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REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2011

8:00 A.M.

EPI CENTER at ST. PETE COLLEGE

LARGO, FLORIDA

Transcribed by:

CLARA C. ROTRUCK

Court Reporter

1 T A P E D P R O C E E D I N G S

2 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Good morning.
3 My name is Will Weatherford, and I have the
4 honor of chairing today's hearing. The
5 Joint/Senate House Redistricting hearing is now
6 called to order.

7 We are pleased to be joined today by
8 several members of the Florida House and the
9 Florida Senate. I am going to ask them in just
10 a moment to briefly introduce themselves so
11 that everybody here understands who we are
12 talking to.

13 But we have Legislators from across the
14 state of Florida who are interested in knowing
15 about your community and having a better
16 understanding so that when we are drawing lines
17 in the future, that we have all the information
18 necessary.

19 And so we are grateful to be here this
20 morning, had a great hearing last night in
21 Hillsborough County, and happy to be here.

22 We want to thank St. Pete College and
23 President Law for having us here today. I saw
24 President Law earlier, right there in the front
25 row. We appreciate you for allowing us to use

1 this wonderful facility. This is a great
2 facility, and we are very happy to be here.

3 And we want to thank all the members of
4 the public, we've got a great turnout this
5 morning already, I am sure people will be
6 trickling in.

7 I got stuck on the interstate coming in
8 from Wesley Chapel, but I made it here just in
9 the nick of time, Mr. Chairman, and so I'll
10 tell you what we will do, before we get
11 started, I would like to -- if we have a spare
12 mike, John, we will start here, right here with
13 Representative Frishe, and go down and allow
14 them introduce themselves, and we will have Mr.
15 Frishe here welcome us here to Pinellas County.

16 REPRESENTATIVE FRISHE: Thank you,
17 Mr. Chairman. I am Representative Jim Frishe.
18 I am Chairman of the Pinellas County
19 Legislative Delegation, and on behalf of the
20 delegation and my colleagues, welcome to
21 paradise, and to the public, thank you for
22 coming out and participating in your
23 government. Freedom is a heavy lift and it
24 needs a lot of hands helping, so thank you for
25 coming out.

1 REPRESENTATIVE NEHR: Good morning. I am
2 Representative Peter Nehr, and I represent
3 north Pinellas County and south Pasco.

4 SENATOR DETERT: There's a gentleman for
5 you.

6 Good morning, I am Senator Nancy Detert,
7 and I represent parts of Manatee, most of
8 Sarasota County and parts of Charlotte County.
9 Very happy to be here to listen to you this
10 morning.

11 SENATOR BENACQUISTO: Good morning, I am
12 Lizbeth Benacquisto. Thank you all for coming
13 out this morning. I represent Florida Senate
14 District 27, which covers portions of Lee,
15 Glades, Charlotte, Hendry and Palm Beach
16 County.

17 REPRESENTATIVE PASSIDOMO: Good morning, I
18 am Kathleen Passidomo, House District 76, which
19 is Collier County. I represent the City of
20 Naples, City of Marco Island and Everglades
21 City.

22 REPRESENTATIVE BOYD: Good morning. I am
23 Jim Boyd. I represent House District 68, which
24 is western Manatee County just across the bay
25 and just a small portion of Hillsborough

1 County. Glad to be here.

2 SENATOR NEGRON: Good morning, Joe Negron,
3 I represent the Treasure Coast and northern
4 Palm Beach County and Okeechobee in the Florida
5 Senate.

6 REPRESENTATIVE BERNARD: Good morning,
7 State Representative Mack Bernard, District 84
8 in West Palm Beach, Florida.

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

12 REPRESENTATIVE CAMPBELL: Good morning.
13 State Representative Daphne Campbell, District
14 108, from Miami-Dade County.

15 REPRESENTATIVE JULIEN: Good morning, John
16 Patrick Julien, representing House District
17 104, which encompasses North Miami Beach, North
18 Miami, Miami Gardens, the City of Opa-Locka,
19 unincorporated Miami-Dade County and the City
20 of Miami, and it is a pleasure to be here.

21 REPRESENTATIVE ROUSON: Good morning, I am
22 Darryl Rouson. I represent House District 55,
23 south Pinellas, north Manatee, north Sarasota
24 and one little smidgen of Hillsborough County,
25 south.

1 REPRESENTATIVE BRANDES: Good morning,
2 State Representative Jeff Brandes. I represent
3 House District 52, which is portions of St.
4 Petersburg, Clearwater, Largo and Pinellas
5 Park. Thank you.

6 REPRESENTATIVE AHERN: Good morning, State
7 Representative Larry Ahern, representing five
8 cities: Pinellas Park, Largo, Seminole, South
9 Pasadena and west St. Petersburg.

10 REPRESENTATIVE HOOPER: Good morning,
11 State Representative Ed Hooper. I represent
12 District 50, which is parts of Clearwater,
13 Largo, Dunedin, Safety Harbor and
14 unincorporated Pinellas.

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

19 REPRESENTATIVE HORNER: Good morning, my
20 name is Mike Horner. I represent State House
21 District 79 in central Florida.

22 REPRESENTATIVE ADKINS: Good morning, I am
23 Janet Adkins from northeast Florida,
24 representing House District 12, which is
25 Nassau, Baker, Bradford, Clay, Union and Duval

1 Counties.

2 REPRESENTATIVE CRUZ: Good morning, my
3 name is Janet Cruz, and I am your partner in
4 the bay area, Tampa Bay, that is. I represent
5 District 58 in Tampa, which is the central part
6 of Tampa. Happy to be here.

7 SENATOR JOYNER: Good morning, I am
8 Arthenia Joyner, State Senator, District 18,
9 which encompasses portions of Manatee,
10 Pinellas, and the majority of the district is
11 in Hillsborough County.

12 SENATOR LATVALA: Good morning, I am Jack
13 Latvala and I am proud to represent the 16th
14 Senatorial District and want to welcome many of
15 my constituents here today, as well as
16 welcoming my colleagues to the 16th Senatorial
17 District, which is where we are sitting right
18 at this moment.

19 REPRESENTATIVE NUNEZ: Good morning, my
20 name is Jeanette Nuñez. I represent House
21 District 112, which consists of portions of
22 Miami-Dade, Broward and Collier County.

23 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Okay. I
24 think that's everybody. Before we move
25 forward, I would like to take just a brief

1 moment to make a pledge to our flag, and
2 Representative Frishe is going to lead us in
3 that pledge.

4 REPRESENTATIVE FRISHE: I pledge
5 allegiance to the flag of the United States of
6 America and to the Republic for which it
7 stands, one nation, under God, indivisible with
8 liberty and justice for all.

9 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
10 very much. Again, ladies and gentlemen, my
11 name is Will Weatherford, and along with my
12 Senate colleague, Don Gaetz, who is the future
13 Senate President of the Senate, we are here,
14 going to be co-chairing this meeting, which
15 will also be webcast live over The Florida
16 Channel and on the Internet, so hopefully
17 people will be watching us there as well.

18 Our sole purpose here today is to hear
19 about what you believe the legal standards
20 governing redistricting and how they should be
21 applied in your community, so that you are
22 represented in Tallahassee and in Washington,
23 fully, equitably and sensibly.

24 Our procedures today are going to be very
25 simple, but they are also very important. And

1 it is important that you sign in so that we can
2 create an accurate public record of all
3 attendees and speakers. Also, you may opt to
4 join our e-mail list so that we can keep you
5 informed about the redistricting process as we
6 work through it over the next few months.

7 If you have not signed in, please raise
8 your right hand, and a staff member will give
9 you an attendance card. Keep your hand up,
10 too. I see lots of hands out there, and just
11 keep them up and we will make sure and give you
12 an attendance card.

13 If you wish to speak today and you have
14 not filled out an attendance card, also raise
15 your -- I'm sorry, before we begin -- and you
16 would like to speak and not just to show that
17 you are here, but if you would like to speak,
18 also raise your hand, and we will get you that
19 attendance card and make sure that you get the
20 opportunity to speak. We want to make sure
21 that we have plenty of time to give everyone
22 that opportunity.

23 And before we begin, I would like to
24 recognize Senator Gaetz for a few moments to
25 walk us through what we are going to be doing

1 here today, what we hope the comments from the
2 public are focused on, and to give us a little
3 bit of background and history of redistricting.
4 So, Senator, if you could, maybe walk us
5 through that.

6 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
7 Mr. Speaker. Every ten years, the Legislature
8 is required by our Constitution to redistrict
9 the state based on increases or decreases or
10 movements of population within the state of
11 Florida, and because our state has grown more
12 than other states in the last ten years, we
13 have actually picked up two additional seats in
14 the U.S. House of Representatives. We have
15 gone from 25 to 27 seats in the House of
16 Representatives.

17 And part of our job as voters, as
18 citizens, as a committee, as a Legislature, as
19 a judiciary, is to determine where those two
20 additional congressional seats ought to be
21 located.

22 Now, because some parts of our state have
23 increased or decreased disproportionately in
24 population, many Senate and House districts
25 will change. In fact, my guess, Mr. Chairman,

1 is that all Senate and House districts will
2 change because of the addition or the
3 subtraction of population or the movement of
4 population within the state. When
5 redistricting is completed, congressional
6 districts must be equal in population and
7 contain 696,345 people, 696,345 people in a
8 U.S. Congressional District. The 40 State
9 Senate districts must also be nearly equal at
10 about 470,000 people, and our 120 House
11 districts must also be nearly equal at about
12 156,700 people.

13 There are displays that you can see over
14 here to my right on the wall, and those
15 displays, I saw a number of you looking at them
16 when you came in, they show the current
17 boundaries of districts in this area of the
18 state and the number of persons which must be
19 added to or subtracted from current districts
20 in order to achieve equal representation.

21 Now, equality of representation is
22 important, but it is not the only legal
23 requirement that redistricting plans must meet
24 under the law. The laws and the important
25 court cases governing redistricting are

1 explained in detail on the House and Senate
2 websites. Those websites are listed in a
3 "Redistricting 2012" brochure that was
4 available when you came in. Did you get a 2012
5 redistricting brochure?

6 If you didn't, it is a tri-fold brochure,
7 raise your hand, and we will make sure you get
8 one. Lots of customers, okay. They were
9 available when you came in, but we want to make
10 sure everybody gets one.

11 The reason why they are important is
12 because they not only list the House and Senate
13 websites, but they explain how the websites are
14 packed with information about redistricting in
15 Florida, including the explanation of the laws
16 and important court cases governing
17 redistricting.

18 The two websites, the House and Senate
19 website, are complementary. They are not
20 exactly the same. They are complementary.
21 They are updated frequently. We hope you will
22 visit both and check back often, because it is
23 a great way to stay current about how
24 congressional, Senate and House districts are
25 taking shape.

1 The websites also deliver to your
2 fingertips all of the demographic data that
3 will be used in drawing districts and the exact
4 same computer programs that legislators and
5 professional staff would use. Any member of
6 the public can participate in building plans or
7 seeing maps or critiquing plans or critiquing
8 maps submitted by Legislators or other
9 citizens.

10 Before, during and after this hearing,
11 House and Senate professional staff are
12 available to show anybody the simple steps to
13 getting on-line and building districts in your
14 area, in your neighborhood, in your community,
15 or if you want to take a whack at it, the whole
16 state, and then submitting that information so
17 that we can use it as a basis for the
18 Legislature's deliberations.

19 If you think that it is too complicated,
20 it is not. I am pretty tech stupid, and it
21 took the professional staff about 15 minutes to
22 show me how to use the District Builder
23 software.

24 Recommendations from citizens and groups
25 of citizens will be made publicly available.

1 So any maps that are offered by anybody will be
2 available for everyone to see. In fact, as of
3 this morning, there are 48 different maps that
4 have already been submitted. So if somebody
5 says, "Where are the maps," you had to walk
6 past them when you came in. There are 48 of
7 them, and some of them have been submitted by
8 individuals who have come to hearings and then
9 literally gone outside during the hearing or
10 after the hearing and learned how to use the
11 software and submitted their maps.

12 Plus there are over a hundred additional
13 submissions we have had of written ideas for
14 how neighborhoods ought to be either divided or
15 communities ought to be held together, and all
16 of that is available on the Web.

17 The submission of proposed maps, the
18 submission of your ideas that makes sense for
19 your community, is the single most effective
20 form of public participation in the
21 redistricting process.

22 We are glad to have people talk to us in
23 any way they would like about the process
24 itself, if you have comments or criticisms,
25 that is fine, but the most valuable information

1 that you probably can impart is to tell us
2 about your neighborhood, your community, how it
3 is divided now, whether that makes sense and
4 what your specific recommendations are.

5 The redistricting schedule under which we
6 are operating is imposed by the state
7 Constitution. The Constitution does not permit
8 the Legislature to act on state legislative
9 maps before the second year after the census;
10 in other words, the Constitution of Florida
11 does not permit the Legislature to vote on
12 legislative maps until 2012. However, we have
13 accelerated this process as much as we legally
14 can in order to get done so that we will be
15 able to have elections in an organized and
16 thoughtful way in 2012.

17 We have moved up the 2012 legislative
18 session from March, when it would usually
19 start, to January, and we have begun our
20 statewide hearings five months in advance of
21 the 2012 legislative session, and we will begin
22 our committee weeks where we will vote -- we
23 will debate, discuss and vote in committees in
24 September instead of in December.

25 Now, it has been suggested that the

1 Legislature should draw maps first and then put
2 them in front of the public and say, "Here they
3 are." We believe this puts the answer ahead of
4 the question. We believe there ought to be no
5 preconceptions created by politicians, but,
6 rather, public testimony should be free and
7 unrestricted.

8 In fact, a principal author of Florida's
9 new redistricting standards, and Ellen Freidin,
10 the Chairperson for Fair Districts, are on
11 record testifying before the House and Senate
12 stating that new maps should not be drawn until
13 after the public has first had an opportunity
14 to comment in public hearings, and so that is
15 exactly what we are doing.

16 Our intent is to use the recommendations
17 made at the 26 public hearings and through our
18 Internet sites as the basis for developing one
19 or more options for district maps. I don't
20 think you will see one map come fully blown
21 from the brow of Zeus.

22 I think instead you will see several
23 options, drawing from the input we receive at
24 these hearings. We will discuss those options
25 in open public meetings before any votes are

1 taken, even votes in committee.

2 In other words, what we are saying is if
3 you look at the maps that you had to walk past
4 outside this room, and you look at the other
5 maps and submissions that are on-line, the ones
6 actually submitted to the Legislature, we are
7 saying that we are starting the legislative
8 process with those maps and with the other
9 input we have received from the public. So if
10 you want to know where we will begin our
11 deliberations and what Legislators will be
12 using as we start this process in Tallahassee,
13 it is with those public submissions, those maps
14 that you had to walk past when you came in the
15 door.

16 Throughout this process, we will solicit
17 additional public comment so that proposed maps
18 can mature with the public involved, all before
19 the Legislature approves any final maps.

20 And then whatever the Legislature passes
21 is submitted from judicial review. The
22 Legislature doesn't get to decide by itself
23 where the lines are drawn. Anything that we
24 develop based on the input we receive from the
25 public is then submitted to the Florida Supreme

1 Court and submitted to the federal judicial
2 level for approval to make sure that every
3 legal requirement, state and federal, is met.

4 Because our purpose today is to hear from
5 you, all of the time remaining between now and
6 11:00 a.m. will be used to ensure that every
7 member of the public who is here and wishes to
8 speak will have time to present testimony and
9 be listened to respectfully without
10 interruption. If after every citizen has had
11 her or his say there is time remaining before
12 our scheduled adjournment, and we hope there
13 will be some time, then any member of the
14 Committee, Democrat or Republican, House member
15 or Senator, may make any statement, answer any
16 question, offer any observation they would
17 like.

18 And you will see that Speaker Weatherford
19 and I will be making heavy notes, you will see
20 other people making heavy notes, so that if
21 there are data-specific questions or empirical
22 questions that come up during the hearing, we
23 will try to make sure, time permitting, that we
24 answer those so that we all leave here with the
25 same set of facts.

1 Mr. Chairman, I hope that this description
2 of our schedule and our process helps set the
3 stage for a successful hearing. John Guthrie,
4 our Senate Professional Staff Director,
5 admonishes me to remind you that you must sign
6 in with the professional staff if you wish to
7 speak.

8 So even if you have let us know on the
9 Internet that you are coming to the hearing
10 today, we are delighted you did let us know, if
11 you want to speak, be sure to let the
12 professional staff know so that Speaker
13 Weatherford has a speaker sheet for you and can
14 call your name.

15 And that is a recitation of the process
16 and where we go from here, Mr. Speaker.

17 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
18 very much, Chairman Gaetz, great explanation of
19 the process here. And very quickly, before we
20 start public hearings, which we will start just
21 in a second, every hearing kind of has its own
22 personality, and we are happy to be a part of
23 this today and we've got a lot of members of
24 the Legislature that are here to listen to you
25 in a very respectful and thoughtful manner, and

1 all we would ask is in your comments that you
2 also make your comments in a very respectful
3 and thoughtful manner.

4 We want to hear your thoughts, whether it
5 is constructive criticism, whether it is, you
6 know, cheerleading, whatever it is, just do it
7 in a respectful way, and I can assure you
8 everybody on this Committee will treat you in
9 the same manner. So we thank you very much for
10 that ahead of time.

11 We've got several speakers; in fact, we've
12 got probably over 40 speakers already signed
13 up, and so we are going to try to limit to
14 about three minutes per person. We will try to
15 give you a little bit of latitude and let you
16 know, and I will lean towards the mike maybe
17 when we are getting close to the end, but try
18 to give everybody at least three minutes. We
19 want every person to have the opportunity to
20 speak.

21 I am also going to call out at least three
22 names at a time, and we have designated this
23 front row up here to my right and your left as
24 kind of an on deck circle. And so as I call
25 your name out, if you could, walk up to the

1 front, so that way we can get you to the mike
2 as quickly as possible and do this in an
3 orderly fashion.

4 So without any further ado, our first
5 speaker this morning is going to be B. J. Star,
6 and following B.J. is going to be Mary Freeman,
7 and following Ms. Freeman will be Jasmina
8 Forcan.

9 And so, B.J., we appreciate you being
10 here. You get the honor to go first, and we
11 are happy that you are here this morning, and
12 you are recognized for three minutes.

13 MS. STAR: Thank you very much. My name
14 is B. J. Star, and I am a woman. I had to wait
15 144 years before I was given the right to vote
16 in this country. Because of this struggle, I
17 do believe that all the women of this nation
18 appreciate the right of the franchise in a very
19 special way.

20 Women were imprisoned, force fed and
21 beaten during the battle to win the right to
22 vote, and, thus, our cry of one person, one
23 vote, is especially meaningful.

24 I come to you today repeating the message
25 of 63 percent of Florida voters that we -- all

1 we want for you to do is to follow the law, and
2 you don't need these expensive hearings to know
3 what that is.

4 The fact that you have set aside \$30
5 million to defend your maps once you finally
6 share them with us is disheartening. It is
7 like it is a foregone conclusion that you are
8 going to have to defend yourselves. If you do
9 it the right the first time, there won't be any
10 legal skirmishes.

11 Additionally, the two and a half million
12 dollars you have already spent fighting against
13 the implementation of Amendments 5 and 6 is
14 appalling. It is even more egregious that
15 Florida taxpayers are paying both for the
16 defense of the amendments and for the lawsuit
17 challenging the amendments. These expenses are
18 even more shocking in a state where you have
19 laid off thousands of teachers.

20 We are disappointed that you have chosen
21 to fight the very amendments that Floridians
22 want. We are disappointed you don't have maps.
23 It is especially disappointing that the
24 timeline you have chosen will only lead to more
25 confusion. It is bad enough that you wasted

1 this legislative session to pass a number of
2 egregious bills against women. In passing a
3 voter suppression --

4 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Ms. Star, if
5 we could, we are here to talk about
6 redistricting, not policy decisions that have
7 been made in the past or the future, just
8 redistricting. Ladies and gentlemen, please.
9 Please, ladies and gentlemen --

10 A VOICE: Let her finish.

11 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: She's going
12 to get to finish, but we are going to keep the
13 comments on redistricting.

14 MS. STAR: Floridians have voiced their
15 opinions and given you their input, and you
16 have chosen to sue us. My foremothers suffered
17 and battled too hard to gain the right to vote.
18 For now to make a mockery of this process is a
19 shame. Please return to Tallahassee, draw us
20 legal maps, and then we will talk. And one
21 last word for the women of Florida: Uterus.
22 Thank you.

23 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
24 Ms. Star.

25 Next up -- next up we have Ms. Mary

1 Freeman with the Democratic Women's Club of
2 Pinellas County, and then Jasmina Forcan, and
3 following Ms. Forcan we have Nigel Watson.

4 Ms. Freeman, you are recognized.

5 MS. FREEMAN: Hi, I am Mary Freeman, and
6 what I'm here to say is in today's economy, why
7 are you spending millions of taxpayer dollars
8 on fighting an amendment that was approved by
9 63 percent of Florida voters?

10 I want to know where the maps are and why
11 are you asking us to draw them up. If you
12 really need help, I and several others would be
13 more than happy to sit down with you and get it
14 done. This could save millions of dollars.
15 The stalling is merely a tactic made to help
16 incumbents who are afraid of being voted out of
17 office.

18 You are only seeking -- you say you are
19 only seeking clarification on reforms -- on the
20 reforms. Well, here is the clarification:
21 Stop wasting taxpayer money, start doing what
22 you are paid to do, draw the maps, have them
23 ready for filing by October 3rd. And, finally,
24 if you do have them ready, will you give us the
25 opportunity to review them to see if you have

1 responded to our requests? Thank you.

2 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
3 very much.

4 I know there were some -- there were some
5 questions that have been asked already thus
6 far. Just so everyone knows, what we will do
7 is we will make sure there is time at the end
8 for any member on the Committee to offer
9 suggestions or answer some of the questions
10 that are presented, and then Senator Gaetz will
11 also try to keep very copious notes, as I will
12 as well, and we will answer all the questions
13 that are asked. So you are recognized, thank
14 you for being here. And, I'm sorry, but after
15 Jasmina, we've got Nigel Watson and R. B.
16 Johnson. Thank you.

17 MS. FORCAN: I am Jasmina Forcan, and I am
18 glad for this opportunity. This is my first
19 involvement in the process, and I hope that
20 everything goes smoothly and the end result is
21 what we expect of you. Thank you.

22 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.
23 We are offering bonus points for brevity,
24 ma'am, and I can tell you, you are leading the
25 charge, so thank you very much.

1 Next up we've got Nigel Watson, and
2 following Mr. Watson, we have R. B. Johnson and
3 Leo Murray.

4 Nigel is with the ACLU. Thank you for
5 being here, sir.

6 MR. WATSON: Good morning. I am not here
7 for Democrats or Republicans. I -- two
8 parties. I am for foreplay -- fair play --

9 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Sir, I think
10 you are at the wrong public hearing.

11 MR. WATSON: No dirty tricks.

12 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: The County
13 Commission is meeting several miles from here,
14 we encourage you to go to the County Commission
15 hearing.

16 MR. WATSON: I am getting ready to go
17 right after.

18 I live in a state in which Democrats had a
19 600,000 plus majority of registered voters, yet
20 two-thirds of the state leg is somehow
21 magically Republican. Does that make sense to
22 you all?

23 My input was in voting for Amendments 5
24 and 6 last November. Your input should have
25 been preparing the maps to show us at these

1 meetings.

2 It is disingenuous for you now to
3 cynically ask us for our version of amateur
4 maps -- no, we don't know how to use that
5 software -- that you then promise to consider,
6 but have no legal dictate to do so.

7 Where are the maps is the focus here, in
8 case you hadn't noticed what the focus was, not
9 productive dialogue. You've got it backwards.
10 No maps equals no debate, except what you are
11 doing. Add to this the millions of our tax
12 dollars being wasted to defeat or amend these
13 measures, excuse me, clarify, you can
14 understand why running out the clock comes to
15 my mind.

16 From gerrymandering the maps, we are now
17 gerrymandering the meetings. Being
18 intellectually honest, such tactics look mighty
19 like a betrayal of your non-partisan public
20 trust. Can we now rely on you to honor the
21 clear will of the people in both letter and
22 spirit, or will you present us with a *fait*
23 *accompli* at the 11th hour, leaving scant time
24 for candidates to plan or for courts to rule?

25 So that your reputations don't sink any

1 further, I suggest that you do right by the
2 people you have pledged to serve. Set aside
3 your grists and tricks in hopes the home folks
4 won't notice, they will. Look in the mirror.
5 Is this how you would want to be now governed
6 if the leg disagreed with your point of view?
7 Instead, withdraw your legal beagles, reset the
8 spacial coding on your mapping software and do
9 the better job two-thirds of us want done.

10 Thanks for your time and attention.

11 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.
12 And Mr. Watson, I say this with all sincerity,
13 we appreciate you, for lack of a better term,
14 warming up the Committee. Thank you very much.

15 Next up we've got R. B. Johnson, followed
16 by Leo Murray and then Doris Houdesheldt. I
17 hope I said that right. R. B. --

18 REPRESENTATIVE FRISHE: Mayor.

19 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Mayor
20 Johnson, I apologize, that's not written down.
21 And, Mayor, thank you very much for being here,
22 sir, and thank you for your service to the
23 community.

24 MAYOR JOHNSON: Thank you. I appreciate
25 y'all giving us a chance to speak before you

1 this morning.

2 I am the Mayor of Indian Rocks Beach, and
3 I am here to speak on behalf of the beach
4 communities, and what we would like to see, I
5 believe, is fairly universal amongst us,
6 especially the Representatives, the mayors,
7 city commissioners and councilmen up and down
8 Indian Rocks, or up and down the beach
9 communities, is after the redistricting process
10 is finished, we would like to see the beach
11 communities to remain essentially as a distinct
12 entity and within the same district, whether it
13 is the House, Senate, et cetera.

14 Now, when you look at this brochure that
15 you passed out here, it talks about the
16 districts being contiguous and compact and as
17 much as possible having the same geographic and
18 municipal boundaries, as much as possible be
19 close together and to be very distinct. And if
20 you look around Pinellas County, if you are
21 looking at an area that has a character that is
22 very distinct and to a large extent separate
23 from the rest of the county, the beach
24 communities would be it.

25 If you are on the beach communities, if

1 you live there, if you have a business there,
2 it is because you love beach living. You have
3 the Gulf of Mexico on one side, you have the
4 Intracoastal on another, and tourism basically
5 fuels our lives, and the businesses and the
6 people who live there have a certain way of
7 life and they are there for a particular
8 reason.

9 Gulf Boulevard runs north and south along
10 the entire length from St. Pete Beach all the
11 way up into Clearwater Beach. It is sort of
12 the life blood line of the beach communities.

13 And we have elected -- we have a series of
14 interests that keep us together and keep us
15 focused about the way of life that we have
16 there. As a matter of fact, we have our own
17 entity called the Big C, the Barrier Islands
18 Governmental Council, that meets once a month
19 to talk about our shared interests and to make
20 certain that when issues come before the State
21 Legislature, that we are united, when there are
22 issues that need to be discussed between
23 ourselves and the rest of the county, that we
24 are united, and that if we are not united, we
25 try to discuss things in an amicable way, but

1 as much as possible, we like to speak with one
2 voice. So we would like to see that continued
3 in the future, because we are our own -- I
4 won't say we are not totally separate from
5 Pinellas County, but like I said, we have
6 everything that determines essentially what you
7 are looking for here as far as redistricting to
8 keep ourselves into one separate district,
9 whether it is the state legislative district --
10 whether it is for Representatives, for Senate
11 or of a congressional district.

12 So we appreciate it if you would take that
13 into consideration, and I know there are other
14 representatives here from beach communities as
15 well, and that is pretty much all it is. Thank
16 you very much.

17 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
18 Mayor, and thanks for your service, sir, we
19 appreciate it.

20 Next up we have Leo Murray, followed by
21 Doris Houdesheldt and then Mike Anderson.

22 Mr. Murray, thanks for being here.

23 MR. MURRAY: Hi. Good morning, Leo
24 Murray. I have lived in my present home in St.
25 Petersburg since 1979. I am in Senate District

1 16, House District 52 and U.S. Congressional
2 District 10.

3 I have been through this process, this
4 will be the fourth time since I have been here.
5 2002 was probably the -- in my opinion, the
6 most drastic and -- during that time.

7 I am going to repeat some of what's
8 already been said. Where are the maps, not
9 amateur drawn maps, but where -- professionally
10 drawn maps by the staff and what have you in
11 Tallahassee that are paid to do this and will
12 be doing it at some point? Why is it taking so
13 long to draw the maps? Again, the maps -- we
14 should have had maps that we could have
15 commented on here, not necessarily if they were
16 firm maps, but tentatively drawn maps that we
17 could have commented on and maybe some --
18 helped tweak them at this point.

19 And, again, why are you wasting taxpayer
20 money on lawsuits and on -- for these public
21 comment hearings? Again, because there's not
22 maps, it is something that's -- and many people
23 are saying is a waste of time to have these
24 meetings.

25 When the maps are drawn, I hope that they

1 will be compact and the districts shall, where
2 feasible, utilize existing political and
3 geographical boundaries. In my opinion,
4 Pinellas County should be one of the more easy
5 areas to redistrict. You've got the Gulf of
6 Mexico on one side, you've got Tampa Bay on the
7 south and east side, and in my opinion,
8 districts shouldn't cross the bay, shouldn't
9 straddle the bay.

10 Currently in District -- nor should they
11 be in three, four, five, six different
12 political communities, whether it is St. Pete,
13 Clearwater, Largo, Pinellas Park, Oldsmar,
14 Safety Harbor, whatever. Jack Latvala's
15 District 16 starts in St. Pete, goes all the
16 way around the bay and into Tampa. I don't
17 think that is fair representation for most of
18 those other communities, especially when the
19 office is in St. Pete.

20 Jeff Brandes' district starts in St. Pete,
21 and it also goes through three or four or five
22 different political communities, but the office
23 is in St. Pete, which is difficult for people
24 to visit.

25 We have other districts that also straddle

1 the bay, minority districts, and I know that is
2 going to be a challenge to maintain those
3 minority districts, because they do straddle
4 the bay. That is a challenge, but where
5 possible, I would like to see the districts
6 stay in Pinellas County and not be split
7 between two and three counties. Some districts
8 are -- start in St. Pete, they go into Manatee,
9 Sarasota, whatever counties. Others are in
10 both counties.

11 Congressional District 10, Bill Young's
12 district, that carved out the African-American
13 community in St. Petersburg, moved it to
14 District 11 in 2002. St. Pete should be in the
15 same -- in the same congressional district.
16 When they redraw that map, it should start at
17 the Skyway, Fort DeSoto, and just move north
18 until you meet your population, six hundred
19 thousand something, I think you said, and the
20 same with the other districts in Pinellas --

21 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Mr. Murray, I
22 am going to ask you to kind of wrap it up.
23 We've got a lot of speakers that want to speak
24 also.

25 MR. MURRAY: Okay. Just square it up and

1 make them as compact as possible.

2 I also see in a newspaper article that
3 quoted you, Mr. Weatherford, and it said you
4 remain hopeful that lawmakers can reach an
5 agreement on time and avoid litigations. I
6 think it is -- and I don't it think it is
7 rocket science. There is a way to do this and
8 a way to do it right, and I hope you live up to
9 that -- those quotes that are attributed to
10 you. Thank you.

11 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
12 very much.

13 Next up we have Ms. Doris, and following
14 Doris is Mike Anderson and then Mac McLaughlin.

15 MS. HOUESHELDT: Thank you very much.
16 First of all, thank you for pronouncing my name
17 almost right. I would say Houdesheldt, but
18 that is what my husband told me a long time ago
19 anyway, 57 years ago, to be exact.

20 I also appreciate your effort to follow
21 the Amendments 5 and 6 for holding these
22 redistricting meetings in our area. I think it
23 is important that you hear the views of the
24 constituents whose lives are being affected by
25 the lines being drawn. And I also wish to

1 specifically thank Representative Weatherford
2 and Senator Gaetz for your work.

3 I am in Congressional District 11, and I
4 think it is important as a resident of
5 Congressional District 11 that our district be
6 centered in Pinellas County.

7 The problem is that we have Tampa people
8 outweighing us when it comes to our opinion, we
9 are overpowered by them. And I do respect,
10 too, the fine work of Senator Joyner. The
11 people of District 11 in Pinellas should be
12 represented by a Pinellas Representative. It
13 is also important to keep the other districts
14 in Pinellas as close to current as possible.

15 Once again, I want to thank you for giving
16 me this time to speak on redrawing the lines of
17 Congressional District 11. Thank you.

18 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
19 very much. We appreciate your comments.

20 Next up we have Mike Anderson, followed by
21 Mac McLaughlin and then Dorine McKinnon.

22 MR. ANDERSON: Good morning. I am a
23 retired social studies teacher. I thank you
24 for permitting me to express my thoughts on
25 redistricting in this public forum.

1 In Monday's *St. Petersburg Times*, Senator
2 Gaetz is quoted as saying that there needs to
3 be a rationale why new districts are drawn.
4 Today I intend to give you my rationale for
5 supporting one of the plans for redistricting.
6 I hope my comments will be part of the road map
7 Senator Gaetz spoke of in the process of
8 drawing new districts for this state. I
9 applaud you for gathering the broadest range of
10 opinion on this subject as you have visited
11 numerous communities in Florida.

12 I am here to support the congressional
13 maps submitted on July 8th, 2011, by John Libby
14 of Duval County. It is HPUBC0003. I believe
15 the plan faithfully follows the Fair District
16 amendments to the State Constitution, as well
17 as the requirements of the Federal Voting
18 Rights Act.

19 In 2009, in a North Carolina case, the
20 U.S. Supreme Court in *Bartlett versus*
21 *Strickland* interpreted the Voting Rights Act to
22 only protect the voting power of minority
23 groups when they constitute a majority of the
24 electorate in a legislative district.

25 In this North Carolina case, their

1 Constitution required that legislative
2 districts respect county boundaries similar to
3 the passed Fair District amendments in Florida.

4 Mr. Libby provides district summary
5 statistics to accompany his map. And four
6 congressional districts are from south Florida.
7 Minority districts were proposed. In Districts
8 23, 25 and 27, Hispanics constitute at least a
9 majority of the voting age population. In
10 District 26, African-Americans constitute a
11 majority. In two other congressional
12 districts, one from southeast Florida and the
13 other from the Orlando area, the combined
14 minority populations constitute a majority of
15 the population. These are Districts 24 and 12.
16 These are minority access districts.

17 In one other southeastern Florida
18 district, the combined minority population is
19 48.9 percent of the population, and that is
20 District 22.

21 Florida's African-Americans and Hispanics
22 represent 25.7 percent of the state's
23 registered voters. Seven congressional
24 districts that is proposed by Mr. Libby would
25 give a minority a competitive chance to win,

1 which is 25.9 percent of the state's
2 congressional district delegation.

3 In five other congressional districts,
4 non-Hispanic whites constitute 55.1 percent to
5 59.8 percent of their districts. These are
6 Districts 4, 9, 10, 13 and 19. Those districts
7 include Jacksonville, Tampa, east Hillsborough,
8 west Orange and North Palm Beach. A minority
9 or a minority-backed candidate would be
10 competitive in those districts.

11 The census found that 42 percent of
12 Florida's population is comprised of
13 minorities. Under Mr. Libby's plan, 12
14 districts would be competitive to elect a
15 minority or a minority-backed candidate. That
16 is 44.4 percent of the delegation.

17 I also like Mr. Libby's plan because it
18 provides for five congressional districts along
19 the Sun Coast. Pasco and Hernando would have a
20 congressional district.

21 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Mr. Anderson,
22 this is great detailed information, but we have
23 got to put a bow on it for us.

24 MR. ANDERSON: I ask the Chairman for
25 permission to have someone Xerox this --

1 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Yes.

2 MR. ANDERSON: -- and give it to the
3 members of the Committee.

4 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: We will do
5 that. We appreciate the detailed information,
6 but what we will do is we know that a lot of
7 folks have more information than what they can
8 get out in three minutes, we will make sure
9 that every member of the Committee -- that goes
10 into the record. Every member of the Committee
11 will get a hard copy of that.

12 MR. ANDERSON: I understand, Mr. Chair,
13 and I appreciate your giving me permission to
14 be up here, and I hope the members of the
15 delegation will look this over. I think it is
16 important that you use this plan as a road map
17 to adopt a plan for us.

18 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Yes, sir.
19 Thank you, Mr. Anderson. We appreciate your
20 detailed testimony.

21 Next up we have Mr. Mac McLaughlin,
22 followed by Dorine McKinnon and then Aaron
23 Dietrich.

24 MR. McLAUGHLIN: Good morning, delegates.
25 I want to say thank you for this opportunity.

1 My name is Mac McLaughlin, and I am a resident
2 of Pinellas County, obviously. I am the former
3 Commissioner and Vice-Mayor of Safety Harbor
4 for eight years, and one of the things I am
5 concerned about is the city -- in the
6 Amendments 5 and 6 as it relates to cities and
7 boundaries. And as you'll look at this map
8 that has been made up by the State, that Palm
9 Harbor is not a city, Feather Sound is not a
10 city, Lealman is not a city, and the problem
11 with it is the whole Pinellas County needs to
12 be as one group for voting.

13 Now, I heard all of these numbers about
14 population, how we got the extra seats. But
15 the key to it is, where's the voters? We are
16 not basing this on votes or -- but basing it on
17 population. So there's never going to be
18 anything perfect, no matter what we do.

19 I am kind of disappointed that we're
20 spending all this money, because that -- that
21 really is what it is all about is the money and
22 who is going to get the money for doing this.
23 And for the lawsuits, both ways, okay.

24 Another thing I would like to see -- that
25 I live in South Pasadena, but I live in the

1 county of South Pasadena. How do I vote? How
2 do I vote? Where am I going to be? And it is
3 just like the beach people. We need to keep
4 them all together, the beach community, and
5 also keep the entire part of Pinellas County
6 together. Let's get Tampa, Hillsborough
7 County, stay over there, and so they are not --
8 so we have our representation here.

9 I understand the pressures that you are
10 all under, and it is a no-win situation. You
11 all knew that when you came here today. You
12 knew that no matter what you listened to, it is
13 never going to -- no one is going to agree.
14 And, once again, I want to thank you for your
15 time, and think about the cost to the Cities
16 and to the Counties in this deal and where are
17 they going to get their money to enact what you
18 all agree to, hopefully, and I am sure you will
19 come to some agreement. But the bottom line
20 is, no matter what you come up with and what
21 these people here want, there's only one person
22 that is going to make the difference, and that
23 is the Governor of Florida, because he is going
24 to veto it or not veto it, and we need to take
25 that into consideration.

1 I want to thank you for your time, and for
2 those who came a great distance here to be with
3 us, we all appreciate that, and thank you.
4 Come up with a good solution.

5 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
6 sir. We appreciate that.

7 Next up we have Ms. Dorine McKinnon,
8 followed by Aaron Dietrich and then Jim Good.

9 MS. MCKINNON: Hi, I am Dorine McKinnon
10 and I am a member of the unincorporated
11 Pinellas County, and I would like to begin by
12 thanking the Committee, Representative Frishe
13 and Weatherford, and Senators Gaetz, Joyner and
14 Latvala for the exceptional work that is being
15 done to make this process transparent and
16 orderly.

17 I appreciate that it is being presented
18 earlier than the 2000 census and is more
19 transparent than previous sessions and that
20 these meetings do not just focus on more dense
21 urban areas, but also include less populous
22 areas and even rural communities.

23 I hope to see new districts that will
24 allow Pinellas constituencies to be represented
25 by a Pinellas legislature while staying as

1 close as possible to the current districting
2 lines. Pinellas is unique and different from
3 Hillsborough and Manatee, and our concerns --
4 and we want representation close to where we
5 live. Thank you.

6 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
7 very much. Bonus points for Ms. McKinnon. She
8 was done in less than a minute.

9 Next up we have Mr. Dietrich, followed
10 Mr. Jim Good and then Sean Krummerich, I hope
11 is the name, I hope I didn't say that wrong,
12 but, Aaron, you are recognized. Thanks for
13 being here, sir.

14 MR. DIETRICH: Thank you. Good morning to
15 all of you. I would like to start off by
16 saying I appreciate the situation that you are
17 in, it's a great deal of responsibility. I am
18 a graduate student from the University of South
19 Florida. I am also a resident of St.
20 Petersburg. I have a few concerns I would like
21 to address with you this morning. I will be
22 brief.

23 To start, I am troubled by the notion that
24 this body has taken valuable time -- valuable
25 time and resources in search of public input

1 across this great state. As many of us are
2 aware, you have already received the public
3 input that is necessary in the forms of
4 Amendments 5 and 6. There you will find clear
5 and concise guidelines for the task at hand.
6 The fact that this Legislature has spent \$2.5
7 million in a time when we are firing teachers,
8 \$2.5 million paying lawyers instead to defeat
9 these constitutional amendments, with all due
10 respect to all of you, that really calls into
11 question the true intent of these meetings, but
12 it casts serious doubt upon the integrity of
13 your leadership, ladies and gentlemen.

14 I will close by saying it appears to many
15 of us that these meetings lack any foundation
16 for discussion.

17 As there are no maps provided by the
18 Legislature, we have no basis for meaningful
19 input. We have not come here to see maps drawn
20 by schoolteachers and construction workers. We
21 come here to see maps drawn by the people we
22 paid -- we have elected to do so.

23 Thank you very much for your time. I wish
24 you the best of luck.

25 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,

1 Aaron.

2 Next up we have Jim Good, followed by Sean
3 Krummerich and then Curtis Holmes. Jim, thanks
4 for being here, sir.

5 MR. GOOD: Thanks, good morning. As you
6 said, my name is Jim Good. I worked for the
7 Post Office for 31 years, and then for the
8 Letter Carriers' Union for nine years, and they
9 have a program they use, and although it is
10 certainly not perfect, it may be similar to the
11 program you have for building the districts.
12 So I am sure that you could have listened to
13 the community and got their opinions after
14 drawing maps and then just pushed a few buttons
15 and changed it to be based on what the opinions
16 were that you drew from those.

17 Also, I am, as other people have said, a
18 little bit upset with the idea that the Senate
19 and the House chooses to have a lawsuit against
20 Amendments 5 and 6 that were passed by the
21 people. I mean, that is the whole idea of our
22 system.

23 And one final note, if you could give a
24 message to Senator Haridopolos for me just to
25 let him know that I am appalled by the recent

1 posting that he put on YouTube that was paid
2 for with state funds. I think he will know
3 what I am talking about.

4 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
5 sir.

6 Next up we have Sean Krummerich and then
7 followed by Curtis Holmes and then Steve
8 McFarlin, who is the Mayor of St. Pete Beach.

9 Thanks for being here, Sean.

10 MR. KRUMMERICH: Distinguished Senators
11 and Representatives, good morning.

12 Last November, on one issue Florida's
13 voters spoke with a clearer voice than on
14 virtually any other issue or candidate on the
15 ballot. They said we are tired, we are tired
16 of having politicians choose their voters
17 rather than the other way around, we are tired
18 of gerrymandered districts, we are tired of the
19 situation which in any given year a third of
20 the Legislature is automatically reelected
21 because nobody bothered to run against them.

22 Well, Amendments 5 and 6 represent the
23 fruits of that frustration, and as we go
24 through this process, we are counting on you,
25 our elected representatives, to adhere to both

1 the letter and spirit of the law that
2 63 percent of us voters approved. And as far
3 as I am concerned, you haven't done your jobs
4 unless on the final approved maps every
5 district in the state, be it State House, State
6 Senate or U.S. Congress, is fully competitive
7 for a candidate from either political party.

8 I know how much you love the convenience
9 of being able to plan so far ahead, but I'm
10 sorry, in a society in which a sparse if you
11 are Democratic, you simply should not be able
12 to plan out three years in advance who will
13 held legislative leadership positions.

14 And another thing -- one other thing,
15 please stop using our tax dollars to fight the
16 implementation of these amendments.

17 You have given your reasons for not
18 presenting any of your proposed maps prior to
19 embarking on this round of public meetings.
20 While I strongly disagree with your rationale,
21 things are what they are. I will tell you,
22 however, the people of Florida are expecting
23 for those final proposed maps to be made
24 publicly available for comment and response
25 well in advance of their final approval by the

1 Legislature. And by well in advance, I mean at
2 least a month. Don't think that you can throw
3 them on the website three days before the final
4 vote and think that that will be all right.

5 Just remember, the people of Florida, they
6 voted for and they expect fair and equal
7 districts, and we will be watching to make sure
8 that you deliver on that promise. Thank you.

9 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.

10 Next up we have Commissioner Holmes, or
11 Councilman Holmes, followed by Steve McFarlin,
12 who is the Mayor of St. Pete Beach, and then
13 Mayor Kathleen Peters. We've got a lot of
14 mayors here today.

15 COMMISSIONER HOLMES: Good morning, one
16 and all. I am glad to see that Jack has
17 graduated to a cane.

18 SENATOR LATVALA: For protection.

19 SENATOR GAETZ: It is a weapon.

20 COMMISSIONER HOLMES: I appreciate all you
21 coming out on a day like today. It is --
22 people think that the Florida House and Senate
23 are such high rollers when it comes to the cash
24 department, but you people are vastly
25 underpaid.

1 Anyway, I am looking at -- yes, I will
2 take the hiss right now. I wouldn't -- I
3 wouldn't take your job as a gift. Anyway, I am
4 looking at this thing, and this -- you have so
5 many mandates on this redistricting that -- you
6 have population mandates, which you have no
7 choice on. You have mandates in here on the
8 Voting Rights Act, which you have no choice on.
9 Well, I have looked at your website, and I
10 thought to myself wouldn't it be smarter to
11 have an interactive website where if you want
12 citizens' comment on this thing, you have to
13 give us the option on this thing where you can
14 take the map and you want to change a district
15 line around, put your cursor on there and
16 scroll it, have the population numbers change,
17 have the voting rights districts changed. If
18 you need minority representation and you start
19 shifting this thing around, you ought to have a
20 little color chart that comes up and says,
21 huh-huh, that one's not going to fly. That
22 would be a lot easier.

23 This reminds me of what we did in Largo
24 when we were going to build a new fire station.
25 We had a public meeting, and we were going to

1 build a new station next door to HCA Hospital
2 on Indian Rocks Road. And I attended this
3 meeting and, it became so bazaar because every
4 speaker who got up there get into the weeds.
5 We didn't like the sirens, you don't have the
6 traffic, you don't have big enough road there,
7 et cetera, et cetera. And I went up to the
8 Chief afterwards and I said, "Wouldn't it have
9 been smarter just to draw a line on a map, and
10 seeing as the county commission is here, and
11 just say, 'The County has told us that we have
12 to locate this fire department within this
13 boundary. If you don't like where we are going
14 to put it, where do you want us to put it
15 within this boundary?'" That would have ended
16 it real quick, because there was no other
17 parcel available.

18 Well, on this redistricting, why don't you
19 just come up with an interactive map, you can
20 go on-line, just scroll the thing, you know, I
21 don't like Jim Frishe's boundary, okay, well,
22 let's change Frishe's boundary. Is that going
23 to work under the Voting Rights Act? Is that
24 going to work with the population? And it is
25 going to tell you in advance, instead of just

1 having these maps here, they are not going to
2 tell me anything. I want something that is
3 going to tell me when that comes up right and I
4 am still going to be in Jack's district, I am
5 not going to have any problem with that,
6 because this is going to comply with the
7 federal mandates, that this is what you are
8 dealing with here is federal mandates. This
9 isn't so much state law. This is what the Feds
10 are telling you we must comply with. That is
11 my suggestion. Thanks for coming out.

12 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
13 Commissioner. And, Commissioner, if you will
14 stick around, I think Senator Gaetz will
15 address some of that, and, in fact, if you walk
16 outside, you will see some of our staff. We
17 actually have a website, the House and Senate
18 have a District Builder that has not all the
19 components you are talking about, but most of
20 them, and I know they would be interested to
21 hear your comments as well. So thank you very
22 much for being here.

23 And next up we have Mayor of St. Pete
24 Beach, Mayor McFarlin, followed by Mayor
25 Kathleen Peters and then Jim Jackson.

1 Mayor, thanks for your public service and
2 thanks for being here.

3 MAYOR McFARLIN: Good morning, Steve
4 McFarlin, Mayor of St. Pete Beach. I want to
5 thank you all for allowing us to come and
6 participate and possibly share some newfound
7 thoughts with you.

8 I was born in St. Petersburg. I owned a
9 business in downtown St. Petersburg, the
10 Cadillac dealership, for many years, operated
11 it.

12 I can tell you that the culture between
13 the mainlands, downtown St. Petersburg and the
14 beaches are entirely different. It is almost
15 like we are in a different state out there.
16 Since I moved out there, I retired and moved
17 out to the beach and gotten involved -- we are
18 in the hospitality business out there. Y'all
19 are in the hospitality business. You live off
20 of those. We are a feeder community, which
21 most of the barrier islands are.

22 I think it is important that we keep those
23 groups together out there, because it is a
24 different culture out there. It is -- it is
25 different, we'll just leave it at that, on some

1 occasions. We are currently going through some
2 redevelopment issues.

3 But just like the push Senator Jones and
4 Mr. Frishe have done for us on renourishment,
5 they didn't put that sand there for us to
6 frolic in. No visual there, but they did it as
7 an investment for tourists. Right now as we
8 sit, buses are on the way, shuttles are on the
9 way, they are bringing dollars into the
10 community, which are going to end up in your
11 hands.

12 This is something we need. We need
13 representation that understands that, works
14 that, and maximizes and capitalizes on our
15 natural resources. It is something different.
16 I know -- it is funny, to date -- I have been
17 in office for six months, and to this very day,
18 I have never spoken with the Mayor of St.
19 Petersburg, never had any communication with
20 him, never met him. We -- and I don't mean
21 anything negative by that, but we just don't
22 share in any daily issues. The beaches are
23 different. I just ask that we keep them
24 together and let's maximize it for economic
25 reasons. That is the reason. Thank you.

1 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
2 Mayor.

3 Next up, Mayor Kathleen Peters from the
4 City of South Pasadena --

5 MAYOR PETERS: Good morning.

6 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: -- followed
7 by Jim Jackson, and Bonnie Agan.

8 Mayor, thank you for being here. Good to
9 see you.

10 MAYOR PETERS: Thank you, it is good to
11 see you, and I really want to thank you for all
12 of the work that you do.

13 I was listening to the earlier testimony,
14 and it brought me back, and I apologize to
15 going on a story, but I am just compelled to do
16 it.

17 About 15 years ago, I took a 17-year-old
18 student from Seminole High School to
19 Washington, DC, and we spoke to him -- maybe
20 it's longer, we were speaking to Senator Graham
21 at the time, and then we went to the Capitol
22 and we were sitting in the Senate Gallery, and
23 she sat over the edge and she is lying over the
24 side and she looks at me and she says, "This is
25 my best day."

1 Now, at that time, I was extremely cynical
2 about our government and our government
3 process. And I looked at her shocked, and I
4 said, "This is your best day?" And she said,
5 "Where else but in this country can a
6 17-year-old student come to our nation's
7 Capitol and speak to a Senator and tell him
8 what I think should be changed in our laws and
9 what should be done?" At that time, it was
10 about issues in juveniles and juvenile justice.
11 "And where else can I go to my nation's Capitol
12 and sit in the gallery and watch the process?"

13 We live in the best country and we have a
14 great government, and I believe that the public
15 comment and the public process is the
16 cornerstone of what makes our government great,
17 and so I want to thank you.

18 That young girl on that day changed my
19 life and my perception, and as a result, I now
20 serve in the local community. So I want to
21 thank you for your service. I appreciate this
22 process and I think it is a good process, and I
23 appreciate that you're willing to hear what we
24 have to say before you draw those maps, and I
25 know that you will be willing to hear what we

1 have to say after you draw those maps, so thank
2 you.

3 Now, regarding drawing those maps, I can
4 tell you I am in a very small city. And I am
5 not a barrier island, I am on the mainland.
6 However, my boundaries primarily are the
7 Intracoastal Waterway. And my commonalities
8 are closer to the barrier islands, because the
9 barrier islands are all small cities. Many of
10 us have smaller than 50 employees, and,
11 therefore, we all have small group health
12 insurance issues. Our fire departments are all
13 about the same size.

14 Therefore, we have the same pension and
15 small fire department issues. And I believe it
16 is those commonalities that make it important
17 that we can get together and we can get
18 representation for the small interests that
19 we -- our common interests. And I can tell
20 you, and no disrespect to the Representatives
21 that are in this room that have served my city
22 before, and currently, but there are some times
23 that we will ask for support or representation
24 on different issues and we feel that since we
25 are such a small city combined with a big city

1 like St. Petersburg and Largo and Pinellas Park
2 and Seminole, that small, little South Pasadena
3 doesn't get the representation that it should
4 relating to the other issues that we have that
5 are not consistent with the larger cities. So
6 I believe that we ought to have commonalities.

7 And I believe also that with this economy
8 that we are in that is going to take us a
9 decade to get out of and rebuild, that we need
10 to consider putting districts together with the
11 thought of economic development, commonalities
12 for infrastructure that we can work together
13 and we can build Pinellas County, the Tampa Bay
14 area, the state of Florida, so we can build
15 this state to be the best great -- best --
16 greatest -- although I believe it is, the best
17 and greatest state. But I think we can do
18 better, and I think that is where we need to
19 keep our focus. And thank you again, and I
20 appreciate your service to our state.

21 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
22 Mayor, thanks a lot. Thank you for your
23 service.

24 Next up we have Mr. Jim Jackson, followed
25 by Bonnie Agan and then Douglas Hickman.

1 MR. JACKSON: Jim Jackson, south St.
2 Petersburg. I represent any number of groups.
3 I speak often at the school board, and it's
4 tradition there for people that support an
5 issue, that if you would stand, all those folks
6 that belong to groups that I belong to, would
7 you stand and support me on this? They know
8 who I am. Yeah, all of you who know me, if you
9 would stand. It's quite a few.

10 And I know many of you, especially my
11 House Rep, Darryl Rouson, my State Senator,
12 Arthenia Joyner. I met you last year when you
13 were speaking at a class size amendment rally
14 in front of St. Petersburg High School.

15 It says tell you your story. My story is
16 this: I am a voter. This is a non-partisan
17 issue. When you buy a house, I do due
18 diligence. I check out the roof, I check out
19 the comps, I check out the square footage, I
20 check out the walkability of the neighborhood.
21 It is buyer beware. What I didn't check out
22 was voter beware. I live in south St.
23 Petersburg. The tiny little red push pin on
24 this very primitive map way down there is me.
25 I am an educator of 43 years. I am using shoe

1 strings because we are on a shoe string budget
2 in education, as you know.

3 My districts absolutely make no sense.
4 These are based on 2002. These are not -- I
5 had a rumor that you didn't have maps.
6 Arthenia Joyner's district covers three
7 counties, divided by this large body of water,
8 Tampa Bay. Darryl Rouson's district covers --
9 55 covers four counties, again divided by this
10 large geographical barrier, Tampa Bay. Kathy
11 Castor, my Congressional Representative, her
12 district also covers three districts divided by
13 this large body of water, Tampa Bay. I live in
14 this little bitty area down here in south St.
15 Pete. They are not contiguous. They are not
16 compact. They have very definite geographical
17 barriers here. When you go to draw these maps,
18 I would like to see you make much more sense
19 about putting people together, no geographical
20 barriers, make them compact, make them
21 contrite, make them make sense. Fair
22 districts, 63 percent of us voted for fair
23 districts. Let's make them fair, let's make
24 them districts as well.

25 A few years back, at my age, I decided I

1 would run for a delegate to the presidential
2 election in Denver. I wanted to be an elected
3 delegate. I didn't realize that even though I
4 live in south St. Petersburg, I had to go to
5 Tampa to in fact run for that because Kathy
6 Castor is my Congresswoman. So I had to pack
7 up all my supporters, some of these folks in
8 the audience, truck them over to Tampa to vote
9 for me, and persevered and won. I know you got
10 thick skins. I ran for public office last
11 year. It is not easy being a public official,
12 I know that.

13 On here, red is actually Darryl Rouson, I
14 thought he'd wear red cowboy boots today, blue
15 is Arthenia Joyner and the beige is Kathy
16 Castor. Again, this looks like a tropical
17 storm or Hurricane Irene spaghetti model. I
18 know it makes no sense --

19 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Mr. Jackson
20 if --

21 MR. JACKSON: Wrap it up. But let's have
22 fair districts, let's get them soon, let's get
23 some maps, let's do the job we elected you to
24 do. Thanks so much.

25 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you

1 very much. Thank you, Mr. Jackson.

2 Next up we have Bonnie Agan, followed by
3 Douglas Hickman and Rob Roberts.

4 MS. AGAN: Hello, my name is Bonnie Agan,
5 I live in St. Petersburg. I live in this
6 little, tiny green portion of District 18, and
7 State Senator Arthenia Joyner is my State
8 Senator; however, she lives over here, and even
9 in spite of her best efforts, she does -- I
10 don't feel that she represents my interests. I
11 am very lucky to have Representative Darryl
12 Rouson, who really does live in my community,
13 and I feel very well represented and I have
14 total access to him. I don't know that I can
15 say the same thing about the people in the
16 other three counties that his district slivers
17 into.

18 So I would ask that you consider the word
19 "community" when these lines are being drawn.
20 I think that is a very, very important
21 component, of course, along with contiguous and
22 compact.

23 And I believe you said that this is not
24 rocket science, and you are absolutely right.
25 This has been done since 1991 in Iowa without

1 court challenge. They have the software, they
2 have been doing it, and you don't have to
3 reinvent the wheel, just go ask them. I am
4 sure they would be glad to help you. Thank you
5 very much.

6 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.
7 If only Florida were a perfect square like the
8 state of Iowa, it would make my life a lot
9 easier.

10 Next up we have Douglas Hickman, followed
11 by Rob Roberts and Richard Piper.

12 Mr. Hickman, you are recognized, sir.

13 MR. HICKMAN: Yeah, thank you for coming.
14 I just wish that we really could have more
15 interaction here.

16 I have two points. One of them is
17 beaches, and it is very true, I have lived out
18 there for 34 years now, Redington Shores, okay,
19 and we are. But if you look at what 54 is now,
20 okay, it also takes in part of south St. Pete,
21 a part of Gulfport, much different communities
22 than the beach communities. It also takes in
23 the large black area of Largo, kind of dilutes
24 their thing, because they don't seem to have
25 much to do with the beach communities or

1 anything else.

2 And while I would like to see the beach
3 communities have a little clout, I don't know
4 if you could actually draw those maps and draw
5 them fairly when that's what the law states we
6 are supposed to do.

7 I've had to take a couple of oaths in my
8 life. You elected officials took an oath to
9 defend the Constitution of the State of
10 Florida. Like it or not, Amendment 5 and
11 Amendment 6 are right now the law of the State
12 of Florida. It is not your job in this case to
13 fight it. It should be the people, if they
14 don't like what we voted for, that should do it
15 by an amendment, okay. You should not be
16 spending our money doing this. You took an
17 oath. Follow your oath, you know, please do
18 that and think about it. A lot of us died for
19 our oaths, okay. It means something to me,
20 thank you.

21 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
22 sir.

23 Next up we have Rob Roberts, followed by
24 Richard Piper and Gail Trask. Rob? Rob is not
25 here right now, so we will put him to the side.

1 How about Richard Piper, is Richard here?

2 MR. PIPER: I am here.

3 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: All right.

4 Sorry I didn't give you more -- more room to
5 breathe there, sir. Richard Piper, followed by
6 Gail Trask and then Karen Hodgen.

7 Mr. Piper, thanks for being here. You are
8 recognized.

9 MR. PIPER: Thank you. I am Rich Piper.
10 I live in unincorporated Largo. I am a
11 Professor Emeritus of government at the
12 University of Tampa, and I would like to repeat
13 some of what has been said before, but I will
14 keep this very brief.

15 I would strongly urge the Legislature to
16 comply fully with Amendments 5 and 6 and cease
17 the lawsuit against them, present us promptly
18 with redistricting plans that meet the legal
19 criteria of these and the other laws governing
20 the process, seek genuine feedback on your
21 proposals, providing clear maps to which people
22 can react, and enact appropriate redistricting
23 time for candidates to prepare their campaigns
24 effectively for the 2012 elections.

25 One of my biggest concerns is the last of

1 those four, that drawing this process out well
2 into 2012 is discouraging potential candidates.
3 I have talked with several of them myself.
4 They said, "Well, we just don't feel like
5 running when we have no idea what the district
6 lines are going to be." So I think it is
7 important that you get out some preliminary
8 proposals and get feedback on them promptly.

9 I have gone on-line, you do have a very
10 good website, and I have drawn up districts.
11 They do comply with many of the suggestions
12 that have been made here, and I will leave
13 those -- those with you. I didn't have time to
14 send them. I would still like to fine-tune
15 them a little bit, quite frankly, but I did
16 draw one going down along the beaches as the
17 mayors out there requested. I happen to live
18 in District 54 right now.

19 I live on the mainland in Harbor Bluffs,
20 but we are a part of that beach community in
21 many, many respects.

22 The problem is, of course, the population
23 isn't quite big enough there to justify a
24 district unto itself, so then the question is,
25 which other communities do you include with it.

1 I would include places like South Pasadena and
2 Gulfport rather than inland areas of Largo. I
3 think we should try to keep the districts
4 contiguous. We should respect community
5 boundaries as much as possible.

6 The districts I have drawn for Pinellas
7 County would keep the whole county together,
8 with one exception, and that is the southern
9 district, currently Representative Rouson's
10 district. I would not take it across four
11 counties, but I would still take that one, let
12 it overlap a little bit down into Bradenton.
13 There is an African-American community there
14 that has a good deal in common with the
15 African-American community in south St.
16 Petersburg and Midtown, and this would be a
17 district that would be likely to elect a
18 minority Representative still. With that one
19 exception, I would keep the county together.

20 I would have a congressional district that
21 is all Pinellas County, currently the Young
22 district, and I would have another
23 congressional district that would be north
24 county. Because of the population shortfall,
25 it would need to spill over a little bit into

1 Pasco or Hillsborough, but one can easily find
2 communities there that fit well with north
3 Pinellas County. I think that makes good
4 sense.

5 On the State Senate districts, again, you
6 are going to have to spill over a little bit,
7 but I think that can be done in much the same
8 way, St. Petersburg up to about Ulmerton Road
9 all together, and then on north district, it
10 spills over into Pasco or Hillsborough.

11 So, again, I think there are good ways of
12 doing this. I really regret that you haven't
13 put forth some thoughts. They don't have to be
14 formal proposals yet, but I would like to see
15 what the Legislators are thinking. I know many
16 of you are thinking about it. I have heard
17 what Senator Latvala has suggested --

18 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Mr. Piper,
19 you're going to have to wrap it up for me, sir.

20 MR. PIPER: Great. Just hopefully get
21 this process moving forward expeditiously and
22 fairly. Thank you.

23 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
24 sir. Okay. Next up we have Ms. Gail Trask,
25 followed by Karen Hodgen and then Vince Cocks.

1 I would also want to mention, I know when
2 we first started, I had mentioned that there
3 was about 40 people who had signed up to speak.
4 We now have over 70 people signed up to speak.
5 And is Burt Benner here? Burt, are you here?
6 Somewhere in the back.

7 Burt is the one who signed up last, and so
8 we want to get to Burt. We want to give
9 everybody an opportunity to speak, and so we
10 are going to try to do it -- you know, if we
11 could get every speaker to be about two to two
12 and a half minutes, we want everyone to get an
13 opportunity to have something to say, and a lot
14 of folks came a long way to speak, we want to
15 give them that chance. So I'm sorry for that.

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

18 MS. TRASK: Thank you. Thank you for
19 being here to listen. I, for one, appreciate
20 the opportunity --

21 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: If you could
22 speak a little closer to the microphone. Thank
23 you.

24 MS. TRASK: If I was a little taller, that
25 might help.

1 Okay. I, for one, do appreciate the
2 opportunity to influence the way my districts
3 are drawn before you draw the maps and make up
4 your minds. I disagree with the notion that
5 we, the people, are too stupid to help draw our
6 own districts. Our government was never meant
7 to be left to the professionals.

8 Our representatives are supposed to be
9 just that, our representatives, not
10 professionals that make proclamations from on
11 high and send them down to we, the people. So
12 I appreciate the opportunity to be here and be
13 heard.

14 I am concerned about districts such as the
15 U.S. Congressional District 11, which may be
16 drawn according to the letter of the law, but
17 it is certainly not drawn according to the
18 spirit of the law, allowing communities to have
19 a common vote. Gerrymandered districts such as
20 this one with pieces taken from three counties
21 and different communities ripped apart and
22 diverse communities stuck together, those are
23 not going to be tolerated by the people when we
24 see these new districts drawn. We are going to
25 hold you accountable. I know that they go

1 through other layers of government to be
2 approved and disproved; however, you are our
3 representatives, you are the ones that we will
4 hold accountable. We expect you to draw these
5 districts lines fairly and honestly and
6 according to both the letter of the law and the
7 obvious spirit of the law to keep communities
8 together. I say it is of utmost importance
9 that you keep districts truly compact and
10 follow existing political and geographic and
11 community boundaries, and these are readily
12 available.

13 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.
14 Next we have Karen Hodgen with the Pinellas
15 Democratic Executive Committee, and then Vince
16 Cocks, followed by Peter Franco.

17 Karen, you are recognized. Thanks for
18 being here.

19 MS. HODGEN: Thank you. Defining
20 communities and preserving them are an aspect
21 of redistricting. I live in Gulfport, which is
22 a fairly small town. We have less than 13,000
23 in population, and we are only 2.8 square miles
24 in area. So we are pretty small with size and
25 population, but we are pretty big in spirit.

1 The interesting thing is Gulfport has been
2 one of those communities that's been a victim
3 of gerrymandering. For our size, we have two
4 U.S. Congressional districts, two State Senate
5 districts and three State House of
6 Representative districts, and this simply
7 divides individuals our community. Either we
8 must be pretty important and we deserve
9 super-special representation, or either we have
10 been carved up to justify or to dilute our --
11 to dilute our vote. So that definitely takes
12 away our sense of community.

13 Gulfport really should be represented by
14 one Congressperson, one State Senator and one
15 State House of Representative. The size we are
16 simply does not justify how we have been
17 divided.

18 Amendments 5 and 6 are important to us.
19 Now it is your duty to act accordingly. We
20 need and expect fair districts so communities
21 like Gulfport and other similar communities
22 will remain intact. We like the language of
23 the Fair Districts. Terms like "compactness"
24 and "contiguous lines" struck a cord with us.
25 It spoke of fairness. Unfortunately, our

1 Florida Legislators can't seem to keep their
2 fingers out of the pie. Some states have
3 independent commissions that determine the
4 districts so it is done fairly and impartially,
5 and I would like to think that maybe Florida
6 could be one of those states as well. Thank
7 you.

8 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.
9 Next we have Vince Cocks, followed by Peter
10 Franco and Matthew Lettelleir.

11 MR. COCKS: Good morning. I reside in
12 south St. Petersburg. I am represented by
13 Honorable Darryl Rouson in our House, and
14 Honorable Arthenia Joyner in our Senate. I
15 applaud your voting record this session. That
16 is Darryl and Arthenia, I applaud that.

17 I am in total agreement with earlier
18 speakers such as Mr. Murray, Jim Jackson and
19 Rich Piper, who stated that Pinellas should
20 remain contiguous and one area when
21 redistricting. Darryl is a neighbor of mine,
22 lives four blocks away, he lives directly
23 across from where I worship. Arthenia lives in
24 Tampa. I don't get to see her often. I see
25 Darryl often. But I admire your service, I

1 really do, Arthenia.

2 Recently Bill Maxwell in *The St. Pete*
3 *Times* reported a quote of a former university
4 professor. This was in last Sunday's edition.
5 The quote was, "When money takes over politics,
6 only a shadow of democracy remains." The
7 author of this was Pope Benedict XVI, and he
8 represents over 1.1 billion Catholics
9 worldwide.

10 Not only has the love of money cast a
11 shadow over our democracy in Florida, there is
12 a total eclipse now. In the session this year,
13 our Legislature voted along party lines to
14 resurrect House Bill 1207, leadership --

15 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Sir, we are
16 here to talk about redistricting, so tie it to
17 redistricting for me.

18 MR. COCKS: This is, because you know
19 what, when you don't -- you started this by
20 saying we wouldn't be interrupted by you.
21 Please don't interrupt me. I won't interrupt
22 you.

23 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: As long as
24 you are talking about redistricting, I can
25 assure you you won't be.

1 MR. COCKS: This is about redistricting,
2 money is about redistricting.

3 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Keep it to
4 redistricting.

5 MR. COCKS: My God. Special interest
6 groups now line up to give House and Senate
7 leaders obscene amounts of money anonymously.
8 Howard Troxler of *The St. Pete Times* described
9 this as campaign slush funds operated legally
10 and officially by the leaders of the
11 Legislature themselves. This is Florida where
12 the laws of democracy are now openly and
13 officially for sale.

14 This folly continues with House Bill 1355,
15 a voting bill that has to do with
16 redistricting. This is under the guise of
17 reigning in voter fraud.

18 Then we got -- I will leave this one out.

19 All right. Here is another one, House
20 Bill 45, shouldn't even go into that, that is
21 control of gun laws that will now be done by
22 the State, and no, you know, local control.

23 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Vince, if you
24 could, wrap it up for me, sir, because we are
25 short of time now.

1 MR. COCKS: Oh, sure, I am not taking a
2 lot of time here. And my Mayor last night, he
3 spoke at my father-in-law's church, and he
4 stated this is the stupidest law that he's ever
5 seen.

6 That being said, I ask you, elected
7 officials, please enact fair districts with
8 utility in mind. Let the demons of special
9 interest be vanquished. Do the greatest amount
10 of good for the greatest amount of people. And
11 I leave you with, "Alas, poor Yorick, I knew
12 him well." Thank you.

13 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.
14 Next up we have Peter Franco, followed by
15 Matthew Lettelleir and Joseph Saportas.

16 Peter, you are recognized, sir.

17 MR. FRANCO: Yes, thanks for giving me the
18 time. My name is Pete Franco. I am a resident
19 in South Pasadena, Pinellas. I just want to
20 first acknowledge the Board for putting this
21 meeting together.

22 My thoughts are that I am glad that you
23 are doing this and giving us a chance to give
24 you some feedback on what we think with respect
25 to redistricting, so I acknowledge you for it.

1 And, in general -- so my general purpose of
2 being here is to acknowledge you for putting
3 this together.

4 As many others have said, I would -- one
5 of my strong requests would be to keep the
6 boundaries as contiguous as possible,
7 especially congressional districts that
8 currently are crossing over into Tampa. I
9 think Pinellas should be Pinellas, pretty much
10 the bottom line, and to keep the districts as
11 contiguous as possible.

12 And, yeah, I -- with respect to the whole
13 timeline of this hearing, I actually -- again,
14 I appreciate that you have taken the time to do
15 it and not rushing it right up off to the
16 courts, and to keep in line with the
17 regulations, both state and federal, but to
18 give us an opportunity to give you our input.
19 That is pretty much what I came to say, and
20 thank you for giving me the time.

21 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
22 sir.

23 Next up we have Matthew Lettelleir,
24 followed by Joseph Saportas and then Wendy
25 Grassi.

1 MR. LETTELLEIR: Good morning. My name is
2 Matt Lettelleir, and I am born and raised and
3 now live in northeast St. Pete. Thank you for
4 allowing me to speak this morning, and thank
5 you for holding these hearings. I, for one,
6 believe these hearings are important and show
7 how much this Legislature appreciates its
8 constituents. I also appreciate you all being
9 here and taking time away from your families.

10 I agree with the Mayor from Indian Rocks
11 Beach that our communities have distinct
12 characteristics that should be considered. I
13 believe that downtown St. Pete has more in
14 common with downtown Tampa than with St. Pete
15 Beach.

16 I believe lines can be drawn while staying
17 within the constitutional provisions, but very
18 few of the people in this room will be happy,
19 no matter what you do. I say to these that are
20 unhappy with the Legislature, to run for office
21 themselves, and if elected, you may begin to
22 understand and have an appreciation for your
23 hard work.

24 I also say that if you don't like the
25 timeline, then propose an amendment to allow

1 the Legislature to move the time frame up.

2 Thank you very much.

3 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
4 sir.

5 Next up, Joseph Saportas, followed by
6 Wendy Grassi and Kofi Hunt.

7 Joseph is with the Citizen and Native of
8 Florida. Joseph, are you here? I don't see
9 him here, so we will move forward to Wendy
10 Grassi.

11 Wendy, thank you for being here, followed
12 by Kofi Hunt, and Winnie Foster. Wendy is with
13 Planned Parenthood. Thanks for being here.

14 MS. GRASSI: I am, I am with Planned
15 Parenthood of Southwest and Central Florida.

16 It appears to us that the Legislature's
17 timeline for drawing districts is extremely
18 unfair to Florida voters. Along with so many
19 others, we question why the Legislature hasn't
20 prepared the new district maps earlier, leave
21 time to debate them this fall and then pass
22 them during the first week of legislative
23 session, instead of waiting to finalize the
24 maps until the end of the session in March.

25 Florida's maps will be approved later than

1 almost every other state in the nation. Our
2 new districts may not be finalized until
3 August, just two months before the 2012
4 elections. Challengers or new candidates will
5 have little, if any, time to mount campaigns.
6 Uncertainty as to what a district will look
7 like helps incumbents, because incumbents
8 already -- are already known to the voters and
9 have a huge advantage in raising money.
10 Challengers will be reluctant to throw their
11 hats in the ring. We can only think that the
12 current timeline is designed as an incumbent
13 protection plan.

14 Also, why is the Legislature -- why is the
15 Legislature spending our precious tax dollars,
16 millions of dollars, to oppose Fair Districts
17 passed during last year's elections by
18 63 percent of the voters? All of this money is
19 being spent unnecessarily while teachers are
20 being fired, social services are being cut and
21 fewer women are able to access healthcare.

22 All of this -- all of this leads us to
23 believe that the real mapping is going on in
24 back rooms, and that the real new maps will be
25 presented at the end of the upcoming

1 legislative session to be rammed through
2 without the public really knowing what is going
3 on.

4 We call on the Legislature to heed the
5 voters. This issue is a test of our democracy
6 and the will of our people. Thank you very
7 much.

8 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.

9 Next up we have Kofi Hunt, Kofi is with
10 Awake Pinellas, followed by Winnie Foster and
11 then Darden Rice.

12 MR. HUNT: Hi. Thanks for letting me talk
13 today. I am in Jeff Brandes, Jack Latvala and
14 Bill Young's district. I was born and raised
15 in St. Petersburg, Florida.

16 You know, one thing with me is I have a
17 difference from a lot of people, maybe it is
18 because I am a lot younger, is I don't see race
19 as much. I don't see -- I see more the
20 communities that I think that that should be
21 considered definitely when considering the
22 districts.

23 Also about we don't want any maps that are
24 hard, we would like maps that are flexible, so
25 that we could, you know, discuss them, and just

1 open democratic debate and discussion.

2 I don't think that we do have adequate
3 information or resources on hand. I personally
4 work two jobs to contribute to the process, and
5 I would appreciate the maps, you know, as well.
6 And when you do create the maps and you bring
7 them to the public, I would like you to, you
8 know, participate in the open dialogue with all
9 of the challenges you get, the logical ones.
10 And also I would like all the information
11 regarding the legal challenges to Amendment 6
12 to be provided to the broader public for voter
13 scrutiny. Beyond that, you know, we would like
14 fair districts. Fair districts, fair
15 democracy, that is my saying. Thanks.

16 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.

17 Next we have Winnie Foster, followed by
18 Darden Rice and then Mary Louise Ambrose.

19 MS. FOSTER: Okay. That is not senility.

20 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Somebody
21 knows how to take control of a room.

22 MS. FOSTER: I am 84 years old -- thank
23 you, gentlemen, for your assistance -- and I
24 have a 40-year history in south St. Petersburg
25 where I have been a grass roots organizer. I

1 now have a program called the Sojourner Truth
2 Center. Much of my organizing has been done in
3 south St. Petersburg. I was part of the group
4 that helped to elect the very first black judge
5 in Pinellas County when everybody said it can't
6 be done. So I know that things can change and
7 happen, and I am always willing to try
8 something new.

9 I see many friends that I am acquainted
10 with in the Pinellas delegation, and we are
11 proud to be able to contact them, but I wanted
12 to tell you about the redistricting that I
13 remember when we got what was called the bug
14 splat districts. They really looked like
15 somebody just threw something against the wall
16 and tentacles went out, and we know that they
17 have been not really as successful as I guess
18 the drawers had hoped.

19 It was done as a compromise negotiation
20 between two groups, and I think one of the
21 groups that compromised on that really realized
22 later that they had lost something very
23 important, they had lost some very effective
24 Legislators.

25 One of the lines was drawn in my district,

1 a block away from the house of one State
2 Senator, and moved a Tampa Representative into
3 St. Petersburg district, so that she only had
4 17 precincts left in Tampa and something like
5 70 in Pinellas County. So that -- that was not
6 a win for those incumbents. It was a result of
7 a compromise.

8 And I can remember that we talked a great
9 deal during the hearings for that redistricting
10 about being compact and contiguous and
11 community, and I can remember many of us
12 standing up and like people are here saying
13 that that is something to be adhered to, and
14 yet it wasn't.

15 And so I just want to tell you this
16 history because, as you know, if we don't know
17 our history, we are going to repeat it, perhaps
18 not in pleasant ways. So thank you.

19 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
20 very much. We appreciate it, Ms. Foster.

21 Next up we have Darden Rice with the
22 League of Women Voters, followed by Mary Louise
23 Ambrose and then Joe Barkley.

24 MS. RICE: Thank you. Good morning. My
25 name is Darden Rice, and I am the President of

1 the St. Pete League of Women Voters. I am also
2 the former Chair of the local Fair Districts
3 Now campaign where the League, along with many
4 others, worked for the passage of the Fair
5 Districting amendments.

6 I want to thank you for your service. We
7 know this isn't an easy job. I have spoken and
8 worked with many of you sitting here.
9 Sometimes a good friend is the friend that
10 tells you what you need to hear and not what
11 you want to hear, so I am here in the spirit of
12 I am offering criticism, but I know that you
13 are working hard at what you do and I know that
14 we share the common goals of wanting to see
15 democracy work in our state.

16 The Florida asks -- excuse me, the League
17 asks the Florida House to stop spending our own
18 taxpayer money against us. Please respect the
19 will of the 63 percent of Florida voters who
20 want new redistricting standards to be applied.
21 The House is using our taxpayer money against
22 us to attack and invalidate Amendments 5 and 6.
23 It is spending our money to join a lawsuit
24 asking the court to strike the amendments, and
25 we ask you to withdraw from this lawsuit

1 immediately. As the State makes major cuts,
2 these efforts to thwart voters wastes money and
3 doesn't do a thing to create jobs.

4 In addition to the 30 million, 30 million,
5 set aside to avoid Fair Districts, *The Miami*
6 *Herald* reported yesterday that the cost of
7 fighting redistricting continued to mount. In
8 addition to the two and a half million spent on
9 lawsuits, the paper also reported that these
10 hearings, which are perhaps less than useful
11 because we have no maps to comment on, have
12 cost the House \$48,000 through July. In the
13 spirit of transparency and fairness, please
14 provide documents to either refute *The Miami*
15 *Herald's* claims, or provide invoices to give
16 the public reasons for your expenses.

17 Finally, PolitiFact and *Orlando Sentinel's*
18 malarkey meter weight the Legislature's denials
19 of wasting money as false.

20 If you would stop fighting this, instead
21 applying these standards as voters intended,
22 there would be no need for wasting massive
23 amounts of taxpayer money.

24 And thank you for listening to my
25 constructive criticism.

1 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.

2 MS. RICE: Thank you.

3 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
4 very much. And, Ms. Rice, if -- I hope you can
5 stay to the end of the meeting, because Senator
6 Gaetz will have an opportunity, and other
7 members will too, to address some of those
8 questions. And sometimes information gets out
9 there that may not be completely factual. We
10 will make sure that we address each and
11 everything that you mentioned there. So thank
12 you.

13 MS. RICE: I look forward to that. If
14 there's an opportunity for a dialogue to ask
15 questions back, we would appreciate that.
16 Thank you.

17 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.
18 Next up we have Mary Louise Ambrose with the
19 Pinellas County Democratic Executive Committee.
20 Thank you for being here. And followed by
21 Ms. Ambrose, we have Joe Barkley and then
22 George Gonzalez.

23 MS. AMBROSE: Good morning. My name is
24 Mary Lou Ambrose, and I am from Belleair
25 Bluffs. Mr. Frishe is supposed to be my

1 Representative.

2 My question to you is, why haven't you
3 done what we asked you to do?
4 Sixty-three percent of us said we want fair
5 districts, we want contiguous, we want compact,
6 we want no political input. What we got and
7 you guys -- what we have now and what you guys
8 proved to us this morning when you introduced
9 yourself is a malarkey of various lines and
10 snakes and little districts butting into other
11 little districts in order to do one thing.

12 This is what we have. The only reason for
13 this is sitting here in front of me.
14 Incumbency is what it is all about, and we want
15 you to stop it. We want fair districts. I am
16 thinking more like squares and rectangles here
17 instead of whatever this is.

18 And the second thing I want you to do is
19 stop spending our money fighting us. There is
20 absolutely no reason why you should sue your
21 constituents. What is wrong with you?

22 The fact is we want fair districts, we
23 want them now, we don't want to wait until next
24 June. We want to be able to bring up people
25 who will at least give you some competition.

1 You need it.

2 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.

3 Next up we have Mr. Joe Barkley, followed
4 by George Gonzalez and Maria Shurggs -- or
5 Scruggs.

6 COMMISSIONER BARKLEY: That is a tough act
7 to follow. That lady is my wife.

8 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Well, you
9 were smart to let her go ahead of you then.

10 COMMISSIONER BARKLEY: I didn't even know
11 I was speaking, she put my name on the list,
12 but I will just say a few words.

13 I live in Belleair Bluffs, I am a
14 Commissioner there. Like many folks who are
15 local elected officials, they want to serve
16 their communities more. The way to do that is
17 to seek wider office, to seek a higher office.

18 When you run for office -- I hope other
19 people in the back realize this. When you run
20 for office, you don't just wake up one day and
21 decide to run for office. It takes a long time
22 to run for office. You have to develop a
23 committee, you have to develop a plan, you have
24 to raise money, you have to knock on doors, you
25 have to make phone calls. You have to do

1 everything possible to get your name out and
2 your ideas out.

3 When we have this kind of situation where
4 we have no time as an elected official who
5 wishes to run for office to form a committee,
6 to decide where to make a phone call, to decide
7 where to knock on a door, to decide how we can
8 best represent people, this is depriving the
9 citizens of Pinellas County and the State of
10 Florida of the right to have a vote. This is
11 extremely, extremely bad behavior on your part,
12 and I take personal offense at this and I hope
13 we will correct this immediately.

14 We need to have a competitive elective
15 system. You guys are all shoe-ins because we
16 have no way to make a valid campaign when we
17 have no way to know where our elected
18 representation is going to be. Thank you.

19 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
20 Commissioner.

21 Next we have Mr. George Gonzalez, followed
22 by Maria Scruggs and then Judy Landon.

23 MR. GONZALEZ: Good morning. In my
24 statements, you will probably sense a man that
25 has lost all faith and hope in his political

1 system and his legislative process. I am not
2 really here today to give you my opinion about
3 redistricting, how to draw the districts, or to
4 plead that you create fair districts that more
5 aptly represent the voter composition of our
6 state, because I know the money and time wasted
7 on these meetings is only for show.

8 If you were truly representatives of the
9 voters, these meetings would have been held
10 months ago, would surely include maps,
11 suggested districts, their voter composition,
12 and you would not be trying to circumvent the
13 will of the people with lawsuits.

14 I am here to sound a warning. Sixty-three
15 percent of the voters of this state, well above
16 your ability to claim partisanship,
17 resoundingly ordered you to redraw districts to
18 be more competitive, that reflect the fact that
19 we live in an evenly divided state. They asked
20 you to stop creating districts that tap into
21 surrounding minority or opposing party areas
22 that there is no commonality with where you are
23 putting it, and doing it for the sole purpose
24 of strengthening one district for your party
25 while weakening the other district to make it

1 competitive for your own party.

2 Despite your lawsuits to circumvent the
3 will of the people, despite the fact that you
4 insult our intelligence by trying to make us
5 think you come to us for political comment,
6 even though you bring us no maps to comment on,
7 you and everybody in this room knows what the
8 intent of the voters was, regardless of party
9 affiliation.

10 By now your brains are probably saying to
11 yourself, "Let's discount this guy's
12 commentary, he is just an angry Democrat."
13 Yes, I am a Democrat by default, because
14 Republican policies have devastated my family.
15 I could care less if I was represented by the
16 wigwam party.

17 Frankly, however, what I yearn for is the
18 America and Florida of my childhood where
19 Republicans and Democrats did not operate under
20 the premises of obstruction, where the parties
21 were not obsessed with keeping unfair balance
22 in the Legislature and did not -- and did not
23 reflect the voters they represented. I long
24 for the days when I respected Republicans even
25 though I disagreed with them, not hated them

1 for the pain they are causing my family. I
2 long for the days when both parties either
3 chose or were forced to compromise in order to
4 do what was best for the citizens, not what was
5 best for themselves or their reelection.

6 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: George, I am
7 going to have to ask you to wrap it up, sir.
8 We are getting tight on time.

9 MR. GONZALEZ: They chose to -- they chose
10 redistricting to send you a clear message, and
11 the intent was clear, so my warning is this:
12 You ignore and circumvent the will of the
13 people at your own peril.

14 If you do not do this honestly and adhere
15 to what is right, ethics charges, lawsuits and
16 federal investigations. I beg you, do this
17 right, you could begin the healing that has
18 this state and this country divided. You could
19 be the catalyst that causes us to find common
20 good for all instead of the selfish need for
21 one.

22 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
23 sir.

24 Next up we have Maria Scruggs, followed by
25 Judy Landon and Marilyn Hafling.

1 I just want to remind everybody, we've got
2 probably almost 40 speakers left, and not a lot
3 of time, so, please, we don't want to be rude
4 and interrupt anybody, but we do want to keep
5 to a very tight time frame, so be brief.

6 Thank you very much for being here. You
7 are recognized.

8 MS. SCRUGGS: You are quite welcome, and
9 for the sake of brevity, I will be brief.

10 First of all, good morning, and thank you
11 for the opportunity to come to present to you
12 this morning. My name is Maria Scruggs, and I
13 live in Representative Rouson's district and
14 Senator Joyner's district. And contrary to an
15 earlier comment made that the minority -- the
16 community of Midtown, which is primary
17 African-American, does not need lines drawn
18 that are compact and contiguous is not true.

19 We do not necessarily have the same
20 interests of African-American communities in
21 Manatee just by the nature of our ethnicity.
22 So, please, when you are drawing the lines,
23 consider that not to be the case.

24 For the sake of brevity, I will not repeat
25 a lot of what has been said today. I say that

1 Amendment 5 and Amendment 6 have been passed by
2 63 percent of the voters. As you can tell from
3 the comments here, from the comments that have
4 been heard around the state, taxpayers are
5 frustrated and they are weary. I beg of you to
6 take the framework of Amendment 5 and Amendment
7 6 and ensure that the lines are drawn to fall
8 within that framework, and then after your work
9 has been done, for the sake of transparency and
10 the sake of clarity, establish a framework that
11 clearly demonstrates that you have adhered to
12 what the voters asked you to do by the passing
13 of Amendment 5 and Amendment 6.

14 And, finally, withdraw from the
15 litigation. That does not lend well to the
16 voters, and I am certain that if this
17 litigation is to ensue, many of you probably
18 will not be here in your next terms. Thank
19 you.

20 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.

21 Next up we have Judy Landon, followed by
22 Marilyn Hafling and then Mary Pugh.

23 MS. LANDON: Hi. Thank you so much for
24 allowing me to speak with you today. A lot of
25 what I have to say is just going to be a repeat

1 of what other people have said, so I am going
2 to keep it brief.

3 Please stop fighting Fair Districts with
4 taxpayer dollars. That is just not right. It
5 really isn't.

6 Eliminate multi-county districts as much
7 as you possibly can, because they really don't
8 make any sense. And in the past, they have led
9 the districts that have crossed the entire
10 state. That is insane.

11 We have -- another thing I would like to
12 say here is that it seems like we have the cart
13 before the horse, which a number of people have
14 said here, but we don't have maps to comment
15 on. These maps aren't going to be coming out
16 until the legislative session, from what I can
17 see from the timeline. It would be best if
18 they came out earlier.

19 At the time that they do come out, what
20 type of review and comment will the public get?
21 What type of input are we going to get? Will
22 there be more public hearings? The last thing
23 that I -- well, see, and here's another thing
24 that kind of concerns me. Those of us who want
25 to play by the rules and use the mapping

1 software, My District Builder, we have a key
2 component of it taken out, *The Sun Sentinel*
3 brought this out, that the -- let's see -- we
4 have the removal of the compactness and
5 geospatial software between the first release
6 last year and the second release of My District
7 Builder, and I do believe that would have made
8 things a little bit easier. I will try to do
9 it as best I can without.

10 And the last thing that I would like to
11 say is to -- well, at the very end, even though
12 we have very little time, to move up the plan
13 approval, to bring to the floor the first week
14 of the legislative session and try to vote on
15 it as soon as possible so that we will be able
16 to meet the June 8th deadline for qualifying
17 for state and federal elections in Florida, to
18 be able to get those district boundaries set
19 before people are trying to qualify and run for
20 office, not only for the candidates, but for
21 everybody involved. I work for the Supervisor
22 of Elections' office, and I am holding my head
23 thinking what that one is going to do to us
24 really.

25 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Ms. Landon --

1 MS. LANDON: So thank you very much.

2 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
3 very much. Thank you for being here.

4 Next up we have Marilyn Hafling with the
5 League of Women Voters -- I hope I said that
6 right, ma'am, I apologize if I didn't -- Mary
7 Pugh and then John Brysacz.

8 You are recognized.

9 MS. HAFLING: Thank you. I am Marilyn
10 Hafling. I am a board member of the League of
11 Women Voters of St. Petersburg. I've lived in
12 Pinellas County since 1979, the last 31 years
13 on Madeira Beach. I have appreciated hearing
14 all of my fellow Pinellas County people speak
15 so passionately today, and I really don't think
16 there's a lot I could add to their eloquence.

17 I would certainly urge all of you to stop
18 fighting Fair Districts. We worked very, very
19 hard to get Fair Districts passed and it is
20 what the citizens want, and I really am boggled
21 that people think they can set aside what the
22 voters have said they want with our money.
23 That just blows me away that we as taxpayers
24 pay both sides of lawsuits all the time. It
25 happens in our little towns, it happens in our

1 county, it happens at our state, and I am
2 really beginning to feel very victimized, and I
3 am just asking that you get on with the
4 business and draw up these districts the way
5 they are supposed to be, the way the citizens
6 asked it to be. As Mr. Hickman said, you took
7 an oath to support our Constitution, and that
8 includes the Fair District amendments, so
9 please get on with it. Thank you.

10 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.

11 Next we have Mary Pugh, followed by John
12 Brysacz and then Marg Baker.

13 MS. PUGH: I am Mary Pugh, just an
14 ordinary citizen here in Pinellas County. I
15 live in Florida. I want to thank you for
16 hearing me.

17 I have to say that watching this, there is
18 a huge and ominous disconnect between the
19 Florida Legislature and its citizens, and I can
20 see it in your body language in some of you.

21 As a citizen of the State of Florida, I
22 would like to believe that my voice is my vote,
23 and I need to protect that voice by insisting
24 and demanding that my vote is counted
25 accurately and fairly. We as citizens have the

1 right to expect that our Legislature follow the
2 law as voted upon by the people and enshrined
3 in the Florida Constitution. Florida
4 politicians will be held accountable by
5 citizens demanding the new districts will be
6 drawn fairly and legally.

7 It is time that Florida citizens start
8 choosing their leaders and stop politicians
9 from choosing their voters.

10 Florida leaders must follow Amendment 5
11 and 6 as voted on by 63 percent of the
12 citizens. Florida politicians must address
13 disfranchisement laws and census miscounts,
14 which screws a lot of -- I mean, skews a lot of
15 the -- it does that, too, but it skews a lot of
16 the census and how this is followed up on.

17 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: We have had a
18 couple of Freudian slips today already.

19 MS. PUGH: Oh, yes. Well, we are angry,
20 we are angry. We want fair districts. It begs
21 the question that in a largely Democratic
22 state, our Legislature is largely Republican.
23 This is due to crafty legislative line drawing,
24 and this is a conflict of interest and allows
25 for politicians to design their own districts.

1 I am hurrying.

2 35.8 percent of the voters in Florida are
3 registered Republicans, 42 percent are
4 registered Democrats, but 63 percent of the
5 House is Republican and 65 percent of the
6 Senate is Republican. These numbers are
7 possible due to the 1992 court-drawn maps.
8 This move concentrated minority majority
9 districts. Since then, there have only been
10 three African-Americans and three Hispanics
11 elected to Congress.

12 These maps diluted the Democratic
13 congressional and legislative districts, thus
14 allowing Republicans to control the Legislature
15 and assume the majority since the mid 1990s.
16 These court-drawn maps clearly favored one
17 party over the other, so who is protecting my
18 voice and my vote? Our elected officials are
19 sent to the Legislature to protect the
20 citizens' rights, not their seats. It is time
21 to watch the watchers.

22 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.

23 Next up we have John Brysacz, I hope I
24 said that right, sir, followed by Marg Baker
25 and then Jason Smith.

1 MR. BRYSA CZ: I noted that for you
2 phonetically. It is a Polish name, so I can
3 understand why you may have difficulty with it.

4 My name is John Brysacz, and I am a
5 profound skeptic. All types of interested
6 parties, including the League of Women Voters,
7 the Sierra Club, private citizens and various
8 members of ethnic, agricultural and business
9 communities have stated their desires and
10 wishes regarding redistricting. In those
11 statements, they hoped, prayed, encouraged,
12 cajoled and treated, beseeched and even begged
13 that our Legislature consider and pay heed to
14 those during its upcoming and untimely
15 deliberations. The language of supplication
16 that characterizes citizen speakers at those
17 forums has shown that there is little
18 understanding about just who serves whom.

19 Let there be no mistake or confusion. You
20 work for me. You work for us. A theater of
21 the absurd has existed in these forums.
22 Interest in and mindfulness of the statements
23 and messages of the citizen speakers seems to
24 be merely famed.

25 One gentleman speaker at Key West forum

1 nailed it when he stated that there's little
2 need for such forums when computers could
3 simply, with a legitimate and appropriate use
4 of mathematical logarithms and geometric
5 fractals, resolve any challenges accompanying
6 fair redistricting, and in a completely
7 non-partisan fashion.

8 A kind of sophistry permeates these
9 forums. Wikipedia refers to the definition of
10 "sophism" thusly, quote, "Plato was largely
11 responsible for the modern view of the sophist
12 as a greedy instructor who uses rhetorical
13 slight of hand and ambiguities of language in
14 order to deceive or to support fallacious
15 reasoning. In this view, the sophist is not
16 concerned with truth and justice, but instead
17 seeks power," end quote.

18 What folly are these forums? Let me
19 iterate some reasons for my skepticism and
20 discharge of --

21 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Sir, I'm
22 going to have to ask you to wrap it up, too.

23 MR. BRYSAZ: "Despite the vote of the
24 people, we, the Legislature, don't support
25 certain amendments to the Florida Constitution

1 that call for fair, compact, contiguous
2 redistricting, so we are going to fight you in
3 the courts" is the mantra of the Florida
4 Legislature. Too, "we don't believe in global
5 warming" is a mantra among certain leading
6 elements of a certain political party. One
7 might glean from these two seemingly disparate
8 statements two things. In the former, they
9 don't believe the power of the people in a
10 democratic society. In the latter, they don't
11 believe in scientific fact and observation.
12 Both are losing propositions.

13 Despite that, the Legislature has sent its
14 minions among the populous to assert their
15 beliefs as truths. They are sophists. They
16 are --

17 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Mr. Brysacz,
18 you are over three minutes, so I am going to
19 have to ask you to stop.

20 MR. BRYSACZ: -- ancient Greece, they will
21 employ --

22 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Mr. Brysacz,
23 there's people behind you that need to have the
24 opportunity to speak, sir. There's a lot of
25 people here.

1 MR. BRYSA CZ: -- to attempt to deter the
2 inevitable.

3 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Please.
4 Thank you, thank you for being here. If you
5 turn those in, we will get those in the record,
6 okay? Thank you, sir.

7 MR. BRYSA CZ: We watched that guy for four
8 minutes talk about some guy named Libby's map.

9 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
10 sir. Thank you.

11 Okay. Next up we have -- next up we have
12 Ms. Marg Baker. Marg, thank you very much.
13 We've got Jason Smith after Marg, and then
14 after Jason, we have Tom Tito. And, please, we
15 want to remind everybody to be respectful to
16 people behind you that want to have an
17 opportunity to speak.

18 Thank you for being here, Marg. You are
19 recognized.

20 MS. BAKER: Thank you. First of all, I
21 would like to contend with the stated law that
22 63 percent of the population voted for. This
23 is what I disagree with and think is
24 unconstitutional. Districts shall not be drawn
25 to deny racial or language minorities. The

1 State cannot change the Federal Constitution,
2 which states, "We, the people of the United
3 States," not we, the racial segments.
4 Contiguous and physical boundaries seem to
5 contradict. I can see why you guys are having
6 so much trouble. There should not be anything
7 to do with minorities or languages. All that
8 we should be concerned with are contiguous and
9 physical boundaries.

10 We are not a democracy. We are a republic
11 which relies on law, not a few people. We're
12 just one state trying to change, we, the
13 people. There are non- -- there are no
14 minorities referred to in our Constitution
15 until we just voted this in.

16 Now we have language and minorities in --
17 as an amendment of our Constitution. This
18 needs to be deleted. There are no minorities.
19 Citizens of the United States are all created
20 equal. And English is Florida's constitutional
21 language. Thank you.

22 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
23 very much.

24 Next up we have Jason Smith, followed by
25 Tom Tito and Craig Glaser. Mr. Smith.

1 MR. SMITH: Well, she just said there's no
2 minorities, but I feel like a discriminated
3 minority. I am a Union member.

4 On-line program maps, first of all, they
5 are not practical, they are not user friendly
6 and they are not our job. By law, only
7 Legislators can submit a map. And I have no
8 reassurances that if I do take the time to
9 actually learn your software and draw your maps
10 for you, are you really going to look at it, is
11 that going in the trash can, are you going to
12 cherry pick from a group of, you know, people
13 who made maps that you wanted to make maps? I
14 don't know what that is all about. That seems
15 like a waste of our time.

16 Third party, we should have hired an
17 independent firm to draw several versions of
18 the maps for us to comment on and discuss
19 during these hearings. It would have been
20 really great to have something to bounce back
21 and forth and actually have context with which
22 to have a discussion. We are talking about
23 stuff that, you know, we have no control over.

24 The interim session begins in September,
25 and I know that you will take the time to focus

1 on career creation. Jobs are things that we do
2 when we graduate from high school so we can pay
3 for gas money. I would like to see careers
4 that give educated adults a chance to live a
5 middle-class life. I would ask you to spend
6 your interim session working for all Floridians
7 this time around and not squander it focusing
8 on social issues and Union bashing on behalf of
9 your corporate donors. Thank you.

10 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Next up we
11 have Tom Tito, followed by Craig Glaser and
12 Darren Ayres.

13 MR. TITO: Thank you. I came here to make
14 three points. First, I would like to see the
15 maps. You have heard other people ask for
16 that. It is not our job to make the maps.
17 Please get on with that, let us discuss it, and
18 in January, you can vote on it.

19 Second point, please respect our
20 Constitution. Amendments 5 and 6 were voted by
21 a lopsided majority. You really don't need a
22 hearing to tell you what the people want. The
23 people told you want -- if we want to amend
24 that, we can.

25 Third point, please stop spending our

1 taxpayer money on a lawsuit suing the people of
2 Florida, your constituents. It is a waste of
3 money. We have people crying for tax relief,
4 schools, medical care, Medicaid. There are
5 needs that are greater than suing the people
6 you represent.

7 I would like to tell you why I came today.
8 I live in District 55, south St. Pete. You
9 have heard some other folks talk about the
10 discrimination we have suffered, the hardships
11 in our neighborhood. Now we are being
12 discriminated against through gerrymandering.
13 I am in a district for State Senate and a
14 district for the U.S. Congress in the Tampa
15 district. And I think Senator Joyner is doing
16 a fine job, I think Representative Kathy Castor
17 is doing a great job for our people. I think
18 they will do a better job if they didn't have
19 to run across the Skyway Bridge and the Howard
20 Frankland Bridge to attend a neighborhood
21 meeting or to -- if they could learn -- build a
22 relationship with a handful of city councils
23 and county -- and one county commission instead
24 of dozens, they could just do a better job. We
25 have suffered discrimination. Please stop

1 that.

2 I think the Hispanic population is also
3 gerrymandered. We have a county district, it
4 is not something you are talking about today,
5 but it is an example in Hillsborough County,
6 cut the Hispanic population in the middle.
7 Orlando, we have the Hispanic population that
8 could be in a district, I think some of them
9 are in the Jacksonville district. It doesn't
10 make any sense.

11 Speaking of not making any sense, the year
12 2000, Florida botched the election. We became
13 the laughingstock of the United States. It was
14 great for late night comedians. They started
15 spelling Florida with d-u-h. Now, let's --
16 let's do our jobs, gain the respect of the
17 country, get these maps out, let us see them
18 and let's, Florida, hold our heads high.

19 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thanks, Tom,
20 we appreciate it.

21 Next up we have Craig Glaser, followed by
22 Darren Ayres and Sandy Oestreich.

23 MR. GLASER: I am Craig Glaser, I am a
24 resident of Treasure Island, and I am not a
25 professional speaker, just a common working

1 class guy. I want to talk about the 8:00 a.m.
2 start time of this. A lot of us had to take
3 time off from work to be here, and we know how
4 precious jobs are right now, and a lot of
5 people that wanted to have their voice heard
6 are not here because they want to keep their
7 jobs. At this time, a job is a precious thing.
8 A career, I mean, that is a dream at this
9 point.

10 We, the people, have already spoken with
11 our votes on Amendments 5 and 6. And I have
12 been listening to the hearing here, and it
13 seems about 80 percent of people are in
14 agreement with two issues: Maps, where are
15 they, we need something to work off of, and
16 this lawsuit is just a waste of time. Please
17 stop the lawsuit against the people. Many
18 states have legislation that may contradict
19 federal law. We voted, it is our Constitution.

20 As far as the maps go, we have nothing to
21 work off of. It is just a fantasy right now.
22 We have to have something to work off of. It
23 is putting the cart before the horse.

24 And I want to thank you for letting my
25 voice be heard. Let's get some maps and let's

1 stop the lawsuit.

2 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.

3 Mr. Ayres, you are recognized, followed by
4 Ms. Sandy Oestreich, I hope I am saying that
5 right, I apologize if I am not, followed by
6 Glenn Paul.

7 MR. AYRES: Good morning, and thank you
8 very much for all of you coming and being here
9 and being a part of this. I do appreciate the
10 transparency, and I appreciate the opportunity
11 for us to have input into this process from the
12 very beginning. It certainly gives a better
13 impression that you haven't already created
14 something that you want to force upon us, but
15 you are giving us the opportunity up front to
16 speak about this.

17 I have heard people come up here today and
18 say, "This is your job, you should be doing
19 this, we don't need to have these meetings,"
20 and then in almost the same breath, they say,
21 "You could hire an independent company to do it
22 for you," or they say, "But if you don't want
23 to do it, me and five or six or eight of my
24 friends will get together and do it for you."
25 Seems somewhat contradictory for me to sit back

1 and listen to them as they say, "It is your
2 job, but we would be happy to tell you how to
3 do it," and that is what this meeting is all
4 about, and I appreciate that, we can stand here
5 and do this.

6 I have heard a couple of common themes
7 today when they weren't just complaining, but
8 the common themes I have heard about actual
9 redistricting is community and commonality,
10 community and commonality. I heard one person
11 to say race isn't important, I heard another
12 one say race is important. And then, again,
13 you've got the Voting Rights Act that you must
14 abide with, so that is important, and we have
15 to understand that role that you have to fill
16 there.

17 I have heard -- I think most of the people
18 when they have talked about community and
19 commonality, I don't know all the individuals
20 here, but it seems like that many of them are
21 talking about more the state positions as they
22 looked and saw the different districts within
23 Pinellas County itself, but when I attended the
24 one up in Wesley Chapel that happened up there,
25 I heard much the same thing that was really

1 addressing the U.S. Congress, commonality as
2 they talked about the U.S. 19 and the people
3 there who are more along the urban and the
4 commercial as opposed to the agricultural
5 community on the eastern side.

6 Commonality and community, and I hope that
7 you really take that into consideration when
8 choosing and laying out these lines, so that
9 people are best represented by their
10 individuals, and that there's not really strong
11 divergent groups that are within that as well.
12 Thank you for your time.

13 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
14 Mr. Ayres. Good to see you, sir.

15 Next up we have Ms. Oestreich. I hope you
16 can make sure I am not saying that --

17 MS. OESTREICH: Don't worry about it.

18 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Okay. And
19 then after --

20 MS. OESTREICH: It is, oh, strike up the
21 music.

22 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Oestreich, I
23 like that. And then we've got Glenn Paul with
24 the ACLU after you, and then I believe
25 Dr. Pamela Settlegood, if y'all could come down

1 and get ready.

2 Ms. Oestreich, thank you --

3 MS. OESTREICH: Okay. I am Sandy
4 Oestreich, and I was Vice-Mayor in North
5 Redington Beach and have the same interests
6 that most people have expressed here.

7 I would like, if you don't mind, and
8 respectfully ask that the two Chairs would
9 grant me the opportunity -- clarifying one
10 point by asking a question. Okay?

11 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: You can ask a
12 question.

13 MS. OESTREICH: Okay, thank you. And this
14 -- the answers can be very, very brief, and I
15 will try to be brief.

16 The question is, as one of the points that
17 is made, when will we actually see, the public
18 actually see and have input to the
19 redistricting maps that you are ostensibly
20 working on at present?

21 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Well, in the
22 essence of time, in about 30 minutes, we are
23 going to give Senator Gaetz and other members
24 an opportunity to address that question and
25 many others. So as opposed to getting in a

1 back and forth, we will answer that question.

2 MS. OESTREICH: Okay. I just thought it
3 might clarify for everybody, and me included.

4 And I do want to just say the vote is
5 terribly important to all of us and this does
6 disenfranchise bunches of people, but it
7 does -- and I agree with B. J. Star absolutely,
8 it does work against women, and we did work
9 very hard for the vote 50 years after all men
10 were just given it. Okay. And I have nothing
11 against men, I'm married to a wonderful guy.

12 So the second part of it is feeling this
13 for the rest of us in an ongoing way so that
14 women get put into the U.S. Constitution. We
15 are not -- females are not mentioned in the
16 U.S. Constitution in any way, shape or form.
17 Men and their pronouns are mentioned 30 million
18 times. We are not in the contract with our
19 nation. That has great psychological and
20 actual impact upon us. I, as you know -- may
21 know, am spearheading the Equal Rights
22 Amendment for -- ten years before the
23 Legislature, you will hear from us again, and
24 right here is our star, Senator Joyner, who
25 sponsored that bill for many, many years, and

1 to our dismay, there are those here who are
2 adamantly against equal treatment for men and
3 women, including Representative Frishe,
4 Representative Ahern --

5 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Ms.
6 Oestreich, this is not an opportunity to have
7 political statements.

8 MS. OESTREICH: Thank you.

9 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.

10 Okay. Next we have Glenn Paul, followed
11 by Dr. Pamela Settlegood and then Mary
12 Griffith.

13 Glenn is with the ACLU. Glenn, thanks for
14 being here.

15 MR. PAUL: Hello. I will try to keep this
16 short. I am with the ACLU, but I am not
17 speaking on behalf of the ACLU. This is just
18 my opinion.

19 So I looked on the website the other day
20 and found that the Florida House district is
21 supposed to be approximately 156,000, Florida
22 Senate districts, about 470,000, and U.S.
23 congressional districts, 696,000.

24 Now, I am proposing something very basic
25 that's said before, why can't we go out --

1 Florida is like an L-shaped state. We've got
2 the Panhandle across its top and we've got the
3 peninsula.

4 Why in the hell can't we just go -- the
5 first 156,000, make up all the rectangles best
6 you can, starting over in Escambia, by Alabama,
7 cut it down, I don't care whose neighborhood
8 you cut it through, whatever, that is the end
9 of a district.

10 And then you need to go all the way over
11 to Jacksonville, and at that point, because the
12 state gets more populated, you go down the
13 middle and you make rectangles on each side and
14 let the chips fall where they may.

15 Now, I don't need to say anything about
16 all the money spent and all that stuff has been
17 said before. So let's -- basically my idea is
18 to have basic rectangles, and as the years go
19 by, we can be increased or decreased according
20 to population, and we don't care about
21 minorities or rich people or Naples or West
22 Palm Beach or this district or whatever else,
23 just make it blind boxes, rectangles. Okay.
24 That is my point.

25 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you

1 very much, sir.

2 MR. PAUL: And I am not speaking for the
3 ACLU there, I am speaking for myself.

4 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Sure. Thank
5 you, thanks a lot.

6 Next up we have Dr. Pamela Settlegood. I
7 hope I said -- is that right, Doctor?

8 DR. SETTLEGOOD: Yes, thank you.

9 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Okay, great.
10 And after Ms. Settlegood, we have Mary Griffith
11 and then Judy McSwine.

12 DR. SETTLEGOOD: Thank you. I am a fourth
13 generation St. Petersburg resident, an
14 educator. I serve on the ACLU Boards, Pinellas
15 and Florida. I have some experience chairing
16 committees and forums, and I have lived and
17 been educated in other places. So this place
18 is a mess. It is a mess. And in part of it,
19 Mr. Weatherford and Mr. Gaetz, your cynicism
20 and arrogance towards the voter is evident.

21 This hearing process is very interesting
22 to me. It is very crafty. For example, take
23 Mr. Gaetz' positions. I do think we need to
24 have this public. He is a Senator and sharer
25 of the Florida Leadership Alliance. That is

1 the organization that is funding the lawsuit
2 against the people. He also chairs -- I
3 noticed a grimace there.

4 SENATOR GAETZ: I will correct the record
5 when you are done.

6 DR. SETTLEGOOD: He also chairs the Senate
7 reappropriate commission, or committee.

8 Now, Amendments 5 and 6, now part of the
9 Florida Constitution, and Chair Gaetz took an
10 oath to defend the Constitution, not the goals
11 of the alliance that he chairs, evidently Mr.
12 Gaetz is determined to overturn the Fair
13 Districts by suing the people of Florida. What
14 is glaringly wrong with our government nowadays
15 are individuals such as Chairman Gaetz.

16 SENATOR LATVALA: Mr. Chairman, I am not
17 going to sit here and have you insulted in my
18 district. We are not insulting the people that
19 are coming and speaking, and I would ask you to
20 not insult us.

21 DR. SETTLEGOOD: Point well taken.

22 These hearings were evidently an incumbent
23 protection plan. They're designed to protect
24 your power.

25 SENATOR GAETZ: And, Dr. Settlegood, if I

1 could you to wrap up just out of respect --

2 DR. SETTLEGOOD: I am.

3 SENATOR GAETZ: -- for the many people
4 behind you --

5 DR. SETTLEGOOD: Two more sentences.

6 SENATOR GAETZ: Sure.

7 DR. SETTLEGOOD: Floridians have spoken.
8 We want fair districts. So to use a phrase,
9 "Let's get to work." Thank you.

10 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
11 Doctor.

12 DR. SETTLEGOOD: Thank you.

13 SENATOR GAETZ: And next we will hear from
14 Mary Griffith with the League of Women Voters.

15 MS. GRIFFITH: Good morning. Nice to be
16 here.

17 SENATOR GAETZ: Hang tight for a second.
18 And following Ms. Griffith, Judy McSwine and
19 Wendy Risk, if you'd be on deck, please.

20 Ma'am, you are recognized. Thanks for
21 coming today.

22 MS. GRIFFITH: Thank you. My question has
23 to do with the timeline of drawing districts.
24 This process can simply and should occur long
25 before the end of the legislative session, as

1 by the law, the courts and the Department of
2 Justice have more than 90 days after passage to
3 review maps.

4 Under the present timeline, these
5 districts will not be reviewed and approved
6 before the June 8th, 2012, deadline for the
7 candidates to file papers, and elections
8 supervisors will have insufficient time to
9 prepare for elections. How will new candidates
10 have time to organize and wage campaigns? Does
11 this amount to an incumbent protection plan?
12 Your own lawyer has said this will cause
13 massive voter confusion. Voters will have no
14 opportunity to learn about candidates, despite
15 the fact you say there is nothing you can do as
16 the Constitution requires the maps to be drawn
17 during the session.

18 These maps could be the first order of
19 business and voted on by the end of the
20 session's first week, January 13th. This would
21 provide double the time for review by the
22 courts and the Department of Justice.

23 In the League's recent letter to the
24 Committee, we asked for an October 3rd deadline
25 for map presentation so that final passage can

1 occur by January 13th, 2012. This results in a
2 fair consideration for Florida candidates and
3 voters.

4 What is your intent? Will you commit to a
5 reasonable and democratic timeline to protect
6 the voting rights of the Florida citizens? It
7 is really the right thing to do. Thank you
8 very much.

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

10 And now we would like to hear from Judy
11 McSwine, also with the League of Women Voters,
12 and then Wendy Risk and then Ernie Bach, if Mr.
13 Bach would be on deck.

14 Ms. McSwine, thank you for coming, and we
15 are delighted to hear your testimony.

16 MS. McSWINE: Thank you. Thank you for
17 the opportunity to speak.

18 I am the President of the League of Women
19 Voters of North Pinellas County, with members
20 from Largo, Clearwater, Dunedin, Palm Harbor,
21 Safety Harbor and Tarpon Springs. And for many
22 years, our League has joined the effort to work
23 for passage of fair districting, and now I join
24 the 3.1 million voters who voted for Amendments
25 5 and 6 to ask where are the maps. The

1 Legislature has had all the information
2 necessary to prepare these maps since March of
3 2010, over five months ago, and during all of
4 these 26 hearings, these expensive hearings,
5 there are no maps available for citizens to
6 review. It is the legislators'
7 constitutionally mandated responsibility to
8 draw these maps, and it has been the League's
9 experience in many years past that when the
10 League and other concerned groups have drawn
11 maps, they have been totally disregarded, not
12 considered. The bottom line, it is not our
13 job, it is your job to draw these maps.

14 You have heard by now in previous hearings
15 that other states finished this process because
16 the maps were presented 30 days before final
17 passage in order to provide an opportunity for
18 public input. This has happened in Alabama,
19 Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana,
20 Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska and Nevada and
21 Oklahoma. When will we have these maps in a
22 timely manner so that they can be reviewed by
23 voters long before the end of the legislative
24 session?

25 Please respect the wishes of 3.1 million

1 voters and comply with a good timeline. Thank
2 you.

3 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
4 Ms. Risk.

5 Next up we have Ernie Bach, followed by
6 Jim Lawrence and Dave Eggers.

7 MR. BACH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There
8 are some tough acts that we have to follow
9 here.

10 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: I'm sorry, I
11 think I may have skipped someone. I'll tell
12 you what, Wendy -- is Wendy Risk here?

13 MS. RISK: Yes, I ceded my time.

14 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Oh, you did?
15 Okay, all right. Well, thank you, I'm sorry.
16 I didn't mean to miss you there.

17 Ernie, you are recognized, sir.

18 MR. BACH: I apologize for some of my
19 redundancy, but my card was turned in with the
20 speaker that spoke an hour and a half ago.

21 My name is Ernie Bach, and I am the State
22 Chairman of the Independent Party of Florida,
23 and you have not heard much from me or from the
24 party recently in the past, but you will in the
25 future.

1 If I may, Mr. Chairman, I am wondering how
2 many people are registered as Independents or
3 NPAs here? Just a few. All right. Well, we
4 are looking for more. I rarely come to these
5 meetings -- I could have --

6 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Apparently
7 somebody already did.

8 MR. BACH: I rarely come to these
9 meetings, because it is important -- yeah,
10 right. These citizens' comments are very
11 important, and as a rule, they're as pertinent
12 and as on target as mine, which is why I don't
13 show up at a lot of these, but we are at a
14 point where the nonsense does have to stop. So
15 I am here today to add my more than two cents'
16 worth to this.

17 As to the point that these hearings are a
18 waste of time, we are of the factual opinion
19 that dragging this on the way you have not only
20 could, but actually has already caused great
21 confusion that affects potential candidates who
22 wish to run next year but aren't even sure of
23 which districts they are running. Candidates
24 we are working with right now around the state,
25 and we are looking for more, by not getting

1 this job done, there is a very real potential
2 for those candidates missing their filing
3 deadlines, and that concerns us. So we
4 sincerely hope you get this dog and pony show
5 back on the road, get finished and get to work
6 on the actual job to be done.

7 Let's mention the money being spent on
8 this wasteful effort, \$30 million set aside, \$3
9 million already spent, with two and a half
10 million spent on lawyers by the Legislature,
11 that is you people sitting up there, attempting
12 to defeat 5 and 6. How many citizens told you
13 to do that? If you answer me, I'll be happy to
14 distribute that answer to over two and a half
15 million Independent and NPA voters in the state
16 of Florida.

17 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Mr. Bach, I
18 am going to have to ask you to put a bow on it
19 for us.

20 MR. BACH: I have waited a long time here,
21 Mr. Weatherford, and I've got about two more
22 minutes, which I hope to finish.

23 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: You don't
24 have two minutes, because you've got about 35
25 people behind you that also want to speak, so

1 you are over two and a half minutes, and that
2 is all you've got.

3 MR. BACH: Remember -- and you are
4 interrupting me, too, and using my time.

5 Remember that we have about two and a half
6 million Independent voters --

7 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Sir, we are
8 going to have to ask you to turn your comments
9 in. You are over two and a half minutes, that
10 is all we've got, and we've got 35 people
11 behind you that want to speak, so, please.
12 Ernie, come on, please. There's a lot of
13 people who want to speak, sir, there's a lot of
14 people who want to speak. I got it right here.
15 Ernie, please. Thank you, sir. Have a good
16 day. Have a good day.

17 Okay. Next up we've got the Mayor of
18 Indiantown Shores, Mr. Lawrence. Mayor, thank
19 you for taking the time to be here, sir. We
20 appreciate you being patient with us as well.
21 Following the Mayor, we have Dave Eggers and
22 Mr. Darrell Flaherty.

23 Mayor, thanks for being here.

24 MAYOR LAWRENCE: You bet ya. I am Jim
25 Lawrence, 18-year resident of Indian Shores,

1 the last 12 on the Town Council -- excuse my
2 voice, I've got a little cold -- and my last
3 six as Mayor.

4 During that 12 years, I have served in
5 many capacities, many committees. I am
6 currently the Secretary-Treasurer of the
7 Pinellas Mayor's Council, and I serve on the
8 Board of Directors of the EMS Advisory Council
9 and the Tourist Development Council.

10 My job today is to speak to you as the
11 immediate past President of the Barrier Islands
12 Governmental Council, affectionately called the
13 Big C. It is a non-legislative advisory
14 council made up of 11 beach communities from
15 Clearwater to St. Pete Beach. The goal of the
16 Big C is to speak with one voice on county and
17 statewide issues, such as tourism, insurance,
18 beach nourishment and offshore oil rig
19 drilling.

20 District 54 encompasses the Gulf shore
21 area from north of Clearwater Beach down to
22 Tierra Verde and mirrors the Big C
23 representation. Our Senate representative also
24 includes almost all of Big C territory. Past
25 and current District 54 Reps and our Senate rep

1 regularly attend our monthly Big C meeting, and
2 they have been our basic conduit to the State
3 Legislature on the issues of import to the
4 beach communities. It is our fervent hope that
5 we can maintain that relationship and keep that
6 district intact. Maybe you can add Mayor
7 Peters, south St. Petersburg there, or South
8 Pasadena. That is all I have, thank you.

9 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
10 Mayor. Thank you for your brevity and your
11 service, too, sir.

12 After the Mayor, we've got Dave Eggers,
13 followed by Darrell Flaherty.

14 MR. FLANERY: Flanery.

15 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Flattery, I
16 apologize.

17 MR. FLANERY: Mike Flanery.

18 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: I'm sorry,
19 okay. Followed by Mike Flanery, and then
20 Barbara Haselden.

21 Is Dave here? Well, Mike, you are next,
22 my friend, so come on up. Thank you for being
23 here. And after Mike, again, we have Barbara
24 Haselden, if you could come forward, and then
25 Robert Kinder.

1 MR. FLANERY: Okay. I am Mike Flanery. I
2 live on Venetian Point in Clearwater, and this
3 is purely technical comments I am making. If
4 you know where Venetian Point is, you go down
5 Edgewater Drive, and there's Sunset -- there's
6 Stevenson's Creek, and because -- I tried to
7 contact my Congressman, Gus Bilirakis, with a
8 comment on the e-mail, and lo and behold, I
9 couldn't because 33755-1752 did not seem to
10 show up on his computer because -- although it
11 is clearly on my I.D. card. And I am asking
12 that if you make these boundaries, make them
13 clear enough that people can e-mail their
14 Congressman. It is -- you know, the computer
15 rejects it if you are not in their district.
16 So I couldn't get through, so I had to make one
17 up whereby I knew I would be able to get to
18 send an e-mail through. Now, I am not saying
19 who is at fault, I think it is a complicated
20 system, but the computer automatically says
21 "What's your ZIP code, you are not in my
22 district," back it comes. So I made up one for
23 me and one for my wife. That was just a
24 comment, and it should be easy to fix, but it
25 also shows how difficult the lines are, because

1 that straight line cuts off my point that I am
2 on and puts me in the wrong district, and even
3 the people that worked did not seem to pick
4 that up. I am not blaming.

5 The second suggestion I have, I know I am
6 sort of theoretical here, but it seems like we
7 have the computer maps, we have the census -- I
8 actually did censuses last year, and I know,
9 knocking on doors, what's on those forms, and
10 commonality and community are the two zingers
11 in this thing. I don't know how to define
12 those. I've heard 15 definitions today, but
13 there is enough in those things that you could
14 write simply a computer program that does these
15 things, looks at the -- this is what is done
16 all the time, and it would be wonderful if you
17 could get out of all the arguments, just let
18 the computer run it through. And what we
19 should be discussing today is which weight we
20 should give to community, commonality, race,
21 being close to something else, instead of --
22 well, or even all the politics we are today,
23 and that is my comments. Thank you.

24 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
25 Mike. Thanks for coming today, sir.

1 Next up we have Barbara Haselden. I hope
2 I said that right, Ms. Barbara, I apologize if
3 I didn't. Following Barbara will be Robert
4 Kinder and Toni Van Pelt.

5 MS. HASELDEN: Okay. Thank you. My name
6 is Barbara Haselden, and I live in northeast
7 St. Pete, and I just want to say that I thank
8 you all so much, because anytime that we have
9 an opportunity to speak to our Legislators, I
10 think it is a great opportunity, especially
11 when we see what is going on all around the
12 world and how few people in the world get an
13 opportunity such as we are all having today,
14 whether we are happy or not happy. So I
15 appreciate everyone's work.

16 And I just wanted to also say that it is
17 my understanding that the process this year is
18 actually earlier than it was done in the year
19 2000 after the census, and that the process
20 this year has been more transparent and orderly
21 than after the 1990 census in which the
22 Legislature, after several special sessions,
23 simply passed a plan and adjourned, basically
24 turning the entire final process over to the
25 courts.

1 I want to thank Representative Weatherford
2 and Senator Gaetz and Senator Joyner and let
3 you know how much your efforts are appreciated,
4 and to say that the congressional districts
5 that are centered in Pinellas I think should be
6 not overpowered by Tampa and -- because we
7 really don't have that much in common with
8 Tampa.

9 And I just want to finalize by saying that
10 I personally was not happy when a doctor in
11 Pinellas County challenged the Amendment 10
12 last year and challenged the language on the
13 ballot, and I also was not happy when it was
14 challenged after Governor Scott turned down the
15 high-speed rail. So I think we just simply
16 live in the time when if people are unhappy,
17 they are suing, and if they are feeling like
18 things are not just, they are suing, and that
19 is our right as Americans. So thank you very
20 much.

21 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
22 very much.

23 Next up we have Robert Kinder. Following
24 Robert, we have Toni Van Pelt, followed by the
25 Supervisor of Elections Deborah Clark.

1 MR. KINDER: Good morning, sir. I
2 appreciate the opportunity to speak. I am a
3 resident here for about ten years, and prior to
4 that, about 50 years in different communities,
5 and one of the things that I noticed over the
6 period of time is that we have somehow tried to
7 categorize America through our census reports
8 year after year.

9 That is passé. We are people, one as
10 Americans, and we should be treated as
11 Americans. I am tired of listening to all this
12 minority, plurality, whatever.

13 If you want to talk about a voting block,
14 I am looking at the biggest voting block right
15 here right now. You represent -- government
16 personnel represent 30 percent of the voting
17 people in the United States. Thirty percent
18 you represent. That is one of the biggest
19 voting blocks around. If you don't believe we
20 have diversity, 40 -- 50 years ago -- I will
21 get the right date. In 1952, I graduated from
22 high school. They taught Latin and Spanish.
23 In my high school today, they taught -- teach
24 11 different languages. They speak over 40
25 languages. This is unbelievable. You look

1 around today, if you don't believe there's
2 diversity, go to the local fast food place,
3 they got anything you want, and yet we are
4 still trying to categorize people.

5 We need to draw maps that are simple, that
6 are defined and can be left there until they
7 have to be changed by law because of the
8 population. Thank you.

9 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
10 sir.

11 Next up we have Toni Van Pelt. Toni,
12 thank you very much for being here. Following
13 Toni is Deborah Clark, Supervisor of Elections,
14 and then Dawn Thompson.

15 MS. VAN PELT: My name is Toni Van Pelt.
16 It is nice to be here.

17 I would like to ask why the Legislature
18 won't commit in writing to prepare the maps
19 now, debate them in the fall and pass them
20 during the first week of the session. There
21 can be no transparency when there are no facts
22 on the table. You need to do your job.

23 We need more than a statement of intent.
24 We ask the Legislature to publish and
25 accelerate a timeline, adopt a rule requiring

1 that all maps should be filed by October 3rd,
2 2011, adopt a rule requiring all committee
3 action on redistricting plans to be completed
4 by the end of 2011, and adopt a rule requiring
5 that all plans be voted on during the first
6 week of the 2012 session.

7 Why is the Legislature continuing to spend
8 taxpayers' money on a court action to have
9 Amendment 6 invalidated? Why won't you
10 withdraw the lawsuit? We ask the Florida House
11 to immediately withdraw from the lawsuit and
12 respect the will of the 63 percent of the
13 Florida voters who want the new redistricting
14 standards to be applied.

15 Why won't the Legislature provide draft
16 maps for public comment? We ask the Florida
17 Legislature -- actually, we strongly suggest
18 that the Legislators commit to holding another
19 round of public hearings with real maps for
20 citizens to comment on this fall.

21 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
22 very much.

23 Next up we have Ms. Clark, followed by
24 Dawn Thompson and Vicky Imes.

25 Ms. Clark, thank you very much for your

1 public service to Pinellas County and for your
2 patience today, and we are happy to have your
3 here. Thank you, you are recognized.

4 MS. CLARK: Thank you. Thank you. I am
5 glad to be here today, and thank you for the
6 opportunity.

7 I won't be redundant. I know you have
8 heard other supervisors speak at your different
9 hearings around the state, and I know you are
10 pressed for time. I do, however -- you know, I
11 could just throw my notes out the window right
12 now, because you have heard it all.

13 There can be no doubt in your minds how
14 incredibly important people's right to vote is
15 and how deeply they feel about the process and
16 how much they want to be included in the
17 process. Certainly you have heard that this
18 morning.

19 As Supervisor of Elections, I proudly
20 represent the voters here in Pinellas County,
21 but I am also here today representing the
22 Florida State Association of Supervisors. And
23 we are public servants as you are. I work for
24 the voters of Pinellas County, the supervisors
25 work for their voters in their counties, and we

1 have worked with your legislative staff and the
2 Census Bureau and we have made some progress.

3 Our main concern is time. And you have
4 heard several people comment about how
5 confusing it will be for candidates if we get
6 those lines late next year, and it's happened
7 before.

8 It is our responsibility as supervisors to
9 conduct impartial and accurate elections for
10 these folks and 11 million voters in Florida.
11 But you have the authority to move that process
12 along, to ensure that we get those lines in
13 plenty of time so that we can prepare for and
14 be ready for the fall elections. We are
15 perfectly capable of doing that.

16 You heard a reference to the 2000
17 presidential election. It would be shameful if
18 Florida lost all the ground we have gained in
19 the last decade with all the efforts that have
20 been put into election reform, beginning with
21 Senate Bill 1401 that was filed by Senator Jack
22 Latvala back in 2002. It moved Florida in the
23 right direction, we've kept moving in that
24 direction, and the spotlight hasn't been in
25 Florida, it is in other states now. You can

1 help us keep moving in the right direction.
2 Successful elections are achieved by minimizing
3 opportunities for failure, and we ask you to
4 please help us with that.

5 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
6 very much, Ms. Clark. We will take heed of
7 your counsel and we appreciate your public
8 service. Thank you very much.

9 Dawn Thompson?

10 MS. THOMPSON: Yes.

11 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Good to see
12 you, and you are recognized, but before that,
13 we've got Vicky Imes and Karen Doering.

14 Also, it is about 10:36, and at about
15 10:45 or so, we are going to have to allow
16 members of the Committee to offer some input
17 and suggestions, and also there have been a lot
18 of questions asked, and we do not want to leave
19 here without giving Senator Gaetz, my
20 co-Chairman, the opportunity to address some of
21 the very questions that you have asked from the
22 public, so we will not get to every speaker.
23 There are several who are here that we will not
24 get to, and we apologize for that ahead of
25 time. We will make sure and get your comments

1 in, but I just wanted everyone to know ahead of
2 time we are going to have a couple more
3 speakers and then an opportunity for the
4 Committee to comment.

5 Dawn, you are recognized.

6 A VOICE: Move to extend time. Move to
7 extend time.

8 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Dawn, you are
9 recognized. Thank you.

10 MS. THOMPSON: Okay. Good morning. My
11 name is Dawn Thompson, and I live in Seminole.
12 My husband and our eight children moved here
13 three years ago, and the first thing I wanted
14 to do is point out that -- what may be the
15 obvious for many of us is that most of you here
16 that have voted were not here to vote on the
17 map that we currently have, but I look at this
18 map and I see things that are all over the
19 place. I come from Massachusetts, the Bay
20 State, and others were talking about not --
21 they are very concerned about their vote, their
22 vote counting. And I can empathize greatly
23 with that, coming from Massachusetts, where we
24 have -- oh, I would say Democrats represented
25 about 95 percent of the Legislators. I ran for

1 the State Senate in western Massachusetts back
2 in '04, and other than feeling very much
3 disenfranchised, we actually were
4 disenfranchised, which I won't go into, on two
5 different occasions by the Legislature. So I
6 appreciate that.

7 I also very much appreciate the fact that
8 the state of Florida is very much a 50/50
9 state. I think that a Democrat or Republican
10 has about as much opportunity to get elected in
11 this state, and we have a large constituency of
12 Independents.

13 And what I heard when I spoke with a lot
14 of constituents here when I was campaigning one
15 year ago and two years ago for the seat that
16 Representative Ahern currently holds is that
17 people are looking for equity. And so in one
18 word what I hear from people that are speaking
19 here today and those who I've spoke to in
20 campaigning, they don't like the
21 gerrymandering. They don't think that -- I
22 will just use Kathy Castor -- sorry, Kathy,
23 about this -- but Kathy Castor's seat, it is in
24 three counties, it's been brought up multiple
25 times, and that is probably the most extreme

1 example in this -- in this area. You shouldn't
2 have to go over two bodies of water to get to a
3 district. People want normal boundaries. They
4 want something that works. Most of all, they
5 want equity. Thank you.

6 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
7 very much, Dawn.

8 Next we have Vicky Imes. Following Vicki
9 is Karen Doering, and after Karen we have Karl
10 Nurse, who is a city council member for the
11 City of St. Petersburg.

12 You are recognized.

13 MS. IMES: Thank you. I want to thank you
14 all for being here today and coming to listen
15 to our views as constituents prior to any
16 decision on your redistricting.

17 I have three areas that are very simple,
18 but I think important. One is that the people
19 of Pinellas be represented by a Pinellas
20 Senator, to keep districts in Pinellas as close
21 to current as possible, and I would like to see
22 the beaches remain together. Thank you.

23 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.
24 Bonus points.

25 Next up we have Karen Doering. Karen,

1 thank you for being here. Karl Nurse is after
2 Karen, and then Bambi Jones with the AARP.

3 You are recognized.

4 MS. DOERING: Thank you. My name is Karen
5 Doering, and I just have a few brief comments.
6 The reasoning and rationale behind my comments
7 have been addressed previously. I think it
8 should be obvious.

9 There can be no meaningful comment on
10 redistricting without maps. We, the people,
11 expressed our role about redistricting through
12 Amendments 5 and 6, which set the legal
13 parameters for how those districts must be
14 drawn. Please show us the maps. This process
15 -- this process has made a mockery of the
16 Florida Constitution, the legislative process,
17 and you are Florida Legislators.

18 Please stop, withdraw from the lawsuit to
19 thwart the will of the people, accelerate the
20 time table for this process, and please stop
21 gerrymandering our vote for your incumbent
22 protection plan.

23 Finally, if you wish to sue your
24 constituents, go for it, absolutely go for it,
25 but use your own money, not taxpayer money.

1 Thank you.

2 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Next up we
3 have Councilman Karl Nurse. Councilman, thank
4 you for being here and thanks for your public
5 service. Following Councilman Nurse, we have
6 Bambi Jones.

7 COUNCILMAN NURSE: To the beach
8 communities that weren't sure they had enough
9 communication with St. Petersburg, we do take
10 your sewage every day, so we hear from you.

11 It also is this: I would urge you all to
12 think about chaos reduction next year. The
13 later -- the later the process happens, the
14 more likely it is to be chaotic, not just for
15 candidates, but particularly for the voters.

16 And, you know, I want to reinforce the
17 Supervisor of Elections' concerns. You think
18 about when you want to have a primary next
19 year, you back up 45 days to mail out the
20 military ballots and 35 days to sort of mail
21 out the others, you could be talking about
22 finishing districts and mailing four or five
23 weeks later. I mean, you really have the
24 possibility of a very chaotic situation. So
25 the earlier you can move that, the better.

1 And I would -- as somebody who lives in
2 St. Pete, who lives in the doughnut, I live in
3 the doughnut for the -- for a congressional
4 seat that is essentially a Tampa Bay seat, the
5 doughnut for State Senate seat that is
6 essentially a Tampa seat, and then, of course,
7 Darryl Rouson has the snake that snakes through
8 several counties. That kind of thing is very
9 confusing for voters.

10 And then finally, let me say, please, I
11 urge you to limit the number of times you cut
12 up precincts. It is -- that is very disruptive
13 to a community, because you could have hundreds
14 of people who were voting in one location
15 today, and because the precinct has been
16 re-carved, which happened many times in the
17 last time, they are there and now suddenly
18 voting in a whole different neighborhood, and I
19 am saying that causes -- that is very chaotic.
20 So chaos reduction, thank you.

21 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
22 sir.

23 Next up we have Ms. Bambi Jones. Is Bambi
24 here? Okay, I don't think so. We have time
25 for one more. Ms. Ann Beamah. Is Ann here?

1 I'm sorry I didn't give you more time. I
2 apologize for that.

3 MS. BEAMAH: My point has been made over
4 and over and over.

5 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: All right.
6 Thank you very, very much. We appreciate that.

7 Ellen Thompson. We have time for probably
8 one more person, Ellen Thompson.

9 Okay. Wendy Paser? Thanks, Wendy, I'm
10 sorry about that. But after Ms. Wendy, we are
11 going to give members of the Committee an
12 opportunity to respond and maybe answer some
13 questions, and certainly I know Senator Gaetz
14 has about 27 pages of notes over here, and so I
15 think he would like to have an opportunity to
16 respond as well.

17 Wendy, you are recognized. Thank you for
18 being here.

19 MS. PASER: Thank you. I work with public
20 school employees in Pinellas County. I work
21 with them and I work for them. They are really
22 concerned as we are bargaining with the little
23 bit of money that the County received this
24 year. They proposed exponential increases in
25 healthcare benefits, they have already taken a

1 three percent reduction in the money that is
2 available to them because of the contribution
3 to the Florida Retirement System, and also they
4 propose fuller days. I would like to know what
5 I can tell them about how we can justify
6 spending their tax dollars to fight what the
7 voters have already accepted.

8 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
9 Ms. Paser, thank you for your comments, and I
10 will make sure that -- I know Senator Gaetz
11 will address that issue, so thank you for being
12 here and thank you for your service to our
13 children here in our community.

14 Okay. Ladies and gentlemen, I would like
15 to give a few minutes -- if there are any -- we
16 will start with House members. Are there any
17 House members who would like to speak or offer
18 a suggestion or contribution? We are going to
19 have Senator Gaetz address some of the
20 questions that were represented, but I don't
21 want to take away anybody's opportunity to
22 speak. I know we are running short on time.
23 Is there any House member? Yes, Representative
24 Ahern.

25 REPRESENTATIVE AHERN: Thank you, Chair

1 Weatherford and Senator Gaetz, for facilitating
2 this meeting. I think it has been very
3 productive for everyone here. I know I haven't
4 seen this many members of the Legislature since
5 the last session, so I think it does belie the
6 importance of this matter, how important it
7 truly is to us to get it right, and that it is
8 of the utmost importance to get the public
9 input so that we will have this when we vote on
10 the maps during the session. And also that
11 while we may not be able to please everyone
12 each and every time, that we are able to serve
13 each and every one of you in this community and
14 in the state of Florida, and that this process
15 is working. You know, it's been said
16 democracy, republic. This connection to
17 government when it comes to the people like
18 this I think is important. In some ways, it
19 may just be a pressure relief valve for those
20 that want to be heard, and we really appreciate
21 you coming out and expressing all your concerns
22 to us today.

23 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
24 very much, Representative Ahern.

25 Any other members from the House? Seeing

1 none, any members of the Senate that wish to
2 offer any comments? Senator Latvala, you are
3 recognized, sir.

4 SENATOR LATVALA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
5 I want to make two quick points.

6 The first one is that, you know, one of
7 the themes that I hear today is how that
8 there's got to be better people to do the
9 redistricting process than the Legislature
10 itself. And I am reminded also that someone
11 mentioned today why in the world was St.
12 Petersburg and my district, Senate District 16,
13 why did that include both Pinellas and south
14 Tampa. Well, the reason that included -- the
15 original basis for putting south Tampa and
16 Pinellas County together was by the Florida
17 Supreme Court in 1993 when the Legislature
18 could not resolve the issue and the issue went
19 to the Court, and the Court is who put south
20 Tampa in with Pinellas County in the district.
21 And so you can't just sort of presume that the
22 courts are going to do things some kind of a
23 magical different way, because that is where
24 that actually started.

25 The second thing I want to say is that,

1 you know, I was on this committee ten years ago
2 and traveled the state, made more hearings than
3 I have made this year, frankly, and I don't
4 remember one single person anywhere in Florida
5 complaining about having hearings, complaining
6 about the Legislature going out and seeking out
7 people's opinions. And, you know, I find it
8 really very disconcerting to have our Chairmen
9 criticized when I sat here at the table today
10 and tried to calculate in my own mind how many
11 hours that they have sat for hearings. In 26
12 hearings, and in some cities more than one
13 hearing in a day, I calculate at least 80 hours
14 of their summer that our Chairmen have spent in
15 hearings. Today -- no, I listened to you. I
16 listened to you. I listened to you. Now you
17 listen to me for a second.

18 Just today we had one gentleman question
19 why do the meetings start at eight o'clock.
20 Well, the reason the meeting started early
21 today is because we have a morning hearing that
22 started at eight o'clock, and then we will have
23 another hearing in the Sarasota area, which
24 will be over at eight o'clock tonight, and then
25 our Chairmen have to get in their car and drive

1 to Naples for a hearing that starts at eight
2 o'clock tomorrow morning. So I personally want
3 to express my appreciation to the Chairmen for
4 the way they have spent their summer vacation.

5 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
6 Senator. I think Senator Jones had a quick
7 comment. Senator Jones for a comment, and then
8 we will come back to Senator Gaetz.

9 REPRESENTATIVE JONES: I will be very
10 brief, but I might be the only one in this
11 entire room that has gone through this process
12 now for the third time. And I want to
13 compliment the two Chairmen for having these
14 public hearings. I can tell you, having done
15 this the previous two times, that you could not
16 go to Tallahassee and have committee meetings
17 without having statewide public input first.
18 And although you don't feel that your comments
19 are important, as you go around the state, all
20 these meetings are being videotaped, all your
21 comments are being recorded for the record that
22 will be reviewed by the court, and I would not
23 minimize your input at these local hearings.
24 Believe me, when you go back to Tallahassee and
25 have a committee meeting, you are not going to

1 be able to be up there at these meetings. That
2 is why your comments here at the local level
3 are important and the Committee does take it
4 seriously.

5 So, believe me, I am hoping this Committee
6 can do their job and basically survive the
7 initial review of the courts, because if you
8 think the courts are going to spend this much
9 time to draw maps, then you had better look at
10 the courthouse they built.

11 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
12 Senator.

13 Listen, before we go, I want to give --
14 Senator Gaetz, I was looking over earlier
15 during the hearing, has got literally tons and
16 tons of notes, page after page he has
17 meticulously written down, lots of comments and
18 questions. I think it would be appropriate to
19 give him a chance to respond and to also answer
20 and maybe, frankly, Mr. Chairman, to clarify
21 some things that seem to have been in the
22 bloodstream at every stop we go to, but I think
23 the citizens would love to hear from you. So
24 you are recognized.

25 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, and most of my

1 notes are the kind of notes that I make at
2 every hearing. I am a former newspaper
3 reporter, an editor, so even though there's
4 videotaping of everything, this all goes in the
5 record, I still like to make my own notes to go
6 over later in every evening.

7 One thing I wanted to begin with,
8 Mr. Chairman, was the persistent theme that we
9 heard and I think very well spoken by
10 representatives of the League of Women Voters
11 as to why the Legislature, in their opinion at
12 least, ought to draw maps and present them, and
13 the public ought not to and the League ought
14 not to. And I thought it might be useful to
15 note that Leagues of Women Voters in different
16 places in the country, and even in Florida,
17 don't necessarily agree with each other. It
18 sort of helps us understand the tension of this
19 issue. For example, ten years ago, the League
20 was the first group that developed maps and
21 presented them. In Georgia, there the League
22 of Women Voters this year, right now, not only
23 prepared and publicized their own redistricting
24 maps, they organized a map fair at the Georgia
25 State Capitol to encourage members of the

1 public to present their own alternative maps.
2 Quote, "Our goal throughout this whole process
3 is to ensure that citizens have a voice," end
4 quote, said the President of the League of
5 Women Voters of Georgia, quote, "and what
6 better way to do this than bringing people and
7 maps to the Capitol," end quote. How right she
8 is.

9 Let's go through some questions that were
10 raised. We will try to provide, where we can,
11 some factual answers. That great Democratic
12 Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan said,
13 "Everybody is entitled to their own opinion,
14 but everybody is not entitled to their own set
15 of facts." And I made a number of notes, we
16 will get through some of them.

17 First, there were a couple of references
18 to a \$30 million fund that the House of
19 Representatives is allegedly using to fight
20 Fair Districts. I would encourage you to go to
21 the state website, which is
22 transparencyflorida.gov. That way you can see
23 exactly what the Legislature is spending on
24 each program and each cost center. I think you
25 will find that the \$30 million is the entire

1 reserves of the House of Representatives to be
2 used for all purposes. So the \$30 million
3 figure, it sounds good, it is a fun bumper
4 sticker, it is just not a fact.

5 And then someone mentioned early in the
6 hearing today if you do it right, there won't
7 be any lawsuits. I wish that were true, and
8 grasping the larger hope, I pray for that every
9 night, but the representatives of some special
10 interest groups have already testified before
11 these hearings that there are going to be
12 lawsuits. They have already said there will be
13 lawsuits even before the Legislature has cast
14 its first vote. So, sadly, I think those who
15 feel that the best way to resolve this matter
16 is in the courts have already indicated that
17 there will be lawsuits. I sure hope there
18 won't be many.

19 A question, will the public see the
20 legislative maps before they are voted on? The
21 answer is yes. Before any vote is taken, even
22 in committee, the public will see any and every
23 map.

24 Third, there was a comment made that there
25 are 600,000 more Democrats, yet there are more

1 Republicans in the Legislature, how can this be
2 true? Well, we have an interesting phenomenon
3 in Florida. We have 40 Senate districts -- I
4 will just use the Senate as an example. The
5 House could be used as well. There are 40
6 Senate districts, and currently 28 of them are
7 held by Republicans, but eight of those
8 Republican Senate districts voted for Barack
9 Obama for President.

10 So you can look at this two ways. First
11 you can say that the people in those eight
12 districts were independent enough to view
13 President Obama's campaign as more persuasive
14 and more worthy of their votes, or you could
15 view it this way, that there were eight
16 districts in the state of Florida that solidly
17 voted for Barack Obama, but yet in the opinion
18 of those voters, the Republican candidates for
19 the Senate had a more persuasive campaign or a
20 better message for the voters.

21 Here's the thing that we really can't do:
22 We can't force Republicans to vote just for
23 Republicans, or Democrats to vote just for
24 Democrats, and we surely don't know how the
25 largest -- not the largest, but the

1 fastest-growing group of voters, Independents,
2 are going to vote. So what we have found is
3 people make up their own minds, and some
4 Republicans vote for President Obama, and lots
5 of Democrats voted for Republican Senate
6 candidates.

7 The next question -- or the next comment
8 came from a representative of the ACLU who said
9 you don't want to see amateur maps, didn't come
10 here to see maps drawn by schoolteachers. I'm
11 sorry you feel that way about public input. We
12 don't view the submissions from the public as
13 being amateurish. Indeed, we have received
14 submissions from Columbia University, from
15 universities and groups of academics here in
16 Florida, but, yes, we have received submissions
17 from schoolteachers and we have also received
18 submissions for 120 House districts from a
19 13-year-old boy and his family last night. So
20 what that suggests is that there is an
21 opportunity to have input. And I would just
22 tell you this: Please don't assume that the
23 only people who ever have any good ideas are
24 people in Tallahassee. That is not true. Your
25 ideas -- your ideas -- sh, sh, sh, sh -- your

1 ideas and the ideas of schoolteachers and
2 construction workers and 13-year-old boys and
3 people from Columbia University and the
4 University of Florida and University of South
5 Florida are all valuable and will all be taken
6 into account.

7 Then there were a number of questions
8 about the time table, Mr. Chairman, and here I
9 think a few facts could be useful. First, the
10 Census Bureau does not release census data on
11 which these maps have to be based, they don't
12 release it all at once. They release it in
13 groups or tranches. Now, Florida didn't get
14 its census data last, but we were one of the
15 last states to receive it. So several
16 individuals mentioned states which received
17 their census data months before Florida.

18 Now, why would they receive their data
19 before we received ours? Well, one of the
20 states mentioned was Louisiana. Well,
21 Louisiana receives its census data earlier
22 because they have their elections on
23 odd-numbered years, not even-numbered years,
24 like Florida.

25 Then there was a reference by a testifier

1 to the State of Illinois, and it is true, they
2 got their maps done very quickly. They are a
3 one-party state. They had a group of
4 Legislators who literally did go into a back
5 room, who came out, put the maps down, said,
6 "Take it or leave it," the Legislature voted
7 quickly and they all went home. Now, as
8 Representative Frishe said when he started
9 today, you know, sometimes representative
10 government is a heavy lift. We chose to use a
11 process that involves the public more than the
12 State of Illinois did. Maybe we were wrong,
13 maybe Illinois was right, but we chose to use a
14 process that was much more interactive and
15 involved.

16 Then also I would point out, as
17 Representative Weatherford did at the beginning
18 of our meeting, that we are accelerating the
19 process as much as the Constitution allows. We
20 can't vote -- the Constitution says can't vote
21 until January. But there are those who
22 testified today as if there were not going to
23 be any votes taken, in some people's minds,
24 they said, until March. Well, that's just not
25 true. Votes can be taken as early as January,

1 and if you follow the public record of the
2 other hearings, you know that our Democratic
3 Leader in the Senate, Senator Rich, who is a
4 member of our Committee, indicated that ten
5 years ago when she happened to be in the House
6 of Representatives then, she didn't even get a
7 chance to present a map. She didn't -- she
8 didn't get a chance to make a proposal, and she
9 asked that the members of the minority party be
10 able to do that. So the commitment that I made
11 as Chairman of the Senate Reapportionment
12 Committee is that at the first meeting that we
13 will have, the first time we can have a meeting
14 in September, the very first thing we will do
15 after taking the roll and calling the meeting
16 to order is to turn to Senator Rich and give
17 her the chance that she didn't have ten years
18 ago. It was unfair ten years ago that she
19 didn't have a chance as a member of the
20 minority party, and we are going to give her
21 the first chance this year in September.

22 Then there was a comment made by a mayor
23 from one of the beach communities that he
24 wanted the beach communities to be kept
25 together, and he acknowledged that that would

1 mean that they wouldn't necessarily be compact,
2 because the beach communities are kind of long
3 and skinny, because of the nature of the
4 barrier islands, they are not necessarily
5 compact. I only point this out because there
6 is -- and you heard it today, there is some
7 apparent tension between those who say "we want
8 compact districts" and those who say "we want
9 communities of interest or commonality to be
10 able to be districts." There is some tension,
11 or apparent tension there, and we just -- you
12 know, we point that out so that you will know
13 that this really isn't a bumper sticker issue.
14 This is something that really requires us
15 balancing these values. That is why these
16 hearings are so important.

17 And then, Mr. Chairman, there was a
18 question, you know, couldn't the Governor just
19 veto all of this anyway? The answer is that
20 under the Florida Constitution, the Governor
21 does not have the veto power over legislative
22 maps. The Governor can veto congressional
23 maps, but cannot veto legislative maps. The
24 veto or review of legislative maps is by the
25 judiciary in our state.

1 And then there was a question -- there was
2 an individual who said that the Senate
3 President, Senator Haridopolos, posted a
4 YouTube paid for by public funds. Again, you
5 might hate the YouTube or you might like the
6 YouTube. I thought the music was a little
7 depressing in the beginning when I saw it last
8 night, but I called the President, talked to
9 him last night, and he gave me this
10 information, which I pass on to you. Not one
11 penny of state funds was used by President
12 Haridopolos in producing or distributing that
13 YouTube message that was released yesterday.
14 He used his own funds.

15 Then there was a question -- or there was
16 a comment that said you really won't do the job
17 unless every district is competitive. Sounds
18 good, but imagine, you've got areas in south
19 Florida, for example, and areas here in the
20 Tampa Bay area where there are very heavy
21 concentrations of Democrats or Republicans who
22 live in certain areas. So let me just take my
23 area, for example. We have a very high
24 registration of Republicans in my area. To
25 make my district -- to ensure by law that my

1 district had to be competitive, we would have
2 to draw my district all the way from Niceville,
3 where I live, which is on the northwest Florida
4 coast, all the way to Tallahassee, three hours
5 away. And if you go to south Florida, if you
6 insisted that some very heavily Democratic
7 concentrations of voters not be allowed to be a
8 district, but that they had to be competitive,
9 you would have to draw those districts a
10 hundred miles long. So it sounds good to say
11 every district should be competitive, but that
12 is why we provided you with the population data
13 that is on the -- that is on the House and
14 Senate websites, so that you can see that
15 unless we force people to move and say that
16 every district has to be competitive that way,
17 which is pretty impractical, it would be hard.

18 Then, Mr. Chairman, the -- there was a
19 mayor who said that she is a mayor of a
20 community on the Intracoastal, not on the
21 barrier islands, but on the Intracoastal. Her
22 argument was we have more in common with the
23 barrier islands, being an Intracoastal
24 community, than we do with other areas that are
25 further inland. So she said we have a

1 community of interest and we want the district
2 lines to cross the water. Well, that is a
3 legitimate and logical point of view. But you
4 heard other people testify and say -- in fact,
5 the very next speaker said, quote, "No crossing
6 of any waterway." I only point this out to say
7 that 160 members of the Legislature, Democrats
8 and Republicans, we also have differences of
9 opinion just as you do, and these values have
10 to be balanced. It is not as easy as it might
11 sound to some to just, you know, go there and
12 vote for something that is compliant with 5 and
13 6 when you have heard disparate comments here
14 by people of good will, people who mean no
15 harm, but make good, logical arguments on
16 different sides.

17 Then there was an individual who said --
18 and did an extraordinary job -- said consider
19 the word "community" as important in your work
20 as the words "compact" and "contiguous." We
21 wish we could. In fact, Representative
22 Weatherford and I tried to get the term
23 "community of interest" into the Constitution
24 along with Amendments 5 and 6, but the Supreme
25 Court said they didn't want that there, they

1 struck that down. So sadly for those who have
2 made eloquent arguments today for community and
3 commonality, the Fair Districts folks did not
4 include that language in the Constitution. So
5 these are -- these, again, are values that are
6 going to have to be very carefully balanced,
7 because clearly we wouldn't be able to make
8 both sides happy in that case.

9 There was a gentlemen who said drawing the
10 process out to 2012 is very hard on candidates,
11 and I surely agree, because I am a candidate.
12 But the Fair Districts people can still change
13 this. The Fair Districts folks, who did a
14 great job with their campaign, raised an
15 extraordinary amount of money, a great grass
16 roots effort, they could have changed this in
17 the Constitution so that we didn't have to vote
18 in 2012, that we could begin voting in 2011.
19 They, for some reason, chose not to accelerate
20 the process with constitutional language. But
21 I am considering as a sole member of the
22 Senate, I have not talked to my colleagues
23 about this, I am considering proposing a
24 constitutional amendment that would allow the
25 next redistricting process to occur in an

1 odd-numbered year so that we can get a year
2 ahead in Florida. Now, we can't do it now
3 because it is too late to change the
4 Constitution at this moment, but we certainly
5 could do it to make sure that that individual's
6 concerns are addressed in future redistricting.

7 Mr. Chairman, I've just got a couple more.
8 There was a gentleman who said, "Defining
9 communities and preserving them is an essential
10 ingredient of redistricting." Again, we
11 couldn't agree more. Sadly, the Supreme Court
12 would not allow that to be added to the
13 constitutional language.

14 Someone said we ought to have an
15 independent commission. Again, the Fair
16 Districts folks could have included that in
17 their amendment language, they chose not to,
18 and so under the Florida Constitution, it isn't
19 an independent commission. It is, instead,
20 elected officials, who you can un-elect, and
21 then judges who, depending upon your point of
22 view, it is either easy or not very easy to get
23 accountability from them for decisions they
24 make, who have the last word.

25 Then there was an individual who made the

1 point that "When money takes over politics,
2 only a shadow of democracy remains." Eloquent
3 quote. Over \$9 million was contributed to the
4 Fair Districts campaign. Vastly most of it
5 came in large contributions, much of it from
6 outside the state of Florida, but that was
7 legal and that was appropriate. There was
8 nothing wrong with that. There was nothing
9 wrong with that. And if you follow the news,
10 you know that President Obama has -- his
11 campaign has already indicated that they intend
12 to raise and spend more money than any
13 presidential candidate in history. Nothing
14 wrong with that. It is legal. There is
15 nothing wrong with that.

16 Here is the question, here is the
17 question: Will money be the only ingredient in
18 decisions that are made in public policy? And
19 the answer is, only if you allow it to be. And
20 clearly, with a group like this and the groups
21 that we are seeing across the state of Florida,
22 you are expressing opinions that truly matter,
23 you are having an effect that is, in my
24 judgment, as equally as important as all of
25 those people who contributed on both sides of

1 the Fair Districts campaign.

2 Someone said we should -- if we wait to
3 finalize the maps until August, that would be
4 wrong; if we wait to vote until March, that
5 would be terribly inconvenient. That is not
6 our plan. That is not our intent.

7 Now, there was someone -- a young lady who
8 said, "We want a commitment from the
9 Legislature when they will cut off maps, when
10 they will cut off debate." Well,
11 Representative Weatherford and I each get one
12 vote. We don't get to vote for everybody else.
13 There are 160 members of the Legislature, and
14 believe me, there would be some in both parties
15 who would stand up and scream from the rafters
16 if we said we are going to cut off debate, we
17 are going to cut off ideas, we are going to cut
18 off your opportunity to improve or refine any
19 proposal. So it is Representative
20 Weatherford's and my intent, our desire, our
21 plan, to move the process as we have expressed,
22 as quickly as is logical, but we can't control
23 what the other 118 members of the Legislature
24 may want to do with their plans and proposals.

25 Then there was a -- the President of the

1 League of Women Voters said that she wanted to
2 have some information about how much the
3 hearings were costing. Please go to
4 transparencyflorida.gov. You can see that. I
5 think that the information in Mary Ellen Klas'
6 story in *The St. Pete Times* and *Miami Herald*
7 was probably pretty close, if not right on. It
8 said that the House had spent something like
9 \$48,000; the Senate, something like 8,000. I
10 think the Senate spent more than that. I think
11 by the end we will find that the House spent a
12 little more, because there are more House
13 members, 120 House members, and the House
14 committee is larger.

15 And then the question was asked of me, and
16 that is, am I funding the fight against
17 Amendments 5 and 6. My wife I am sure is
18 listening, and she probably wants to know if I
19 am, too. Well, I am not. I am not. That is
20 just not true. When the Fair Districts
21 campaign was going on before the election,
22 before these amendments became part of our
23 Constitution, I joined thousands of other
24 Floridians in making contributions based on my
25 personal views. Frankly, I didn't think

1 Amendments 5 and 6 should have been ratified
2 without commonality and communities of interest
3 included, and so I did contribute money against
4 them. But since they became the law, since the
5 election and -- and since the election, I was
6 appointed to this Committee by President
7 Haridopolos, I have contributed nothing, no
8 money, I have not been part of any lawsuit
9 personally or publicly against Amendments 5 and
10 6, and I won't be.

11 Then I guess there was another question,
12 why can't the Legislature commit to a drop-dead
13 date? I think I answered that. We certainly
14 are going to try to move the process along. We
15 are going to start by asking for presentation
16 of maps at the very first committee meeting.

17 Last comment, and that is your Supervisor
18 of Elections, Ms. Clark, encouraged that the
19 process move along as much as we legally can.
20 And, yes, we commit to do that.

21 Some of those who were concerned today,
22 and properly so, with the process, we commit to
23 you that we will do everything that we
24 constitutionally can do in terms of voting on
25 the floor, and as I indicated to you, we will

1 move forward at the very first Senate committee
2 meeting, and we will give Senator Rich, the
3 Democratic Leader, the chance she didn't have
4 and should have had ten years ago, and I am
5 considering proposing a constitutional
6 amendment that would allow us to do this in the
7 future in odd-numbered years instead of even so
8 that we would never have to have that kind of
9 concern or angst again.

10 I apologize for the length of my
11 responses, but we had many, many, many good
12 questions. This has been an extraordinary
13 hearing. There's information about your
14 communities and neighborhoods I could never
15 have received if I would have just sat in an
16 echo chamber in Tallahassee. This was well
17 worth my time, and I thank you for your input.

18 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
19 very much. Thank you very much, Senator Gaetz,
20 and thank you all for being here today.
21 Senator Gaetz moves that we rise.

22 (Whereupon, the proceedings were
23 adjourned.)

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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 23 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 30th day of November, 2011.

CLARA C. ROTRUCK

Notary Public

State of Florida at Large

Commission Expires:

November 13, 2014