --
6 as a Mayor, I have two State Reps, one neighbor
7 having one State Rep, somebody across the
8 street having somebody else, and as many as two
9 or three Congressional Representatives.

10 They all do an outstanding job, I support
11 them all, and they are all -- God bless them,
12 but on behalf of the Town of Miami Lakes, our
13 town is making a plea. Miami Lakes should have
14 one State Representative. Miami Lakes should
15 have one Congressperson.

16 To have a town, a small little box of a
17 five-mile town, how could you take a five-mile
18 Mayberry little, small town and divide the
19 people of that town up into multiple
20 Congressional Districts or multiple State
21 Senate and multiple State Rep districts?

22 And it really dilutes your strength
23 because anytime there's a major issue, our town
24 never has strength, because we are always one
25 small part of somebody else's larger district.

1 So when you make -- when you carve up a
2 town and make different parts of the town a
3 small part of some other larger city's
4 district, you are depriving those people of
5 adequate representation, they become
6 insignificant.

7 So I am making a plea, which I am going to
8 follow up with a petition that everyone in
9 Miami Lakes is going to sign, and Miami Lakes
10 is urging, Miami Lakes is demanding that the
11 Town of Miami Lakes have one State Rep, one
12 State Senator and one Congressperson.

13 Anything beyond that would be a failure of
14 the process and would deprive the people of our
15 city of their right to fair representation
16 under the Florida and Federal Constitution.

17 So I am hoping you will do that. I want
18 to thank you for your time. It is good to see
19 all of you, many of my friends, you are working
20 hard here, and I would appreciate you giving
21 some consideration to my thoughts, and thank
22 you very much.

23 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Mayor, and when
24 you do get that petition put together, would
25 you please forward it to us as quickly as you

1 can?

2 MAYOR PIZZI: We will, and thank you very
3 much.

4 SENATOR GAETZ: You bet. Thank you.

5 And now, Joel Volinski. Mr. Volinski?
6 Thank you for coming today, and I think you
7 have the honor of giving the benediction, or
8 bringing up the end, or the first shall be last
9 and the last shall be first. You are
10 recognized.

11 MR. VOLINSKI: Senators and
12 Representatives, thank you very much for coming
13 to Miami to hear everyone. And I apologize, I
14 only came into the room a few minutes ago, so
15 whatever I am saying may have already been
16 said.

17 So I apologize in advance if it is a
18 duplication of anything, but I am here just to
19 spend two minutes to say that I do have genuine
20 concerns about the integrity of our democracy
21 and the fact that our country is so divided
22 right now, so split, and I really do think a
23 lot of it has to do with districting.

24 And when those who are in power have the
25 right to kind of draw lines to retain power, it

1 doesn't make me feel comfortable, and when the
2 State of Florida citizens provided a pretty
3 clear message that they want to see a very fair
4 set of boundaries established, to me, that
5 was -- that was something that was very valid,
6 something that represented the anxiety that
7 they have over this splitting up of our country
8 based on safe districts.

9 And once there's safe districts,
10 Representatives or Senators don't have to
11 listen to the side that they don't -- they
12 don't particularly care for in one way or
13 another.

14 And so my thought is to, please -- and I
15 am an Independent, I am not in any particular
16 party, and if it were Democrats that were in
17 control, I would say the same thing, that we
18 simply have to have our people running for
19 elected office listening to all sides of all
20 arguments, the marketplace of ideas, instead of
21 being safe and usually ending up being
22 determined by the most extreme elements of
23 either party in their district. So really that
24 is all I was here to say.

25 I don't understand the details of the

1 Legislature's challenge to what the voters
2 passed. I thought it was stunningly arrogant,
3 but I -- but I, again, don't understand it
4 completely.

5 But I am here just to say that I would
6 wish in a state that is relatively evenly
7 divided, that there should be more districts
8 that are challenged fairly in every election,
9 and I hope that as you are doing your
10 redistricting, that you will take that into
11 account.

12 Again, I thank you very, very much for the
13 opportunity to speak. Thank you for your
14 efforts in coming to this part of the state to
15 hear us. Thank you.

16 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you. Excellent
17 testimony to end our hearing.

18 We have reached the part of our meeting
19 now, or our hearing now, where we will invite
20 any members of the House Redistricting
21 Committee or the Senate Reapportionment
22 Committee to make any comments they wish to
23 make or make any proposals or offer any maps or
24 offer -- answer any questions.

25 And then at the end, we will turn to

1 Speaker Designate Weatherford, who has been
2 making copious notes on specific questions or
3 points of fact that have come up.

4 So let me begin by asking, are there
5 members of the House? Representative Rivas
6 Logan requests recognition, and please give her
7 the mike.

8 SENATOR GAETZ: You are recognized.

9 REPRESENTATIVE LOGAN: Thank you,
10 Mr. Chair. I appreciate the dialogue today
11 about various communities, racial and ethnic
12 minority communities, economic communities of
13 interest, and the very civil and respectful
14 debate that went on here today.

15 But I feel it is important to make it
16 perfectly clear that Florida's new standards
17 for redistricting specifically state that
18 districts shall not be drawn with the intent or
19 result of denying or abridging the equal
20 opportunity of racial or language minorities to
21 participate in the political process, or to
22 diminish their ability to elect the
23 Representative of their choice.

24 And my point in saying that is simply that
25 these issues must be by federal and now state

1 law considered, and the letter of the new state
2 law makes these considerations very prominent.

3 And so while I certainly appreciate and
4 frankly think it is very important that
5 everyone offer their guidance in how these
6 issues should be implemented, opportunities for
7 racial and language minorities must be
8 considered by both state and federal law.
9 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

10 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
11 Representative. Other comments by members of
12 the House Redistricting Committee? Yes, sir --
13 well, any members of the House first, then we
14 will go to Senators.

15 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Representative
16 Baxley.

17 SENATOR GAETZ: Representative Baxley, you
18 are recognized, and then we will go to the
19 Democratic Leader of the Senate.

20 REPRESENTATIVE BAXLEY: Thank you,
21 Mr. Chairman, and I too would like to thank the
22 participants today, including our Chairman, for
23 the courtesy with which this meeting has been
24 conducted. It has been outstanding.

25 One thing I would like to address, because

1 we do hear a lot about the lawsuit. It happens
2 to be one of the few bipartisan things going on
3 in that we have an African-American
4 Congresswoman and a Republican Hispanic
5 Congressman who are putting this together, and
6 regardless of all of the consistency that we
7 hear about opposition to this lawsuit, the fact
8 is if what we have passed in our State
9 Constitution is in conflict with the United
10 States Constitution, we need to know the answer
11 to that question.

12 And we do need to be prepared that as
13 people exercise their right to file suits
14 regarding this map, these maps that are drawn,
15 that we should be prepared to have that
16 discussion, and it is not the only environment
17 in which we pay both sides.

18 Another area that we need to know the
19 right answer is in those cases with death
20 penalty. We pay the argument for that
21 judicious decision on both sides, because we
22 must know the right answer.

23 So while we may differ about that, I would
24 like to add that context, that that lawsuit is
25 more than trying to subvert the will of the

1 people, it is trying to discern how do you fit
2 together those views that some of these things
3 that are proscribed for us to do by law, to
4 follow the law, seem to be in conflict, and how
5 do we resolve that.

6 So I hope maybe that sheds some light on
7 at least my perspective on the validity of
8 having that discussion and finding the answer
9 to that question.

10 The other is, I would like to point out
11 many remarks that we hear have to do with
12 people choosing their own voters, drawing their
13 own maps, and I would like to point out how
14 much that the aspect of term limits has already
15 addressed this subject.

16 You will find that most of these people
17 did not run on maps that they were any part of
18 drafting, and that with ten-year census data
19 and eight-year term limits, much of that kind
20 of thing is blunted, and Congressmen don't draw
21 maps at all.

22 So I think much of it has been addressed,
23 and I think we do -- are going to see out of
24 the work of this Committee some compact
25 districts that deal with many of the things

1 that were brought before us.

2 Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your liberty.

3 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Representative,
4 and now we would recognize the Democratic
5 Leader, Senator Rich.

6 SENATOR RICH: Thank you, Senator Gaetz.

7 Representative Baxley, I want to tell you,
8 you are correct that some of us who were in the
9 Legislature in 2002, when the lines were drawn
10 absolutely had nothing to do with their
11 districts and how they were drawn, and I am one
12 of those people.

13 I am one of the handful of people probably
14 here that, Senator Negrón, a few others, that
15 actually was involved in a redistricting, but I
16 will not say that I was involved in how the
17 lines were drawn, because there was no
18 transparency, it was done behind closed doors,
19 and all of a sudden, I had a district that was
20 entirely different than the district that I had
21 previously run for in the year 2000.

22 So I think we are all working very hard to
23 try and have a different result here.

24 Having said that, I think it is important
25 for the people who have testified here, the

1 people who are still here, to know that we are
2 not all of one mind up here.

3 There are many of us up here that do agree
4 strongly with many of the points that you have
5 made, particularly with regard to the timeline.

6 We have heard from Supervisors of
7 Elections who feel that this is going to be
8 devastating, this timeline, especially in the
9 larger counties that have hundreds of precincts
10 and tremendous numbers of absentee ballots and
11 so forth.

12 So what I did last night -- Senator Gaetz,
13 I don't have a map to present to you, but I
14 still would have the same request, to take a
15 look at the timeline in light of the hundreds
16 of people who have spoken to us about it in the
17 counties that we -- where we started on Monday,
18 Martin County and then Palm Beach County,
19 Broward County and now Dade County, have pretty
20 much told us the same thing.

21 So I hope that we will take that into
22 consideration and listen to the voices of the
23 voters.

24 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
25 Leader.

1 Other comments? Leader Gardiner, the
2 Republican Leader.

3 SENATOR GARDINER: Thank you,
4 Mr. Chairman, and I was not prepared to speak,
5 I didn't address the audience when you were in
6 my community, but I did want to just mention a
7 couple of things, because Leader Rich brought
8 up ten years ago.

9 I was on the Committee ten years ago, and
10 there are a couple of things that I think need
11 to be put in the record.

12 Number one, I was speaking with staff,
13 we're actually ahead of schedule compared to
14 where we were ten years ago. The first map ten
15 years ago was not presented to the Committee
16 until January, the second week in January.

17 The League of Women Voters, who have been
18 very active in saying we should have maps now,
19 didn't present a map until two days after we
20 presented a map in January. That is the
21 realities of the situation.

22 And the idea that it was done behind
23 closed doors, it was presented before the
24 Committees, we took public testimony, everybody
25 had an opportunity to look at them, make

1 recommendations, amend them, and then it
2 followed through the process before it and
3 passed bi-partisanly.

4 So this idea that we should have maps now,
5 the reality is if we had maps now, just as many
6 people would be standing up saying it was done
7 behind closed doors, we didn't have the
8 opportunity to review them, and now you are
9 just going to just pass it.

10 So I just would keep that in mind, those
11 that say it is behind closed doors, or look at
12 the timeline, Mr. Chairman, we are ahead of
13 schedule compared to where we were ten years
14 ago.

15 So, again, I just wanted to clarify that,
16 put that on the record, and I want to thank you
17 for your time coming down here today. Thank
18 you.

19 SENATOR GAETZ: Yes, sir. Thank you,
20 Leader. President Margolis.

21 SENATOR MARGOLIS: I will stay seated.

22 I think that the participation of this
23 very diverse community today has been an eye
24 opener for my colleagues from around the state.

25 I thank you all for coming forward,

1 expressing your opinions and telling us what
2 you expect of us.

3 If you look at our redistricting brochure,
4 you will see that we talk about not only the
5 two Constitutional Amendments that were
6 recently passed and saying that we have to
7 abide by those -- those guidelines, but we also
8 have to abide by the guidelines of the Voting
9 Rights Act.

10 I don't think they need to be in conflict.
11 I would hope that they don't need to be in
12 conflict at all during this process. But I
13 think that the members here have understood
14 that this is a very extremely diverse community
15 and respect all of you in the input that you
16 gave us, and I thank you for being here.

17 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Madam
18 President.

19 Any other members of the Senate Committee
20 that wish to be recognized? If not, the Chair
21 recognizes the Speaker Designate, Chair
22 Weatherford, for concluding comments.
23 Mr. Speaker.

24 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
25 very much, Chairman, and I just want to thank

1 everybody for taking the time to come out today
2 and to give us your thoughtful opinions and
3 suggestions.

4 We know it takes time out of your day to
5 be here and to sit through a hearing like this,
6 and while it is our job to be here, you have
7 other things going on in your life, and the
8 fact that you would be here and be a part of
9 this really makes us thankful.

10 And I will tell you, Mr. Chairman, I
11 learned a great deal today about Dade County.
12 And I have spent a lot of time here over the
13 years and I live in the Tampa Bay area, but to
14 hear first-hand from the citizens from
15 different parts of the community here within
16 Dade County, to hear about the diversity, to
17 hear about the differences of the communities
18 of interest, to hear about the communities of
19 interest in the Haitian community and then the
20 Hispanic community and the African-American
21 community, has really been, frankly, eye
22 opening for me, and I wouldn't have that if I
23 hadn't been here today.

24 And so I want to thank you for bringing
25 that diversity and making sure that it is

1 explained it the Committee.

2 I also want to make it clear that I think
3 there was also a very strong signal sent to the
4 Legislature today that the breaking up of
5 communities and the breaking up of cities and
6 the breaking up of neighborhoods should be
7 avoided when possible, and that you want
8 compact districts and districts that also at
9 all times when possible to follow geographic
10 boundaries.

11 I think that is a very reasonable request.
12 Somebody said earlier that Amendments 5 and 6
13 was basically just trying to make the
14 redistricting process reasonable, and I
15 couldn't agree with you more, and it should be
16 reasonable.

17 And your comments today helped us as we
18 navigate through this process, which is very
19 complex, to understand your community better.

20 Something else I heard today that I
21 thought was important, that I took note of, was
22 to make sure there was no retrogression of the
23 minority districts here in Dade County, both
24 the Hispanic districts and the African-American
25 districts.

1 And I think that is something that
2 everyone on this Committee recognizes. It is
3 now enshrined in our Constitution. Not only is
4 it part of the Voting Rights Act, but it is
5 also in our Constitution, and we plan to uphold
6 that. And so we appreciate those comments in
7 that regard as well.

8 There were those who mentioned that they
9 are planning on drawing maps today. I thought
10 that was great. I said earlier today there can
11 be no better form of participation in this
12 process with this Committee than actually
13 submitting maps.

14 That has been extremely informative. We
15 have 35 of them already. We would love to have
16 a hundred, the more, the merrier, because it
17 gives us more ideas, more options, more
18 thoughts on paper that you have, and so we
19 could ask you to continue to do that.

20 A gentleman earlier by the name of
21 Mr. Hill asked a couple of questions. They
22 were almost rhetorical in nature, but I thought
23 that they were timely.

24 And he said, "How do we know what fair
25 districts look like? How do we know what

1 compactness looks like? How are we going to
2 know -- they're enshrined in our Constitution,
3 but how do we know what they actually are?"

4 And that is the whole reason we are here
5 today, Mr. Chairman, is because we don't know
6 exactly what those are. We know that there are
7 different court opinions about what compactness
8 means.

9 We know that if we ask ten people in this
10 room what fairness means, we would probably get
11 different answers. But the idea is to come to
12 you first and to get your opinion before we
13 start drawing the first line.

14 And so that leads me to the question that
15 we hear everywhere we go, which is, "Where are
16 the maps?" And it is very simple.

17 We are probably going to be -- this
18 Committee would probably be criticized whether
19 we had the maps or we didn't, but this is a
20 chicken versus the egg debate, and it should be
21 what comes first.

22 Should the Legislature make decisions
23 first and draw maps first, or should we come
24 before you, listen to you, spend hundreds of
25 hours traveling the state, getting a feel for

1 the diversity of our state, for the diversity
2 of Dade County, and then draw maps and then get
3 public testimony after that?

4 Well, that is the choice that we have
5 made, Mr. Chairman, and I think it is the right
6 choice, and I think we should continue on the
7 track that we are on, because I could have
8 never had the understanding of the diversity of
9 Dade County and the different communities
10 involved had I not been here today.

11 And if we would have drawn maps before we
12 showed up today, I think we would have been --
13 it would have been insulting to the members of
14 this audience, and, frankly, would have been
15 insulting to the people of Florida, because
16 they deserve to be listened to.

17 And the worst Bills that have been voted
18 on in the Legislature, in my opinion, have been
19 the ones that have been rushed through, the
20 ones that we have tried too quickly to push
21 them through.

22 And we heard a lot of complaints from
23 citizens around the state saying, "Take your
24 time, slow it down." Well, ladies and
25 gentlemen, that is what we are doing here.

1 This is a very serious thing.

2 We are redrawing every district in the
3 state of Florida. How you are going to be
4 represented in Tallahassee, how you are going
5 to be represented in Washington, D.C., will be
6 dictated by this Committee and what we submit
7 to the full bodies in the Legislature.

8 And I submit to you that taking our time
9 and doing it the right way is better than
10 rushing through it.

11 And so that leads me very quickly into the
12 timeline. We are on a tight timeline, and we
13 do recognize that it has to go through the
14 courts and we do recognize that qualifying is
15 waiting for us in the first or second week of
16 June, and we have to be done by then.

17 But I would also submit to you that doing
18 what the State of Illinois did, which is voting
19 on maps and submitting maps to their full body
20 for a vote with very limited, if not any at
21 all, public testimony, is the wrong way to do
22 it, and that what we are doing, while we are
23 being sensitive to the timeline, we feel it is
24 more important to hear from you first and
25 continue to watch the time and make sure that

1 we get done.

2 The Constitution also says, and I think
3 most people in this room are familiar with
4 this, that we cannot vote on legislative maps
5 until January at the earliest. We cannot vote.

6 We are legally not allowed to vote on
7 legislative maps until then. So if we spend
8 the summer listening to you, and the fall
9 looking at maps and debating maps, we will have
10 plenty of time to vote and look at the last
11 maps by session.

12 Lastly, this was raised numerous times,
13 and I just want to touch on it very quickly.
14 There was a lot of conversation about
15 litigation and lawsuits, and I first want to
16 say this:

17 There is litigation taking place and there
18 are lawsuits that are taking place, but I raise
19 my hand every two years when I am sworn in to
20 uphold the Constitution of the United States of
21 America and of the State of Florida, and
22 everybody else up here does the same.

23 And I can assure you that Amendments 5 and
24 6 passed with over 60 percent of the vote, they
25 are on the Constitution, they are the law of

1 the land, and every person, including myself,
2 will follow the law of the land, and we will
3 follow Amendments 5 and 6 to the T. We will
4 absolutely do that.

5 There was also a mention in regard to
6 money that is being spent on lawsuits, and I
7 have heard numbers like \$30 million and
8 \$20 million, and that is simply not true, and
9 it is a rumor, and it was one -- a newspaper
10 article that was written that apparently it
11 just seems to continue to float out there, but
12 I just want to make it clear one more time,
13 that is not true.

14 There is no 20 or 30 million dollar pot of
15 money that is dedicated to these lawsuits. It
16 does not exist, it is not true. And if you
17 don't believe me, you can go to
18 transparencyflorida.gov.

19 Transparencyflorida.gov is a website that is
20 run by the State of Florida, and it shows every
21 dollar that is being spent by the Legislature
22 and all the agencies and everything else. I
23 hope you will go there and check it out.

24 Lastly, I just want to say, Mr. Chairman,
25 that any member on this Committee at any time

1 during this process can submit maps to this
2 body or to the Legislature, and they will
3 immediately be placed online for the citizens
4 and for other members to look at.

5 And so for those who are out there that
6 want to rush through this and want to hurry up
7 and see maps and have maps presented by the
8 Legislature, any member of this body can do
9 that, and we, frankly, would encourage them to
10 do that.

11 But I learned a lot today, Mr. Chairman.
12 Thank you for chairing a great meeting, and I
13 look forward to the meeting tonight. Thank you
14 very much.

15 SENATOR GAETZ: And with that,
16 Representative Weatherford moves we rise.

17 (Whereupon, the proceedings were
18 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 169 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