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REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2011

6:00 P.M.

NEW COLLEGE, HARRY SUDAKOFF CONFERENCE CENTER

SARASOTA, 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: Thank you all for being
3 here this evening. The Joint House/Senate
4 Redistricting Hearing is called to order.

5 We are pleased to be joined tonight by a
6 number of members of the House of
7 Representatives and the Senate, most of whom
8 serve on the Redistricting Committee in the
9 House or the Reapportionment Committee in the
10 Senate, and in a moment, we will ask them to
11 identify themselves and the area of the state
12 that they represent so that you will know who
13 you are sharing your views with.

14 We want to thank New College for allowing
15 us to use this very helpful facility. We want
16 to thank all of you for being here, especially
17 members of the public who have come to share
18 your comments and your recommendations to help
19 shape congressional, Senate and House districts
20 for the next decade.

21 My name is Don Gaetz. I am a member of
22 the Florida Senate. My Senate district runs
23 from Pensacola to Panama City in the Florida
24 Panhandle, out where we have Central time, and
25 I am pleased to be here tonight. I will be

1 chairing the meeting with my colleague, the
2 Speaker Designate of the Florida House of
3 Representatives, Will Weatherford, who is to my
4 left. And the hearing tonight is being webcast
5 statewide by The Florida Channel over the
6 Internet. So before you get up to speak, make
7 sure your hair looks good, check your makeup,
8 straighten your tie, because everybody across
9 Florida is watching you, and we welcome the
10 thousands and thousands of Floridians who are
11 joining us tonight by webcast.

12 I would like to begin, Mr. Speaker, by
13 asking each of those members of the Legislature
14 who are here if they would very briefly
15 identify themselves by name and whether they
16 are a Senator or a Representative and the part
17 of the state that they are from.

18 Where are we? We are down at the far end.
19 Representative, why don't you start?

20 REPRESENTATIVE CHESTNUT: Good afternoon,
21 Chuck Chestnut, House Representative, District
22 23, a portion of Alachua County and a portion
23 of Marion County.

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

1 Palm Beach, Florida.

2 REPRESENTATIVE STARGEL: Good afternoon,
3 thank you for being here. Kelli Stargel, State
4 Representative from District 64, which is north
5 Polk County, mostly the City of Lakeland.

6 SENATOR NEGRON: Good evening, Joe Negron
7 from southeast Florida. I serve in the Florida
8 Senate.

9 REPRESENTATIVE PILON: Good evening,
10 Representative Ray Pilon, District 69, which is
11 right here, the northern part of Sarasota
12 County and a small part of Manatee. Welcome.

13 REPRESENTATIVE FORD: Representative Clay
14 Ford from Pensacola. I get the award for the
15 farthest traveled.

16 REPRESENTATIVE BOYD: Hi, I am Jim Boyd,
17 House member, District 68, which is the
18 district just north of here, western Manatee
19 County. Thanks for coming this evening.

20 REPRESENTATIVE JULIEN: Good evening, John
21 Patrick Julien representing House District 104,
22 which is in Miami-Dade County. My district
23 encompasses North Miami Beach, North Miami,
24 Miami Gardens, Opa-Locka, the City of Miami and
25 unincorporated Miami-Dade County. It is a

1 pleasure to be here.

2 REPRESENTATIVE NEHR: State Representative
3 Peter Nehr. I represent District 48, which is
4 in Pinellas County and parts of Pasco County.

5 REPRESENTATIVE FRISHE: I am State
6 Representative Jim Frishe, and I represent the
7 beaches in Pinellas County.

8 REPRESENTATIVE HOOPER: I am Ed Hooper,
9 representing Florida House District 50, which
10 is a portion of Pinellas County.

11 REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAMS: I am Trudi
12 Williams, Representative from District 75,
13 which is portions of Lee and Collier County.

14 SENATOR JOYNER: I am Arthenia Joyner,
15 State Senator, District 18, encompassing
16 portions of Hillsborough, Pinellas and Manatee.

17 SENATOR DETERT: I am Senator Nancy
18 Detert, and I am very proud to say this is my
19 Senate district, Sarasota, a portion of Manatee
20 and about 30 percent of Charlotte County.
21 Thank you all for coming.

22 REPRESENTATIVE HOLDER: Good evening, and
23 welcome to Sarasota. I am Doug Holder. I
24 represent House District 70, which is the south
25 part of Sarasota County, and I would like to

1 welcome all of our delegates from across the
2 state in the House and Senate to this beautiful
3 place that we call home.

4 REPRESENTATIVE ROBERSON: Thank you for
5 being here this evening. I am State
6 Representative Ken Roberson. I represent parts
7 of Sarasota, Charlotte and Lee County, and I
8 represent the City of North Port in Sarasota
9 County, which is now the largest city in
10 Sarasota County. Thank you for being here.

11 REPRESENTATIVE PASSIDOMO: I am Kathleen
12 Passidomo. I represent House District 76,
13 which is in Collier County. It includes the
14 City of Naples, the City of Marco Island and
15 the City of Everglades City. Thank you.

16 REPRESENTATIVE CLARKE-REED: Good evening,
17 I am State Representative Gwyndolen Clarke-Reed
18 from Broward County. I represent seven cities
19 in Broward County: Deerfield Beach, Pompano
20 Beach, Oakland Park, Wilton Manors, Ft.
21 Lauderdale, the northern quadrant, the Victoria
22 park area, North Lauderdale and Tamarac.

23 REPRESENTATIVE ROGERS: Good evening. I
24 am Hazelle Rogers. I represent the -- one of
25 the most diverse cities and counties in Broward

1 County, and that is representing over 1.8
2 million residents. My district is 94, eight
3 cities, which is Lauderhill, Lauderdale Lakes,
4 Plantation, Oakland Park, Tamarac, Margate, the
5 City of Sunrise. Thank you for being here.
6 Looking forward to hearing your comments.

7 REPRESENTATIVE CRUZ: Good evening. My
8 name is Janet Cruz, and I represent District
9 58, which is a piece of central Tampa. Thank
10 you very much for being part of this process
11 this evening. We are happy to be here.

12 REPRESENTATIVE ADKINS: Good evening. I
13 am Janet Adkins from State House District 12,
14 which is Nassau, Baker, Bradford, Clay, Union
15 and Duval Counties, rural northeast Florida.

16 REPRESENTATIVE BURGIN: Good evening,
17 State Representative Rachel Burgin, District
18 56, which is the City of Tampa and eastern
19 Hillsborough County.

20 REPRESENTATIVE HORNER: Good evening. My
21 name is Mike Horner. I represent State House
22 District 79 in south central Florida.

23 REPRESENTATIVE NUNEZ: Good evening. My
24 name is Jeanette Nuñez. I represent House
25 District 112, which consists of portions of

1 Dade, Broward and Collier County.

2 REPRESENTATIVE YOUNG: Hi there and
3 welcome. I am Representative Dana Young, and
4 my District is District 57, which is a large
5 part of the City of Tampa and part of
6 Hillsborough County.

7 REPRESENTATIVE CAMPBELL: Good evening.
8 My name is Daphne Campbell, District 108, from
9 Miami-Dade County.

10 REPRESENTATIVE BAXLEY: Good evening. I
11 am Dennis Baxley, serving Ocala, Marion County,
12 in the Florida House District 24.

13 REPRESENTATIVE ALBRITTON: Hello, thanks
14 for coming out. My name is Ben Albritton. I
15 serve in the Florida House. I represent
16 southern Polk, Hardee and northwestern
17 Highlands County.

18 SENATOR GAETZ: I think that has given all
19 of our Senators and Representatives a chance to
20 let you know who they are and where they are
21 from.

22 Our purpose tonight is to hear from the
23 public about how you believe the legal
24 standards governing redistricting should be
25 applied. Let me emphasize that. It is not

1 whether the legal standards should be applied,
2 because Amendments 5 and 6 are part of the
3 Constitution, but rather how they ought to be
4 applied. And as you listen to each other's
5 testimony, I think you will see that there are
6 questions that we really need your input on.

7 Our procedures tonight are simple, but
8 important. It is important that you sign in so
9 that we can create an accurate public record of
10 all attendees and speakers, and you may also
11 opt to join our e-mail list so that we can keep
12 you informed about how the redistricting
13 process is proceeding. If you have not signed
14 in, but if you would like to speak or if you
15 have just come to listen, we still would like
16 to know who you are so that we can stay in
17 touch with you, so if you would like to speak
18 or if you are just here as a listener and we
19 have not had an opportunity to get your name,
20 if you will raise your hand, we will make
21 sure -- thank you, there is a young lady right
22 here in the second row -- if you will raise
23 your hand, we will certainly be sure to get a
24 card. It is the same card whether you wish to
25 speak or whether you are here simply to listen

1 to your friends and neighbors.

2 We also would ask you, even if you are
3 RSVP'd that you were going to be here, and
4 many, many people have, and we are so grateful
5 for that, be sure that you do sign in so that
6 we can call your name and give you an
7 opportunity to speak.

8 Before we begin, the Chair will recognize
9 the Speaker Designate, Representative
10 Weatherford, to explain how today's hearing
11 fits into the redistricting process and the
12 redistricting schedule. Mr. Speaker.

13 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
14 very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you all for
15 taking time to be here. This is a great
16 turn-out, and we are excited to be here in
17 Sarasota County and excited to hear from your
18 public testimony. In fact, I was just chatting
19 with Representative Holder a minute ago, and I
20 think this is home to the finest beach in
21 America, if I am not mistaken, is that right,
22 Siesta Key. So, as legislators, we sometimes
23 have tough duty having to go into beautiful
24 places like Sarasota, so thank you very much
25 for welcoming us here.

1 I am going to walk you through just a
2 brief -- give you an understanding about what
3 we are here to do today and what we hope to
4 accomplish. Every ten years, the Legislature
5 is required by our Constitution to redistrict
6 the state based on increases, decreases and
7 movements in population. Because Florida has
8 grown dramatically over the last ten years, we
9 have actually picked up two new congressional
10 seats. So instead of having 25 members of the
11 House of Representatives, we will now have 27
12 members of the House of Representatives.
13 Because some parts of our state have increased
14 and decreased disproportionately, many Senate
15 and House Districts will change, either adding
16 or losing in population.

17 When redistricting is completed,
18 congressional districts must be equal in
19 population and have 696,345 people, the 40
20 Senate districts must also be nearly equal at
21 470,000, and people in our 120 House districts
22 must also be nearly equal at 156,700 people.

23 Now, we have displays at the very front of
24 the room that will show you the current
25 boundaries of the state, and more particularly,

1 the current boundaries in this area, and if you
2 feel free at any point during the hearing, you
3 can go back and get a look very closely at what
4 they look like.

5 Equality in representation is not the only
6 legal requirement redistricting plans must
7 meet. The laws and the important court cases
8 that govern redistricting are explained in
9 detail in the House and Senate websites. Those
10 websites are listed on the "Redistricting 2012"
11 brochure that was available to you when you
12 came in. Our "Redistricting 2012" brochure
13 summarizes federal and state laws, and outlines
14 topics that we hope we will be discussing here
15 at today's hearing. If you did not get a copy
16 of that brochure when you came in, they are
17 available at tables outside the meeting, or our
18 staff is more than willing to give you a copy.
19 If you just raise your hand and give us a few
20 moments, we will get a copy to you. Keep your
21 hands up, and we will get them to you.

22 These websites also deliver to your
23 fingertips all of the demographic information
24 that will be used in drawing districts in the
25 exact same computer programs that legislators

1 and professional staff will use when we draw
2 districts. Any member of the public can
3 participate in building plans or seeing maps
4 submitted by legislators or other citizens.
5 Before, during and after this hearing, Senate
6 and House professional staff are available to
7 show anyone the simple steps in going on-line,
8 building districts and submitting maps now or
9 in the weeks to come.

10 Recommendations from citizens and groups
11 of citizens will be made immediately -- will be
12 made public immediately. In fact, as of this
13 morning, we've had 49 public submissions of
14 partial or complete maps, and many other
15 written ideas for maps available on the week,
16 and I am sure that number will increase. In
17 fact, Mr. Chairman, just last night, we were in
18 Tampa Bay and a 13-year-old young man, student,
19 actually has drawn an entire House district map
20 for the entire state of Florida, and did it
21 with -- he and his sister, and that is the kind
22 of participation and the opportunity that you
23 can get with the websites that we have, and so
24 we hope that everyone here will also
25 participate in that manner. The submission of

1 proposed maps that makes sense for your
2 community is the single most effective way that
3 you can communicate with this Committee and
4 with the redistricting process.

5 The redistricting schedule under which we
6 are operating is imposed by the State
7 Constitution. Let me say that again. This
8 always comes up every hearing. The
9 redistricting schedule under which we are
10 operating is imposed by the State Constitution.
11 The Constitution does not permit the
12 Legislature to act on state legislative maps
13 before the second year after the census; in
14 other words, before 2012. We have accelerated
15 this process as much as we can by moving up the
16 2012 legislative session from March to January,
17 and by beginning our statewide hearings five
18 months in advance of the 2012 session.

19 It has been suggested that the Legislature
20 should draw maps first and then ask the public
21 to comment. We believe that puts the answer
22 ahead of the question. There should be no
23 preconceptions created by politicians, but,
24 rather, public testimony should be free and
25 unrestricted. In fact, a principal author of

1 Florida's new redistricting standards and the
2 Chairperson of Fair Districts campaign are both
3 on record and in agreement with the notion that
4 new maps should not be drawn until after they
5 have received public comment.

6 Our intent is to use the recommendations
7 made at these 26 hearings and through our
8 Internet sites as the basis for drawing one or
9 more options for district maps. We will
10 discuss these options in open public meetings
11 before any votes are actually taken on the
12 maps, even in committee. In other words, what
13 we are literally saying here is that if you
14 look at the maps outside this room when you
15 first came in and you walked through on your
16 way into this room, and the ones that have been
17 submitted to the Legislature by citizens just
18 like you, we are literally saying that the
19 legislative process is starting with those maps
20 and those suggestions from the public. So if
21 you want to know where we begin our
22 deliberations, it is with those public
23 submissions and the testimony from meetings
24 that we have just like here this evening.
25 Throughout the process, we will continue to

1 solicit additional public comment so that the
2 proposed maps can mature with your public
3 involvement and more input as we go through the
4 process. Whatever the Legislature passes, it
5 is then submitted from judicial review to
6 ensure that the final maps meet every single
7 legal requirement.

8 Because our purpose today is to hear from
9 you, all the time now -- between now and
10 9:00 p.m. will be used to ensure that every
11 member of the public has an opportunity to
12 speak. If after every citizen has had his or
13 her say and there is time remaining on the
14 schedule before adjournment, any member of this
15 Committee may make any statement or any
16 observation. Of course, any member of the
17 Legislature may today, or, Mr. Chairman, at any
18 time propose a map or a plan, and we will make
19 it public immediately.

20 Mr. Chairman, I hope that this description
21 gives us a starting point for the process, and
22 I look forward to hearing from the citizens
23 here in Sarasota County. Thank you.

24 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

25 The good news is that we have over 80 people

1 who have signed up to speak. That is
2 excellent. But what that means is that all of
3 those who signed up to speak -- in fact, more
4 than 80, I am just handed a note. What that
5 means is that those who do speak need to be --
6 if we could ask you to be respectful of the
7 fact that there are others of your friends and
8 neighbors who would like to speak also. So in
9 deference to them and out of respect for the
10 many people who would like to share their
11 views, we are going to ask those who speak to
12 confine their verbal testimony to two minutes.
13 Now, you can supply -- if you've got a script
14 or you have some information that you have
15 written down, you can supply that to the
16 Committee, it will go in the record, every
17 member of the Committee will receive it and
18 have a chance to read it and review it. But we
19 would like your verbal comments, if you could,
20 to be short and to the point, because there are
21 so many of you who would like to share your
22 views with the Committee.

23 That being said, I am going to call about
24 three names at a time and ask if you would come
25 up to the center aisle and be ready, sort of in

1 an on deck circle, so that we could spend our
2 time listening to your views as opposed to
3 waiting for folks to work their way through the
4 crowd.

5 Kathy Dent, the Supervisor of Elections,
6 is our first speaker tonight, and follow is
7 Ms. Dent, Karen Berman, and then Ann Hardy from
8 the League of Women Voters, then Debbie Trice.
9 So if those individuals will come forward, we
10 will move expeditiously through the process.

11 And, Ms. Dent, thank you for being here
12 and thank you for your service to the people of
13 this county. You are recognized.

14 MS. DENT: Thank you very much, and I
15 appreciate the opportunity to be here and I
16 thank you all very much for being willing to
17 make this tour of the state.

18 I racked my brain trying to come up with
19 something that was not something you have heard
20 a thousand times before, and it all boils down
21 to two very simple things. Number one, the
22 Supervisors of Elections, contrary to rumor,
23 especially when I walked in this room tonight,
24 do not already have the lines drawn. We are
25 leaving it up to you.

1 And, number two, the two important things
2 that I am asking you to take into
3 considerations is the timing. We are going
4 into 2012, and this is Florida. If we don't
5 have enough time to get our ballots drawn, to
6 get our polling places located, to notify the
7 voters, to get our precincts approved by the
8 Board of County Commissioners, we will be more
9 likely to make a mistake and it could actually
10 impact over 11 million voters in the state of
11 Florida, which we don't ever want to have a bad
12 name here again.

13 And the second part is I am imploring that
14 you use the VTDs. Those are the Voting
15 Tabulation Districts. The Supervisors of
16 Elections -- and I think this is where the
17 rumor comes in. Supervisors of Elections
18 worked very hard in 2009 to make sure that
19 communities of interest were isolated to make
20 it easier for you all when you are looking to
21 draw those lines, that if you remain within
22 those communities of interest, you can't go
23 wrong. It keeps, for example, the Palmer Ranch
24 here in Sarasota County, The Villages, West
25 Villages in North Port, who actually are

1 divided right now between Representative
2 Roberson and Representative Holder. And we
3 made a mistake even just a couple of years ago
4 on a couple -- about 200 ballots, because it is
5 that easy to do to make a mistake when you have
6 all of these splits.

7 SENATOR GAETZ: And, Ms. Dent, I apologize
8 profusely, but if you could wrap up, I would be
9 very grateful.

10 MS. DENT: I sure will.

11 And one last thing I would like to say is
12 history does repeat itself. I think that this
13 illustrious body can look ten years down the
14 road, you are all going to be term limited, and
15 to look at some way of dealing with this time
16 crunch that we have, constitutional amendment
17 followed with special session, or get creative
18 and just do some research --

19 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you.

20 MS. DENT: -- and not have this happen
21 again.

22 SENATOR GAETZ: Yes, ma'am.

23 MS. DENT: Thank you again for the
24 opportunity.

25 SENATOR GAETZ: And, Ms. Dent, we hope

1 that you will be able to stay until the end of
2 the hearing, because a number of questions tend
3 to get raised during the hearing, factual
4 questions about timelines and other things, and
5 the Speaker Designate, as well as other
6 members, will be making copious notes. We will
7 try to answer factual questions, not get into
8 arguments about opinions, but answer factual
9 questions if there's time at the end of the
10 hearing. Thank you very much, Ms. Dent.

11 And now, Karen Berman, thank you for
12 taking some of your time tonight to come with
13 us, and you are recognized.

14 MS. BERMAN: Thank you. I came to implore
15 you and say just do it, implement the Fair
16 Districts amendments which we citizens voted
17 for. Set fair boundaries according to the
18 standards that are outlined. You know what
19 they are.

20 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much.

21 And now Ann Hardy, representing the League
22 of Women Voters, and behind Ms. Hardy will be
23 Debbie Trice and Doug Heinlen and I believe it
24 is Jutta Tolbert, and I apologize if I have
25 mispronounced that.

1 Ms. Hardy, thank you for coming tonight,
2 and you are recognized.

3 MS. HARDY: Thank you, Senator Gaetz.

4 Good evening, my name is Ann Hardy. I am
5 on the Board of the League of Women Voters of
6 Sarasota County, and thank you all for giving
7 me this opportunity to speak.

8 I would like to address two issues this
9 evening. First is the timeline for the
10 redistricting process. Say the Legislature
11 does not vote on the districts until March.
12 After the mandatory review period by the courts
13 and the Department of Justice and after
14 resolution of probable lawsuits, we will very
15 likely be hitting the filing deadlines for
16 candidates. In addition to putting a huge
17 strain on our Supervisors of Elections and
18 designating new placings and preparing overseas
19 and absentee ballots, this late date will give
20 candidates inadequate time to mount credible
21 campaigns, and most importantly, will give
22 voters little time to get to know their
23 candidates. Amendments 5 and 6 were in part
24 adopted to give candidates a fair shot at
25 presenting their case and getting elected.

1 Having a March date for passage of new
2 districts flies in the face of this intent.
3 Please set a deadline for proposed maps in
4 early October. Allow a reasonable amount of
5 time for the public to provide input on the
6 maps and on subsequent amendments, and complete
7 your committee review of the plans in December
8 so that the final maps can be voted on the
9 first week of session in January.

10 This brings me to my second and I think
11 most important point. The citizens of this
12 state approved Amendments 5 and 6 by
13 63 percent. I ask that you take special care
14 to respect the will of the voters. I have been
15 watching these hearings across the state, and
16 it is easy to see the frustration of citizens
17 who feel the system has been manipulated. The
18 Constitution now requires the districts be
19 compact, contiguous, and use existing
20 geographical and political boundaries. It also
21 requires that districts not be drawn to favor
22 incumbents or political parties. We can do
23 this. We can make fair districts. As the
24 Governor would say, let's get to work.

25 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,

1 Ms. Hardy. And, Ms. Hardy, I hope you can stay
2 until the conclusion of the meeting as well,
3 because I think you will get the same
4 reassurance that we provided the League on
5 numerous occasions about the timeline.

6 Next we will hear from Debbie Trice, and
7 then Doug Heinlen, then Jutta Tolbert and then
8 Keith Dibell.

9 And, Ms. Trice, thank you for coming
10 tonight. You are recognized.

11 MS. TRICE: Thank you. Good evening.

12 Most Floridians know what county they live
13 in. Most Floridians know what municipality
14 they live in. Many can even identify where
15 they live in relation to major roads or
16 waterways. But few can tell you which
17 legislative district they are in. Why does
18 that matter? Well, of course, it matters
19 during election season when candidates are
20 soliciting campaign contributions and votes,
21 but why does it matter the rest of the time?

22 Knowing what legislative district you are
23 in is crucial to seeking services and
24 assistance from your Representative. Getting
25 the run-around after contacting the wrong

1 office is one reason for public anger with
2 public servants. I am sure none of you wants
3 to be voted out of office because what the
4 office holder in the neighboring district
5 failed to do.

6 Now, how relevant is that to this -- the
7 topic of this public hearing? I want to convey
8 to you how critical it is for district
9 boundaries to be placed where they will be
10 meaningful to the people who live in those
11 districts. Use existing political and
12 geographical boundaries as required by the
13 Florida Constitution. Remember, these
14 standards were supported by a two-thirds
15 majority of Florida voters.

16 Now, on a slightly different note, it is a
17 disservice to the people of Florida that these
18 hearings are being held before your Commission
19 has produced maps for the public to comment on.
20 Only the people who live close to the proposed
21 district boundaries can identify problems and
22 offer solutions.

23 Now, in the absence of a proposed map, I
24 will identify a problem with a piece of the
25 current map of House District 70, which

1 Representative Holder serves.

2 SENATOR GAETZ: And, Ms. Trice, I am glad
3 you have gotten to that point, but I would ask
4 you to wrap it up just in deference to the
5 people who are signed up behind you.

6 MS. TRICE: Okay. Very quickly, the
7 northern boundary of the District is Clark
8 Road, State Road 72, which is a major
9 thoroughfare and exit off of I-75. That is an
10 excellent boundary. The problem, however, lies
11 in the exceptions. If you live north of Clark
12 Road between the railroad tracks and I-75, you
13 might be in District 70, but then again, you
14 might not be. So I urge you not to include any
15 meandering boundaries like this in drawing the
16 new district lines.

17 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you. That is
18 exactly the kind of information we need.

19 And next we will hear from -- is it -- did
20 I do it correctly, did I pronounce it
21 correctly, Doug --

22 MR. HEINLEN: Heinlen.

23 SENATOR GAETZ: -- Heinlen?

24 MR. HEINLEN: Heinlen, that is right.

25 SENATOR GAETZ: Mr. Heinlen, thanks for

1 coming and give us some time tonight.

2 MR. HEINLEN: Good evening, Mr. Chairman
3 and committee members. My name is Doug
4 Heinlen, got that straight. I am a resident of
5 Sarasota, and tonight I speak as Florida AARP
6 State President, which is a volunteer position.

7 AARP Florida has 2.7 million members, and
8 we serve the older adult community of Florida
9 in many ways. Our Florida Tax-Aide volunteers
10 prepared at no cost 230,000 tax returns last
11 season. There were 48,000 graduates of our
12 driver safety program, and 5,000 job seekers
13 were served at 17 SCSEP sites in Florida with a
14 placement rate of 74 percent, the highest in
15 the country.

16 One of the areas that AARP Florida is most
17 engaged in is advocacy. Our staff in
18 Tallahassee is assisted by 200 active advocacy
19 volunteers, and active they are, as
20 demonstrated by the fact that Florida led the
21 country in petitions to Congress about the
22 recent suggestions to cut Social Security and
23 Medicare, with 80,000 signatures collected from
24 Florida AARP members in a very short time.

25 It is to advocate the AARP position that I

1 speak to you tonight, specifically a position
2 on redistricting. Transparency, timeliness and
3 trust, these principal elements of the
4 redistricting process need to be adhered to.
5 The voters of Florida have spoken, supporting
6 the Fair District plan by almost two to one,
7 about fair districts. But we are concerned the
8 project is going to proceed without full
9 disclosure and public presentation. The public
10 needs the opportunity to comment and to have
11 those comments be meaningfully considered. We
12 ask you to post the proposed map designs in a
13 timely manner so they can be reviewed by all.
14 We ask for the posting of the proposed map
15 designs to allow enough time for public review.

16 And, finally, I would like to take note of
17 the tremendous effort by the Florida League of
18 Women Voters on Fair Districts issues. They
19 led this fight really. I remember my
20 daughter's middle school civics club --

21 SENATOR GAETZ: And, sir, we are over two
22 minutes, so if you could wrap it up, I would be
23 very grateful.

24 MR. HEINLEN: A few more sentences.

25 -- working with the local League

1 collecting signatures for the first ballot
2 initiative on Fair Districts at one of the
3 Sarasota reading festivals. My daughter is now
4 a senior in college, which goes to show you
5 what a long-time, sustained effort the League
6 put in. So thanks to the League and thanks to
7 all of you for taking on this very difficult
8 task.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: And thank you, sir, for
10 your testimony, excellent testimony.

11 And now, Jutta Tolbert, and did I get that
12 right, ma'am?

13 MS. TOLBERT: It's Jutta.

14 SENATOR GAETZ: Jutta Tolbert, I am so
15 sorry. Thank you for coming tonight. And next
16 will be Keith Dibell, or Dibell, and then
17 Joseph Blais, I think, and then Earl Beckwith,
18 if you would please line up in the on deck
19 circle.

20 Ms. Tolbert, the floor is yours.

21 MS. TOLBERT: Thank you. My question is,
22 as far as the committee meetings, is there a
23 schedule already set for those that once we are
24 done here and you guys go into committee, what
25 is the schedule there?

1 SENATOR GAETZ: That is a great question.
2 The Speaker Designate can answer that. The
3 answer is yes, but he will be able to point you
4 to a website so you can see what the
5 Committee's schedule is.

6 MS. TOLBERT: Okay. And my other question
7 is, how many of those present here will be on
8 those committees?

9 SENATOR GAETZ: Again, we will answer
10 those questions, but we want to give everybody
11 a chance to speak first.

12 MS. TOLBERT: Sure. Thank you.

13 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you so much, ma'am,
14 for your testimony.

15 And next, Keith -- is it Dibell or Dibell?

16 MR. DIBELL: It is Dibell.

17 SENATOR GAETZ: Dibell. I had it wrong
18 both ways.

19 MR. DIBELL: That's all right, I was in
20 the military.

21 SENATOR GAETZ: Well, I understand. My
22 name gets butchered from time to time, too.
23 You are recognized, sir, and thanks for coming
24 tonight.

25 MR. DIBELL: My name is Keith Dibell. I

1 am from Manatee County. I want to thank each
2 and every one of you on this panel for being
3 here.

4 One of the reasons that I am standing here
5 is my vote does not count in Manatee County.
6 That is not right. I work for the City of
7 Bradenton. The policies that are set by y'all
8 go to Pinellas County in Hillsborough County,
9 not to the City of Bradenton.

10 Now, over it all, it all filters down
11 throughout the state and gets to me eventually.
12 I would like to have a direct result to the
13 City of Bradenton about governing my county.

14 There are a number of Representatives,
15 there are a number of Senators. Y'all set
16 policy, y'all make laws. We, the voting
17 public, gave you a mandate to correct this.
18 Please do so.

19 The idea of having a map prior to a
20 committee meeting. Gee, I am not really sure
21 what I am commenting on other than I would like
22 to know what you have done. Doing it in a
23 timely manner would be welcome, because I will
24 see you in Tallahassee, each and every one of
25 you. Have a good evening.

1 SENATOR GAETZ: And looking forward to
2 seeing you.

3 MR. DIBELL: Oh, no, you won't.

4 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
5 Keith. We'll look forward to seeing you in
6 Tallahassee. I am at Senate 420.

7 MR. DIBELL: I know where your office is.

8 SENATOR GAETZ: Come on down.

9 Joseph Blais. Is it Blais, sir?

10 MR. BLAIS: Blais.

11 SENATOR GAETZ: And after Mr. Blais is
12 Earl Beckwith, and then Monia, I think it is
13 Joblin, with the Planned Parenthood
14 organization, and then Glenda Wright, if you
15 would be on the on deck circle, please.

16 Joseph, thank you for coming, and we are
17 looking forward to your observations, sir.

18 MR. BLAIS: Good evening, everyone. I
19 want to commend this body for the website. I
20 think this is very important. Keep it current,
21 keep it updated. We -- you know, if we don't
22 look at it, it is our fault. You have made the
23 effort, you have met us halfway.

24 I think the other thing, having this
25 televised is incredible. To have this

1 communication to the people is essential. I
2 mean, there shouldn't be any excuses. If you
3 want to know what it is about, there's ways to
4 find out.

5 My situation is I lived -- I have been in
6 Florida for 20 years. I lived in Tampa Bay. I
7 am used to a larger population. I moved to
8 Charlotte County about close to six years ago.
9 Unfortunately, Charlotte County has under
10 250,000 population, approximately 160,000 in a
11 vast, undeveloped -- we have a lot of land, and
12 it's -- I think when I look at the maps
13 currently, it is like you've -- whoever did
14 this before -- because I have never been
15 involved in anything like this before. This is
16 my first time up at bat.

17 SENATOR GAETZ: You are doing well.

18 MR. BLAIS: Exactly. And I, for instance,
19 there's the congressional districts. We've got
20 three congressional districts in our county.
21 And, you know, it is hard for us to go and
22 meet, like we have to go to either West Palm or
23 Naples or wherever Connie Mack -- because that
24 is my Congressman, and then there is Buchanan,
25 I believe. So we just feel that we are being

1 underserved, and we have regional concerns,
2 because we are looking for Florida to grow
3 again, because I think Charlotte County had a
4 great plan, and the recession hit, the housing,
5 so on and so forth, so our growth has been
6 stunted, but we are making plans to grow again.
7 So, you know --

8 SENATOR GAETZ: And if I could ask you to
9 bring it in for a landing.

10 MR. BLAIS: Yes, I will.

11 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you.

12 MR. BLAIS: Whatever you can do, I know we
13 are limited by our population, but please try
14 to find common ground, because I really don't
15 want this to go to the courts, because I am a
16 taxpayer, and we pay the legal and we pay the
17 price. So let's find a way to be bipartisan,
18 like you are trying to do tonight, and let's
19 find a solution that gets us more on a
20 regional, cooperative basis. That is what I am
21 looking for.

22 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you.

23 MR. BLAIS: Thank you.

24 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you so much for your
25 testimony. And next we will hear from Earl

1 Beckwith, and following Mr. Beckwith, Monia
2 Joblin from Planned Parenthood and then Glenda
3 Wright and then Bill McGrath.

4 Mr. Beckwith, thank you for coming
5 tonight. The floor is yours.

6 MR. BECKWITH: Thank you. I just want to
7 know how much this lawsuit is going to cost the
8 taxpaying public for something that is
9 basically trying to thwart the will of the
10 taxpaying public initiated by the House.

11 SENATOR GAETZ: We will certainly provide
12 you any information we can at the conclusion of
13 the hearing. Thank you, Mr. Beckwith.

14 And I apologize, is it Monia, Monia?

15 MS. JOBLIN: It's Monia.

16 SENATOR GAETZ: Monia. Is it Joblin?

17 MS. JOBLIN: It is Joblin.

18 SENATOR GAETZ: Joblin, from Planned
19 Parenthood. Thank you for coming and sharing
20 your perspective tonight.

21 MS. JOBLIN: You're welcome. I am
22 speaking on behalf of Planned Parenthood of
23 Southwest and Central Florida, and it appears
24 to us that the Legislature's timeline for
25 drawing districts is extremely unfair to

1 Florida's voters. Florida's maps will be
2 approved later than almost every other state in
3 the nation, and our districts may not be
4 finalized until August, just two months before
5 the all-important 2012 elections. One can only
6 think that the current timeline is designed as
7 an incumbent protection plan.

8 And I agree with the previous speaker, why
9 is the Legislature spending our precious tax
10 dollars, over a million dollars so far, to
11 oppose Fair Districts passed during last year's
12 elections by 63 percent of the electorate? All
13 of this money is being spent unnecessarily,
14 while teachers are being fired, social services
15 are being cut, fewer women are having access to
16 health care. What the Legislature should be
17 working to uphold, the constitutional
18 provisions placed there by almost two-thirds of
19 the electorate last November, not spending
20 taxpayers' money to avoid the voters' will.
21 You are spending our money -- it would seem you
22 are spending our money to protect your own
23 seats.

24 Now, there is something very suspicious
25 and anti-democratic about the procedure that is

1 being followed, all of the do-it-yourself maps
2 notwithstanding. Look, it leads us to believe
3 that the real mapping is going on in back
4 rooms. We call on the Legislature to heed to
5 the voters. This issue is a test of our
6 democracy and the will of the people of
7 Florida. Thank you.

8 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you so much.

9 Next we will hear from Glenda Wright, and,
10 folks, this is a public meeting, so you are
11 welcome to applaud, you are welcome to emote,
12 you do anything you want. Just bear in mind
13 that the time we take is time that then folks
14 won't be able to use to speak. No, no, no, no.
15 I said you are welcome -- you are welcome to do
16 it, but just understand that the laws of
17 physics do pertain and you can't do two things
18 at the same time.

19 Glenda Wright.

20 MS. WRIGHT: Hi, good evening. My name is
21 Glenda Wright.

22 SENATOR GAETZ: Now, let's give Ms. Wright
23 our attention, okay?

24 MS. WRIGHT: Thank you. My name is Glenda
25 Wright, and I am speaking tonight as a private

1 citizen. I live in Manatee County and I work
2 in Sarasota County. I believe I bring a unique
3 perspective to the redistricting issue. I have
4 worked for two members of Congress who have
5 represented Sarasota and Manatee Counties.

6 During the redistricting process in 1990,
7 and again in 2000, I was very involved in the
8 debate regarding the lines of congressional
9 districts, and became very familiar with both
10 the process and the need for areas of similar
11 interest to remain in one congressional
12 district.

13 With that in mind, I would like to read
14 into the record just a couple of excerpts from
15 an article written by my -- one of my former
16 bosses, Congressman Dan Miller, who could not
17 be here this evening. This column appeared in
18 *The Sarasota Herald-Tribune* on June 3rd of this
19 year. Congressman Miller and I share the same
20 view, that Sarasota and Manatee County should
21 be combined into one congressional district.

22 Here are a few comments: "Manatee and
23 Sarasota Counties have formed the heart and
24 soul of our congressional district for 20
25 years. There is compelling evidence that they

1 should continue to do so for another decade.
2 The state constitutional amendments passed by
3 Florida voters last November were designed to
4 produce honest, non-gerrymandered districts
5 that serve the public's interest, and not the
6 interest of incumbents or a political party.

7 "It is less than 11 miles from downtown
8 Bradenton to downtown Sarasota. The fabric of
9 both communities is deeply interwoven.
10 Separating them will tear apart years of
11 economic and geographic collaboration. The
12 relationship between Manatee and Sarasota
13 Counties is far greater with the communities to
14 the south and the north -- is far greater than
15 with the communities to the south and north of
16 our area. Keeping Bradenton and Sarasota
17 together maximizes the influence of these two
18 key cities in the halls of Congress. Keeping
19 Manatee and Sarasota Counties together is the
20 right thing to do for the people who live in
21 the district and for the integrity of the
22 process. Logic dictates the two counties
23 should remain in the current district."

24 Thank you.

25 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you. And if you

1 have more -- Ms. Wright, if you had more that
2 you were not able to get in --

3 MS. WRIGHT: I turned it in.

4 SENATOR GAETZ: Okay.

5 MS. WRIGHT: I turned it in.

6 SENATOR GAETZ: We would love to have it
7 in the record.

8 MS. WRIGHT: Thank you.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you for your
10 testimony.

11 Next, Bill McGrath. And, Mr. McGrath, you
12 will be followed by --

13 MR. GRANT: That is just Grant, G-r-a-n-t.
14 That is a middle initial.

15 SENATOR GAETZ: Oh, okay.

16 MR. GRANT: First I want to thank you all
17 for coming from all over the state here rather
18 than make us drive up to Tallahassee.

19 I started the political business some 50
20 years ago, and I can't say that we did, my
21 generation, a great job. We have given you one
22 enormous challenge. With our best big hearts,
23 we instituted all these entitlement programs.
24 The results, of course, have been catastrophic,
25 as we see by the number of people --

1 SENATOR GAETZ: Sir, if we could -- no,
2 no, no, no, no. If we could bring it back to
3 redistricting, okay?

4 MR. GRANT: Okay. It is -- well, it is
5 coming to redistricting.

6 SENATOR GAETZ: Well, let's get there
7 soon. You now have a minute and 30 seconds
8 left.

9 MR. GRANT: That is enough time.

10 The next couple of years are going to be
11 very traumatic periods, a lot of challenges,
12 and it is important that as we undergo these
13 challenges, that all of our residents believe
14 that they are represented. And to that extent,
15 even though I am a little against the idea of
16 trying to manipulate districts, I think it is
17 important that minorities continue to be well
18 represented in our state. So I would recommend
19 that District 55, which under the files would
20 say, hey, let's change that, not be changed.

21 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.

22 Next, Patricia Benson -- I'm sorry?

23 MR. McGRATH: It is a little uncanny,
24 there must have been two Bill McGraths in the
25 hall, both of whom were recognized.

1 SENATOR GAETZ: Well, Bill McGrath, the
2 second, you are recognized.

3 MR. McGRATH: Exactly, not a junior.

4 And my questions basically have already
5 been asked, but I think one point probably
6 needs to be reiterated. I think if these
7 hearings are to be considered seriously by the
8 public, why then at the same time has *The St.*
9 *Petersburg Times* and *The Miami Herald* within
10 the last week stated that the Legislature has
11 spent over \$2.5 million in last year and this
12 year alone challenging the Constitutional
13 Amendments 5 and 6? If the Committee doesn't
14 accept the *Times* and the *Herald* figure of \$2.5
15 million, I think you could at least accept the
16 figure that was given out by the House
17 spokeswoman, Katie Betta, I believe is her
18 name, who has already stated that this year
19 alone, one-third million dollars has gone to --
20 for the House challenge of Amendment No. 6.

21 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.

22 And now -- just a moment -- Patricia
23 Benson with the Democratic Women's Club of
24 Manatee, and following Ms. Benson we will have
25 Virginia Hitchcock, then Mildred Headdy with

1 the League of Women Voters and then Larry
2 Grossman with Manatee County Democrats.

3 Ms. Benson, thanks from coming, and we are
4 delighted to hear from you.

5 MS. BENSON: Thank you. Basically I just
6 want to reiterate what everyone else has said
7 in the past. I was a teacher for 33 years, and
8 when we went before the community with changes
9 within the school district, we came with the
10 maps, the parents saw it, they then raised
11 questions and we made changes, but we came with
12 the maps. And as far as I am concerned, this
13 is a waste of time and waste of money. Thank
14 you.

15 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you.

16 Next, Virginia Hitchcock. Ms. Hitchcock,
17 thank you for being with us tonight, and you
18 are recognized.

19 MS. HITCHCOCK: Good evening. Please
20 excuse my reading my statement.

21 SENATOR GAETZ: Not at all. Go ahead.

22 MS. HITCHCOCK: My family and I moved to
23 Sarasota from Washington, DC, 12 years ago.

24 Thank you for taking the time and making
25 the effort to get public opinion on this very

1 important issue. The long haul of 26 hearings
2 is almost over for you.

3 Unlike many, I agree with your decision to
4 get public input first, as this is an important
5 first step in creating ownership of any process
6 of change. If you had come with proposed maps,
7 you would have had nothing but unhappy people
8 asking why you didn't get their opinion first.

9 I have been so impressed by the My
10 District Builder system. It was developed for
11 state officials and offered to the public for
12 input.

13 When you take all this input and opinions
14 and begin to create your proposed districts, I
15 hope you will follow certain principles. The
16 most basic is to follow the wording of the
17 amendments passed by 63 percent of our citizens
18 to create compact, contiguous districts of
19 approximately equal populations that follow
20 county and city boundaries, as well as Voting
21 Tabulation Districts and natural boundaries.

22 When I created my own U.S. congressional
23 map, I thought it would be easy. Just combine
24 counties of low populations or divide counties
25 of large populations to arrive at the target

1 numbers. I was wrong. First of all, it is not
2 that easy to create compact districts at the
3 county level when some of our counties are
4 definitely not compact. How did they come up
5 with Lake County anyway?

6 My basic building unit was the Voting
7 Tabulation District. Even though the
8 redistricting software allows changes on the
9 block level, I would hope that you would
10 likewise leave the VTDs untouched. The 2002
11 congressional district map did not respect the
12 VTDs. I think local Supervisors of Elections
13 must have the autonomy to create the districts
14 that serve their populations best.

15 For areas south of the heavily developed
16 I-4 corridor, I differentiated coastal urban
17 areas from rural central ones. In these areas,
18 the transitions between open land and dense
19 housing developments are very distinct, and I
20 think the inhabitants of each markedly has
21 different issues and concerns. I suspect that
22 the concerns of residents of rural areas have
23 been overshadowed by those of the more densely
24 populated coastal regions.

25 SENATOR GAETZ: And, Ms. Hitchcock, we

1 really appreciate your submission of a map, but
2 if you could wrap it up in a sentence or two,
3 that would be respectful to those behind you.

4 MS. HITCHCOCK: Okay. Okay. I have not
5 considered racial or ethnic makeups in the
6 proposed districts. I think it's time for
7 Florida to have a system that is color blind
8 and see how it works.

9 Several friends have asked --

10 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you. Thank you very
11 much. And we really appreciate you becoming
12 the 50th submitter of maps, and we will take
13 your maps deeply into consideration and thank
14 you very much. We will put them on the
15 Internet so that everyone can see them, and if
16 you have extended remarks, please supply them
17 for the record.

18 MS. HITCHCOCK: I will.

19 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much.

20 MS. HITCHCOCK: Thank you.

21 SENATOR GAETZ: And now we will hear from
22 Mildred Headdy with the League of Women Voters,
23 and following Ms. Headdy, we will have Larry
24 Grossman from the Manatee County Democrats,
25 then Bonnie Hepburn.

1 So, Ms. Headdy, thank you for coming, and
2 you are recognized.

3 MS. HEADDY: Okay. I am Millie Headdy,
4 and I was going to address timing this evening.
5 It has already been addressed, so for brevity,
6 I give the rest of my time. Thank you.

7 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, and
8 please stay if you can so that you will have an
9 opportunity to hear some of the answers to the
10 timeline questions at the end of the hearing.

11 MS. HEADDY: Thank you.

12 SENATOR GAETZ: Yes, ma'am.

13 MR. GROSSMAN: My name is Larry Grossman,
14 I live on Longboat Key, and by profession, I am
15 a city planner, so I walk around with maps all
16 the time. I know it is damned if you do and
17 damned if you don't. If you had the maps
18 already prepared, people would say, "That is a
19 solution to what problem? We haven't had any
20 input." And so now you are getting the
21 opposite, "Where's the maps, where's the
22 solution?" And I think it is preferable for
23 you to get the input from people to say -- cite
24 problems they see, because that will help in
25 your decision-making.

1 Okay, so here goes. I was very surprised
2 -- I have only been here for a couple of years,
3 so I am very surprised that Nancy Detert
4 represents me, because I live on Longboat Key.
5 I visited my friend in Punta Gorda recently,
6 and now I can't believe that we are in the same
7 Florida Senate District 23.

8 A VOICE: 76,000 thousand people.

9 MR. GROSSMAN: Right. And then, lastly
10 perhaps, I think that -- so one of the things I
11 do want to look at, you know, District 21, 23,
12 and rearrange the geographics there.

13 The other point is that I think the
14 barrier islands should all be in one district,
15 and I think they are not. And I think they
16 have more to do with each other than -- because
17 they have issues of beach re-nourishment and
18 tourism and all kinds of other stuff, so they
19 should be together. And, lastly, you know, the
20 House District 55 looks really strange, because
21 it just hits a lot of different jurisdictions,
22 it should be more compact. Thank you.

23 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much. That
24 is exactly the kind of input we need.

25 And now we will hear from Bonnie Hepburn,

1 and following Ms. Hepburn, Robert -- I think it
2 is Waechter, Waechter, with the Sarasota
3 Manatee Airport Authority, and then Sarah
4 Hernandez, and then if David Matthews would be
5 ready.

6 Ms. Hepburn, thank you for coming tonight,
7 and we are anxious to hear your testimony.

8 MS. HEPBURN: Thank you. I am a Sarasota
9 resident, and I heartily endorse the comments
10 made by the Supervisor of Elections and the
11 representatives of Planned Parenthood, League
12 of Women Voters and many of the previous
13 speakers.

14 I am particularly interested in a comment
15 made in the Tampa -- quoted in *The Tampa*
16 *Tribune* today by Speaker Designate Weatherford
17 from the meeting last night at Jefferson High
18 School in which Speaker Designate Weatherford
19 agreed, committed even, to get final maps out
20 in time for candidates to qualify to run. And
21 I am very, very adamant that that should work
22 for non-incumbents as well as incumbent
23 candidates, and that steps taken -- would be
24 taken that are necessary so there would indeed
25 be time to put together viable campaigns for

1 non-incumbents.

2 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
3 ma'am, and the Speaker Designate will have a
4 chance to restate his position at the
5 conclusion of the meeting tonight if we have
6 time.

7 Let me -- let me recognize -- and I
8 apologize, would you pronounce the last name,
9 sir?

10 MR. WAECHTER: It is Waechter.

11 SENATOR GAETZ: Waechter. Well, Senator
12 Detert is whispering in my ear, and I should
13 have listened to her.

14 MR. WAECHTER: You should always listen to
15 Senator Detert.

16 SENATOR GAETZ: I know. She chairs two
17 committees I am on, she controls my
18 legislation.

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

21 MR. WAECHTER: Thank you, Chair, and thank
22 you, all of you, for giving me the opportunity
23 to do this. I am going to read this in the
24 interest of brevity.

25 My name is Bob Waechter, I serve as

1 Chairman of the Sarasota Manatee Airport
2 Authority and I am speaking to you in that
3 capacity this evening. I am addressing only
4 the congressional districts in this appeal from
5 the airport authority.

6 The airport authority is a special
7 district straddling the county line dividing
8 Sarasota and Manatee Counties. We have a good
9 relationship with our host communities and
10 enjoy strong support in both of them. This
11 fact is evidenced by the recent pledge of both
12 counties to contribute 200,000 in support of
13 our attempt to secure a small community air
14 service grant from the Federal Aviation
15 Authority to solicit new air service for the
16 airport, thereby benefiting the business and
17 residential communities of both our counties.

18 When dealing with federal agencies that
19 oversee airport authorities, it is imperative
20 that we have a strong voice in Congress
21 representing our interest. We have that strong
22 voice now in the person of Congressman Vern
23 Buchanan. We are concerned that any proposed
24 redistricting that would divide our two
25 counties between congressional districts would

1 adversely impact our representation at the
2 federal level. Bifurcation of the district
3 along the county line would actually divide the
4 airport into two separate congressional
5 districts, as the county line goes through the
6 center of the airport property. This could
7 lead to having two congressional
8 representatives taking opposite positions on an
9 aviation matter, especially if one district has
10 another competing airport in the district, a
11 likelihood.

12 We strongly recommend that any
13 redistricting map retain both Sarasota and
14 Manatee Counties in one congressional district.
15 At the August board meeting of the airport
16 authority, we voted to authorize me to express
17 to you our belief that our region will be
18 better served if Manatee and Sarasota Counties
19 continue to be within a single district with a
20 unified voice as they are now. I thank you for
21 this opportunity.

22 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.

23 Next, Sarah Hernandez. Ms. Hernandez, are
24 you here? Thank you so much for being here,
25 and the floor is yours. And following

1 Ms. Hernandez, David Matthews, if you will be
2 ready, and then Manuel, and I think it is
3 Chepote, UnidosNow, and then Peggy Simone.

4 Ms. Hernandez, thanks for being here.

5 MS. HERNANDEZ: Thank you for the
6 opportunity to speak to you here today.

7 I want to speak to three issues. The
8 first one, which has been mentioned before, has
9 to do with the current lawsuit. My comment in
10 relation to that, it seems to me that that
11 lawsuit should be left to be done by a private
12 citizen who might not have agreed with the
13 citizens' vote. It is the responsibility for
14 legislators to support and defend that law as
15 the voters voted for it.

16 The second point you have heard enough
17 about has to do with the timing for these so
18 that we have enough time for candidates to come
19 forward and run their campaigns.

20 The third item had to do with District 55.
21 I live here in Sarasota, and I notice that the
22 way in which my own neighborhood is affected,
23 it is affected by my neighbors east of where I
24 am on the west side of 41. It seems to me that
25 having that representation for aspects that

1 affect the development in District 55, which is
2 my next-door neighbor, that also impact me. So
3 having us be together makes a lot more sense,
4 because we will be supporting each other.

5 Thank you.

6 SENATOR GAETZ: Thanks, that is very
7 helpful testimony, very useful.

8 David Matthews is next, and following
9 Mr. Matthews, Manuel, and I believe it is
10 Chepote, and then Peggy Simone, former
11 Representative Simone, and then Rita Ferrandino
12 with Arc Capital Development.

13 Mr. Matthews, we are looking forward to
14 your testimony, and you are recognized.

15 MR. D. MATTHEWS: Good evening. Welcome
16 to the Manatee/Sarasota area. My name is David
17 Matthews. I was born in Sarasota and grew up
18 here. I currently live in Manatee County in
19 the City of Bradenton. Thank you for coming
20 today and listening to our concerns and our
21 comments.

22 One of the things that you have heard a
23 lot lately is the need to follow Amendment 5
24 and 6 by drawing compact, contiguous districts
25 that don't do things like split up cities and

1 counties. That doesn't sound bad, but I was
2 curious and did some research on what some city
3 boundaries actually look like. As you can see
4 here -- as you can see here, the -- this is a
5 map of Bradenton where I live. If you will
6 notice, Bradenton is not compact, and it is
7 actually not even entirely contiguous. If
8 you -- if you look at -- there is a ward over
9 here and then there's separation with county
10 and then a ward here, so you don't have compact
11 and you don't have contiguous, which begs the
12 question, how can you do things like make
13 compact districts that follow city lines when
14 you have to follow boundaries like Bradenton's
15 that don't qualify as compact or contiguous? I
16 am sure there are some cities where there is a
17 -- where that is the case, but there are many
18 cities like Bradenton in our state that have
19 the same jagged boundaries that people dislike
20 about legislative districts. If you follow
21 city boundaries, I fear the districts will not
22 meet the compactness requirements of Amendment
23 5 and 6, and that residents may actually be
24 just as upset at what the districts look like
25 as they are now.

1 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.
2 We -- you have used your time, and if you could
3 leave any additional comments you have, we
4 would be happy to have the Committee consider
5 them. Thank you very much.

6 MR. D. MATTHEWS: Okay.

7 SENATOR GAETZ: And our next -- thank you.
8 Our next speaker is Manuel -- and I apologize,
9 is it Chepote?

10 MR. CHEPOTE: You did it right, thank you.

11 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, sir, for being
12 here. And you represent UnidosNow?

13 MR. CHEPOTE: UnidosNow.org.

14 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you. Please go
15 forward. You are recognized.

16 MR. CHEPOTE: Thank you very much.

17 I would ask you to respect the voters'
18 wish with 63 percent of them voting on
19 Amendment 5 and 6. Please do not waste our
20 hard-earned tax dollars.

21 Number two, do it timely so we can have
22 those maps ahead of time, and not to waste time
23 and give the chance to everyone.

24 And the third item, please consider the
25 tremendous growth of the Hispanic population in

1 the counties of Sarasota and Manatee.

2 Thank you.

3 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.

4 And now the Honorable Peggy Simone, former
5 State Representative. Representative, thank
6 you for being with us, and thanks for your
7 service to the State of Florida. You are
8 recognized.

9 MS. SIMONE: Thank you, Senator. I want
10 to compliment all of you for serving on this
11 committee. It is very difficult. It is almost
12 impossible to do a fair job with the two
13 amendments that passed on the ballot. But
14 those I did not support, and I will tell you
15 why. I sat on this redistricting committee in
16 '90 to '92, and we got a lot of minority
17 districts, and you are going to lose minority
18 districts if you do compact districts.

19 I will give you my comments here after --
20 after I list them. I did not confer with
21 anybody about the congressional district
22 Manatee and Sarasota County, but I have -- that
23 is my number two hope, that the congressional
24 seat that we have in Manatee County be combined
25 with Sarasota County as it is now.

1 Also, my number one priority is two
2 Florida House seats in Manatee County, plus the
3 remainder of the population needed based on the
4 districts, what you have, 156,000, Manatee
5 County has 322,000 people, so you need about
6 10,000 more, and you could get those from
7 eastern Sarasota County, which would take in
8 the community of interest of Lakewood Ranch.
9 Or if you don't do that, put Hardee County back
10 with Manatee again, that's about 10,000 people.

11 The third priority -- my third priority is
12 that a Florida Senate seat be based in Manatee
13 County and that a Florida Senate seat be based
14 in Sarasota County.

15 And I hope -- wish you the best of luck.
16 I'm sorry that you are going to lose a lot of
17 minority districts if you go to compact
18 districts, because we made sure in 1992 that we
19 got a lot of minority districts, and I am just
20 going to be sorry to see them go. Thank you
21 very much.

22 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Representative.

23 Next, Rita Ferrandino with Arc Capital
24 Development, and then Bruce Brunette, please,
25 then Michael, I believe it is Verbil, and then

1 Richard Jackson.

2 Thank you so much for being here tonight,
3 and we are looking forward to anything you
4 might have to share with us.

5 MS. FERRANDINO: Well, hello there. I am
6 Rita Ferrandino. I am almost never brief, but
7 I will make an exception this time --

8 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you.

9 MS. FERRANDINO: -- because many of my
10 fellow Sarasotans have spoken up, and I just
11 want to urge the committee to take the vote --
12 the voters were really clear. They want fair
13 districts. They want to be connected to their
14 government. And I would like to just reiterate
15 how important that is for us here in Sarasota
16 to feel that the will of the voters are being
17 heard. And as you move forward, we would like
18 you to move quickly so that we are able to have
19 everyone understand the districts so that we
20 are able to have fair elections. So thank you
21 very much.

22 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, and you get
23 extra points for brevity.

24 Bruce Brunette, and then after Bruce,
25 Michael, I think it is Verbil -- if I've

1 mispronounced it, please accept my apologies --
2 then Richard Jackson and then Jack Wetherson
3 with the Venice Duplicate Bridge Club. I am
4 sure there is a relationship to redistricting.

5 Bruce, you are recognized, and thanks for
6 being here.

7 MR. BRUNETTE: Thank you. I am a Venice
8 resident, a business owner, a member of the
9 Chamber. Thirty million dollars, Legislature
10 has set aside \$30 million to fight the will of
11 the people. You have already spent one to two
12 million dollars in a year when we really don't
13 -- can't afford it and we've got lots of cuts.
14 Why are you doing that? I don't get it. This
15 is supposed to be a government by the people
16 and for the people, not by the politicians and
17 for the politicians.

18 In 2008, you fought the Supreme Court
19 approval of a law. In 2010, you tried to go to
20 court again and get it knocked out. That
21 didn't work. In 2007, since you couldn't do
22 that, you came up with this fake Amendment 7 to
23 try to get around it. That got thrown out.
24 When are you ever going to learn? This is what
25 the people want. Drop the lawsuit and stop

1 fighting the will of the people.

2 SENATOR GAETZ: And, Bruce -- Bruce, I
3 hope you can stay for the end of the hearing.
4 Sometimes things get put in the bloodstream and
5 we begin to think that they are true because
6 they get repeated a lot. The Speaker
7 Designate, I think, will have some good
8 information for you that might to some extent
9 help reassure you.

10 Next is -- how do we pronounce your last
11 name, sir?

12 MR. VERBIL: Verbil.

13 SENATOR GAETZ: Verbil.

14 MR. VERBIL: Michael Verbil, I am a
15 resident of north Sarasota County.

16 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you so much for
17 being here. You are recognized.

18 MR. VERBIL: Thank you all for your
19 service. Though we all may come from different
20 political parties, I know that I don't have to
21 remind anybody that you are all representing
22 everyone in your constituency.

23 That said, Sarasota and Manatee Counties
24 are unique in their concentrations of arts
25 organizations, institutes of higher learning,

1 such as New College here. Under the mandate of
2 the citizens to make the districts compact, I
3 would ask that this special area not be divided
4 in any separate districts. I understand that
5 this there is a possibility that having two
6 Representatives representing one area may make
7 it easier to get something done in Congress and
8 legislation, but I think that this is a special
9 area that should stay together.

10 That said, I have been looking at District
11 Builder. I started working on it. I have
12 learned a little bit about it. Then I found
13 last night that there was a 13-year-old who did
14 it, and I said, "Well, who am I if a
15 13-year-old can do it?" But you as our elected
16 Representatives are being paid to do this work.
17 You are the experts. I have to ask why you are
18 not doing it. I think it was a mistake. I
19 think this process of not having the maps first
20 is flawed. Rather than discussing your maps
21 and getting the work done before the legal vote
22 is allowed, I think that we are all being asked
23 to work in a vacuum. And we are not experts.
24 We are really working in the dark here.

25 I understand the legislation can't be

1 voted on before 2012, but there is no time to
2 prepare for the 2012 elections if we wait until
3 March 2012 for a final vote.

4 Here is what I want to see happen: You as
5 a body publish your ideas for maps now. We can
6 debate them and refine the maps before and
7 during the fall session, with two-way input
8 from the media using interactive media, all in
9 the sunshine. Then when voting is allowed, the
10 lion's share of the work will be done, and then
11 we can get the vote done at the earliest
12 possible legal date rather than wait until the
13 last possible date.

14 One question I would like to ask, I would
15 like to hear answered tonight by the panel:
16 After all of the hearings you have conducted,
17 what concrete changes, improvements to your
18 ideas, have you each made based on the public
19 input you have heard?

20 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, and we will
21 certainly give folks a chance to respond to
22 that.

23 MR. VERBIL: Can I have one more minute?
24 Can I have one more second?

25 SENATOR GAETZ: If you can wrap it up just

1 in --

2 MR. VERBIL: It will be very quick. It is
3 only a comment.

4 SENATOR GAETZ: Sure.

5 MR. VERBIL: We have little enough time
6 before you. I am only speaking to a minority
7 of the people on the panel. If you didn't come
8 here to hear us and would rather spend time on
9 your cell phone or doing e-mail, please don't
10 insult us by ignoring our presence. Thank you.

11 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, sir.

12 Next, Richard Jackson. Mr. Jackson?
13 Richard Jackson? Richard Jackson, then Jack
14 Wetherson from the bridge club, and then
15 Rochelle Wetherson from Temple Beth-El and then
16 Fred Falkner.

17 Mr. Jackson, thank you for being here,
18 and, please, the floor is yours.

19 MR. JACKSON: Thank you. Most of my
20 comments have already been made, but if you
21 will take Manatee County and draw a line from
22 north to south, you will wind up with two
23 Representatives. Within a couple thousand
24 people, you will be right there. If you did
25 the same thing with Sarasota County, went out

1 to the eastern edge, lopped off 50,000 people,
2 you could have two more House members. So you
3 could have four House members, it would be
4 easily done.

5 If you wanted to make a Senate district
6 out of that, you could keep the two -- let me
7 get my directions right now. You could get the
8 two -- you could get the two western counties
9 -- I'm sorry, the western Representatives in
10 those districts and take one of the other two.
11 You could also take Manatee and Sarasota County
12 and make one U.S. House district. And that
13 is -- the numbers add up. It is compact, it is
14 contiguous, it is consistent economically,
15 socially and culturally.

16 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very, very much.

17 MR. JACKSON: You're welcome.

18 SENATOR GAETZ: Very helpful.

19 Jack Wetherson? Jack? Jack went home and
20 had to play bridge.

21 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: He is waving.

22 SENATOR GAETZ: He is waving. Are you,
23 are you ceding your time, sir?

24 MR. WETHERSON: I am.

25 SENATOR GAETZ: Well, thank you very much.

1 I was really looking forward to your testimony.

2 Rochelle Wetherson. You are not going to
3 talk either? Well, you could correct Jack if
4 you spoke.

5 Fred Falkner is next, and then Casey
6 Welch, and following Casey Welch, Tom Walker
7 and then Tina Steele. And I'm sorry we didn't
8 give you as much time to work your way down,
9 but Fred Falkner, then Casey Welch, then Tom
10 Walker and then Tina Steele.

11 Fred Falkner? Fred? Going once, twice,
12 three times.

13 Casey Welch? Mr. Welch, thank you for
14 coming, and we are delighted to have your
15 testimony this evening.

16 MR. WELCH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
17 Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you,
18 Representatives and Senators. Welcome to
19 Sylvan, Sarasota County. Appreciate you all
20 being here tonight.

21 I am speaking as a private citizen here
22 tonight. I am a seventh-generation Floridian,
23 and my three-week-old son, born in Sarasota
24 Memorial Hospital, is the eighth. So bear with
25 me, I have been on diaper duty, so I will be

1 brief.

2 I just want to talk for a few minutes --
3 excuse me, two minutes about the communities of
4 interest in this area. As growing up in the
5 rural parts of this -- of Sarasota and Manatee
6 County, and now living in the urban section of
7 Lakewood Ranch, there are distinct communities
8 of interest in this area. The areas of Myakka
9 Head, Old Myakka and Myakka City, while they
10 are pronounced and spelled differently, they
11 are communities of interest, they are rural,
12 they have a lot more in common with south Polk
13 County, eastern Hillsborough County, Hardee
14 County and DeSoto Counties than with the urban
15 areas. And talk about the urban cluster of
16 Lakewood Ranch, it is divided by Manatee and
17 Sarasota County, but it is a community of
18 interest. That is where I live. We should be
19 represented by one State Representative, one
20 State Senator and one U.S. Congressman. And
21 that is all I have to say.

22 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you so much. And
23 good luck with the two o'clock feeding.

24 Next we will hear from Tom Walker, if
25 Mr. Walker is here.

1 MR. WALKER: Yes.

2 SENATOR GAETZ: And, Ms. Steele, don't go
3 away, because we want to hear from you, too.

4 Mr. Walker, you are recognized, and thanks
5 for being here tonight.

6 MR. WALKER: My concerns have already been
7 expressed by the previous speakers, so I won't
8 say much, except to ask you to respect the
9 intent of the legislation and do the right
10 thing as you know it in your own hearts. Thank
11 you very much.

12 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you so much, sir.

13 And now, Ms. Steele, we are glad you are
14 here, but behind you, if Charlie Clifton will
15 be ready, and then Diane Desenberg and then
16 Henry Jorgensen.

17 Ms. Steele, you are recognized.

18 MS. STEELE: Thank you very much. Good
19 evening. Thank you for all being here. You
20 are hearing the will of the people tonight by
21 the cheers, by the jeers and by the applause.
22 Amendments 5 and 6 were passed by us. We are
23 the people, and you need to listen to us.

24 There is another reason I am here tonight,
25 and that is because I am always a poll watcher

1 at the elections, and I also represent the
2 disabled. You need to get those districts
3 drawn, and drawn now. We have a hard enough
4 time with people showing up at the polls who
5 have not got the right district, they don't
6 have the right polling station. There is going
7 to be confusion in spades if you don't get your
8 job done and get it done now. Thank you.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, and thanks for
10 your work as a poll worker.

11 Charlie Clifton? Charlie Clifton?

12 MR. CLIFTON: Right here.

13 SENATOR GAETZ: Mr. Clifton, thank you for
14 coming. We are delighted you are here, and you
15 are recognized.

16 MR. CLIFTON: Thank you for the
17 opportunity. I will be brief since a lot of my
18 ideas have already been stated, but one thing I
19 would like to reiterate is the -- I think a lot
20 of people here feel that the \$30 million that
21 you are using to defend -- challenging the will
22 of the electorate should be used for a better
23 purpose, like maybe it could be given to
24 education instead. Thank you.

25 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you. And, Charlie,

1 I appreciate your time so far, but if you can
2 give us a little bit more time and stay to the
3 end of the hearing, I think you may get some
4 facts about that that either would reassure you
5 or at least give you a better sense of what the
6 real numbers are.

7 Next we have Diane -- is it Desenberg?

8 MS. DESENBERG: Desenberg.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: And following Diane, Henry
10 Jorgensen and then Betsy Roberts and then Ruth
11 Brandwein with the National Association of
12 Social Workers.

13 Diane, thank you for coming, and we are
14 looking forward to your testimony.

15 MS. DESENBERG: Thank you. Normally I am
16 a big fan of getting public feedback before
17 making government decisions. In this case, I
18 think that your request for lots of feedback
19 before drawing maps is entirely disingenuous.
20 You already have public feedback. We spent a
21 lot of time getting a citizen amendment on
22 there for Amendments 5 and 6. You know what
23 the public thinks. We want compact,
24 contiguous, respecting political boundaries and
25 geographic boundaries. So draw up your maps.

1 We are looking forward to making comments on
2 that.

3 That said, the only thing we really have
4 that we can make comments on is the timing, and
5 I think it is really important to get this done
6 more quickly than more slowly. Getting it all
7 voted on and finalized by the beginning of the
8 session in January I think should be your
9 paramount concern, and I think in order to do
10 that, you guys have got to get your maps drawn
11 now. There is no reason not to get anything
12 out by the end of September, I would say, get
13 it through your committees in a few weeks, and
14 then you need to spend time getting feedback
15 from the public.

16 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very, very much.

17 Henry Jorgensen. Henry, thank you from
18 coming by tonight and giving us some time. You
19 could have been somewhere else, but you came
20 here, and thank you for that.

21 MR. JORGENSEN: Thank you. I am from
22 Venice. We don't see any maps here. That
23 means the dollar has been spent to divert this,
24 and more millions planned on it. Doesn't give
25 me a very confidence in this body. It is

1 really dirty politics, period. I am one vote,
2 and I don't want to feel like a pawn in a
3 shuffle board game of dirty politics. Fair
4 districting, that is a no-brainer if you take
5 the dirty politics out. You don't understand
6 what fair is, go back to kindergarten.

7 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you. And next is
8 Betsy Roberts, and following Ms. Roberts, Ruth
9 Brandwein from the National Association of
10 Social Workers, then Marilyn Harwell, and then
11 if Rosalie Shaffer will be on deck, and she as
12 well is with the League of Women Voters.

13 Ms. Roberts, thanks from coming, and we
14 look forward to your testimony.

15 MS. ROBERTS: Okay. Thank you for being
16 here.

17 This should be a non-partisan issue. I am
18 not sure it is. And someone mentioned earlier
19 that there are a lot of -- there would be a lot
20 of unhappy people if we saw the maps ahead of
21 time. Well, I am hearing a lot of unhappy
22 people because we did not see the maps ahead of
23 time, and we have no idea what you are thinking
24 and what is ahead.

25 And we just have to stop gerrymandering.

1 This map on the front shows what the
2 gerrymandering has done. So let's get good,
3 compact districts and stop this silly lawsuit.
4 Thank you.

5 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, ma'am.

6 Is -- Ruth, are you here?

7 MS. BRANDWEIN: Yes.

8 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you so much for
9 being here and for representing NASW.

10 MS. BRANDWEIN: Thank you. My name is
11 Ruth Brandwein. Thank you for the opportunity.
12 I am the new Legislative Chair for Sarasota
13 NASW. I will be seeing a lot of you,
14 Mr. Holder, and some of the rest of you.

15 I moved here a year ago as a resident, and
16 the first thing I did was I signed up,
17 registered to vote, and have been involved, and
18 I am pretty surprised at some of the politics
19 going on here, but -- and I come from New York,
20 which is -- you know.

21 But two-thirds, 63 percent of the voters
22 voted for fair, contiguous and equitable
23 districts. I would hope that that would be
24 respected, and also that it would not -- as the
25 amendment says, that without regard for

1 partisan politics or for incumbency. And I
2 know you all are incumbents, and I know that
3 your first job is to get reelected, but that is
4 not what this is about. This is about fairness
5 and representing the people.

6 I will be very brief. A lot of good
7 comments have been made, and I support what the
8 first League of Women Voters speaker suggested
9 in terms of timing. You have had these
10 hearings, we can't undo that, but I would hope
11 that you would go back and have your staff do
12 the work. It is not up to us to do it. You
13 are getting paid and your staff are getting
14 paid to do the work. Present something in
15 October so that we can have another opportunity
16 to give you feedback before a final vote, and
17 it does need to be sooner than March. Thank
18 you.

19 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Ruth.

20 Is Marilyn -- are you Marilyn Harwell?

21 MS. HARWELL: I was when I walked in, yes.

22 SENATOR GAETZ: Well, good. Well, I can
23 guarantee you this --

24 MS. HARWELL: Yes.

25 SENATOR GAETZ: -- you will be Marilyn

1 Harwell when you walk out.

2 MS. HARWELL: Well, I sure hope so.

3 SENATOR GAETZ: And behind you -- behind
4 you will be Rosalie Shaffer with the League of
5 Women Voters, and then Frances Rice and then
6 Lois Congdon with the Manatee Democratic Party.
7 Ms. Harwell.

8 MS. HARWELL: Okay. If these hearings are
9 for the purpose of learning how to redraw
10 districts, it begs the question why you don't
11 all just go in a corner, read Amendments 5 and
12 6 and -- you know, those are the amendments
13 that were approved by the Florida Supreme
14 Court, the Justice Department, of course
15 overwhelmingly by the voters of Florida. Those
16 amendments give you the framework within which
17 to satisfy the voters. Simply stated, they
18 require you to draw lines based on factors
19 unrelated to party and incumbency within
20 contiguous territory. Who but people in
21 Tallahassee would know how to do that best?
22 Certainly not me or the other people sitting
23 here.

24 What these hearings confirm is that
25 Tallahassee does not want to comply with these

1 amendments. Tallahassee -- Tallahassee
2 politicians do not want to give up the power to
3 draw districts that benefit themselves. You
4 proved this by spending our tax money to fight
5 the new redistricting standards in court, and
6 now while you have cut billions from the
7 education and social services 2012 budgets, you
8 have set aside tens of millions of dollars to
9 mount still more legal assaults on these
10 amendments.

11 The perception is you only want to draw
12 districts that will preserve your own seats.
13 It is a perception which counts more than
14 reality. You know that if Amendment 5 and 6
15 rules are followed, the districts that have
16 guaranteed the reelection of just about every
17 incumbent during the last ten years will no
18 longer be safe.

19 SENATOR GAETZ: And, Ms. Harwell, you --

20 MS. HARWELL: I will finish.

21 SENATOR GAETZ: Excuse me, you are making
22 some great points, but I would like to ask you
23 to summarize, because we have a whole bunch of
24 people.

25 MS. HARWELL: I have one sentence, and if

1 you hadn't interrupted, I'd be sitting down.

2 SENATOR GAETZ: Go for it. Go for it. Go
3 on.

4 MS. HARWELL: These hearings have no
5 purpose other than to derail the process. You
6 should not be wasting our time and money this
7 way. Just imagine if you had spent all these
8 hours --

9 SENATOR GAETZ: Now, that is -- you're on
10 to your third sentence.

11 MS. HARWELL: -- talking about job
12 creation, look what you could have done.

13 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Ms. Harwell.

14 Next is Rosalie Shaffer with the League of
15 Women Voters. Ms. Shaffer. Thank you very
16 much for being here tonight, and your time is
17 running.

18 MS. SHAFFER: Hi, I am Rosalie Shaffer,
19 and I am representing the League of Women
20 Voters of Manatee County.

21 First I want to tell you what we don't
22 want. What we don't want is what we have in
23 Manatee County, which are two U.S.
24 Representatives, three State Senators and four
25 State Representatives. They are in some very

1 strangely shaped districts, and many of the
2 office holders only have slight slivers of
3 Manatee County, so we don't really see them too
4 often in our county. So we are looking forward
5 to districts drawn according to the new Fair
6 Districts rules.

7 Gerrymandering is what happens when the
8 office holders choose their voters rather than
9 the other way around. Hopefully that is an end
10 to that.

11 And along with so many who have told you
12 this tonight, we are asking you to drop your
13 lawsuits against Fair Districts. This is not a
14 good use of state taxpayers' money. And to
15 make it even more ludicrous, in one of the
16 suits, the Secretary of the State is a
17 Defendant, and the Legislature is -- has joined
18 the suit against. So the taxpayers are
19 defending both sides of the suit, to sue and
20 defend. The Legislature should stop trying to
21 get out of following the new Fair Districts
22 rules, and apply them as the voters intended.
23 Thank you very much.

24 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, ma'am.

25 Frances Rice. Next we will hear from

1 Frances Rice, and then Lois Congdon with the
2 Manatee Democratic Party and then Carole Malone
3 and then Roy Sorenson with IATSE Local 412.

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

6 MS. RICE: Good evening. Thank you so
7 much for giving me a chance to speak. I am a
8 retired Army lieutenant colonel and I am a
9 lawyer, and I hope -- I hope no one here wants
10 to adhere to Shakespeare's admonition to kill
11 all the lawyers.

12 I have lived in Sarasota County for 11
13 years. People have been expressing concern
14 about the cost of lawsuits, and being a lawyer,
15 I am also concerned about lawsuits, and they
16 have a right to be concerned about how our tax
17 dollars are being spent, but I think they may
18 be missing the point. The best way to prevent
19 lawsuits is to have an airtight contrast where
20 everything is defined and nothing is ambiguous,
21 because where confusion exists, lawsuits
22 follow, meaning judges get to decide who is
23 right and who is wrong, and what one thing
24 means or doesn't mean. I am afraid that we are
25 in for a lot of lawsuits, because Amendments 5

1 and 6 are filled with vagueness and lawsuit
2 justifications waiting to be decided in court.
3 Key words such as "compact" and "existing
4 political boundaries" are undefined, and then
5 other words, like "predictable" and "feasible"
6 are used, which are too subjective. Five and 6
7 also say an incumbent cannot be disfavored,
8 but --

9 SENATOR GAETZ: And I'd ask you to bring
10 it in for a landing.

11 MS. RICE: Yes, indeed, sir.

12 In a situation where two incumbents are
13 forced to run against one another, could they
14 sue for being disfavored? And I am going to
15 wrap it right up now. Amendments 5 and 6 are
16 subject to interpretation that I can't imagine
17 a scenario that is not ripe with lawsuits. As
18 a taxpayer, that concerns me. I would rather
19 see my money being used for something more
20 important than paying for a bunch of lawyers,
21 myself included. So, legislators, please be
22 careful in drafting these districts so we don't
23 waste the money on tons of lawsuits.

24 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you. Thank you.

25 And thank you for your service to our country.

1 Next, Lois Congdon with the Manatee County
2 Democratic Party. Ms. Congdon, thank you.

3 MS. CONGDON: I thank you for listening to
4 us --

5 SENATOR GAETZ: Of course.

6 MS. CONGDON: -- before you draw the maps
7 so that we can give our ideas. I especially am
8 interested in making sure that the districts
9 are compact, and as much as possible, follow
10 political lines. I am the precinct captain in
11 precinct 46, which includes both the House
12 District 55 and House District 68, and that can
13 lead to a lot of confusion, even for a
14 hard-working, marvelous Supervisor of
15 Elections.

16 In 2008 -- you see, part of Bradenton
17 Tropical Palms is in one district, and part is
18 in the other. And in 2008, they sent us all
19 the primary ballots for absentee ballots for
20 District 55. So I had to call Mr. Sweat and
21 say, "I am not in District 55," and that dear
22 man came by on a Saturday afternoon and
23 exchanged something like 27 ballots for the
24 right ones.

25 Now, that shouldn't be. That District 55

1 is compact up in St. Petersburg and the
2 northern part of Manatee County, and if you can
3 find some other areas right next to it that can
4 preserve the minority-majority, that would be
5 great. But that tail comes that all the way
6 down Route 41 the whole length of Manatee
7 County way over into Newtown in Sarasota County
8 is not compact. You need -- the part that
9 adjoins 68 should go to 68, and the part that
10 adjoins 69, one of you represents, should go to
11 69. The people from Newtown shouldn't have to
12 go all the way to St. Pete to see their
13 Representative. So I hope that you will keep
14 them compact.

15 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you so much, ma'am.
16 That is very helpful testimony and right to the
17 point.

18 Next we will hear from Carole Malone and
19 then Roy Sorenson and then Charles Smith with
20 the Southern Christian Leadership Conference
21 and then Joe Gruters.

22 Ms. Malone, thank you.

23 MS. MALONE: Good evening, and I am so
24 happy I am here.

25 I believe that if you say something often

1 enough, people will start to really believe
2 you, and I think you have heard a lot tonight
3 about the \$30 million, and I would like to
4 repeat that. We don't need to spend that, we
5 taxpayers don't need to spend that. And what
6 really, really concerned me was on the heels of
7 all those devastating cuts that Florida just
8 went through, then we read that you have set
9 aside \$30 million for these lawsuits, and I am
10 appalled.

11 SENATOR GAETZ: And thank you. And,
12 Ms. Malone, Ms. Malone -- Ms. Malone, please --
13 no, that is okay. Please hang in there with
14 us, because I -- you are right, sometimes when
15 things get repeated often enough, people
16 actually think they are facts. So we are
17 going to -- we are going to give an opportunity
18 for some information to be provided tonight so
19 that you can decide for yourself -- sh, sh, sh.
20 We are going to provide an opportunity tonight
21 for Democrats and Republicans on the Committee
22 to respond to that specific point. So thank
23 you for making it and putting it at the top of
24 our list.

25 Next we will hear from Roy Sorenson, and

1 following Mr. Sorenson, Charles Smith and Joe
2 Gruters, and then if Kelly Kirschner would be
3 on deck.

4 You are recognized, sir, thank you for
5 coming.

6 MR. SORENSON: Thank you, Senator and
7 legislators. Welcome to Sarasota. We got
8 democracy here, and we are very proud of it,
9 and we are very glad you came down to be part
10 of this process.

11 I do have the same concerns that you have
12 heard all night long about you not producing
13 maps that we can compare the maps that we had,
14 or the time frame, which is going to put many
15 of the new candidates behind -- in a
16 disadvantaged situation.

17 I have lived here for 30 years in Sarasota
18 and Manatee. If you travel from south Sarasota
19 County up to northern Manatee, you are still
20 within more or less the same community of
21 interest, but you are going through three
22 congressional districts, you are going through
23 several Senate districts and four different
24 House districts. That is not right.

25 I would suggest that you take

1 Congressional District 13 and not use DeSoto
2 and Hardee County as part of it, that you make
3 that district -- that congressional district
4 both Sarasota and Manatee County, that the
5 district north of here that Representative
6 Castor represents, that that not be part of
7 our -- that it become part of that
8 congressional district and not be part of the
9 one north of us. If you look at the body of
10 water that we have north of us, there are so
11 many different like jigsaw puzzles around it.
12 I would suggest you use that body of water to
13 divide the districts fairly.

14 And back when you talk about the money
15 that you've put away for fighting this,
16 whatever amount of money it is, it is not
17 right. It should be used for you to hire
18 consultants and demographers and cartographers
19 to get this process in the fair way it should
20 be. Thank you.

21 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you. Thank you very
22 much, sir.

23 Next, Charles Smith with the Southern
24 Christian Leadership Conference, then Joe
25 Gruters, then Kelly --

1 MR. SMITH: Charles --

2 SENATOR GAETZ: Just a second, please.

3 Then Kelly Kirschner, if you would be on deck,
4 and then Charles Dudley.

5 Mr. Smith, you are recognized, and we are
6 delighted you are here.

7 MR. SMITH: I am Charles Smith, the
8 President of Manatee/Sarasota County Chapter of
9 the SCLC and national board member of SCLC and
10 national director of chapters.

11 I am here to support Amendments 5 and 6.
12 For Manatee and Sarasota County, it is simple.
13 The congressional seats should remain in
14 Manatee and Sarasota County. Your State
15 Representative and Senate seats can easily be
16 divided in Manatee and Sarasota County. A
17 combined population of about 700,000. You say
18 the seats need to be estimated at 150,000. You
19 can draw four State Representative seats in
20 Manatee and Sarasota County. So for the
21 residents here, it is simple. And with the
22 population of just Latinos and
23 African-American, not counting other, you've
24 got an estimated 100,000 population from that
25 standpoint. They be combined to one different

1 area, you would know your Representative. Make
2 no mistake, we have fine Representatives in
3 Mr. Darryl Rouson and Sister Joyner. They have
4 represented us well. But when -- 5 and 6 was
5 kind of a shock for me, support it, but our
6 organization has took a firm position that we
7 are going to support 5 and 6. That means if we
8 have to go to court, we are going to court. We
9 are prepared to do that also through civil
10 disobedience anyway. We need to be more
11 concerned about not who is a Republican and
12 Democrat, we need to be concerned about people.
13 And so I encourage you to take issue to
14 providing cited representation and keep it
15 compact and 5 and 6, and I thank you very much.

16 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, sir.

17 Joe Gruters? Mr. Gruters? Did he give up
18 on us?

19 Okay. Then Kelly Kirschner, and Kelly
20 will be followed by Charles Dudley and then
21 Jackie Fountaine, or Fountaine, and then
22 Mitchell, I think it is Zavon or Zavon.

23 Kelly, thank you so much for being here,
24 and we are delighted to have your testimony
25 tonight.

1 MR. KIRSCHNER: Thank you, Senator Gaetz,
2 Joe Gruters ceded his time to me. We are
3 former classmates at Cardinal Mooney High
4 School, and --

5 SENATOR GAETZ: Well, Joe can cede his
6 time, but you've got two minutes.

7 MR. KIRSCHNER: All right. I see you are
8 listening to Senator Detert again.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: Yeah. It is a good thing
10 I do from time to time.

11 MR. KIRSCHNER: I appreciate the
12 opportunity to speak. Coming in here with the
13 folks in the parking lot, it actually looked
14 like a college football game, so I think at
15 least it is stimulating conversation that
16 everybody is obviously excited about.

17 I am here representing a relatively new
18 nonprofit organization, it is called UnidosNow,
19 that is specifically working in the southwest
20 Florida area mobilizing and engaging our
21 Hispanic population to start participating at
22 much greater levels in our local democracy. I
23 just stepped down as Mayor of the City of
24 Sarasota in May. Twenty percent of Sarasota's
25 population now is Hispanic, yet only two

1 percent of our registered voters are Hispanic.
2 If you contrast that with the Pew Hispanic
3 Center that says conservatively 70 percent of
4 our Hispanic residents are legal citizens, you
5 can appreciate that we have a fundamental
6 problem right now with franchising this
7 population and actually participating and
8 contributing to the vibrant fabric of our
9 democracy.

10 And I think what is concerning about
11 tonight and what you read about last evening in
12 Tampa and what you all have heard throughout
13 the state is that the perception is here that
14 the game is fixed. And so instead of us
15 talking about -- instead of us talking about
16 Latin America and Banana Republics and Latin
17 America, what we are talking about is,
18 unfortunately, that sense of mistrust with
19 government in our hometown, in our home state
20 and our own communities with the people that we
21 elect.

22 I think a hallmark of vibrant democracy,
23 which is what we want to take place, is
24 competition, and when you have competition, I
25 think it breeds an honesty in the process. And

1 what Charles Smith just said from SCLC from
2 Manatee County, I think probably for the entire
3 Hispanic community in both counties would be
4 the exact same type of testimony that we would
5 want to give to you, and for the entire state,
6 create a competitive marketplace where ideas
7 matter and gerrymandering doesn't, and I think
8 the state of Florida is going to benefit for
9 it.

10 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Mr. Mayor,
11 thank you for your service.

12 Next we will hear from Charles Dudley, and
13 after Mr. Dudley, Jackie Fountaine, then
14 Mitchell Zavon, or Zavon, and then Donna
15 Cubit-Swoyer with the Sarasota Alliance for
16 Fair Elections.

17 Mr. Dudley, thanks for being here, and
18 you've got the floor.

19 MR. DUDLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My
20 suggestion is directed to congressional
21 redistricting. As you noted, the ideal
22 population of a district is 696,345. To
23 provide some flexibility and to make greater
24 use of county boundaries, we could allow the
25 deviation of one percent above and below the

1 ideal number; in other words, from 689,382 to
2 703,308.

3 Two examples using this population range
4 are, one -- and this should not be a
5 surprise -- combining the populations of
6 Sarasota and Manatee Counties, 702,281;
7 grouping Collier, 82,387, from south Lee,
8 Monroe, Hendry, Glades, Okeechobee, Highlands
9 and DeSoto Counties will give you 702,665. A
10 marginal case involves Escambia, Santa Rosa,
11 Okaloosa, Walton and west Bay, 10,489,
12 counties. That gives you a total of 695,345.
13 However, given the small portion from Bay
14 County, and to keep this as uncomplicated and
15 simple as possible, it might be better just to
16 lump this in with the Bay County group, which
17 would result in the total incidentally of
18 702,980, but would leave the Escambia grouping
19 with 684,856.

20 In summary, Mr. Chairman, don't be too
21 fascinated with the famous number of 696,345.
22 Do not try to slice and dice these districts
23 into tiny parts.

24 For the record, I would like to submit a
25 congressional redistricting plan based on the

1 one percent deviation described --

2 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir,
3 for that information.

4 One of the -- one of the frustrations of
5 this process is -- for some people is the
6 federal court rulings on exactly the question
7 you have raised. So I hope you can stay,
8 because that will be one of the facts that we
9 will try to provide you tonight. We really
10 appreciate the submission of maps that you
11 made.

12 And now, Jackie Fountaine. Is it
13 Fountaine or Fountain?

14 MS. FOUNTAINE: Well, originally it was
15 Fountain, and my husband's father didn't like
16 that, so he put on an E.

17 THE COURT: Is that right? Well, ma'am,
18 tonight you may have it either way you want.

19 MS. FOUNTAINE: It doesn't matter.

20 SENATOR GAETZ: And you are recognized.
21 Thanks for coming tonight.

22 MS. FOUNTAINE: Thank you. I just have
23 three items. Okay. Are you honestly
24 serious --

25 SENATOR GAETZ: Ma'am, just so that

1 everybody can hear your comments -- there we
2 go. Now you are much closer.

3 MS. FOUNTAINE: Are you honestly serious
4 about finishing redistricting in time for the
5 2012 elections?

6 SENATOR GAETZ: And I think you will hear
7 an answer to that question --

8 MS. FOUNTAINE: Good.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: -- at the end, just like
10 you heard at the beginning, but go ahead.

11 MS. FOUNTAINE: Why is Florida one of
12 seven states that does not automatically give
13 ex-felons the right to vote? They should be
14 able to walk out of prison or jail and go and
15 register to vote, because they have been
16 punished.

17 And my last comment, if you do the right
18 thing, you will be reelected regardless of what
19 district you are in in 2012.

20 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you so much.

21 Is it Zavon, Zavon?

22 MR. ZAVON: Correct.

23 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much for
24 being here and --

25 MR. ZAVON: I thought you had lost me. I

1 came first.

2 SENATOR GAETZ: Well, you came 52nd,
3 actually, but --

4 MR. ZAVON: Well, I signed up before it
5 opened.

6 SENATOR GAETZ: I understand. You are
7 recognized. We are glad to have you.

8 MR. ZAVON: Thank you for coming. I am a
9 health physician and occupational physician,
10 have worked as a consultant for the federal and
11 state governments.

12 A majority of the voters who voted for the
13 amendments, and I am being redundant, to
14 eliminate the gerrymandering, I expected to
15 have you and the staff to have developed proper
16 for the next elections the establishment of the
17 state and federal retiring. At that, I could
18 have made opinion including Newtown as directly
19 part of Sarasota, for example, not a division
20 of parts. You have failed. If part of a
21 corporation of whom I also worked over 57
22 years, you would be more now failed and no part
23 of the job. I would have failed you for not
24 doing.

25 As years 88, I live long enough for the

1 2012 election, I expect to vote strongly out
2 for anyone that is taking our money out of the
3 budget to kill our action against the members
4 voting to use -- contradict what our majority
5 voted to certify the amendments, and to
6 eradicate the gerrymandering. Enough.

7 Briefly, I stated I believe that the use
8 of the election for -- of the state and federal
9 should compact geographically, where possible,
10 each city and county should be compact by
11 population, both compact and graphically and
12 feasible transportation as possible.

13 SENATOR GAETZ: And, sir, we would be
14 happy to take the rest of your comments in
15 writing.

16 MR. ZAVON: It is over.

17 SENATOR GAETZ: We have a whole bunch of
18 folks.

19 MR. ZAVON: Thank you very much.

20 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you. Thank you very
21 much. Thank you very much, sir.

22 And next, Donna Cubit-Swoyer, I believe,
23 with the Sarasota Alliance for Fair Elections,
24 and then Ted Mackie, Frank, and I believe it is
25 Hedy, and then Tess Canja, if I have it

1 correctly, and Arthur Levin.

2 Ma'am, you are recognized, and we are
3 delighted to have your testimony this evening.

4 MS. CUBIT-SWOYER: Thank you. I do want
5 to thank all of you for being here. I sat
6 through half of Tampa last night until now, and
7 I am sure you must be weary.

8 SENATOR GAETZ: No, no.

9 MS. CUBIT-SWOYER: I was -- well, some of
10 you look a little weary, regardless of what you
11 say.

12 SENATOR GAETZ: Which ones?

13 MS. CUBIT-SWOYER: And I do thank you for
14 being so courteous.

15 SENATOR GAETZ: Of course.

16 MS. CUBIT-SWOYER: Nevertheless, I have to
17 say --

18 SENATOR GAETZ: I knew this was going
19 somewhere.

20 MS. CUBIT-SWOYER: I knew you knew.

21 I have to say that Monia said it all for
22 me, and I thank her for saying it so well, so I
23 am not going to repeat all of the things that
24 she said.

25 I do want to say you should have the maps

1 here, it is your job, not our job, and it is
2 incumbent on you to make maps in a fair and
3 timely manner, and it is incumbent on all of us
4 to remember what happens come election time,
5 because we still have power, we still have the
6 power, so remember. Thank you.

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

9 Next is Ted Mackie. Is Ted here?

10 MR. MACKIE: Tad.

11 SENATOR GAETZ: Or Tad, I'm sorry. And
12 then Frank, I think it is H-e-d-y.

13 MR. HEDY: Yes.

14 SENATOR GAETZ: And then Tess Canja, I
15 believe, if I have it correctly.

16 Tad, thank you for being here, and you are
17 recognized.

18 MR. MACKIE: Sure, Tad Mackie, I have been
19 in Sarasota for 45 years, just John Q. Public.

20 In the U.S. Constitution, it says you are
21 supposed to count us every ten years. It
22 doesn't say you are supposed to count us by
23 color, doesn't say you are supposed to count us
24 by race, creed, demographics of any kind. It
25 says you are supposed to count us, just

1 numbers, just people.

2 District 55 starts up someplace in
3 Clearwater or St. Pete and comes all the way
4 down to Fourth and 301. That is like 45 miles.
5 That is absurd. It is absolutely absurd.

6 Now, on the other hand, we have these
7 amendments that say it is supposed to be fair.
8 Now, I don't know about your definition of
9 "fair" is different than his definition of
10 "fair" is different than his definition of
11 "fair." Nobody knows what "fair" really means,
12 not really. But I submit to you that "fair"
13 means nobody has an advantage, nobody. Okay.
14 If you can take -- we have most of our
15 population on the coast, and if you can take a
16 little small slice on the coast and go deep
17 inland, you have covered everybody. You've
18 covered the rich folks on the coast, you've
19 covered the poor folks in the middle, you've
20 covered the middle folks out there in rural
21 whatever. Why do we need to separate us by all
22 these different demographics? All you do is
23 separate us. We are supposed to be one nation.
24 We are supposed to be the melting pot. We are
25 not supposed to be divided by all this

1 nonsense, okay.

2 And I understand the lawsuit. I don't
3 have a problem with that. You got to test it
4 ahead of time. I really don't have a problem
5 with that.

6 I also understand we don't have a
7 democracy, we have a republic. I don't have a
8 problem with that.

9 I also understand why you don't have your
10 maps here, because you don't know what they are
11 supposed to be, and you want to hear from us
12 first, and I appreciate that. I really do
13 appreciate that.

14 So that is basically it. All I am asking
15 you to do is make it so that nobody has an
16 advantage. There's no reason for the beaches
17 in St. Pete to have their own Representative
18 when they can go all the way across. Okay.

19 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you. Your time has
20 elapsed, and we appreciate your testimony.

21 Frank -- and I apologize, it is not your
22 handwriting, it is my eyes. Would you
23 pronounce your last name?

24 MR. HEDY: My name is Frank Hedy.

25 SENATOR GAETZ: I got it right, by golly.

1 You are up, and then following you, Tess, I
2 think it is Canja, then Arthur Levin, and then
3 if Marcella Levin would be on deck.

4 Frank, thanks for coming, and the floor is
5 yours, sir.

6 MR. HEDY: Thank you very much. My name
7 is Frank Hedy, I am an Air Force Vietnam
8 veteran, and after 41 years I have -- they say
9 I have been diagnosed with Agent Orange
10 exposure. That is the government we have.

11 My question is about redistricting
12 tonight. I just want everybody here -- we are
13 Americans first. Why don't all the Democrats,
14 Republicans, work together for the good of our
15 country, our state and our nation and all the
16 people that is in it, wherever they came from?
17 We shouldn't be over here arguing about
18 districting this, districting that. We should
19 all work together. I hope the State Senators
20 and State Reps all work together for the good
21 of our state. And I have the same basically
22 speech that Frances Rice had earlier, and I
23 want take anymore of your time, but I just hope
24 everybody works together in Tallahassee and we
25 do the right thing for everybody in our state,

1 and I hope this U.S. Congress, U.S. Senators
2 and the President can work together instead of
3 always arguing about everything. We are sick
4 and tired of all this arguing. Have a good
5 night.

6 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you. Thank you,
7 sir.

8 Tess, are you here?

9 MS. CANJA: I am here.

10 SENATOR GAETZ: Well, thank you for
11 coming, and behind you will be Arthur Levin and
12 then Marcella Levin and then Martha G. King.
13 And is it Canja?

14 MS. CANJA: Canja, that's very well done.

15 SENATOR GAETZ: Canja. Thank you for
16 coming, and we are delighted to have your
17 testimony on the record tonight.

18 MS. CANJA: Thank you so much. Thank you
19 for the opportunity to speak today. My name is
20 Tess Canja. I live in Charlotte County, which
21 basically is within Congressional District 16.

22 CD 16 is so gerrymandered that it starts
23 on Florida's Gulf Coast, spreads north across
24 the state's agricultural center and ends on the
25 other coast. It was districts like ours that

1 brought about such an overwhelming vote for
2 fair districts, compact and contiguous.

3 Now, I recognize that a congressional
4 district is at least four times as large
5 population wise as Charlotte County. What we
6 need for fairness is to be joined in a
7 congressional district with other coastal areas
8 so that our problems, our concerns and our
9 needs are similar, with Sarasota County, for
10 example, or parts of Lee. All three counties
11 are working together for connected
12 transportation, and a Congressman would not
13 have to travel four hours to see his
14 constituents. So my first request is to keep
15 Charlotte County in one congressional district
16 on the southwest coast.

17 My second request is to make Charlotte
18 County one State House district. Right now, it
19 is parts of three. Our county has a population
20 of approximately 160,000. That is 3,000 more
21 than a population needed for a State House
22 district. So we have more than enough for one
23 district, and it certainly could be compact.

24 My third request is that our Florida
25 Senate district be a Charlotte/Sarasota

1 connection for the reasons previously given.
2 Our county is represented in the State
3 Legislature by three Senators. None of them
4 live in Charlotte County.

5 I couldn't help thinking, given these
6 realities, that Charlotte County must have
7 looked to the mapmakers like an unfrosted
8 cookie that could be broken up and passed
9 around. It would be easy for us in the county
10 to feel disenfranchised.

11 SENATOR GAETZ: And, ma'am, you are
12 getting -- you are over time, so if you could
13 wrap it up in fairness to the people behind
14 you.

15 MS. CANJA: I will. You know, I pray that
16 you all will do better. My hope is that you
17 will quickly get the maps drawn for public
18 review, and that we will be pleasantly
19 surprised and grateful that our testimony has
20 not been in vain, and I thank you.

21 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you. Thank you so
22 much. Very useful testimony. That is exactly
23 the kind of information we needed.

24 And now, Arthur Levin, followed by
25 Marcella Levin, and they appear to be related,

1 or at least they are in the same house.

2 MR. LEVIN: For sure.

3 SENATOR GAETZ: And then Martha King and
4 then Susan Brainerd.

5 Mr. Levin, thank you for coming, and be
6 careful now, because your wife does have the
7 opportunity to correct whatever you may say.

8 MR. LEVIN: She's already done that.

9 Thank you for having me. My name is
10 Arthur Levin. I am a resident of downtown
11 Sarasota.

12 Since you have not put forward any
13 criteria of your own which I might comment on,
14 I am here to offer to you a set of rules you
15 should follow in establishing a reapportionment
16 plan that will not only comply with the spirit
17 of the recent redistricting amendments, but
18 which will also cover the will of the people
19 who supported them in historic numbers.

20 Wherever possible, a district should be
21 contained within a single county. This fosters
22 communication up and down the layers of
23 government, and increases the probability of
24 working toward common goals driven by local
25 interests.

1 Wherever possible, whenever a district
2 spans a county line, the population drawn from
3 each county should be approximately equal.
4 This will reduce the prospect of one group's
5 interests overwhelming those of the other.

6 Further, when a district must span a
7 county boundary, a consideration of existing
8 relationships and common interests within the
9 affected communities should govern the
10 selection of which counties and which
11 communities to combine. For example, Sarasota
12 and Manatee share many cultural, civic, service
13 and religious facilities, as well as a common
14 labor market. If it were necessary to go
15 beyond the boundaries of Sarasota County, it
16 would be reasonable to combine Sarasota and
17 Manatee into a common district.

18 Finally, there is one critical rule that
19 must be applied in any reapportionment plan:
20 Apportionment factoring, factoring in party
21 registration in any form must be forbidden.

22 Thank you.

23 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.

24 And now we will hear from the upper
25 chamber of the house of Levin.

1 MS. LEVIN: That is right.

2 SENATOR GAETZ: And, Ms. Levin, behind you
3 will be Martha King and Susan Brainerd and then
4 Marilyn Jacobs.

5 And you are recognized, ma'am. Thank you
6 for coming.

7 MS. LEVIN: Good evening and thank you for
8 coming to Sarasota to listen to us.

9 As was stated previously, the 2010 census
10 entitled Florida to 27 congressional districts,
11 each district averaging 696,000 plus people.
12 The combined population of Sarasota and Manatee
13 County is 702,000 plus, which is, as you heard,
14 a one percent differential. You have to start
15 redistricting someplace, you have to start the
16 mapping someplace, and, therefore, I propose
17 that redistricting of congressional districts
18 begin with this area. Combine Sarasota,
19 Manatee, a community of interest, and that
20 we -- and I propose that we be accorded a
21 Congressperson of our own.

22 As for redistricting the Florida House of
23 Reps and the Senate, I propose that you follow
24 the law. All districts must be compact and
25 contiguous. I don't mean to pick on you,

1 Representative Rouson, but your current
2 district of 55 is contiguous only because of a
3 bridge. This is a good example of what not to
4 do in redistricting. The redistricting must
5 conform to Fair District amendments as decided
6 by 63 percent of the Florida electorate.

7 And, finally, I am outraged that you could
8 find and set aside millions in the state budget
9 to defend redistricting plans that do not yet
10 exist. I'm sorry to say it seems that the
11 size -- that the size of the set-aside seems to
12 be intended to intimidate organizations that
13 might want to challenge the final maps.

14 Thank you.

15 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you. I
16 would point out that it appears that
17 Representative Rouson is feeling sorry for
18 himself because he's been picked on so much
19 tonight, so we'll all feel sorry for you, we
20 will buy you dinner, Representative Rouson. He
21 is a good man. He didn't draw that district,
22 so we are not going to blame him.

23 Next up, we have Ms. Martha King. After
24 Ms. King, we have Susan Brainerd and then
25 Marilyn Jacobs.

1 You are recognized, ma'am.

2 MS. KING: Thank you very much, and I
3 would like also to thank all of you for being
4 here. We've applauded our local
5 Representatives, but those of you who had to
6 travel a long way, we are very appreciative of
7 that as well.

8 One of the real benefits, if we have our
9 way with Amendments 5 and 6, is that maybe many
10 of you will not have to do the amount of
11 traveling that you do now to cover your
12 districts, and it will give you a chance to get
13 to know your voters and they will get to know
14 the people who represent them, and that is, of
15 course, a very, very ideal view.

16 Because -- public perception is that
17 redistricting -- or districting favors one
18 party over another because of gerrymandering.
19 And this "Redistricting 2012" little pamphlet
20 that you handed out is just -- if you look at
21 it, there are so many wonderful examples.
22 There is actually the salamander up here at the
23 top, there is a donkey down on the left, and
24 there is actually a sea horse and a dragon and
25 who knows what else. So it is wonderful, and

1 you couldn't have chosen a better map to put on
2 the cover, because it makes our case.

3 Let's hope that you consider the will of
4 the people and not the strict letter of the law
5 if there is some vagueness. It is still very
6 clear that what people want is one voter and --
7 you know, one citizen and one vote, and so
8 please do that.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you. Thank you
10 ma'am. Thank you very much. And, Ms. King, we
11 are not -- we are not creative enough to do all
12 those animals. Those were done by legislators
13 in the past. We are sort of into more boring
14 geometry. So maybe you can help us pin the
15 tail on that donkey.

16 Susan Brainerd is next and --
17 Ms. Brainerd?

18 Marilyn Jacobs, then Norma Dayton and then
19 Catherine Rodriguez.

20 Marilyn Jacobs, thank you for being here
21 this evening. You could be other places, but
22 thanks from spending some time with us.

23 MS. JACOBS: Thank you, and thank you for
24 your patience. My name is Marilyn Jacobs, and
25 I am a resident of Port Charlotte. And I know

1 you have heard this from Tess, but this is what
2 I deal with.

3 Congressional District 14, Collier,
4 Charlotte and Lee County; Senate District 23,
5 Charlotte, Manatee and Sarasota; House District
6 71, Charlotte, Lee and Sarasota. What we would
7 like is Charlotte County to be in one place --
8 we are in one place -- one district in every
9 way, shape and form. We are a little -- around
10 160,000, but either put us with the Lee or
11 Sarasota, but don't divide us. That is it.
12 Thank you very much.

13 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very, very much.
14 Thank you, that is very helpful.

15 Next is Norma Dayton and then Catherine
16 Rodriguez and then Carol -- I think it is
17 Dunkak-Dunekirchen.

18 Norma Dayton, thanks for coming.

19 MS. DAYTON: Hi. I just want to say thank
20 you very much for having these.

21 I do support the comments of the League of
22 Women Voters and Planned Parenthood. My major
23 concerns are the maps that we don't have and
24 the timing. The timing is very important for
25 candidates who want to run for office and don't

1 know what district they are in. So please
2 speed this up as much as possible. Thank you.

3 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, ma'am. And,
4 Ms. Dayton, if you can hang with us until the
5 end, I think you will get some information that
6 either -- that might reassure you or at least
7 give you some additional data.

8 Catherine Rodriguez, Ms. Rodriguez, and
9 then, I apologize, my eyes again, not your
10 handwriting, Carol -- is it Dunkak-Dunekirchen?
11 Close enough for government work. You are
12 next, and then John Else and then Gregory
13 Stone.

14 Ms. Rodriguez, you have the floor, ma'am.

15 MS. RODRIGUEZ: I beg you to drop the
16 lawsuit and get to work on the redistricting as
17 the Florida voters have asked you to do. You
18 work for us, and we want you to do that. Get
19 to it.

20 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you. Ms. Rodriguez,
21 we give extra credit points for brevity and
22 making your points succinctly, and so far, you
23 win tonight.

24 Carol, can you help me with your name,
25 please, ma'am?

1 MS. DUNKAK-DUNEKIRCHEN: It is
2 Dunkak-Dunekirchen.

3 SENATOR GAETZ: I thank I almost got that.

4 MS. DUNKAK-DUNEKIRCHEN: You were very
5 close, yes.

6 SENATOR GAETZ: Well, thank you for being
7 here, and we are anxious to hear your
8 testimony, ma'am.

9 MS. DUNKAK-DUNEKIRCHEN: Thank you for
10 having me. I am a resident of Port Charlotte.
11 I live in congressional -- U.S. Congressional
12 District 16, which as you have heard, begins on
13 the west coast with part of Charlotte County
14 and ends on the east coast, beginning with St.
15 Lucie County and runs down the coast. It is an
16 excellent example of gerrymandering. My
17 Florida State House District 72 includes DeSoto
18 and parts of Charlotte and Lee Counties.
19 Finally, my Florida Senate District 23 consists
20 of parts of Charlotte, Manatee and Sarasota
21 Counties.

22 I know that you have heard this before.
23 Despite the good efforts of Senator Detert, all
24 of Charlotte County should be in one district.
25 Since it does -- it may not meet the minimum

1 standards for numbers in population in some of
2 the areas, it could be combined with more
3 community -- communities of interest. You
4 know, eastern Charlotte County is very rural,
5 so is DeSoto County, okay. We have the coastal
6 -- coastal areas that could be similar to Lee
7 or Sarasota. But I think you really need to
8 take all of that into consideration, and above
9 all, do not divide Charlotte County. Thank
10 you.

11 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much.

12 And John Else, E-l-s-e, how did I do on
13 that?

14 MR. ELSE: Else, like anything else.

15 SENATOR GAETZ: I was -- I had a little
16 bit of Norwegian going in there. John, thank
17 you for being here, and your testimony is
18 welcomed. Following you, we will hear from
19 Gregory Stone and Rosemarie Myerson, if you
20 will be on deck, and then John Eddins.

21 Mr. Else, thank you for coming.

22 MR. ELSE: I don't think the law -- the
23 amendment is confusing, in spite of my
24 colleague's statement. I lived for 23 years in
25 the state of Iowa, which is generally regarded

1 as one of the -- has one of the fairest and
2 least contentious systems for redistricting,
3 and it's been in place for 30 years, and it
4 uses many of the same terms that are in the
5 amendments. The responsibility for creating
6 the map is with the Legislative Service Bureau,
7 a non-partisan body connected to the
8 Legislature, and they create that by computer
9 models where the assumptions are all put in.
10 So it is a very objective system. They have an
11 advisory committee of two Democrats, two
12 Republicans, and the Chair selected by the
13 majority of those four. The principles are
14 much the same, as I said. The results in Iowa,
15 which passed -- made its reapportioning this
16 year, was that four of the five incumbent
17 Congressmen ended up in the same district with
18 another incumbent. So two of them moved into
19 -- were combined with two others. In this
20 case, two of them moved into other districts.
21 So that is a possibility, too, for you who are
22 incumbents.

23 I think it is a good idea for you to get
24 input before you make the maps, but then I
25 think the maps have to be drawn, and there is

1 no reason they can't be drawn within a month if
2 you use computer systems. And that you can
3 then have another round of these hearings going
4 on the maps in October and November, and into
5 December if you need to. So I just think your
6 job has been set and you have the possibility
7 of really doing something for us.

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

10 Gregory Stone, is Gregory Stone still with
11 us? Mr. Stone?

12 How about Rosemarie Myerson? Ms. Myerson,
13 following your testimony, we will hear from
14 John Eddins and then Ina Rae Levy and then Joy
15 Davis.

16 Ms. Myerson, thank you for coming tonight,
17 and the floor is yours.

18 MS. MYERSON: Thank you for inviting me.
19 I am delighted to be here.

20 I didn't come to tell you exactly how to
21 do it. I think the two amendments gave the
22 ground rule of fair, compactness and getting
23 rid of gerrymandering. And as I listened to
24 what each one of these Representatives and
25 Senators represented, I clearly heard how not

1 to draw the map. I only try to keep track of
2 Collier and Lee Counties, and I heard at least
3 five of you represent pieces of Collier and Lee
4 Counties, and I don't think the population is
5 that big there. All right, so that's it.

6 The other thing I wanted to address is the
7 seriousness of this law case. I have followed
8 Betty Castor, who originally had one amendment
9 to get rid of gerrymandering in this state, and
10 it was thrown out at the courts in the end
11 because they said there should have been two
12 amendments, one addressing the federal
13 government redistricting, and the other
14 addressing the state. So now we drew up a
15 second one, and then everybody crying about
16 race representing or whatever, and they put in
17 all these other things, which now we hear a
18 lawyer saying, "Oh, that doesn't make any sense
19 whatsoever." Well, I think you people
20 understand the intent, and that Amendments 5
21 and 6 went right through the courts before they
22 were allowed to go on the ballot, and they were
23 declared legal all the way up, I think, to the
24 Supreme Court. I do not understand. I am not
25 going to discuss how much money you are

1 spending. I don't care. I mean, I do care,
2 but I can't understand at this stage, at this
3 time, when we need to choose candidates, we
4 need two new federal candidates, we have no
5 idea what the districts are in the whole state
6 are going to be, if they are going to be fair,
7 compact, contiguous, I can't understand your
8 taking this to the courts when it's already
9 been through the courts, and I hope you will
10 explain what courts you are going to and why.
11 And I -- I applaud all the wonderful things
12 that have been said here. I think Monia Joblin
13 said it for me very well.

14 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Ms. Myerson.

15 And I think, if you are able to stay, the
16 Speaker Designate will explain to you how the
17 law requires us to go to the Supreme Court and
18 the federal courts.

19 Next is John Eddins. John Eddins, are you
20 here, sir? If not, we will go to Ina Rae Levy,
21 Ms. Levy, and following Ms. Levy, Joy Davis and
22 then Theresa Perkins and then Cheryl Brown.

23 Ms. Levy, you are recognized, and thank
24 you so much for being here this evening.

25 MS. LEVY: Good evening, and thank you for

1 this opportunity. But I would like to ask the
2 panel, have you heard the people tonight? Have
3 you heard what the feelings are in your
4 communities? Well, I am sort of getting blank
5 looks. I am wondering --

6 SENATOR GAETZ: Now, if you are asking if
7 the -- if you are asking if the loudspeaker is
8 working, it is working fine, thank you, but
9 please go ahead.

10 MS. LEVY: What the loudspeaker is -- how
11 the loudspeaker is working and how the brains
12 are taking it in are two different things.

13 I don't think there's any reason for me to
14 go over again the maps. Of course, you
15 understand clearly the feeling of the people.
16 The fact that it was passed by 63 percent, the
17 amendment, that is clearly understood by
18 everyone.

19 The only thing I want to say is I wonder
20 how many of you know that a camel is a horse
21 put together by a committee. And if we have
22 hundreds of thousands of people drawing maps,
23 who is going to examine them, who is going to
24 make them? Just get to work and do it now.

25 Thank you very much.

1 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you so much.

2 MS. DAVIS: My name is Joy Davis.

3 SENATOR GAETZ: Hold just a second. I
4 just want to make sure that folks are lined up
5 behind you: Theresa Perkins, Cheryl Brown and
6 Deborah Livingston.

7 And now, Ms. Davis, you have the floor.

8 MS. DAVIS: Thank you. My name is Joy
9 Davis, and I have been a life-long Republican.
10 I have lived here in Sarasota for over 20
11 years. I am a teacher, and sitting in the
12 front row, I have observed all evening who is
13 paying attention and who isn't. I don't care
14 how old you are, it is over two hours and we
15 all have our limit on listening. I want to let
16 you know that I appreciate those of you who
17 have really made an effort, and I have watched
18 you. I have contacted you by eye to listen to
19 each and every one of us. This is serious
20 business. I am not up here as a teacher, but I
21 am up here as a voter, and you have listened to
22 the people, and the people have told you what
23 they want.

24 SENATOR GAETZ: Great classroom voice,
25 too.

1 MS. DAVIS: How -- excuse me, I know you
2 are trying to be very suave, and yes, you --
3 you and the one next to you are in charge of
4 this lawsuit to begin with. I am not impressed
5 with your smooth comments, sir.

6 How dare you use the taxpayer money for
7 your benefit and ignore the voters' wishes.
8 Obvious, it's been done. Get busy. It is like
9 you are a bunch of children in a classroom and
10 I can't get you to get your work done. Stop
11 the fighting. I would separate you, because
12 you aren't -- you aren't any better than a kid.
13 Do your responsibility to the State of Florida
14 and to your voters and get busy and do your
15 job.

16 SENATOR GAETZ: And, ma'am, your time is
17 up, thank you. Still a good classroom voice.

18 Theresa Perkins and then Cheryl Brown,
19 then Deborah Livingston and then Murray
20 Blueglass.

21 Theresa Perkins, thank you for being with
22 us tonight, and you are recognized.

23 MS. PERKINS: Thank you for coming
24 tonight, and I am Pastor Perkins from the
25 Newtown/Sarasota community, and what we -- the

1 District 55, when you redistrict, please
2 maintain Newtown in north Sarasota in the House
3 District 55. This district is very important
4 to us in our black community, because it let us
5 elect a Representative of our choice, we share
6 the same concerns with the other communities in
7 this district, and I also believe that not
8 keeping us in the district would violate the
9 Amendment 5, which was passed by over
10 60 percent of the vote. I also urge you to
11 also allow our area to be in a minority
12 district in the State Senate and in the
13 Congress. We want to be empowered, all levels
14 of government. Thank you.

15 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you so much, ma'am.

16 Next, Cheryl Brown, and then Deborah
17 Livingston, please, and then Murray Blueglass
18 from the Longboat Key Democratic Club and then
19 Jim Hunter would be on deck.

20 Ms. Brown, you are recognized, and we are
21 delighted to have your testimony.

22 MS. BROWN: Thank you. Good evening.
23 Thank you for listening tonight. My name is
24 Pastor Cheryl Brown, and I am a citizen who
25 have lived actually in the Sarasota area for

1 over 40 years now. I am now living in Manatee
2 County, Lakewood Ranch, Florida.

3 I am here tonight to ask you to keep
4 Newtown and north Sarasota combined with
5 Manatee, Hillsborough and Pinellas County in
6 House District 55. This is a seat that gives
7 us an opportunity to elect a Representative of
8 our choice. If you do not keep us together, we
9 will lose our representation, and we are
10 concerned that we will be represented by
11 someone else who does not know our needs. This
12 is the law of Florida, so following the law
13 shouldn't be difficult.

14 Also, we would like you to give us
15 additional opportunities to elect candidates of
16 our choice in the State Senate and in the U.S.
17 Congress. Thank you very much.

18 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you so much, Pastor.
19 Deborah Livingston, then Murray Blueglass,
20 then Jim Hunter, then William Grant.

21 Ms. Livingston, you are recognized, ma'am.

22 MS. LIVINGSTON: Good evening. I was born
23 in Sarasota. Welcome to Sarasota, and thank --
24 thank you for being here to listen to our
25 concerns today.

1 On behalf of the black community here in
2 Sarasota County, I am here to say that we like
3 being with St. Petersburg, Palmetto, Bradenton,
4 in House District 55. Our community is small,
5 and being united with other similarity
6 communities gives us the opportunity to elect
7 Representatives of our choice. This request
8 shouldn't be considered a favorite or a special
9 treatment, but simply following the law passed
10 last November by 60 percent of the voters. Not
11 doing this will weaken our position as minority
12 voters and violate the law. Thank you again
13 for your time.

14 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
15 ma'am.

16 And now, Murray Blueglass, if Murray
17 Blueglass is here from the Longboat Key
18 Democratic Club, and following Mr. Blueglass,
19 Jim Hunter and then William Grant, and if Wade
20 Matthews would be on deck, please.

21 Mr. Blueglass, thank you for coming, and
22 the floor is yours.

23 MR. BLUEGLASS: Thank you very much.
24 Thank you for -- all of you for being here this
25 evening. What an array of our Legislature to

1 take the time to come around the country -- or,
2 excuse me, come around the state and to listen
3 to us.

4 First of all, I would like to say thank
5 you to all the people in the audience. Last
6 year I watched town halls across this country
7 on TV. I was shocked by the lack of civility
8 that was displayed across the country. The
9 people in this audience really deserve a round
10 of applause, and I think you ought to give
11 yourselves one. Only in Sarasota/Manatee,
12 Florida, can such civility, good response and
13 positive feeling be felt. Thank you.

14 And, Senator Gaetz, I disagree with
15 somebody who spoke recently, just a couple of
16 speakers ago. I think you have handled this
17 with aplomb, with great patience and great
18 determination, and you have kept it on track.
19 Bipartisan politics, thank you for running a
20 good meeting.

21 Amendments 5 and 6 didn't just appear
22 mid-air. They were created because of a need.
23 Everybody at this table understands that. The
24 people in this county, the people in Manatee,
25 indeed, the people across the state were

1 determined that in the next redistricting in
2 2012, it would be fair and consistent. We need
3 you to understand that. That is bipartisan
4 politics. That makes good sense. We didn't
5 need the amendments. We don't need all the
6 fighting. We need to understand how important
7 it is to represent the people. Sarasota,
8 Manatee, that is a winning combination. Sorry,
9 Ray, but it is an absolute winning combination
10 to combine Sarasota and Manatee into a
11 district.

12 As you work across the state and you hear
13 other people, contiguous districts that don't
14 run from sea to sea will be so, so important.
15 Contiguous districts with common interests and
16 fair number of people represented by you is all
17 we are asking for.

18 So we thank you very much for coming
19 tonight. Remember, we, the people of these
20 United States, isn't that what we are all
21 about? Thank you.

22 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.

23 Jim Hunter, Mr. Hunter, and then William
24 Grant, then Wade Matthews for the Better
25 Government Association of Sarasota County and

1 then John Bellantoni, please.

2 Mr. Hunter, you are recognized, and we are
3 delighted you are here.

4 MR. HUNTER: Yes, Mr. Chairman, thank you
5 very much, and members of the Committee, thank
6 you for attendance tonight.

7 I am a retired businessman. I have been a
8 resident of Sarasota for over 35 years. This
9 is the first time I have ever even heard of a
10 hearing on redistricting. I am glad we are
11 having one.

12 If we can end gerrymandering, we have
13 certainly accomplished something in the history
14 of our state. And if we can respect the
15 boundaries of cities, counties, neighborhoods,
16 that would be a major accomplishment. We need
17 to drop the lawsuits, we need to save our tax
18 dollars, and I hope that our next hearing will
19 be on campaign finance reform.

20 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much.

21 Is William Grant here? William Grant? He
22 already talked?

23 SENATOR GAETZ: Ah, slid in early, did
24 you?

25 Wade Matthews. Mr. Matthews, you will be

1 followed by John Bellantoni and by Lois Regan.

2 And you are recognized, sir.

3 MR. W. MATTHEWS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4 I put Better Government Association down
5 because I am co-President of it, but I am not
6 here to represent them. I have talked,
7 however, with the members that I have been able
8 to see of that and about the other ten or so
9 other organizations that I am either on a Board
10 of Directors with or an officer of, and they
11 all have the same general consensus of the
12 great majority view of what we have heard here
13 tonight.

14 I just want to address -- I was going to
15 address those things, but I just want to take
16 two quick points. One, it seems fairly easy to
17 form the districts compactly with contiguous,
18 not favoring or disfavoring any political party
19 or incumbent. There were two issues that were
20 brought up, though, about the idea of following
21 existing city, county and geographical
22 boundaries. One case of the City of Bradenton,
23 for example, it says here "where feasible" in
24 this law. So where it is not feasible as that
25 sort of case, you ignore it -- don't ignore it,

1 you do it to the extent you can, but you don't
2 do it otherwise.

3 The other case that came up is the idea of
4 not denying racial or language minorities
5 and -- the opportunity to participate and elect
6 Representatives. It says "not deny." It
7 doesn't say you have to have the complete
8 ridiculous gerrymandering that we have. And
9 I -- I have spoken with Representative Rouson
10 here. I personally believe that he could be
11 elected in almost any district with his -- with
12 his eloquence and his diplomatic approach to
13 things, whether it is a black district, a white
14 district or whatever. I think he is a fine,
15 fine person. However, I don't think he needs a
16 district all his own in order to do it, and
17 that would completely -- you cannot have that
18 done as equal to the other cases. You don't
19 need -- you will not be denying racial or
20 language minorities if you follow a system of
21 doing that away. We have the entire state of
22 Florida, which has elected one -- one Senator
23 who is Hispanic, and has one now who is
24 Hispanic. You have had -- in Sarasota County,
25 you have -- there's very few blacks in the

1 county district represented by one black member
2 of the county commission. You have --

3 SENATOR GAETZ: Could I ask you to put a
4 bow on it pretty soon?

5 MR. W. MATTHEWS: Absolutely. I am
6 finishing up right now.

7 You have a President of the United States
8 who considers himself black who was elected by
9 all the people, and I am convinced that black
10 Representatives can have their representation
11 and elect people without having this sort of
12 gerrymandering.

13 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you so much.

14 John Bellantoni. Mr. Bellantoni, are you
15 here, sir? If not, we will pass you.

16 Lois Regan, or Regan, then Craig -- I'm
17 sorry, my eyes again, C-e-r-r-e, I think, t-a,
18 at Lakewood Ranch Business Alliance, and then
19 Ida Culbertson.

20 Lois Regan. Thank you for coming,
21 Ms. Regan, and we are delighted to have your
22 testimony on the record tonight.

23 MS. REGAN: I would like to go on the
24 record thanking you for having the meeting and
25 agreeing with the things that were said here,

1 and what I would like to -- just look at my
2 notes a little bit.

3 SENATOR GAETZ: Sure.

4 MS. REGAN: I feel that having this
5 meeting without having concrete maps to look at
6 is really having the cart before the horse.
7 You have the material, you have the fair act,
8 voting act, to go by as your guidelines. You
9 have a lot of information about demographics
10 and everything that you need that we citizens
11 don't have. So the input that the citizens
12 could give would be after you gave some kind of
13 outline for us to look at based on the Fair
14 District Act and based on all the tools that
15 you have, like the gentleman who talked about
16 Iowa and what is available. So I feel that it
17 is very hard for us to really give sufficient
18 input without having a concrete thing before
19 us.

20 As far as the suit goes, I don't know what
21 the amount of money is that is being used in
22 this suit, but I feel that we have so many cuts
23 for urgent things that our citizens need, that
24 I think taking any money to use for a suit
25 against what 63 percent of the people voted for

1 is a misuse of taxpayer funds. I feel that it
2 is totally inappropriate for you to do that.

3 And I really feel that, just to summarize
4 it, that if you could give us something
5 concrete within a reasonable time and have
6 meetings for us to look at -- there are many
7 people who don't have computers. If you showed
8 me something with a map on a computer, I would
9 really have a problem with it. So if you
10 really want input, you need a public meeting
11 with some format that you are presenting to us,
12 and we need it in a timely manner so absentee
13 ballots could get out, all the -- Kathy Dent
14 could do or any of the Supervisors could get
15 their things done. And people who are not
16 incumbents, who are not known in their
17 districts, whatever their party is --

18 SENATOR GAETZ: May I ask you to
19 summarize, ma'am?

20 MS. REGAN: Yes, okay.

21 -- that they have time to know where they
22 are running and to do their campaign fairly.

23 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you so much. Very
24 good testimony.

25 And now Craig -- is it Cerreta?

1 MR. CERRETA: Cerreta.

2 SENATOR GAETZ: Cerreta. Mr. Cerreta with
3 the Lakewood Ranch Business Alliance, and then
4 Ida Culbertson and then John Hoover and then
5 Emmalou Kirchmeier, who says she is
6 representing the Methodist church.

7 Mr. Cerreta, thank you for being here, and
8 you are recognized, sir.

9 MR. CERRETA: Okay. Thank you very much
10 for having me.

11 For those of you Representatives who are
12 not familiar with Lakewood Ranch, it is a
13 little 33,000-acre development about six miles
14 directly east of here. It is a community. It
15 is a residential community and a business
16 community. I am here representing about 469
17 businesses that make up that business
18 community, from individual realtors to
19 businesses that have 600 employees or more.

20 From our perspective, obviously just like
21 all the residents, we want to work very closely
22 with our representation. Good, close
23 relationships help to get things done. To do
24 so, we feel that recognizing communities,
25 whether they are county communities or smaller

1 communities like ours that are not
2 incorporated, are very important when you are
3 drawing these lines.

4 So we cross county boundaries, similar to
5 The Villages that does. We don't want to see
6 Lakewood Ranch split up at the House -- at the
7 state level and have us divided in our efforts
8 as we are trying to get representation. So we
9 ask that when you are drawing the lines, you
10 take into consideration that it is not just
11 county lines, it is not just major roads, it is
12 not just those other geographic boundaries.
13 Communities make up a very important component,
14 regardless of those other boundaries.

15 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you so much, sir.

16 Next is -- I think it is Ida Culbertson.
17 Is that correct, ma'am?

18 MS. CUTHBERTSON: Cuthbertson.

19 SENATOR GAETZ: Cuthbertson, I am very
20 sorry, it is my eyes. You are recognized, and
21 thanks for being here tonight.

22 MS. CUTHBERTSON: Thank you for the
23 opportunity.

24 This voter and millions more across
25 Florida spoke loudly and clearly last year

1 about redistricting this state. You know what
2 the voters instructed the Legislature to do.
3 Legislators can ignore the voters and even
4 fight them in the courts, but you do so at your
5 own peril. My advice to the legislators is to
6 heed the message from the voters from last
7 year, drop the lawsuit, but do redistrict into
8 compact districts.

9 You have also offered no draft maps for
10 citizens to look at. In my mind, that is a
11 rather strange circumstance. So I urge you to
12 place Sarasota and Manatee Counties together in
13 the same district for the U.S. Congress,
14 Representative and for the Florida State seats.
15 Thank you.

16 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
17 ma'am.

18 And next, John Hoover, please, Mr. Hoover,
19 and following Mr. Hoover, Emmalou Kirchmeier
20 and then Glenda Williams and if -- I think it's
21 Logan Bartholomew, if Mr. Bartholomew will also
22 be on deck.

23 Mr. Hoover, thanks for being here, and
24 fire away.

25 MR. HOOVER: Thank you all for coming out.

1 We appreciate it. Thanks for holding these
2 hearings.

3 As I understand, you all have received a
4 certain amount of skepticism. Please excuse
5 your constituents, but we have been misinformed
6 time and again by politicians who have told us
7 one thing and done another.

8 Fair Districts mean fair to all, and I
9 think there is some wiggle room for compact
10 districts in ensuring minority representation.
11 We in the past have seen redistricting be the
12 spoils of electoral success by majority party
13 and/or incumbent. Now that Amendments 5 and 6
14 have passed, Floridians have a high hope for
15 districts that reflect regional commonalities.

16 Reports in the news that both State House
17 and Senate have tens of millions of dollars
18 stashed to fight challenges to the new
19 districts support citizen skepticism. Please
20 prove us wrong. Please don't be Lucy and us be
21 Charlie Brown. Thank you.

22 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much.

23 Just previews of coming attractions, we
24 are getting close to the nine o'clock hour. A
25 number of you have asked that members of the

1 Committee respond to certain questions you have
2 asked. We are going to try to do that. Those
3 that -- you know, the good news is that 109
4 people indicated their desire to provide input,
5 and if we aren't able to get to you tonight,
6 that doesn't mean we are not going to be able
7 to get to you. It just means that you can
8 submit your comments in writing. You can send
9 it to us by regular mail or by e-mail or you
10 can give them to us this evening if we don't
11 get a chance to get to you, but we are grateful
12 for everyone who has hung with us.

13 And now, Ms. Kirchmeier, it says here you
14 represent the Methodist church, and --

15 REVEREND KIRCHMEIER: Well, I put that
16 down because I have to, I am a reverend, and --

17 SENATOR GAETZ: Well, Pastor, thank you.

18 REVEREND KIRCHMEIER: It is kind of odd
19 not to.

20 SENATOR GAETZ: Pastor, thank you very
21 much for being here.

22 REVEREND KIRCHMEIER: Thank you. But I
23 actually came here with the Bible in one hand
24 and a flag in the other, if you understand.

25 And I think that is the way most of us feel

1 about where we are and who you are. You
2 represent our government. Now, whether we like
3 you or not, it depends on how you vote, and,
4 you know, if you want us to like you, and you
5 are not being liked, change your vote.

6 I came here to save my husband's life 16
7 years ago to Myakka, and I learned about
8 eating, you know, those things that go on the
9 ground and have long tails and I never get
10 their names right -- alligators, and my
11 grandchildren were surprised I ate it for
12 Thanksgiving. And my husband lived seven years
13 instead of just the six months they talked
14 about.

15 So when it comes to Florida, I usually
16 only have good things to say, but Myakka and
17 Old Myakka and the way this other gentleman
18 talked about it, you have to know the
19 cattlemen's association, you got to go out
20 there and fish and, I mean, you've got to know
21 when the water comes up and you've got to move
22 the herd, what is going to happen to their
23 hoofs, you know, if they are in the mud. I
24 mean, you got to know all those things about
25 country living. And I just loved it all, and

1 then I moved to Bradenton when my husband died
2 and I became a democratic committeeman for
3 District 59, and then I did the census for
4 District fifty -- sixty -- 69, and I learned
5 about what they need -- they needed sewers,
6 okay, terrible situation, and I learned about
7 city government. And then I got very, very
8 upset, because if there's one thing I am
9 constantly fighting for, it is women's rights,
10 children's rights and black Americans' rights.
11 That is me, okay. And if somebody is in their
12 way, God help them when they are in my way.
13 And sometimes that is what you are doing. You
14 are getting me so angry I can't understand how
15 some of you got elected.

16 SENATOR GAETZ: Well, blessed are the
17 merciful, Pastor, and we are running a little
18 short on time, so if I could ask you to get to
19 the --

20 REVEREND KIRCHMEIER: Well, what I am
21 going to say to you --

22 SENATOR GAETZ: -- three points in the
23 palm of the sermon.

24 REVEREND KIRCHMEIER: -- tonight is that
25 the 14th Amendment made a lot of promises to

1 us, and you are not keeping them.

2 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you.

3 And now, is it Logan Bartholomew? Logan
4 Bartholomew, you are up, and then is David
5 Miner? Then Rodger -- I think it is Skidmore,
6 and then Tammy Cabrera.

7 Mr. Bartholomew, thank you for coming, and
8 you are on.

9 MR. BARTHOLOMEW: Thank you, sir, good
10 evening. I am a native of Boynton Beach,
11 Florida, over on the southeast coast, but I go
12 here to New College, I am a fourth-year
13 student, just for reference, Congressional
14 District 19, State Senate District 30, and
15 State House District 89, which I can't draw,
16 which is a problem for me. At least in South
17 Florida, I think that is what is going to make
18 or break the maps, especially when it comes to
19 the courts, because the way at least the
20 congressional districts are currently drawn, it
21 is drawn by socioeconomic strata with the
22 ultra-rich on the coast, the poor people
23 slightly more inland, and then obviously we get
24 richer as we go farther west.

25 I would ask that the Committee please draw

1 the lines east/west along the major grid
2 roadways in southeast Florida so that we get
3 more representative districts, that we get
4 districts that listen to ideas rather than race
5 or culture or any other -- we need better
6 ideas, sir. Thank you.

7 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you so much.
8 Appreciate your testimony.

9 And now, David Miner, followed by Rodger
10 Skidmore, and Tammy Cabrera will be our last
11 speaker this evening. David.

12 MR. MINER: Chairman, I am Dave Miner, I
13 am from Manatee County, I work and live there.
14 I was born in Florida. I am a Marine Vietnam
15 veteran, proud to be here with y'all, and I
16 have some -- a lot of concerns about --

17 SENATOR GAETZ: Now, excuse me, Mr. Miner.
18 We have listened to everyone respectfully
19 tonight. If you would like to have a
20 conversation, that is fine, but would you
21 please take it out in the hall? This gentleman
22 is a veteran of our military services. He has
23 come here to share his opinions. Let's give
24 him our attention.

25 Mr. Miner.

1 MR. MINER: Thank you, sir.

2 One of the concerns I have is about the
3 attitudes of our country's people toward their
4 government. And in preparation for speaking
5 tonight, I talked with the Supervisor of
6 Elections' office. I had a contact, see how
7 many people actually voted the last time that
8 we had a general election, and it was
9 55 percent of the registered voters in Manatee
10 County. That comes down to about 42 percent of
11 the actual people who could vote, because not
12 everybody is a registered voter.

13 And I have talked with a lot of people
14 over time why they don't vote, and many of them
15 say, "Well, you know, I got other things to
16 do." A lot of them say, "It doesn't make any
17 difference." That is the main theme. It is a
18 cynicism that seems to pervade our populous
19 here in Florida and I think in this country.
20 And why are people cynical? And that is why I
21 ask them, and they say, "Well, it doesn't make
22 any difference. People get elected, and they
23 are just going to do what the money tells them
24 to do, what the leaders say to do, not what the
25 people tell them what to do." I don't think

1 cynicism is good for our country. It is not
2 what I fought for. I think that you all need
3 to take that into account when you do things.
4 I think that you need to act to reduce that
5 cynicism. I think you need to act to restore a
6 little more faith in our political process.
7 And I think two ways that you can possibly help
8 is that when you get to Tallahassee, remember
9 what happened here. Another thing is to
10 remember that it is important that you follow
11 the Constitution that you take an oath to, and
12 that oath includes Amendments 5 and 6. This
13 oath says that you are not supposed to do
14 something to favor political parties or
15 incumbents. And how do you enforce that?

16 SENATOR GAETZ: And, sir, out of respect
17 for you, I have given you a little extra time
18 because you were interrupted, but, please, if
19 you could bring it to a conclusion.

20 MR. MINER: Okay, two things. I think you
21 ought to make it an ethics violation if any
22 member of the House or Senate talks with
23 another member and says, "Hey, I want a favor,
24 I want you to take into special consideration
25 my district or what I want to run for," and

1 then have harsh sanctions.

2 And, too, I think you ought to -- or
3 number three, whatever money you are spending
4 -- and I know the Constitution says that you --
5 or Florida Supreme Court has to approve any
6 final districting. I don't have any problem
7 with that lawsuit.

8 SENATOR GAETZ: Sir, I am going to have to
9 ask you to conclude.

10 MR. MINER: Okay. But if you are spending
11 money, you know, to fight 5 and 6, I don't
12 think that helps diminish cynicism, it
13 increases it. And I don't think that helps our
14 country, and I think you ought to change your
15 minds about that. Thank you very much.

16 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you for your service
17 to this country.

18 And now, Rodger Skidmore, if you will come
19 forward, and then Tammy Cabrera, if you could
20 be on deck. Mr. Skidmore, you are recognized,
21 sir.

22 MR. SKIDMORE: Thank you. I would like to
23 thank you all for bringing so many very, very,
24 very concerned citizens together in one room.

25 Earlier you said that we could go ahead

1 and applaud, but there is no real way to
2 quantitatively or qualitatively decide how much
3 impact we have with you, and we would like to
4 have a record of that. So I have created a
5 Petition that I would like to pass around,
6 people can sign it and let others sign it since
7 I've only got 100 of them.

8 The amendments state that the districts
9 will have to be compact and utilize existing
10 political and geographical boundaries. Very
11 simply, this means that one cannot for
12 political expediency take a region of Florida
13 and create four districts with a 60 percent
14 majority of one party's voters, and one
15 district packed with 95 percent of the other
16 party's voters or of minority members, that
17 thus ensuring a four to one majority vote for
18 that one party in Tallahassee. I understand
19 the law on minorities, I agree with it, but you
20 don't have to pack so many of them into one
21 place and take them out of their local areas
22 where they can vote on local ideas.

23 And, actually, the above example is not
24 fair to voters of any party, not just because
25 the second party will do the same if they get

1 into power, but because it also gives too much
2 party -- too much power to party bosses. We
3 have seen that local representatives of the
4 party in power wanting to vote the way they
5 feel their constituents would like them to vote
6 have been told to vote the party line or lose
7 funding on needed projects --

8 SENATOR GAETZ: And, sir, I am going to
9 have to ask you to conclude with one more
10 sentence, and then please feel free to pass
11 around the Petition.

12 MR. SKIDMORE: -- and if they vote wrong
13 too often, to have their districts
14 gerrymandered out of existence in future years.

15 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir,
16 and please feel free to pass it around.

17 Tammy Cabrera, is it --

18 MS. WILLIAMS: My name is Glenda Williams.
19 You called my name one time, then you haven't
20 called it since, so --

21 SENATOR GAETZ: I'm sorry, is Tammy
22 Cabrera there? Ms. Cabrera, you are up, and we
23 are delighted to have you with us this evening,
24 and you are recognized.

25 MS. CABRERA: Legislators, welcome and

1 thank you for coming to Sarasota. I would like
2 to ask you to consider leaving District 55
3 largely the way it is from south St. Pete to
4 northern Sarasota. Though it only covers a
5 small part of our county, it allows us to be
6 united with other similar communities.

7 I hope that with the Amendment 5 and 6
8 passing, you will also be able to look at
9 additional opportunities for us to elect
10 representatives to the State Senate and
11 Congress. We relate to the community and know
12 our needs. Thank you.

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

15 A number of you asked tonight that before
16 we concluded, that some specific questions be
17 answered or observations be made by members of
18 the Committee, and so I am going to turn to the
19 Speaker Designate at the end to answer any
20 questions that hadn't been answered. He made a
21 list of them. But let me begin first with
22 members of the House of Representatives,
23 Democrats or Republicans. Any of you have any
24 comments that you would like to make before we
25 go to the Speaker D?

1 Yes, sir, you are recognized,
2 Representative Rouson.

3 REPRESENTATIVE ROUSON: It is hard to sit
4 here -- first of all, I am very grateful to the
5 number of people that came out tonight. It is
6 a testament to our Republic and to our
7 democracy.

8 It is hard to sit here hearing after
9 hearing after hearing and take some shots, but
10 we were elected for just that, to do the best
11 that we could, understanding that we will not
12 be able to please everybody. But it is
13 important to be heard. I think that to hear
14 from you and then go back and try and draw
15 something after having heard you over and over
16 and over again helps us, and I, for one, would
17 have been very distraught -- in fact,
18 Mr. Speaker Designee and Mr. President, tell me
19 if y'all got some maps somewhere. I want to
20 know. I want to see them. But this part of
21 the process is so that we can take back. And I
22 want you to know, I am taking it back. I ain't
23 scared of no ghost. And we will make sure that
24 what is done is fair. My daddy taught me one
25 lesson, he said, "Son, ain't no fairness.

1 There's only justice in the end." There is no
2 fairness truly when human beings are behind it,
3 but as much as possible, we seek fairness while
4 we expect justice.

5 Thank you for coming out tonight.

6 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Representative,
7 well spoken.

8 Other members of the House who wish to
9 offer any comments? Please, Representative
10 Frishe.

11 REPRESENTATIVE FRISHE: First of all, full
12 disclosure, I am not running for reelection to
13 the House. Ms. Davis, I hope I paid attention,
14 I hope I met your threshold, but you weren't
15 watching me, were you?

16 So we have been told to follow Amendment 5
17 for legislative districts, but the question I
18 would like somebody to come up and tell me
19 after we adjourn is do we then split Lakewood
20 Ranch or not? Because we have heard both
21 arguments here tonight. Do we split the
22 airport or not, because the county line runs
23 down the middle of it, or not? But we have to
24 follow Amendment 5. So it is going to be a
25 problem.

1 The congressional seats, we heard
2 testimony that said we should keep Charlotte
3 and Sarasota together because they are a
4 community of interest, but Amendment 6 doesn't
5 allow for communities of interest. And we also
6 heard we should keep Sarasota and Manatee
7 together because they are a community of
8 interest, but, once again, we can't consider
9 communities of interest under the law.

10 So we are going to try and follow the law
11 and keep Representative Rouson's District 55
12 for those who want it, and get rid of it for
13 those who don't. Now, I am really trying to
14 pay attention here, folks, so hang on. Darryl,
15 behave yourself. Now -- and I don't really
16 mean to be all that humorous about that, but
17 what I want to point out is that issue,
18 especially at the congressional level, may well
19 be out of our hands, because the Federal Voting
20 Rights Act, as enforced by the federal courts,
21 are going to give us guidelines that we cannot
22 deviate from, just like the population of a
23 congressional district doesn't have a one
24 percent variation, it has a plus or minus one
25 person variation. So try drawing that

1 congressional district on the software, folks,
2 because I got to tell you, it took me two hours
3 to draw the first one, and I started in the
4 Panhandle, and that is easy up there because
5 there's lots of open space and small families.

6 The maps are out in the lobby. That is
7 what we are going to start with. If you've got
8 some changes to them, go tell us what they are.
9 Tell us what -- there are a couple of them,
10 pick your favorite one. There is one I happen
11 to like out there. But take a look at the
12 maps, reference the number, tell us what
13 changes you would like to see, because we are
14 going to start with the will of the people.
15 That is what we are elected to do.

16 There are a couple other things out
17 there -- that were said tonight that I think
18 are going to get answered, but we get paid to
19 get beat up. That is why they pay us the big
20 bucks, both of them.

21 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much.
22 Other members of the House? If not, Senator
23 Detert, you are recognized.

24 SENATOR DETERT: It is probably not in my
25 best interest to tell you what I think, but,

1 frankly, I am very disappointed in our
2 community. If you recall last year, we spent
3 about a half a million dollars to promote
4 civility, and for this woman in the front to
5 stand up and say, "Stop, the child is
6 fighting," this is our half of the table. This
7 is my good friend, Senator Joyner, from a
8 gerrymandered district, my good friend, the
9 Democrat. Nobody on this side of the table is
10 fighting. None of this group is fighting over
11 districts or anything else. We came to listen.

12 I thank the Representatives, look at the
13 size of the crowd that came here today, they
14 came early, they took a tour of the Ringling
15 Museum. I was hoping they would be impressed
16 with our community, because they all get to
17 vote on our budget, things like this
18 university, things that we want for our
19 community. This is an opportunity to showcase
20 the community. It is also an opportunity to
21 participate in your government. Now, you can
22 either have tons of paranoia run rampant and
23 you can protest, or you can pull up a chair and
24 you can participate.

25 In the past, districts were gerrymandered.

1 No one at this table probably drew any of the
2 districts, the salamander, the this, the that,
3 the whatever.

4 The best testimony we had today was this
5 morning in Largo at 8:00 a.m. from an
6 84-year-old woman who was probably the smartest
7 woman in the room. She's seen lots of
8 redistricting. And she referred to one map as
9 the bug splat. Peggy Simone, you probably did
10 that, for crying out loud. So it is not like
11 gerrymandering is new.

12 This is the most open, transparent
13 situation you will ever see up until now,
14 thanks to things like technology, the Internet.
15 There are no maps in the back room that we are
16 all going to run back there and arm wrestle
17 over. In fact, I have to congratulate our
18 Chairman, Senator Gaetz. The very first
19 meeting we ever had -- and he told this to me,
20 frankly, in private, he said, "I don't even
21 want to know where anybody on the Committee
22 lives." And you know what? I don't want to
23 know where anybody on the Committee lives
24 either.

25 I think -- I did participate in

1 redistricting in the year 2000. I personally
2 drew District 70. I think it is compact. I
3 think it is a community of interest. You have
4 to hit the numbers. There are certain rules.
5 And for you all to stand up and read us the
6 rules, guess what, we know the rules. We have
7 read the amendments, and we did not start out
8 this meeting by saying we have no intention of
9 keeping any of the rules.

10 So, frankly, I am a little disappointed in
11 the lack of civility. I think we have been as
12 polite on our side of the table as we can be.
13 We intend to be fair, and, really, you probably
14 won't know until we do produce the maps, and
15 then you will -- and then you will be --

16 SENATOR GAETZ: Ma'am, ma'am, ma'am --

17 SENATOR DETERT: And I thank you all for
18 staying this late, because you will hear some
19 of your questions answered by Representative
20 Weatherford, who I turn over the mike to now.

21 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, and with that,
22 I will recognize the Speaker Designate, and
23 he's made a list of some of the questions that
24 have not been responded to, and we will ask him
25 to respond to those questions now, and please

1 give him your attention.

2 Mr. Speaker.

3 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
4 very much, Mr. Chairman. It's been a great
5 hearing, and thank you all for staying so late
6 and sitting through this entire hearing and
7 giving us an opportunity to talk to you and to
8 respond to some of the questions, a lot of the
9 questions that probably need to be clarified.
10 And so I am going to do my best to do that, but
11 first I did want to say there was one
12 gentleman, Mr. Chairman, who complimented your
13 ability to chair this hearing, and I stole one
14 of the band-aids from Darryl Rouson, I just
15 think you should have one yourself, too. So
16 feel free to partake.

17 But I want to say there were a lot of
18 things mentioned tonight, and I am going to try
19 to go through them systematically. One person
20 I thought had an interesting question, the
21 first time I have heard this, Mr. Chairman, in
22 probably over 1,000 people who have spoken
23 before this committee, maybe 2,000, and that
24 question was this: What have you learned since
25 hearing all this public testimony? And we have

1 probably had 70 hours plus of public testimony
2 thus far. And I thought that was a very
3 interesting question, and so I am going to
4 briefly tell you a couple of things I think I
5 have learned.

6 The first thing I have heard and I have
7 learned is I have heard from every Supervisor
8 of Elections that has talked to us about the
9 efforts you have put in in putting the VTDS
10 together, and to make sure, since you put all
11 that detail into work, that we utilize that and
12 honor that in our process, and I hear you loud
13 and clear, we hear all of you loud and clear, I
14 want to thank you for that. That has been
15 very, very helpful.

16 The other thing we have heard a lot about
17 is I have heard several people talk about
18 transportation corridors; in other words, talk
19 about how far it takes for them to get from
20 where they live to maybe the district office of
21 the person who represents them. And so
22 transportation matters, and roads and bridges
23 and railroad tracks and things that get you
24 from A to Z actually matter. And so I have
25 learned a lot about that, and I didn't know

1 much about Sarasota and Manatee except for the
2 few times I have driven through here or come to
3 visit some of my friends, and so we are
4 learning as we are sitting here about the
5 different transportation needs and corridors of
6 your community. I have learned a lot about
7 that today and about our state, and that has
8 been very helpful to me as well.

9 The last thing I have heard a lot about
10 that I think I didn't recognize until this
11 process started is that the Federal Voting
12 Rights Act mandates that the Legislature
13 analyze where cohesive minority communities
14 exist, and we have received tremendous
15 information, both in Orlando and in Miami and
16 in Tampa, on this exact issue. We have heard a
17 lot about it in regards to District 55 just
18 here tonight, and that has been very helpful,
19 too. So that was a great question. I could
20 probably go on for a long time about things I
21 have learned. Those are a couple of things,
22 but I hadn't heard that yet, and I wanted to
23 make sure I responded to it.

24 Something we hear everywhere we go -- so I
25 started with something I never hear, and now I

1 am going to start with something I hear
2 everywhere we go. Something we hear everywhere
3 we go, and there were several comments made
4 tonight about it, was the timeline. And I
5 stated this in my opening, but in case anybody
6 missed it, I want to say it one more time. The
7 Constitution of the State of Florida is very
8 clear. We cannot -- we cannot vote on
9 legislative maps until 2012. We cannot do it.
10 It is illegal.

11 Okay. Now, that being said, the question
12 is, what are we going to do with the time
13 leading up to that, right? Well, we have
14 already moved session from March to January,
15 that is a start. So what are we going to do
16 with the six or seven months before that? We
17 were one of the last states, not the last
18 state, one of the last states to get our census
19 data in the entire country. Okay. Now, we
20 have started since session got out on what we
21 are calling a listening tour. We started in
22 Pensacola. We are working our way all the way
23 down the state. This is our last week. You
24 are one of our last meetings that we are
25 having. We are going to spend -- we have spent

1 the entire summer listening to people just like
2 you, over 1,000 people thus far. And then we
3 are going to spend the fall months analyzing
4 the information that you have given us and
5 utilizing it to put it into action, into
6 drawing maps. And then when we get into
7 session, we are going to vote on maps. Ladies
8 and gentlemen, that is the process. That is
9 the timeline. We are not slowing down
10 anything. That is what we are going to do, and
11 I hope you hold me accountable to that, because
12 that is exactly what the Chairman and I plan on
13 doing going forward.

14 The other thing I want to mention in
15 regard to the timeline is that Fair Districts
16 could have easily addressed this. In other
17 states, they have constitutional requirements
18 about when they can vote on their maps, just
19 like we do. If this was such a big problem,
20 and if everybody recognized that we should have
21 sped up the timeline, why didn't we include in
22 the Fair District amendments the timeline and
23 made it an off-cycle amendment? They could
24 have easily said, "Let's vote on maps in 2011.
25 That way, we will have a year and a half to

1 decide who we are going to vote on and get all
2 this stuff out of the way." Somebody who was
3 crafting those amendments specifically chose
4 not to do that, and I can't tell you what the
5 reasons are, but my point is it wasn't
6 important a year and a half or two years ago,
7 but now it seems to be the most important
8 thing.

9 We are dealing with the timeline that we
10 have. Our Constitution says what it says, and
11 we are going to follow it and do it as quickly
12 as we possibly can.

13 Another question was Ms. Hepburn asked are
14 we going to be done in time for qualifying. I
15 can assure you there are deadlines that we
16 have, like we have to pass maps before session
17 is out in the first week in March. That is a
18 deadline. We have no plan or hope to go that
19 late in the process. We want to pass the maps
20 as quickly as we can possibly can. But, also,
21 something we have no control over is what the
22 Supreme Court will do or what the Department of
23 Justice will do. And so I hope, as you are
24 telling us to speed up our timeline, that you
25 will spend as much time and effort in reminding

1 those branches of government to speed up their
2 timeline as well.

3 Lastly, Senator Gaetz -- in regard to the
4 timeline, Senator Gaetz this morning brought up
5 something that I thought was very interesting,
6 and I hadn't heard this yet and I still want to
7 think it over, but he said -- we had heard so
8 much about the timeline and the confusion about
9 the timeline, he said, "Why don't we have a
10 constitutional amendment so that ten years from
11 now we won't have the exact same problem? We
12 will just say you have to draw the maps in
13 2011, or what now would be 2021, and we won't
14 have this problem anymore." And I think that
15 is a very interesting suggestion and something
16 that this Committee should consider going
17 forward.

18 Another question we hear everywhere we go:
19 Where are the maps, big question mark. Where
20 are the maps? Why haven't you brought the maps
21 to us? This is a chicken versus the egg debate
22 that we hear in every town hall meeting that we
23 have, and I want -- I want to articulate it
24 this way first: In politics, probably the
25 biggest criticism I get when I go to have town

1 hall meetings in my district or when I speak to
2 groups is they ask us why we voted on certain
3 things or why we made decisions without
4 listening to the citizens first. Senate Bill
5 6, I cannot tell you how many people over
6 Senate Bill 6 said, "Why didn't you listen to
7 us first? Why didn't you ask the teachers
8 first? Why didn't you spend time with your
9 constituents first?" Ladies and gentlemen,
10 this is a big deal. We are changing the
11 political landscape in Florida for the next ten
12 years. Wouldn't it be prudent of us to come
13 and to listen to people first and to give us
14 some thoughts and some guidance before we draw
15 maps?

16 Next, the Chairwoman of Fair Districts --
17 of the Fair Districts campaign spoke before a
18 joint committee of House members, Senators,
19 Republicans, Democrats, and stood at a podium
20 and told us she would not even attempt to draw
21 maps unless she had heard from the public
22 first, and that is the lady who crafted and
23 pushed and campaigned for the Fair District
24 amendments, which everyone in here has said
25 they are in support of.

1 Lastly, everywhere we go, the League of
2 Women Voters has talked about how important it
3 is that we draw maps now and that we don't ask
4 for public input. And I think the League of
5 Women Voters has done some unbelievably
6 tremendous things for our country, fighting for
7 women's suffrage, making sure that we do have
8 fair districts in this process across the
9 country. However, there seems to be some
10 inconsistencies within the League of Women
11 Voters when it comes to map making, and I want
12 to give you one example.

13 In Georgia, as of the last week, there the
14 League of Women Voters not only prepared and
15 publicized its own redistricting maps, it
16 organized a map fair at the Georgia State
17 Capitol and encouraged members of the public to
18 present their own maps. "Our goal" -- and I
19 quote, "Our goal throughout this process is to
20 ensure that citizens have a voice," said the
21 President of the League of Women Voters of
22 Georgia, "and what better way to do this than
23 to bring people and maps down to the Capitol?"
24 If it works for the League of Women Voters in
25 Georgia, I am a little bit confused as to why

1 it doesn't work for the League of Women Voters
2 in Florida. That is a very important thing to
3 mention as well.

4 Litigation, we have heard about the
5 litigation, and people -- there's a lot of
6 confusion around litigation. I want to be very
7 clear about this. Litigation is going on. It
8 is only going on in regard to Amendment 6. So
9 the amendment that deals with the legislative
10 maps, House and Senate maps, there is no
11 litigation in regard to that amendment.
12 Amendment 6 that deals with congressional maps,
13 there is litigation going on with Amendment 6.
14 The litigation was originally filed by a
15 Republican Congressman from Miami and a
16 Democratic Congresswoman from Jacksonville.
17 They were the ones who originally filed the
18 amendments. And it is going to have an effect
19 at some point, but myself, the Chairman and
20 every member of the Legislature has sworn an
21 oath to protect and defend the Constitution of
22 the United States and the Constitution of
23 Florida, and that means, to me, that Amendments
24 5 and 6 are the law, and we will follow every
25 single word. You have our word on that.

1 The indication that there is a \$30 million
2 fund for litigation, that somehow the
3 Legislature or the Florida House has set aside
4 a \$30 million fund to fight Amendments 5 and 6
5 is simply not true. Senator Gaetz said that
6 sometimes things get in the bloodstream, and
7 there was an article and there was one
8 newspaper who seems to think that it was true.
9 It is their opinion, it is not fact. And if
10 you do not believe me, if you do not believe
11 me, you can go onto a website, and the website
12 is called transparencyflorida.org, and
13 Transparency Florida will show you every dollar
14 that is being spent by state government, and I
15 will implore anyone who can show me a
16 \$30 million pot of money that is set aside
17 specifically for redistricting and lawsuits.
18 It does not exist, ladies and gentlemen, that
19 is not true.

20 A VOICE: How much has been --

21 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: I tell you
22 what, I don't have that number. There was an
23 article that was written, and I think the
24 number that they threw up that had been spent
25 on litigation was somewhere in a couple hundred

1 thousand dollars, but, sir, to be honest with
2 you, I will get that number to you, we will
3 make that available and we will put it on our
4 website, on floridaredistricting.org. We will
5 find a number that has been spent, we will do
6 our due diligence, we will put it up there so
7 you can see it. Okay. We will do that.

8 I am not going to get into get into --
9 hold on. Ladies and gentlemen, we have been
10 listening for three hours, I am going to wrap
11 this up, and I will be here afterwards if you
12 want to ask questions, please.

13 There was a question about have we put out
14 the schedule yet for the fall. The answer to
15 that question is, no, we have not put the
16 schedule out for the fall. But if you go to
17 our website, floridaredistricting.org, or the
18 Senate website, you can get that information,
19 it will be forthcoming in the coming weeks.

20 The other question they had was were there
21 members on the Committee, will they all be --
22 are the members here all on the Committee?
23 Most of them are, but we encourage all members,
24 whether they are on the Committee or not, to
25 participate in the process.

1 A couple of things, and I am going to end.
2 There's a lot of tension involved in this
3 process. Some people here said, "We made our
4 voices clear when we voted for Amendments 5 and
5 6, just do your job." That is a fair
6 assessment, and I respect that position, but
7 let me point out a couple of things. I heard
8 some people show up here today and say that
9 minority seats should be the number one
10 priority and making sure there's no
11 retrogression whatsoever, no matter what. I
12 heard some people show up today and say that
13 compactness should rule the day, and that
14 Sarasota and Manatee County should be together,
15 no matter what. I heard some people come up
16 and tell me that county boundaries were the
17 most important thing, and some counties aren't
18 as compact as others. I heard some come and
19 say that the communities of interest, whether
20 it was the western end of the county or the
21 eastern end or the agricultural community or
22 the industrial community, was the most
23 important thing. I had some folks talk about
24 political boundaries and roads and bridges. I
25 had -- I think you get my drift in that this is

1 not easy. And the reason is amendments 5 and 6
2 has a lot of standards, and a lot of them --
3 and they are good standards, and we should have
4 standards. But we should also hear from you
5 about what you think about the -- what you
6 think about them and the legal requirements
7 that come with them.

8 There was a comment about congressional
9 maps and whether or not they had to be exactly
10 the same. I think Senator Detert addressed
11 that, but just to be clear, 15 years ago we
12 drew them with only one person deviation. If
13 we do more than that, we do put ourselves in a
14 situation where the federal government could
15 reject our maps, and so we have to be extremely
16 careful. I don't want to say we can't have any
17 deviation, but we have to be extremely careful
18 about that.

19 There was a gentleman who asked us, do we
20 go to the courts again, and why do we go to the
21 courts again. I think it was a lady that asked
22 why are we going to the courts again. Ladies
23 and gentlemen, it is mandated by the
24 Constitution, it has to go to the courts, it
25 also has to go to the Department of Justice,

1 and they will both look at these maps once they
2 are passed.

3 The last thing I will leave everyone with
4 is this: We want to get this right. We are
5 all here, we are here to listen to you, we are
6 here to hear a great amount of public
7 testimony. The last thing I want to do is do
8 this wrong. My mother always told me that she
9 would tell me when something was fair, she
10 would let me know if something was fair, and my
11 guess is you will let us know if it's fair when
12 we put it out there. So do me a favor, hold us
13 accountable. Continue to follow what we are
14 doing. Go to our websites, learn more about
15 what we are doing. Your input tonight has been
16 tremendous, and I thank you for that and thank
17 you for your attention and for your civility.
18 And, Mr. Chairman, thank you for a great
19 hearing. Thank you all very much.

20 SENATOR GAETZ: And with that,
21 Representative Weatherford moves we rise.

22 (Whereupon, the proceedings were
23 concluded.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF FLORIDA)

COUNTY OF LEON)

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

That the foregoing pages 2 through 168 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 28th day of November 2011.

CLARA C. ROTRUCK

Notary Public

State of Florida at Large

Commission Expires:

November 13, 2014