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REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31, 2011
8:00 A.M.
NAPLES DAILY NEWS COMMUNITY ROOM
NAPLES, 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 Thank you all for being here this morning. My
4 name is Will Weatherford, and I have the honor
5 of chairing this meeting today with my
6 co-Chairman, Senator Gaetz, and the Joint
7 Senate/House Redistricting hearing is called to
8 order.

9 We are pleased to be joined by several
10 members of the Florida House and Senate today.
11 In a moment, I am going to ask each and every
12 one of them to introduce themselves to you so
13 that you have an understanding of who you are
14 talking to. We have people from all over the
15 state and everywhere from the Panhandle down to
16 the Florida Keys, and we want to give them an
17 opportunity to introduce themselves to you.

18 We want to give a special thanks to the
19 *Naples Daily News* for allowing us to use this
20 wonderful facility, and we also want to thank
21 you all for being here. It is a great turnout
22 already, and I am sure people will continue to
23 spill in, but we are glad to hear your comments
24 and your recommendations that will help us
25 shape the congressional, Senate and House

1 Districts for the next decade.

2 Again, my name is Will Weatherford, and
3 our sole purpose here today is to hear from the
4 public about how you believe the legal
5 standards governing redistricting should be
6 applied in your community so that you are
7 represented in Washington and Tallahassee
8 fairly, equitably and sensibly.

9 Our procedures today are very important,
10 but they are also simple, and so it is very
11 important that you sign in so we can create a
12 public -- an accurate public record of all the
13 attendees and speakers, and if you opt to join
14 our e-mail list, we can also keep you informed
15 about the redistricting process in the months
16 ahead. If you have not signed in, please raise
17 your hand, and a staff member will give you an
18 attendance card. So if we've got a couple of
19 hands up, just keep them up for a moment. And
20 if you wish to speak today and you have not
21 filed out an attendance card, also raise your
22 right hand or left hand, depending on which
23 side you want to come from, and raise your hand
24 and we will get a card for you and we will make
25 sure that you get your public testimony heard.

1 It is the same attendance card to check in or
2 to speak.

3 So before we begin, I am going to ask
4 Senator Gaetz -- we do this at every hearing,
5 and I think it is important and it kind of sets
6 the tone for the hearing, but I am going to ask
7 my co-Chairman, Senator Gaetz, to give us a
8 little bit of a perspective about some of the
9 history in redistricting, a little bit about
10 the legal standards that we have to follow and
11 a little bit about what we hope to get out of
12 the public testimony from you today. We have
13 had many hearings around the state of Florida.
14 We are happy to be in Collier County, it is a
15 beautiful part of the state, and we are excited
16 about today's hearing. And so with that, I am
17 going to turn it over to my co-Chairman,
18 Senator Don Gaetz.

19 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, Mr.
20 Speaker.

21 Every ten years, the Legislature is
22 required by our State Constitution to
23 redistrict the state based on increases,
24 decreases or movements of population within the
25 state. Because Florida has grown more than

1 many other states in the last ten years, we
2 picked up two new members of the U.S. House of
3 Representatives. So we go from 25 to 27
4 members of the U.S. House. New York lost two,
5 Florida picked up two. Part of the job of this
6 process is to locate where those two new
7 congressional districts would be.

8 Because some parts of our state have
9 increased or decreased disproportionately in
10 population, many Senate and House districts
11 will change. In fact, Chairman Weatherford and
12 I believe that all of them will change, either
13 adding or losing population or moving their
14 borders.

15 When redistricting is completed,
16 congressional districts must be equal, and they
17 must contain 696,345 people. That is a hard
18 number. The 40 Senate districts in the state
19 must also be nearly equal at 470,000 people.
20 There can be a little bit of variation there.
21 And our 120 House districts must also be nearly
22 equal at about 156,700 people. There are
23 displays that you saw when you came in today
24 showing the current boundaries of districts in
25 this area and the number of persons who have to

1 be added to or subtracted from current
2 districts in order to achieve equal
3 representation.

4 But equality of representation, while
5 important, is not the only legal requirement
6 that redistricting plans have to meet. The
7 laws and the important court cases governing
8 redistricting are explained in detail on the
9 House and Senate websites, and we hope you will
10 go to those websites. The websites are
11 explained on the "Redistricting 2012" brochures
12 that were available to you when you came in,
13 and we would certainly make them available to
14 you as you leave today if you would like to
15 pick them up. That brochure summarizes the
16 federal and state laws, and outlines topics
17 that we really need your advice on and your
18 input on at today's hearing. If you didn't get
19 a copy when you came in, as I said, pick up a
20 copy when you leave.

21 The websites -- the House and Senate
22 websites are packed with information about
23 redistricting in Florida, including an
24 explanation of the laws and important court
25 cases governing redistricting. The two

1 websites, the Senate and House website, are
2 complementary, they are updated frequently, and
3 it is a great way to stay current on plans that
4 are presented and yet have an opportunity to
5 see the schedule, see how the redistricting
6 process is moving forward.

7 The websites also deliver to your
8 fingertips all of the demographic data that
9 will be used in drawing districts and the same
10 computer programs that legislators and
11 professional staff will use. That way, if you
12 want to, if you want to, any member of the
13 public can participate in building a plan for
14 your neighborhood or your community or your
15 part of Florida, or for the whole state if
16 you'd like, and you can also see all of the
17 maps that have been submitted so that you can
18 determine how they might affect your area. And
19 a large number of maps have already been
20 submitted.

21 Before, during and after this hearing,
22 House and Senate staff will be available to
23 show anybody the simple steps to getting
24 on-line, to building districts and moving lines
25 around if you want to do that, and if you want

1 to submit a plan, House and Senate staff can
2 show you how to do that. Don't be afraid of
3 that process. It is pretty simple. I am
4 techno stupid. It took them about 15 minutes
5 to show me how to use the software, the same
6 computer programs, the same software that
7 professional staff and the courts and also
8 legislators are using.

9 Recommendations from citizens and groups
10 of citizens will be made publicly available
11 immediately as soon as we see them. In fact,
12 as of this morning, 50 public submissions of
13 partial or completed maps and many -- over a
14 hundred other written descriptions for maps are
15 available on the Web, and many of them are
16 available in the lobby as you came in. So the
17 maps are there, and we would love to have you
18 look at the maps and then in your testimony
19 today say "the map that" -- and you can use the
20 name of the individual or group that has
21 submitted it, "that map works for us" or
22 "doesn't work for us, here is why, here is how,
23 here is how it ought to be changed." We have
24 received, in fact, a new map this morning
25 already from a Naples resident. And after our

1 final hearing in Clewiston, I am sure that
2 those numbers will increase. The submission of
3 proposed maps, the submission of your ideas
4 that makes sense for your community is the
5 single most effective form of public
6 participation in the redistricting process.

7 Now, the redistricting schedule under
8 which we are operating is imposed by the State
9 Constitution. That is important. There has
10 been a little bit of -- I wouldn't say
11 misinformation, but a little bit of confusion
12 about the timeline and the process. The
13 Constitution of Florida does not permit the
14 Legislature to act on state legislative maps
15 before the second year after the census; in
16 other words, 2012. Now, we have accelerated
17 the process as much as we are legally able to
18 do this year. We have moved up the 2012
19 session from March, when it would usually
20 start, until January, we have begun our
21 statewide hearings five months in advance of
22 the 2012 session, and we have moved up our
23 committee meetings from December to September
24 so that plans can be considered immediately in
25 September and there can be voting in committees

1 as soon as any committee wants to go forward.

2 I might mention that one of the things we
3 have learned in this process is that ten years
4 ago, the person who is now the Democratic
5 Leader of the Senate, Senator Nan Rich, she was
6 in the House of Representatives ten years ago,
7 and she was not even permitted to present a
8 map, she said, ten years ago, which was
9 absolutely unfair and it was wrong. And so the
10 commitment that I have made as Chairman of the
11 Senate Reapportionment Committee is that at our
12 first meeting in September, right after we call
13 the meeting to order, we are going to give
14 Senator Rich the chance as Democratic Leader
15 that she did not have ten years ago that she
16 should have had to take the floor first and
17 present any maps that she wants to present
18 alongside the other maps that are already
19 available and that might be available by that
20 time.

21 Now, it's been suggested that the
22 Legislature ought to draw maps first and then
23 say to the public, "Here they are if you have
24 any comments." We believe that that puts the
25 answer ahead of the question. We think there

1 ought to be no preconceptions created by
2 politicians, but, rather, public testimony
3 should be free and unrestricted. In fact, a
4 principal author of Florida's new redistricting
5 standards and Ellen Freidin, the Chairperson
6 for Fair Districts, both have provided
7 information, Ellen Freidin testified before a
8 joint committee of the Senate and the House
9 saying that there is no way that maps should be
10 drawn until public comment is heard first. And
11 we certainly agree with her.

12 In Georgia, the League of Women Voters not
13 only prepared and publicized its own
14 redistricting maps, but it organized a map fair
15 at the Georgia State Capitol to encourage
16 members of the public to present their own
17 alternative maps. Quote, "Our goal throughout
18 the whole process is to ensure that citizens
19 have a voice," said the President of the League
20 of Women Voters of Georgia, quote, "and what
21 better way to do this than bringing people and
22 maps to the Capitol." And we would certainly
23 agree with Ellen Freidin from Fair Districts
24 and the President of the Georgia League of
25 Women Voters that it is very, very important to

1 listen first, to have the public present their
2 ideas and have an open process throughout.

3 Our intent is to use the recommendations
4 made at these 26 public hearings and through
5 our Internet sites and through the testimony
6 that you provide in meetings in Tallahassee and
7 any input you provide your own legislators as
8 the basis for developing one or more options
9 for district maps. And it was suggested at a
10 recent hearing by one of the testifiers that a
11 county had gone through its own redistricting
12 and had established six options, and then based
13 on those six options, put those out so that
14 everyone saw them before the first vote was
15 taken. And Speaker Weatherford and I think
16 there is some value to that. So probably what
17 will happen is that based on all the
18 information we are getting from these hearings,
19 we will put out several options drawn from the
20 testimony in these hearings, and then those
21 options will be publicly available, you will
22 see them, and before any vote is taken, we will
23 have public testimony and any vote will be
24 taken -- will be taken in public. In other
25 words, what we are saying is, if you look at

1 the maps outside of this room submitted by
2 people across the state, if you look at what
3 the League of Women Voters has done so well in
4 Georgia, if you look at the advice given by the
5 Chair of the Fair Districts campaign, then the
6 maps submitted by people across the state of
7 Florida ought to and will form the basis for
8 the legislative process going forward. So if
9 you want to know where we will begin our
10 deliberations, if you want to know where are
11 the maps, it is the maps that we receive from
12 the public and the maps that are generated
13 through the legislative process that we will be
14 using as the basis for our recommendations to
15 the full Legislature. Throughout the process,
16 we will also solicit additional public comment
17 so that proposed maps can mature with the
18 public involved, all before the Legislature
19 approves any final maps.

20 And then the Legislature doesn't get to
21 finally decide what the lines or the maps or
22 the districts ought to look like. That is
23 subject to judicial review. It is a
24 requirement of law that any -- any proposals
25 that come out of the Legislature then have to

1 be submitted to the courts at the state level
2 and it has to be submitted for judicial review
3 at the federal level before there can be a
4 final map or maps.

5 Because our purpose today is to hear from
6 you, as soon as I conclude, Mr. Speaker, all
7 the time between now and 11:00 a.m. will be
8 used to ensure that as many members of the
9 public as possible can share their testimony
10 and be listened to respectfully.

11 If after our citizens here have an
12 opportunity to have their say, if there is time
13 remaining before adjournment, and we hope there
14 might be, then any member of the Committee,
15 Republican, Democrat, House member, Senator,
16 may make any statement, answer any question,
17 offer any observation, and, of course, any
18 Democrat or Republican member of the Committee,
19 if they feel so moved, can present any map at
20 any time for consideration.

21 Mr. Chairman, I hope that this description
22 of our schedule and our process helps set the
23 stage for a successful hearing.

24 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
25 very much. Thank you very much, Senator Gaetz,

1 and before we move into the public testimony,
2 we are just going to take about two minutes to
3 go around the room here very briefly for the
4 members to get the opportunity to introduce
5 them to you, and for you to know exactly who
6 you are talking to. I think we've got
7 everybody here, so I will start right here with
8 our friend from southwest Florida,
9 Representative Aubuchon.

10 REPRESENTATIVE AUBUCHON: Thank you,
11 Mr. Speaker, and I am just -- I represent
12 District 74 just to the north, and I am a proud
13 member of the southwest Florida delegation.

14 REPRESENTATIVE PASSIDOMO: Good morning,
15 everybody. Kathleen Passidomo, District 76,
16 which is Naples, Marco Island, Everglades City.
17 I am so thrilled to be home after spending the
18 entire summer on the road, to be back with my
19 friends and family here in Naples. I would
20 like to point out, our favorite former
21 Representative is sitting over there in the
22 corner. Dudley Goodlette, do you want to just
23 raise your hand? Thank you for coming.

24 REPRESENTATIVE NUNEZ: Good morning. My
25 name is Jeanette Nuñez, and I am proud to

1 represent House District 112, which consists of
2 portions of Collier, Broward and Dade County.

3 REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAMS: Good morning. I
4 am Trudi Williams. I represent District 75,
5 and that is the northern portions of Collier
6 County and southern parts of Lee County. Thank
7 you for coming.

8 REPRESENTATIVE LEGG: John Legg, I
9 represent Pasco County.

10 REPRESENTATIVE PRECOURT: Steve Precourt,
11 west side of Orlando, portions of Orange, Lake
12 and Osceola Counties.

13 REPRESENTATIVE CORCORAN: Richard
14 Corcoran, I represent Pasco County and Pinellas
15 County. I just want to say at the onset, too,
16 that I will probably stand on the side a lot.
17 It is not because I am not completely
18 captivated and tired, it is because I have five
19 children and my third daughter, who is eight,
20 she said she wanted to go horseback riding, so
21 Dad thought it would be good to take them all
22 horseback riding and, well, now, after a
23 bruised tailbone, I spend a lot of time
24 standing. I'd also like to thank the *Naples*
25 *News* for the hardest chair so far.

1 REPRESENTATIVE CAMPBELL: Good morning.
2 My name is Daphne Campbell, District 108 from
3 Miami-Dade County.

4 REPRESENTATIVE ROGERS: Good morning, my
5 name is Hazelle Rogers. I am from Broward
6 County, representing 1.8 million residents. My
7 District is 94. This is my 23rd hearing. It
8 is good to be here this morning. I hail -- my
9 cities are Lauderhill, Lauderdale Lakes,
10 Margate, Tamarac, Oakland Park, Plantation,
11 Sunrise, and, of course, my home city is
12 Lauderdale Lakes.

13 REPRESENTATIVE BAXLEY: Thank you. I am
14 Dennis Baxley, serving in the Florida House
15 from District 24, Ocala, Marion County. Good
16 to be with you.

17 REPRESENTATIVE BERNARD: Good morning,
18 State Representative Mack Bernard, District 84,
19 West Palm Beach, Florida.

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

24 REPRESENTATIVE CLARKE-REED: Good morning,
25 State Representative Gwyndolen Clarke-Reed,

1 representing the northeast part of Broward
2 County, starting in Deerfield Beach, Oakland
3 Park, Pompano Beach, Wilton Manors, North
4 Lauderdale, a little bit of Tamarac and a part
5 of Ft. Lauderdale. Glad to be here.

6 REPRESENTATIVE JULIEN: Good morning, John
7 Patrick Julien representing House District 104,
8 which is in Miami-Dade County. It is a
9 pleasure to be here.

10 SENATOR LATVALA: Thank you. I am Jack
11 Latvala. I represent the 16th Senatorial
12 District, Pinellas and Hillsborough, and I
13 apologize to you for being in my shirt sleeves,
14 but I had a little wardrobe malfunction and I
15 am a long way from home.

16 SENATOR NEGRON: Joe Negron, I am Senate
17 District 28, southeast Florida.

18 REPRESENTATIVE NEHR: State Representative
19 Peter Nehr. I represent District 48 in
20 Pinellas County.

21 REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Good morning, Mia
22 Jones, State Representative, Jacksonville,
23 Florida.

24 SENATOR DETERT: Good morning. I am State
25 Senator Nancy Detert from Sarasota. I

1 represent parts of Charlotte County, Sarasota
2 and Manatee, and it is great to be here.

3 SENATOR JOYNER: Good morning. My name is
4 Arthenia Joyner. I am State Senator from
5 Hillsborough, Pinellas and Manatee. That is
6 Tampa, St. Pete and Bradenton.

7 SENATOR BENACQUISTO: Good morning,
8 everyone. My name is Lizbeth Benacquisto.
9 Thank you all for being here this morning. I
10 am proud to represent Senate District 27, which
11 covers wonderful communities in Lee County,
12 Glades County, Hendry County, Charlotte County
13 and Palm Beach County.

14 SENATOR RICHTER: Good morning. I am
15 Garrett Richter, and I would like to thank you
16 all for joining us today. This is my district,
17 and I join Kathleen Passidomo when we welcome
18 our wonderful colleagues in both the House and
19 the Senate. And to Phil Lewis, thank you, to
20 the Naples daily newspaper, for making this
21 facility available for our public meeting, and
22 this is what it is all about is to hear from
23 you, and I just want to thank you all very,
24 very much for getting up and showing your
25 interest in our government. Thank you all.

1 SENATOR GAETZ: And my Senate district is
2 in coastal northwest Florida from Pensacola to
3 east of Panama City.

4 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: All right. I
5 think we got everybody. Thank you all.

6 We are planning on adjourning at
7 11:00 a.m., so we're going to spend the next --
8 from now until 11:00 hearing public testimony.
9 Because we have probably close to 50 folks who
10 have already signed up to speak, we are going
11 to try to limit comments to about three
12 minutes. We run on a point system, and those
13 points are given based on brevity, so those of
14 you who are creative in finding ways to deliver
15 messages quickly, we give bonus points. But,
16 no, we want to hear from you, we want to listen
17 to you, we want to give you the opportunity and
18 the respect that you deserve to have your
19 comments heard, you will get that, and we just
20 ask that you also show the same respect and
21 courtesy to the Committee. So thank you all
22 for being here.

23 I am going to probably read out three or
24 four names at a time. We also have a
25 spill-over room, and so as this room continues

1 to fill up, there may be folks in the
2 spill-over room. We want to give them enough
3 time to come over and have an opportunity to
4 speak.

5 So our first up is the Collier County
6 Supervisor of Elections, Ms. Jennifer Edwards.
7 Ms. Edwards, thank you for being here and thank
8 you for the service here in Collier County.
9 And after Ms. Edwards, we are going to have
10 Michael Reagen and then William Poteet,
11 followed by Chuck Mohlke.

12 MS. EDWARDS: Good morning.

13 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Good morning.

14 MS. EDWARDS: I am Jennifer Edwards, and
15 welcome to Collier County and a special hello
16 to our delegation members.

17 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Ms. Edwards,
18 I may need you to get a little closer to the
19 microphones.

20 MS. EDWARDS: Okay. Is this better?

21 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: That is
22 perfect.

23 MS. EDWARDS: Great. Well, as you know, I
24 am an election administrator, and in doing so,
25 I join my colleagues across the state in urging

1 you in helping us to provide great service to
2 our voters. You change election law, and
3 administrators like me implement those changes.
4 In addition to following the state and federal
5 election laws, election administrators and our
6 great staff have a passion to provide an
7 excellent service to our voters.

8 I want to share with you, and the screen
9 is behind you, the three requests that you can
10 grant that will assist election administrators
11 and our staff to provide continued outstanding
12 service to voters.

13 Number one, please respect voter
14 tabulation districts, or VTDs, to the extent
15 possible. Number two, avoid irregular
16 boundaries to the extent possible. These have
17 a tendency to split neighborhoods. And number
18 three, please adopt maps early in the
19 legislative session to avoid election and voter
20 confusion in 2012.

21 We have a few examples to share with you
22 to show you some of the irregular boundaries in
23 Collier County. Here is Congressional District
24 25, and next we have Senate District 39. You
25 can see this demonstrates irregular boundaries

1 in our communities. And next we have House
2 112, and then we have a representation here of
3 Golden Gate City. This shows a split in
4 representing House 101, as well as 112. And
5 Golden Gate City is also a census-designated
6 place, so here is a community that is split
7 down the middle.

8 The final slide, we have taken the liberty
9 of using, of course, your timeline and
10 depicting it in a colorful way, pink at the
11 top -- doesn't look like pink this morning, but
12 it is pink, and it is the length of your
13 session. Yellow is the number of days that you
14 have allotted for the review by the Attorney
15 General's Office, and blue is the number of
16 days for the review by the Florida Supreme
17 Court, and orange is the 60 days for the U.S.
18 Justice review. And as you can see, with our
19 -- with our primary being scheduled
20 August 14th, qualifying is the first week of
21 June, which is that green line near the bottom,
22 and if it takes U.S. Justice the full 60 days,
23 we won't get their approval until a week after
24 qualifying. And, in addition, election
25 administrators under federal law are required

1 to mail the military and overseas ballots 45
2 days before the election, which is June 30th.

3 I know that the time it will take the
4 other agencies to review your district
5 timeframes is totally out of your control.
6 However, this timeline emphasizes the
7 importance of my earlier stated third request:
8 Please adopt maps early in the legislative
9 session to avoid election and voter confusion
10 in 2012, to aid election administrators and our
11 staff across the state in being prepared and
12 providing good service to all of our voters.
13 And on behalf of the voters of Collier County,
14 thank you.

15 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
16 Ms. Edwards. Ms. Edwards, I will just say we
17 have heard from a lot of supervisors, but that
18 was the most detailed and probably informative
19 presentation I have seen thus far, and in a
20 very quick manner. Thank you very much.

21 Next up which have Mr. Michael Reagen with
22 the Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce,
23 followed by William Poteet and Chuck Mohlke.

24 Mr. Reagen, you are recognized, sir.

25 MR. REAGEN: Thank you very much,

1 Mr. Chairman. Good morning. Everything I say
2 this morning is on behalf of the Chamber of
3 Commerce, the Collier building industry, Naples
4 Board of Realtors and the Economic Development
5 Council of Collier County, and everything that
6 we say this morning has been put together with
7 the close collaboration of the Supervisor of
8 Elections' offices. I've got four maps and one
9 graph, and I've got five and a half minutes to
10 share them with you.

11 Number one, map number one, looking at the
12 southern area of our state, we see the issue as
13 it stands today. Several districts criss-cross
14 the entire east-west expanse of the state.
15 Legislators in these districts are put in the
16 position of representing several diverse
17 population. The current maps, frankly, seem to
18 hold limited regard for compactness, political
19 subdivisions and communities.

20 Map number two, here we take a closer look
21 at the southern section of our state. Collier
22 County is currently divided among five
23 legislative districts. District 75 holds a
24 portion of Collier's northwest corner.

25 District 77 holds a small portion of Collier

1 County north of Main Street and Immokalee and
2 extends north to Highlands. District 101 holds
3 a large section of Collier County, extends
4 across the state into Broward County. District
5 112, similar eastward expansion to District
6 101, runs clear across the state to Dade County
7 and the city of Durrell. And District 76 is
8 the only district that lies completely within
9 Collier County and represents the largest
10 portion of the western coastal community.

11 As we look to create a solution to this
12 challenge, the following three things are
13 terribly important: One, new boundaries should
14 keep Collier County districts intact locally to
15 the greatest extent possible; number two, new
16 boundaries should ensure the proposed districts
17 clearly are compliant with the standards of the
18 Voting Rights Act; third, new boundaries should
19 permit Collier County voters to elect
20 Representatives of their choice to the greater
21 extent possible.

22 The third map we have is a proposed
23 solution. It divides Collier County among
24 three legislative districts, as opposed to
25 five, allowing communities of interest to

1 remain better intact. The new district lines
2 are also better attuned to existing political
3 subdivisions. District 75 in the north
4 acquires an additional section of Collier, then
5 extends into Lee County. District 101 contains
6 a large portion of Collier County with a
7 western section of Dade County. District 76
8 compacts land-wise in the west, but remains the
9 only district held entirely within Collier
10 County.

11 Our fourth map shows representatives of
12 the same solution, but highlights which
13 sections in each county that lie with the
14 specified legislative districts. All of the
15 proposed district lines are respectful of
16 Collier County communities of interest, as
17 reflected in the Voter Tabulation Districts --
18 precincts, if you will -- submitted to the
19 Census Bureau by our Supervisor of Elections.

20 Graph. This solution achieves an equal
21 population for criteria of redistricting as
22 well. As you know, the ideal total population
23 per district is 156,678 people. Districts 75,
24 101 and 112 must lose populations. Districts
25 76 and 77 must gain populations.

1 The population counts for the three
2 districts that we are suggesting would be as
3 follows: District 75 would have 156,992
4 people, and would represent 38.4 of the
5 district's total population. District 76, 56,
6 82 with 100 percent of the population of
7 Collier County. District 101 would have
8 155,126 people, with Collier residents
9 representing 67.4 percent of the district's
10 total population. And Districts 77 and 112
11 would no longer hold sections of Collier
12 County.

13 Mr. Chairman, thank you, sir.

14 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
15 very much. You beat me to the punch. That was
16 very detailed. Thank you very much, and thank
17 you for what the Chamber does here in Collier
18 County. We appreciate that, sir. Very good
19 information.

20 Next up we have Mr. Poteet, followed by
21 Chuck Mohlke, and then I believe it is Liza
22 McClenaghan, or McLendon, I apologize if I am
23 mispronouncing that, but I think you know who
24 -- did I lose my mike there? Do we have a
25 malfunction? Okay. And we are back. Okay.

1 All right. We've got Mr. Poteet --
2 Mr. Poteet, followed by Chuck Mohlke and then
3 Liza.

4 Mr. Poteet, you are recognized, sir.

5 MR. POTEET: Good morning. I thank you
6 for the opportunity to speak before you, and I
7 am here on behalf of myself and no other
8 organizations, I want to make that clear.

9 I agree with Mr. Reagen on a number of
10 points that he had. I don't have a map. I
11 don't have a magic number of the number of
12 Representatives, but I do know more is better.
13 We currently have five State Representatives
14 that cover Collier County, two Senators, and
15 with that we get more coverage and more voice
16 in Tallahassee.

17 If you reduce the number, we are going to
18 have less voice, we'll have less people on the
19 committee structure, which is vitally important
20 for getting any of the bills through, and so,
21 you know, we are not going to be -- we are a
22 small county, so we need more voice. And when
23 we get people like Chairman Grimsley who covers
24 just a little piece of Immokalee, but also
25 represents the interests of Collier County and

1 is here on a regular basis, that is a very good
2 thing for our community.

3 And so I just say when you take into
4 consideration and you look at the east-west
5 districts, a lot of people would like to cut
6 them out. I have talked to Representative
7 Nuñez and Representative Hudson, and both of
8 them like traveling and visiting us on a
9 regular basis and do a fine job and they give
10 us representation, a voice in our legislation
11 and also a voice in the other representative --
12 or other county districts, so they know what
13 Collier County wants. And so more is better.
14 Thank you.

15 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
16 very much. We appreciate those comments.

17 Next up we have Chuck Mohlke, and then we
18 have Liza and then Shari Monetta.

19 Mr. Mohlke, thank you, sir.

20 MR. MOHLKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
21 Thank you, Senator Gaetz.

22 I appear here for three purposes. One, to
23 support unreservedly the comments of our
24 Supervisor of Elections, and hope that the
25 Committee will support the ideas presented to

1 you by Mr. Michael Reagen.

2 Second, I want to compliment Senator Gaetz
3 on his opening remarks and on the recent
4 reported comments that he made in several of
5 the newspapers that indicate the great
6 flexibility of you, Senator, and the other
7 members of the panel in respect to how you are
8 going to proceed to inform the public about
9 your final decisions regarding redistricting.

10 And, third, this expedited procedure that
11 you are on I think is in the public's interest.
12 We are so pleased that you have such a
13 representative panel here today to hear these
14 remarks, and we thank you very much for your
15 participation and for your -- we welcome you on
16 behalf of Collier County. Thank you.

17 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
18 very much.

19 Next up we have Liza, and, Liza, I am
20 going to ask you to say your last name just so
21 we get it on the record the right way.

22 MS. McCLENAGHAN: Good morning, Liza
23 McClenaghan.

24 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: McClenaghan.
25 I'm sorry that I didn't say that right. And

1 after Ms. Liza, we have Shari Monetta and then
2 Michael Lyster, followed by Chris Straton. You
3 are recognized.

4 MS. McCLENAGHAN: Good morning, Chairman,
5 members of the redistricting committees. I
6 would like to begin with some praise for the
7 present, move quickly to the future and then
8 review some lessons learned from past
9 redistricting.

10 Congratulations to you and your staff on
11 the creation of My District Builder. With this
12 software, the Legislature has created a
13 superior geographical information system for
14 the public use to provide our own submissions,
15 as well as to review proposals of the
16 legislative committees and other organizations.
17 In 2001, the Florida Legislature deployed
18 FREDS. That was an envy of many states. With
19 this track record, you know how to create the
20 tools needed to accomplish your task in an
21 unimpeded fashion.

22 Many states have already completed their
23 redistricting, and at least two states have
24 completed the review with the U.S. Department
25 of Justice for pre-clearance under Section 5.

1 The responsibilities and timeline of the
2 Legislature to reapportion and redistrict the
3 legislative seats and redistrict the
4 congressional seats following the release of
5 decennial census needs to be clarified and
6 expedited. Even as the current redistricting
7 process is unfolding, it has become obvious
8 that the voters may not know the districts in
9 which they will be eligible to cast their
10 ballots, and candidates may not know which
11 districts they will contest by June 2012 for
12 the August 2012 primary.

13 Submitted for your consideration is
14 proposal to amend the Florida Constitution to
15 begin the reapportionment/redistricting process
16 the year of the decennial census release and
17 complete it by the end of the year. Voters and
18 candidates can then be prepared for the
19 election season in the second year following
20 the census, along with the Division of
21 Elections and the Supervisors of Elections. I
22 have submitted this language to your staff.

23 Article III, Section 16, and Article X,
24 Section 8, require only minimal language
25 changes. If necessary, you should consider a

1 special redistricting session so that the
2 Legislature's budget process is not impacted.
3 The cost every ten years would be not as great
4 compared to the upheaval caused by this
5 extended process. All current steps would
6 remain in Section 16, but the Florida
7 institutions' portion must be completed by
8 December 31st of the year following the
9 decennial census. In Article X, if necessary,
10 the effective date of the census can be moved
11 forward. While the issue of redistricting is
12 still on our minds, please bring these
13 amendments to the ballot.

14 Another key component of the redistricting
15 process is the creation of the Voter Tabulation
16 Districts, or VTDS. The U.S. Census timeline
17 has a submission of these precinct-like units
18 early in the decennial census process.

19 I ask that you involve the public in the
20 review at the county level to assist in
21 identifying communities of interest and any
22 changes in any political subdivisions. This
23 will make your task easier and allow for the
24 public input at a critical time in the process.

25 Ten years ago, the Democratic party and

1 Republican parties of Collier County came
2 before a similar body and asked that you not
3 draw districts across the Peninsula from east
4 to west. I make that request again today.
5 There is little that eastern Collier County
6 shares with western Broward and Miami-Dade for
7 legislative and congressional representation.

8 Here is a quick review of what we learned
9 in 2002. Please respect minority districts.
10 In 2002, your districts plowed right through
11 the census-designated places of Immokalee and
12 Golden Gate, which our Supervisor of Elections
13 shared with you in a map earlier. Please
14 respect political subdivisions. In a midnight
15 drawing exercise, you divided the city of
16 Everglades City in two when you found State
17 Road 29.

18 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Ms. Liza, I
19 know we are about three and a half minutes in.
20 I would like to try to get to put a bow on it,
21 if you could, and then we will also take your
22 statement in whole and make sure it is part of
23 the record.

24 MS. McCLENAGHAN: Sure. I have submitted
25 it, thank you.

1 Please respect communities of interest as
2 shown in Senate 37 and 39, and then please note
3 that we had a lot of confusion, we, voters,
4 when we have split precincts.

5 Interstate 75 is a man-made obstacle, and
6 last time one committee took the east side of
7 the road and one took the west side of the road
8 and sometimes you drew it down the middle,
9 creating populations with no -- districts
10 within populations.

11 In closing, I would like to -- in closing,
12 I would like to remind the Committee that
13 Collier County is a covered jurisdiction under
14 the Voting Rights Act, and we wonder why you
15 are holding this meeting at eight o'clock in
16 the morning when the people impacted by that
17 portion are at work. Thank you for your time.

18 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
19 very much. Thank you very much.

20 Ladies and gentlemen, I don't know who it
21 was that shouted. I will handle it with the
22 timing, and we appreciate that. We want to
23 give everybody a chance to speak, but we do --
24 we've got 50 people to speak. I don't know
25 where Vi Steffan is in this room. Vi, are you

1 here? You are the last person on my list right
2 now. I want to make sure I get you a chance to
3 speak, so if everyone would be respectful of
4 Vi, we will try to get to her as well.

5 So, Shari, you are recognized. Thank you
6 very much for being here today.

7 MS. MONETTA: Good morning, members.
8 Thank you for visiting Naples today.

9 My name is Shari Monetta. I am here as a
10 private citizen. I have lived in Collier
11 County for 15 years today. I have been
12 following your listening tour since June, and
13 am frustrated when I hear special interest
14 groups at every stop attack a process that
15 gives citizens the ability to tell their
16 legislators what we want them to do when they
17 draw the new district lines. I am talking
18 about groups like the League of Women Voters,
19 who are heavily involved in the political
20 process and who promote civic participation.
21 Getting involved with redistricting is very
22 important, yet the League has decided to
23 criticize you rather than offer any substantial
24 ideas of its own. It is funny this is
25 happening, because a decade ago, the League was

1 the first group to publicly submit a
2 redistricting plan. I am not sure what
3 accounts for this change of heart, except for
4 the fact that now Amendments 5 and 6 are part
5 of the state's Constitution.

6 The League, which supports these
7 amendments, knows the wording of these
8 amendments is so vague that it will be
9 impossible for you to fulfill their
10 requirements. That is why the League refuses
11 now to show its hand and offer any ideas on how
12 you should draw -- redraw the district
13 boundaries. I am disappointed the League and
14 their allies have taken this position, but it
15 comes as no surprise, given that Amendments 5
16 and 6 are so ambiguous.

17 I don't envy the position of this
18 Committee. It is unfortunate that these
19 amendments will result in multiple lawsuits
20 being filed against any plan you ultimately
21 pass. I urge you to work as hard as you can to
22 draw good maps. Don't listen to criticism from
23 groups who have no interest in seeing this
24 Committee succeed in its work. Thank you for
25 allowing me to speak this morning.

1 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
2 Shari, we appreciate your comments.

3 Next up we have Michael Lyster. Following
4 Michael will be Chris Straton and then David
5 Easlick.

6 Mr. Lyster, thanks for being here, sir.
7 You are recognized.

8 MR. LYSTER: Good morning. I am Mike
9 Lyster, I am here as a private citizen. I want
10 to thank you all for taking the time to have an
11 open and transparent process via the website
12 and these hearings. As representatives of the
13 citizens, it is refreshing to see you go out
14 and listen to the opinions of the citizens
15 prior to your decision-making.

16 I am a resident of Collier County. I have
17 been a resident for 12 years. Our son,
18 daughter-in-law, grandson and granddaughter are
19 residents of Collier County. Our youngest son
20 is a resident of Miami-Dade. So I have a keen
21 interest in the future of Florida and your
22 activities.

23 The growth in the -- as you said, Senator,
24 the growth in Florida gives us two more
25 Congressmen, and Collier County has shared in

1 that growth and we would like to see you give
2 us our own representation.

3 Amendments 5 and 6 require contiguous,
4 compact districts. Good luck on that. As you
5 know, there are many municipal boundaries that
6 are not compact and contiguous, and so it is
7 going to be left to your best judgment to come
8 up with meeting Amendment 5 and 6 and
9 supporting the efforts of everybody you hear
10 from.

11 Finally, let me just echo the words of our
12 Supervisor of Elections. As a clerk in a
13 voting precinct for the last six elections, I
14 appreciate your expedited process and I wish
15 you best of luck to get that out as soon as you
16 can so that we can get our election processes
17 prepared and all the citizens notified so we
18 have an efficient and effective election.

19 Thank you.

20 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
21 very much.

22 Next up we have Chris Straton.

23 Ms. Straton. And then following Ms. Straton,
24 David Easlick and Jacob Winge, I believe, or
25 Winge, yes, I believe is what it is, and then

1 Joyce Fletcher.

2 You are recognized. Thank you.

3 MS. STRATON: Thank you. Good morning.

4 My name is Chris Straton, and I, too, am here
5 as a private citizen.

6 What I have in my hand are the five maps
7 that the county commission boundaries have been
8 drawn up and shared with the public. The
9 public has an opportunity to react to those in
10 a timely fashion. Even now when we anticipate
11 the Board of County Commissioners will be
12 approving these maps and deciding which map to
13 accept on September 13th, candidates who have
14 already announced for the Board of County
15 Commission seats are very concerned that this
16 decision be made quickly, because it will
17 affect who their constituents will be, who will
18 be voting for them.

19 The timeline that Mr. Gaetz explained
20 early did not state that the Committee would
21 work to come up with maps immediately. He did
22 not tell us when you would be having the maps
23 presented to the legislators to vote on. It is
24 critical that the people that want to run for
25 office be informed quickly so that they have

1 the opportunity to campaign effectively.

2 The Supervisor of Elections talked about
3 the concern of not having voter confusion and
4 wanting you to move quickly. We agree with
5 that, but the other side of the coin is the
6 voters are entitled to know who is going to be
7 possibly running for office.

8 Failure to move up the schedule to early
9 in your session is nothing more than making it
10 easier for the incumbents, and we all know that
11 when Amendments 5 and 6 were passed, the
12 electorate in Florida said we want compact,
13 contiguous and districts that do not -- excuse
14 me, I have to check my words -- do not favor
15 any party or incumbent, and failure to have
16 these -- your maps drawn up and approved
17 quickly in the legislative session is nothing
18 more than favoring the incumbents. Thank you.

19 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
20 Ms. Straton. I hope you can stick around also,
21 Ms. Straton, because I believe that Senator
22 Gaetz and the members of the Committee at the
23 end will have an opportunity to address some of
24 the questions in regard to the timeline and the
25 maps. And sometimes things get out into the

1 bloodstream about the direction or the timeline
2 that we have had, and I think we can clarify a
3 lot of the questions that you had. So if you
4 can, please stick around to the very end.

5 And after that, next up, we've got
6 Mr. David Easlick --

7 MS. STRATON: Excuse me, I think that is
8 important that everybody be informed of, and
9 not just at the end of the session.

10 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
11 very much.

12 Next up we've got David Easlick.
13 Mr. Easlick, thank you for being here, sir,
14 followed by Jacob Winge and then Joyce
15 Fletcher.

16 You are recognized, sir.

17 MR. EASLICK: Good morning, committee
18 members. I am glad to see you here in Naples.
19 I am David Easlick, and I have been here about
20 ten years. My parents came down in 1972, and
21 it took me a while to find them.

22 But my main concern is it is basically,
23 guys, KISS, keep it simple, stupid, because
24 this is going to be a horrible mess. I am a
25 member of the Michigan State Bar Association

1 for 35 years, and I know the legal fraternity
2 is going to be out there just tearing this
3 thing apart. Amendments 5 and 6 created a
4 terrible disaster, and I think that the -- you
5 know, the faster you can get this thing done,
6 the simpler you can get this thing done.
7 Jennifer is going to have an impossible job,
8 but she has given you some good help there, and
9 I think you ought to take a good look at it,
10 and Mr. Reagen from the Chamber of Commerce is
11 good, and, you know, if we don't do any
12 gerrymandering, if we look at this thing
13 compactly and get it done. Thank you.

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

16 Next up we have Jacob Winge, followed by
17 Joyce Fletcher with the League of Women Voters,
18 and then Cosme Perez.

19 Jacob is -- it says he is with the Collier
20 Youth Political Activists. Welcome for being
21 here, sir.

22 MR. WINGE: Yes, good morning,
23 Representatives and Senators. Thank you for
24 allowing me and other members of the public to
25 speak to you in this very important process.

1 I, first of all, would like to echo the
2 words of our Supervisor of Elections and others
3 in saying to please do this process as quickly
4 as possible. There is a time when you have to
5 put politics aside and put principle and people
6 first on either side, Democrats, Republicans,
7 non-party, because if you don't do this process
8 effectively and quickly, it is going to affect
9 all sides, state, county and even city level
10 politics, as far as candidates running for a
11 variety of offices.

12 I also want to say, just coming from a
13 history perspective, I am on the Board of
14 Directors of the Collier County Museum, I don't
15 believe that you can represent both sides of
16 the State of Florida, which is culturally and
17 historically different, effectively and
18 efficiently, not good or bad, effectively and
19 efficiently. I live in Congressional District
20 25 and I live in House District 112, and it is
21 not -- I am not pointing any fingers, saying
22 good or bad job, but it is about effectively
23 and efficiently representing the people, and I
24 don't see how you can do that when both sides
25 of the state are completely different in

1 history and culture. Thank you so much.

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

4 Next we have Joyce Fletcher, and following
5 Joyce Fletcher is Cosme Perez, followed by
6 Estela Perez.

7 Joyce, thank you very much for being here.

8 MS. FLETCHER: Good morning. Thank you
9 all for coming to Naples and being here and
10 giving us this opportunity.

11 My name is Joyce Fletcher. I am
12 Vice-President of the League of Women Voters of
13 Collier County, and was a local coordinator to
14 help pass Amendments 5 and 6.

15 I have been requested by one of our
16 legislators to not repeat the message you have
17 heard about maps from the League of Women
18 Voters at every stop. While I will not belabor
19 this point, I must insist that you get maps out
20 to the public. Now that you have heard what
21 the public has to say, we must see what you are
22 proposing and truly have an opportunity to
23 comment, not in Tallahassee or by e-mail, but
24 all over the state and face to face.

25 We know the Constitution mandates that you

1 complete the State Legislature redistricting in
2 2012, and we believe there should be no reason
3 that you could not have maps, true public
4 comment and be ready to vote the first week of
5 session in January.

6 Here in Collier County, we have been
7 forced to live with our county being divided
8 into five State House districts since 2002.
9 How can Collier and its history and -- truly be
10 represented in such a design? The 2010 census
11 reported 321,520 citizens in Collier County.
12 This would entitle us to just over two
13 Representatives. Please look at how to keep
14 the most of Collier County in two districts, no
15 more districts reaching from the Atlantic to
16 the Gulf.

17 While we do not have enough citizens to
18 have a Senator to represent just Collier
19 County, we do need to continue to have a one --
20 to have most of the county in one Senate
21 district, perhaps with southern Lee County.

22 I, too, Representative Weatherford, had
23 trouble with My District Builder, but, you
24 know, the Constitution requires that you draw
25 the maps, not the citizens. Besides, we don't

1 have all the input that you have gleaned from
2 the meetings you have held all over the state.
3 Please do draw the maps now and distribute them
4 through every media possible. Give us time and
5 face-to-face ways to comment so you can be
6 ready to vote on the maps in early January.
7 Thank you.

8 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
9 very much.

10 Next up we have Cosme Perez and Estela
11 Perez. Now, I am guessing perhaps that Mrs.
12 Perez is your wife?

13 MR. PEREZ: Yes, I think she is declining.

14 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Are you sure
15 you don't want her to go first? I don't want
16 to get you in trouble back home, so --

17 MR. PEREZ: Only because she is declining.

18 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Okay, okay,
19 all right. Good to see you, Ms. Perez. Mr.
20 Perez, you are recognized to speak. Thanks for
21 being here, sir.

22 MR. PEREZ: Thank you very much for
23 letting me -- thank you for being here. First,
24 my name is Cosme Perez, and I came here -- I am
25 going to read it, because I came here with my

1 wife to this county in 2002, and ten years
2 later, we are retiring now here. We have two
3 kids that are grown up, raised up in Miami and
4 they are okay. First we wanted to sell the
5 house in Miami and then come to Naples for our
6 dream house and retire here. We participated
7 in many community events without regards of
8 ethnic or racial concern, but noticed that
9 there was a leadership gap in the Hispanics.

10 In 2003, we participated -- we joined a
11 fraternity, and this fraternity conduct a
12 Columbus Day parade in Golden Gate City. We
13 helped organize this parade to bring to
14 Hispanics to participate for the first time.
15 That is a big group here in this county. This
16 resulted in the church that produced this
17 parade activated a scheduled mass in Spanish
18 with a Spanish priest that we still have now in
19 two churches. So the Hispanic groups here are
20 50 percent -- 57 percent increase, and Collier
21 County has its share about that. And there is
22 no -- I know that this may not be what about
23 the map, but listen to this. We have held --
24 even Jennifer with the elections campaign,
25 trying to work on the polls, but the Hispanics

1 don't vote, don't vote. There is a very low
2 turnout of Hispanic votes in this county, and
3 it is because probably the sign of this areas
4 and the concern they have, you know, who is
5 representing them.

6 As a part of the Hispanic -- I was part of
7 the Hispanic -- I was a member of the Hispanic
8 Advisory Board of Collier County Commission for
9 six years, and no one recommendation was ever
10 submitted to the Board by this Commission, by
11 this Board. And it is important, because the
12 issues discussed there month after month, the
13 Hispanics and the public didn't come to this
14 public session to listen to what we were
15 discussing.

16 Now, we can talk about dividing the
17 Florida map into 120 -- 200 congressional
18 districts.

19 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Mr. Perez, I
20 am going to have to ask you to help me wrap it
21 up a little bit.

22 MR. PEREZ: Yes. But we need leader of
23 Hispanic background to help get the Hispanic
24 vote out. And I want you to consider those
25 areas. There is no Hispanics here -- there are

1 Hispanics here, but not fifty -- 25 percent as
2 should be, and I think that they should have
3 this type -- this type of conference available
4 to them, too, so they can understand the system
5 so they can vote and be concerned. Right now,
6 they are not concerned.

7 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
8 very much, Mr. Perez. I do think it is
9 important to point out that Collier County is a
10 Section 5 county. What that means is that it
11 is federally protected by the Department of
12 Justice, and that any changes to the districts
13 have to be cleared by the Department of Justice
14 for that very reason. And so I thank you for
15 your comments, sir.

16 I apologize, because Ms. Perez was not
17 speaking, I kind of fell behind here, so I am
18 going to announce somebody's name that probably
19 was not prepared, but Annisa Karim. Ms. Karim,
20 I'm sorry I didn't give you more time to
21 prepare. Following Ms. Karim, we've got Jim
22 Burke, and after Mr. Burke, we have Patricia
23 Forkman and then Neville Williams.

24 Thank you very much for being here.

25 MS. KARIM: Thank you very much. My name

1 is a Annisa Karim. I am the President of the
2 Collier County Democratic Club, but today I am
3 here as an individual speaking on my own
4 behalf.

5 I want to thank you for coming to Collier
6 County. I would say beautiful Collier County,
7 it is kind of overcast today, but usually --

8 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: It is not
9 just because the Legislature is in town, too.
10 I just wanted to point that out for the record.

11 MS. KARIM: I thought it was because the
12 legislators are in town -- no.

13 I want to thank you for coming here, and
14 although these are comments you may have heard
15 across the state over and over, I think it is
16 important to make them again, because these are
17 the voices of the citizens.

18 This is the first time that I have
19 actually been paying attention and involved in
20 a redistricting process. And, of course, you
21 know that we are doing this concurrently. In,
22 you know, Collier County we are redrawing our
23 Board of County Commissioner districts and our
24 school board districts and, of course, we are
25 going through this redistricting process with

1 you, and it is very different.

2 Our Supervisor of Elections, I have to
3 congratulate her, I have to give her a big
4 thumbs-up, because her and her staff have done
5 an amazing job. They have given us five
6 different maps on which to comment. Not only
7 that, but they have actually given us the
8 opportunity on more than one occasion to
9 comment on these maps. We are able to make
10 substantive comments. Not only do we want
11 these maps to be fair to the citizens, but we
12 want to be able to look at a map and say, "You
13 know, I think District 4 is not right here. I
14 think District 1 here, you know, does not
15 respect community boundaries." And so we are
16 able to, as citizens, give substantive
17 comments. And that is really what I was hoping
18 for from the Legislature.

19 Given that we do not have maps, I do urge
20 you to adopt early in your session a map, maybe
21 by early January, so that we, as voters, one,
22 may have the opportunity to maybe know who
23 might be representing us, and, two, may, as
24 voters, know maybe where our district
25 boundaries are.

1 This is not a political -- this is
2 actually a non-partisan process. It doesn't
3 matter whether you are Democrat or Republican.
4 This is going to affect the state and all of
5 the decisions made within the state in the next
6 ten years.

7 So I urge you -- thank you for coming to
8 Collier County. Thank you for hearing us.
9 Please give us maps that we can make
10 substantive comments on and stop spending
11 taxpayer money on fighting Amendments 5 and 6
12 that the Collier County -- or, rather, the
13 state voters overwhelmingly approved. So thank
14 you very much. Have a great day.

15 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
16 very much. Great testimony.

17 Next up we have Jim Burke, Commissioner
18 from the North Naples Fire District, followed
19 by Patricia Forkman, Neville Williams and then
20 Charles Willits.

21 Commissioner, good to see you.

22 COMMISSIONER BURKE: Thank you. First of
23 all, panel, thanks for the opportunity to
24 speak, and secondly, I want to commend you on
25 the job you are doing in bringing this out to

1 the public. I do not envy the job you have in
2 front of you.

3 But I am not here with maps or demographic
4 breakouts. I am more concerned with the
5 language you are dealing with. As an example,
6 the district has to be compact. Well, I am
7 sure everybody in this room has a feeling about
8 what compact is. Let me give you mine. I grew
9 up in a Catholic parish of 15,000 people. We
10 could all walk to Mass on Sunday. That is
11 compact. Be careful with that.

12 The other one is political boundaries.
13 What does that mean? City, county commission,
14 fire districts, of course, and things like
15 that. That is a delicate issue.

16 But the third piece of language you are
17 dealing with that I really like is -- I am
18 having a senior moment -- practicable. Wow,
19 that is a good one. I can't figure that one
20 out. But my concern is you've got to deal with
21 it, thank God not me, but you are dealing with
22 it, be careful with it, get yourself some
23 definitions. Let's not end up in court with
24 every one of these. So thanks for the time.

25 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you

1 very much, Commissioner. It is good to see
2 you.

3 Next up we have Patricia Forkman. Ms.
4 Forkman, thank you very much for being here,
5 followed by Neville Williams, Charles Willits,
6 and Steven Heping.

7 MS. FORKAN: Thank you. My name is
8 Patricia Forkan.

9 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: I'm sorry
10 about that.

11 MS. FORKAN: That is fine. We moved here
12 a year ago from Maryland. We were quite used
13 to having a close relationship with our member
14 of Congress. Imagine our surprise when we went
15 to vote and learned that our member of Congress
16 was living in Miami.

17 We are living in the Lely Resort area. It
18 has been -- how shall I say kindly --
19 gerrymandered, and we understand that it is a
20 situation having to do with the voters' rights.

21 So one of the suggestions that I have and
22 a number of us that live in Lely that would
23 like to be brought back into the Naples family
24 is -- Representative Passidomo's district
25 includes us and Senator Richter's district

1 includes us. So we would like you to look at
2 those particular situations. There is one
3 Hispanic group that -- a small group that is
4 part -- that is south of where we live that
5 apparently has caused justice to go in and
6 scoop out many more of us than are part of the
7 Hispanic voting block. So that is the primary
8 thing that I am here to talk about and hope
9 that you will consider.

10 The other thing that I am quite interested
11 in, but I don't know really how you would look
12 at this, I worked in Washington, DC, for a
13 number of years, and I have to compliment you.
14 I have never been to a hearing in Washington
15 where there were this many people on the
16 committee who are here and staying. Normally
17 most of you would have left by now. So it is
18 really kind of great to see --

19 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Those are all
20 members of the Sergeant's office that won't let
21 us leave, so we are good.

22 MS. FORKAN: I came down here with a
23 strong belief that we should protect the
24 Everglades. And when I look at how one member
25 of Congress has, at least in this area, the

1 whole of the Everglades, it would be
2 interesting to look at, when you are doing the
3 congressional district, to look at whether we
4 could get two Congressmen who could represent
5 Florida more vigorously, let's say, for the
6 Everglades. So that was the other thing I
7 wanted to bring up, that one person is
8 enough -- is not enough, really, as long as you
9 can possibly get it out to like say Route 29 or
10 something like that where there is more of an
11 interest on the members' part that would be
12 representing this as congressional district.
13 Thank you very much.

14 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
15 very much, Ms. Forkan. We appreciate that.
16 Very good, substantive advice, and we will take
17 it to heart.

18 Next up we have Neville Williams, followed
19 by Charles Willits, Steven Hemping and then
20 Norine Hemping.

21 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes, thank you for coming
22 and for listening. And I just want to endorse
23 what my wife just said, because I can't say it
24 better. So I waive most of my time, other than
25 to say --

1 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: You are one
2 smart man, sir.

3 MR. WILLIAMS: But I don't think that the
4 Representative of District 25, U.S. Congress,
5 really wants all those alligators in his
6 district just so he can have a small piece of
7 voting block over here. And I feel -- I really
8 want to go on record as a protest that we feel
9 unrepresented. As my wife said, we could --
10 our Congressman was Chris Van Hollen, we could
11 see him anytime we wanted. I have no idea how
12 to get ahold of the Congressman over in Miami.
13 It does seem strange and really needs to be
14 addressed. Thank you.

15 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Very good
16 point. Thank you, sir.

17 Next we have Charles Willits.
18 Mr. Willits, thank you for being here, sir, and
19 I hope I said that last name right.

20 MR. WILLITS: You sure did, thank you.

21 I am a native Floridian and a resident of
22 Collier County for 18 years. I am speaking on
23 my own behalf, and my only interest in coming
24 today is to comment on the irregular boundaries
25 that have been mentioned already, Golden Gate

1 City, the area around Lely. And had I known
2 that our Supervisor of Elections had presented
3 the wonderful slide show saying the exact same
4 thing, I wouldn't need to come here today. So
5 I yield the rest of my time.

6 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: All right,
7 smart man. Thank you very much. As I said, we
8 are giving bonus points out for brevity, sir.
9 You are leading the charge there, Mr. Willits,
10 so thank you very much.

11 Now, Steven, I see that you are planning
12 on going before your wife. Now, is that a
13 smart decision on your part? I just -- I want
14 to give you every opportunity --

15 MR. HEMPING: That decision was made
16 outside.

17 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Okay. All
18 right. Okay, you got to ask first.
19 Mr. Hemping, good to see you, sir, and you are
20 recognized.

21 MR. HEMPING: Good to be here this
22 morning. I am really representing myself as a
23 citizen of Collier County and Florida, but I am
24 past Chair of the Democratic party, so most
25 people probably know that here already. But I

1 appreciate you being here, and I would like to
2 get at the issue, and it is the unspoken word,
3 the gerrymandering issue. I mean, we are all
4 dealing with that here. Both major political
5 parties deal with this across the United
6 States. But here in Florida, it is an issue
7 that we have to take up, and voters of Florida
8 are really fed up with gerrymandering, you
9 know. The reason the Amendments 5 and 6 passed
10 with 63 percent majority really represented the
11 citizenry saying, hey, it is time for us to do
12 the job and make sure that all Floridians are
13 represented, not just one political party who
14 happens to be in control at this point. So
15 voters want fair, compact, contiguous district
16 lines drawn, we have already heard that, but
17 that is the goal.

18 If you could bear with me, I would like to
19 have some statistics brought forward to this
20 meeting this morning showing how negative
21 gerrymandering really is to the citizenry of
22 the state of Florida. We have -- 41 percent of
23 our registered voters in Florida happen to be
24 Democrat, 36 percent are registered Republicans
25 and the rest are NPAs or other, which is

1 23 percent.

2 If you look at our existing congressional
3 makeup, we actually have 19 Republicans,
4 whereas we probably should have ten if you look
5 at the pure statistics, and we only have six
6 Democrats in Congress. This is a perfect
7 example of how to do gerrymandering, okay, and
8 how one political party has over the last 20
9 years taken control of the state, unfairly for
10 really the majority of the populous in Florida.
11 So I suggest that this is an issue that needs
12 to be taken up. I know it is a challenge, I am
13 not saying it isn't, and I know you've got
14 pressures, but we have pressures, too, and we
15 are voters and we would like to be represented
16 like everyone else.

17 If I could just keep going a little bit,
18 if you look at the State House and State
19 Senate, in the State Senate, we have 40 seats.
20 There are 28 Republicans, which is a 70 percent
21 majority, and 12 Democrats. When 41 percent of
22 the voting population is Democrat, I can't
23 understand why there's only 12 Democrats
24 elected. I do know why, because we have been
25 gerrymandered here for a long time.

1 So just looking purely at the numbers, you
2 can see that we really don't have a represented
3 democracy, and I would like to commend you on
4 your effort here, but I would also like to
5 challenge you to really look at gerrymandering
6 in a big way.

7 If I have another minute?

8 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: You don't
9 have another minute, but you've got about a
10 sentence and a half.

11 MR. HEMPING: Okay, all right. Let me
12 just say one thing about our community here,
13 and it's been brought up before. We have
14 Representative Passidomo here, who really is
15 the only one of our nine represent -- people
16 that represent us in State House, Congress and
17 State Senate, and we really need more people
18 focused on Collier County. We really don't
19 want Miamians supporting us, they don't know
20 our needs. And we don't really want people
21 in --

22 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
23 Mr. Hemping.

24 MR. HEMPING: Okay. Thank you for --

25 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Whatever you

1 missed, I am sure that Ms. Hemping is going to
2 get. So thank you very much.

3 Dr. Hemping, thank you very much for being
4 here, and I feel sorry for your husband that he
5 went before you. I know you are going to take
6 it out on him later.

7 DR. HEMPING: Don't feel sorry for him.
8 In 2011, we are a team and we are co-equals.

9 MR. HEMPING: Good.

10 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Amen.

11 DR. HEMPING: My name is Dr. Norine
12 Roberts Hemping. I am a first-generation
13 American. Both my parents came to this country
14 with their parents seeking the American dream.
15 My parents had little of this world's material
16 goods, but they gave me something more
17 precious, the values which have made us a great
18 nation: Belief in the common good, respect for
19 one another, love of learning, participation in
20 a representative government. My parents are
21 buried a couple hundred miles north of here in
22 Clearwater, Florida, where they lived for 30
23 years of their retirement.

24 My uncles, though immigrant kids, all
25 served in the U.S. Army, Navy and Air Force in

1 World War II. One of the greatest strengths of
2 this, the greatest generation, was their
3 unselfish willingness to work together. They
4 put aside their differences to achieve uncommon
5 goals from victory against Hitler to building
6 highways, providing housing for returning
7 veterans, to supporting quality public
8 education for all.

9 As a nation and state, we are again facing
10 immense challenges. Millions of Americans are
11 anxious, worried and angry. As state
12 legislators, will you take your responsibility
13 seriously and work to strengthen our political
14 process by ending the unjust practice of
15 gerrymandering? Or will you choose to take us
16 further down the path to despair by destroying
17 what is left of our representative democracy?
18 The Boston Tea Party was never about cutting
19 and avoiding taxes. It was always and only
20 about the tyranny of being taxed while being
21 denied representation.

22 You are public servants. What do those
23 two words mean to you? Are you using the power
24 and influence of the office you hold to blindly
25 serve one ideology, one political party? Will

1 you make choices pleasing only to your base?
2 Will you make decisions which serve only to
3 further enrich the millionaires and
4 billionaires and hope for enough crumbs from
5 their corporate tables --

6 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Doctor, we
7 would like to keep the comments focused on
8 redistricting, if we could.

9 DR. HEMPING: -- to buy your reelection?
10 Or do you believe that being in public office
11 is a sacred trust with all the people that you
12 must honor and never break? Will you rise
13 above divisive partisan politics and meet your
14 obligation to present fairly drawn
15 redistricting reapportionment maps to the
16 people of Florida in a timely fashion, or will
17 you behind closed doors collude with cynical,
18 mean-spirited partisans to draw gerrymandered
19 district maps that destroy any last hope of the
20 people for representative democracy, thus
21 further disenfranchising millions of us
22 Floridians?

23 Will you find the courage to use
24 taxpayers' dollars to pay impartial IT
25 professionals to draw up district maps which

1 are fair, compact and contiguous, or will you
2 keep spending more millions of taxpayers'
3 dollars in misguided efforts to undermine the
4 express will of nearly two-thirds of Florida
5 voters by fighting Fair Districts Now?

6 When one party gains a super majority in
7 the State Legislature, you are at risk to act
8 like the schoolyard bully just because your
9 numbers are bigger. Like schoolyard bullies,
10 you can hurt others just because you can.
11 Gerrymandering is --

12 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Dr. Hemping,
13 I am going to have to ask you to try to help us
14 wrap it up here.

15 DR. HEMPING: Sure. I urge you to turn
16 away from the extremist ideologies. I urge you
17 to listen to your better angels. Give us fair
18 reapportionment maps. This is the best and
19 only way to restore the people's faith and
20 competence in the Democratic party. You do not
21 have 160 choices, you have but two. Number
22 one, either you lift high the lamp that gives
23 us --

24 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Ms. Hemping,
25 we are about a minute over. I would really

1 like to ask you to help us wrap it up.

2 DR. HEMPING: -- fair districts, or number
3 two, slam shut the golden door in our faces by
4 gerrymandering again. Thank you.

5 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.
6 And for those -- for those who -- if we run
7 over, what we will do is if you've got a
8 written statement, we will take that. It will
9 go into the record. It will be just as
10 valuable and utilized as if you had a chance to
11 speak it out right here into the microphone.
12 So we will give -- everything that you want to
13 say will go on the record and will be a part of
14 the process. We just want to give everybody an
15 opportunity to speak.

16 Ellie Cantor is next. Ms. Cantor, I don't
17 know if I gave you enough of a heads-up. I
18 apologize for that. That is my fault. She is
19 with the Collier County Democratic Executive
20 Committee.

21 Following Ms. Cantor, we have Randal Long.
22 Following Randal Long, we have Joe Russo and
23 then James Kelly.

24 Ms. Cantor, I'm sorry about that.

25 MS. CANTOR: That is quite all right.

1 Very good, I need it. Thank you, and I am glad
2 to be here.

3 I am urging you to adopt a timeline for
4 redistricting that makes sense for Florida.
5 Failure to approve the maps in early January of
6 2012 will assuredly delay final approval of new
7 districts until close to election day. Vote on
8 the final plans on the floor by no later than
9 the end of the first week of session, if you
10 can do this by Friday, January 13th. The
11 schedule -- and I won't go into the schedule
12 for presenting this to the courts. However,
13 the Legislature does send the plans to the U.S.
14 Department of Justice, who has 60 days to
15 review, and if they take all that time, the
16 districts will be finalized June 18th. The
17 problem with that is obvious and been stated
18 before today. We need you to revise your plan.
19 While this may be presented by June 18th,
20 candidates, however, must register to run by
21 June 8th. And so, again, it is an issue of not
22 knowing what their district is, nor
23 constituents being well-informed of who their
24 Representatives are.

25 I had an opportunity to serve on the New

1 York State Senate Redistricting Committee as a
2 member of senior staff up in Albany, New York,
3 and so I really did learn firsthand what
4 reapportionment means, though our mechanics
5 were somewhat different a few years ago. I
6 have lived in Florida now for 20 years, but
7 while I know that 63 percent of the people
8 voted for Amendments 5 and 6, our Fair
9 Districts amendments, which says districts must
10 be contiguous unless otherwise required, must
11 be compact, as equal in population as feasible,
12 and where feasible, must make use of existing
13 city, county and geographical boundaries, but
14 what we all know and I learned firsthand by
15 experience is that the party that is in power
16 is the one that draws the lines and they have
17 the final say. And so, as you know, you have
18 this responsibility, and what I am asking
19 primarily at this point is to honor a schedule
20 that will allow for fair districts. Thank you.

21 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
22 very much. Thank you for your comments.

23 Next we have Randal Long, Mr. Long.
24 Following Mr. Long is going to be Joseph Russo,
25 followed by James Kelly and then Jeff

1 Dentinger.

2 MR. LONG: Good morning, panel. I am
3 Randy Long. I am a citizen of Collier County,
4 have been here for 13 and a half years. I was
5 born and raised in Coral Gables, so I know both
6 sides of the state. I have worked in central
7 Florida and I have worked in Palm Beach area,
8 and Broward, and so I have a pretty good sense
9 of the state.

10 As Mr. Willits said, I think that you have
11 received a mandate. You have received a clear
12 picture of what the desire -- I would just ask
13 you to be bipartisan, to be as a group that
14 cares for the entire state, no matter what your
15 particular ideology is, and please represent
16 Florida in the very best sense. I was so
17 embarrassed with our Congress and our President
18 in the whole process that we just experienced
19 this summer. Our country needs to stand up,
20 and Florida is the fourth-largest state, we
21 need to be the leaders in this country. And
22 please do the right thing for us and for our
23 country. Be the leaders. Thank you.

24 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you for
25 those words of inspiration. We appreciate

1 that.

2 Joseph Russo? Is Mr. Russo here? Good to
3 see you, Joseph. Followed by James Kelly, Jeff
4 Dentinger and James McDonald.

5 MR. RUSSO: Good morning, Representatives
6 and Senators. I know you are all thinking, who
7 is this kid here that is probably the youngest
8 person to speak today. My name is Joseph
9 Russo. I am a student at Florida Gulf Coast
10 University where Professor Bergerson here, one
11 of the smartest men that I probably know, is
12 one of my teachers over there and --

13 A VOICE: Suck up, suck up.

14 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: There are no
15 easy As in his class, I can tell by looking at
16 him.

17 MR. RUSSO: I got to try, come on.

18 Anyhow, I am here today to speak to you as
19 somebody that has been politically active since
20 eight years old when my dad took me out
21 canvassing in his city council election. I
22 have been very involved in the political
23 atmosphere of this state. But I am here mainly
24 to talk about the southwest Florida region and
25 its respects to gaining another congressional

1 seat.

2 With over 20 percent growth in the past
3 ten years, it is quite obvious that southwest
4 Florida, being one of the fastest growing and
5 one of the most prestigious areas in our state,
6 could very well deserve and outright needs
7 another congressional district. If we look
8 right now, we have Collier and southern Lee,
9 and that district that we have, 14 and 13. If
10 we can look at the maps, we can clearly see
11 that there is another opportunity to put a
12 congressional district right between the two.
13 Personally, I would propose Collier and
14 southern Lee be linked up in the current
15 district we have here, and then Manatee and
16 Sarasota County keep their other district up
17 there, and we plop District 27, the new seat
18 that we have gained, right in between in
19 northern Lee and in Charlotte County. And in
20 that, we can also group that district with the
21 interior and the rural counties of Hendry,
22 Glades and all the others.

23 But I want to again thank you very much
24 for having this transparent process and
25 allowing me to come speak here today. I know

1 it is a great opportunity for myself to address
2 all of you, and thank you very much for being
3 our representatives and for doing this process
4 very, very well. Thank you.

5 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
6 very much, Mr. Russo, and good luck in your
7 political future. I think everybody --
8 everyone on this Committee, we know young
9 talent when we see it, so good luck to you,
10 buddy.

11 Next up we've got James Kelly, and
12 following Mr. Kelly, Jeff Dentinger and then
13 James McDonald.

14 Good to see you, sir.

15 MR. KELLY: Thank you very much. I am a
16 member of the Southwest 9/12 Project, and also
17 a citizen of the country, although my -- I have
18 a party and I have affiliations and I have
19 interests, I am just a citizen speaking about
20 citizens being represented. So I want to thank
21 you for being here. I have been in the county
22 for a few years. I really appreciate your
23 taking the time. I had a printer malfunction,
24 so I am reading from an iPhone. I apologize
25 for that.

1 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: God bless
2 technology.

3 MR. KELLY: I am embarrassed to say it was
4 a backup.

5 Anyway, this morning I speak about my
6 feelings towards Amendments 5 and 6. As I read
7 these amendments, I realized that they are
8 actually very open to interpretation because of
9 so many terms that are not well-defined, and
10 that gives me great pause. I don't understand
11 how the words "practicable," "feasible," can be
12 interpreted, for instance, meaning -- when
13 their meaning varies so much from person to
14 person. How can you draw maps that will use
15 lines that seem practical and feasible as our
16 18 million Floridians who might define those in
17 their own way?

18 Another one that's been mentioned already
19 is "compact." I think words like "compact" are
20 also fairly relative and they are not
21 specifically defined in the amendments. My
22 question is, is there one standard for
23 compactness that you all as Representatives and
24 Senators will use when drawing your new lines?
25 What is the standard? I think it is important

1 that you have a specific standard.

2 Finally, the amendments stated that you
3 need to follow existing political boundaries.
4 They don't specify what those boundaries are.
5 Are they city boundaries, are they existing
6 state -- lines in State House, State Senate,
7 congressional districts? Or are they
8 census-designated places like Naples Park and
9 Lely?

10 My point in raising these questions is
11 that the open-endedness of these amendments
12 will most likely mean that tax dollars will be
13 spent on endless lawsuits over whatever maps
14 are drawn. I don't want -- I don't want that,
15 and I don't want judges to draw the maps. I
16 want you to draw the maps. While this process
17 may be -- while this process may be a sincere
18 attempt to get the maps drawn without the court
19 system, I haven't heard a clear explanation --
20 hopefully, I will -- of what you are doing to
21 prevent that. Is there a clear objective
22 standard that you are aiming that, if achieved,
23 will show overwhelming evidence that the
24 Legislature has met the standard required by
25 both state and federal law?

1 A couple of comments that I would like to
2 make is there's two young gentlemen that stood
3 up today who were the youngest speakers, and
4 they make the most sense because they speak
5 common sense. And I think that is something
6 that we can all grab ahold of as left and
7 right, whatever party we have, you know, that's
8 the way it is. I think as citizens of the
9 U.S., that is what makes us great. However,
10 elections do have consequences, and that is for
11 the majority and the minority. I lived in
12 Texas when the minority moved to Oklahoma to
13 avoid this process. I'd like a show of hands
14 from the minority who say they won't do that.
15 No, I'm sorry, I am just trying to make light.

16 Anyway -- and I would also like to echo
17 one more comment --

18 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: It is a long
19 ride to Georgia from here.

20 MR. KELLY: Did I say Georgia? I mean
21 Texas anyway. Oh, no, you're right, it is
22 Oklahoma, Georgia. Okay. I am from Georgia,
23 you threw me off.

24 Anyway, the last thing I would like to say
25 is there's a person that has been mentioned on

1 both sides of the issue, and that is our
2 Supervisor of Elections, outstanding. She is
3 -- I think she would be a great asset to you
4 guys in your deliberations. So thank you for
5 being here and thank you for --

6 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
7 sir, thanks for your comments.

8 Next we have Jeff Dentinger. Mr.
9 Dentinger, I hope I said your last name right
10 there, sir. Thanks for being here. And then
11 we have James McDonald and then Ms. Linda
12 McDonald, and if I was James McDonald, I would
13 at least offer Ms. Linda the opportunity to go
14 first, and then Mary Kniaz, I believe. I hope
15 I said that right.

16 You are recognized, sir.

17 MR. DENTINGER: Hi, legislative members.
18 My name is Jeff Dentinger, and I have two
19 suggestions for priorities on redistricting.
20 One is military. We are in a financial crisis.
21 To protect our state sovereignty, we need
22 independence. To supply our fuel needs for the
23 military and our people, I suggest making an
24 environment for corporate refining of oil. Any
25 area willing to build a refinery should be --

1 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Sir, these
2 are -- I hope -- is this going to be focused on
3 redistricting? Okay, good.

4 MR. DENTINGER: -- northwest Florida.

5 Two, education. This year, budget
6 appropriations for education come down to a
7 midnight meeting in the Capitol. Resulting
8 education funding for graduate studies was
9 increased, and undergraduate studies was
10 decreased.

11 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Mr.
12 Dentinger, I don't like to ever interrupt
13 anybody speaking, but this hearing is about
14 redistricting and not about -- there's a lot of
15 town hall meetings and opportunities to talk
16 about education and oil and everything else.
17 We would like to --

18 MR. DENTINGER: If you could come down --
19 if it comes down to making a decision about a
20 district, if you could lean towards public
21 schools, I would appreciate it. If you could
22 have a little bit of mandering towards public
23 schools, that would be fine, just no
24 gerrymandering. Thank you.

25 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Okay. Thank

1 you very much, sir. We appreciate that.

2 Next up we have Mr. James McDonald.

3 MR. McDONALD: I yield to the Chair's
4 wisdom and send my wife.

5 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: You are a
6 smart man, Mr. McDonald.

7 MS. McDONALD: You know, I used to be
8 tall.

9 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Ms. McDonald,
10 it is great to see you. Thank you for being
11 here, and your husband is one smart man.

12 MR. McDONALD: Yes, he is.

13 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: You are
14 recognized to speak.

15 MS. McDONALD: Thank you. My name is
16 Linda McDonald. I am here representing mostly
17 myself. Wait, you can't have that. We have to
18 know who you are. However, I am also the Chair
19 of Collier TIGER, which is Together in
20 Government and Education Reform, and represents
21 the teachers and non-instructional personnel in
22 the public school here in Collier County.

23 First of all, the teachers weren't too
24 thrilled about the timing of this, but since I
25 retired last year after 40 years, I am here.

1 So my big concern is we all know Democrats
2 and Republicans throughout our history have
3 done gerrymandering. The people of Florida
4 just voted and said stop. All of us said stop.
5 So that is what we need to do, we need to have
6 fair and -- oh, my goodness, I don't envy you
7 this job, because I looked at that and I
8 thought, oh, it is -- you know, it is not an
9 easy job. So nobody in their right mind is
10 going to expect it to be perfect for everyone.
11 Please, what we are asking is that you do it as
12 fairly as you can.

13 Now, I happen to personally know a
14 Republican on this group that I know is a fair
15 man, because I grew up -- helped his kids grow
16 up in our church. Yes, that would be the
17 Senator, Mr. Richter, who does still live here
18 as far as I know. Did you move? Thank you.

19 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Now, did you
20 say fair? Isn't he a banker? I am just
21 kidding, I am just kidding. We love Senator
22 Richter.

23 MS. McDONALD: He is a banker, he is a
24 banker, but he is really a good man. So this I
25 know personally, not politically, I don't know,

1 but, yeah, I pretty much do. He is a good
2 human being and he will be fair.

3 All I am asking is that the rest of you
4 please remember that we're not asking you to be
5 perfect. We are asking you to give it your
6 best shot, to not think, oh, wait, if I go in
7 there, I will get more Republican votes, or if
8 I go in there, I will get more Democratic
9 votes. Whatever side you are on, please -- I
10 live in District 101. The people in Broward
11 really don't have all the same, yeah, problems
12 or concerns that I have here. So I would like
13 to not have 101 include half of the coast, and
14 a lot of people have said that.

15 And I also just have to say how incredibly
16 wonderful Jennifer Edwards is and the work she
17 has done for this community. Thank you.

18 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.
19 And, Ms. McDonald, we have to agree with you
20 that Senator Richter is a good man, and much
21 like Mr. McDonald, the reason he is a good man
22 is because he married way up, so he is a
23 good --

24 MR. McDONALD: Thank you, I appreciate
25 that.

1 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: You are
2 welcome, sir. You are recognized.

3 MR. McDONALD: I appreciate that. I came
4 with 12 pages of notes today, and I am down to
5 this. So everything that I felt I needed to
6 say today has been said, except I want to echo
7 the welcome and appreciation to all of you for
8 being here. It is very impressive that you
9 would travel across the state, down the state,
10 up Airport Road, to be here today and to hear
11 what we have to say. I may not have voted for
12 many of you, but I respect the offices that you
13 hold and I accept the will of the people who
14 elected you to office, feeling that you were
15 the best candidates to represent all of us, not
16 just Republicans who may have put you in office
17 or Democrats who may have put you in office,
18 but all of us. I accept that and I respect you
19 for being in that position.

20 And I ask today that you respect the voice
21 of the people who supported Amendments 5 and 6,
22 that said, you know, 200 years of
23 gerrymandering, we're tired of it, let's go
24 ahead and clean it up and do it right. So I
25 ask you to do that. Thank you very much.

1 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
2 very much, sir. We appreciate those comments.

3 Next up we have Mary --

4 MS. KNIAZ: Kniaz.

5 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: -- Kniaz.
6 Thank you very much. I'm sorry, I was
7 struggling with that.

8 After Ms. Kniaz, we have Lydia Galton.
9 Following Ms. Galton, we have Douglas Wilson
10 and then Doug Fee.

11 You are recognized, ma'am.

12 MS. KNIAZ: Hi. My name is Mary Kniaz. I
13 am a new Florida resident. I currently live in
14 Lely Resort, plan to stay there the rest of my
15 life. I was really surprised, as were my
16 neighbors who spoke here earlier today, to
17 discover that I was represented by a
18 Congressman whose office is on the other side
19 of the district, and whose district extends way
20 over to Miami. I moved to Naples because I
21 thought Naples was wonderful, and I don't think
22 it has a lot in common with Miami.

23 Lely Resort is comprised entirely in
24 precinct 155. Right next door to us is
25 precinct 157, which I think is a majority

1 Hispanic community, and that is the reason that
2 Lely has been cut off and put all the way over
3 with Miami in a congressional district. We are
4 represented by Kathleen Passidomo and by
5 Senator Richter, and actually there are two
6 senatorial districts in Lely Resort, I believe,
7 divided by Wildflower Drive.

8 I am here to ask that Lely Resort be
9 placed in one congressional district, in the
10 congressional district that covers the rest of
11 Naples with whom we have a common newspaper,
12 common beaches, common banks, common businesses
13 and just a common sense of community. We have
14 nothing whatever in common with Hialeah or
15 Miami. So I would ask that if you feel that
16 you need to put precinct 157 in with what is
17 considered to be a community of interest,
18 perhaps a Hispanic community of interest,
19 although I don't quite get that, because
20 precinct 157, I believe, is majority Mexican
21 Hispanic, whereas Miami is Cuban Hispanic, and
22 it is kind of like saying Brazil and Portugal
23 should elect the same Representatives, that
24 they have more in common than they do with
25 their immediate neighbors, but if you feel that

1 it is necessary to cut out that one
2 neighborhood and put it with -- as it is now I
3 think in Representative Nuñez' District, go
4 ahead and do that, but Lely Resort belongs in
5 Naples, and I would ask that you put it in a
6 Naples congressional district. Thanks.

7 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
8 very much.

9 Next we have Ms. Lydia Galton with the
10 League of Women Voters of Collier County,
11 followed by Douglas Wilson, Doug Fee and then
12 Scott Duval.

13 MS. GALTON: Good morning, legislators. I
14 just want to assure you that I am not here to
15 criticize your committee. I just -- as the
16 President of the League of Women Voters of
17 Collier County, I want to make some suggestions
18 to you to make the process better.

19 The timeline that you have currently
20 published is really unrealistic. As our
21 Supervisor of Elections has already pointed
22 out, she will be unable to mail absentee
23 ballots by September 21, because the courts
24 could still be hearing redistricting
25 challenges. Your timeline gives candidates for

1 office insufficient time to qualify by
2 June 8th. The districts could still be in the
3 courts, and the challengers won't even know
4 whether they live in the districts, so how in
5 the world could they run?

6 Very importantly, your timeline gives the
7 electorate very little time for review. You
8 have to -- your maps won't be unveiled, as you
9 currently plan it, till late in January, and we
10 will have very little time to comment on it.

11 You are charged by the Constitution to
12 create these maps, and you are charged by
13 Amendments 5 and 6 to create them in accordance
14 with the rules of those amendments. So I urge
15 you, please, file all your maps by October 3rd.
16 Make them available to the electorate so that
17 we can comment on them, whether you do this
18 electronically or any other way, but make them
19 available to us. Hold the floor vote on the
20 legislative districts on January 13th. As you
21 very well know, the congressional districts
22 could be drawn today and voted on tomorrow if
23 you wanted to.

24 On election day 2012, the Department of
25 Justice could still be reviewing totally drawn

1 districts. If so, can you assure me that our
2 votes will count? Will we let the United
3 States Supreme Court decide another
4 presidential election because of the sloppiness
5 of Florida's legislators? Let's not be fodder
6 for Saturday Night Live. Thank you.

7 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
8 very much. And, Ms. Galton, I hope -- I know
9 you probably plan on sticking to the end. I
10 think you bring up some great points, and I
11 know that Senator Gaetz is taking copious
12 notes, he's probably got seven pages of notes
13 already, and he will address some of the very
14 questions you asked, so thank you.

15 MS. GALTON: Thank you very much.

16 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Yes, ma'am,
17 thank you.

18 Next up we have Doug Wilson with the ACLU,
19 thank you very much for being here, Mr. Wilson,
20 followed by Doug Fee, Scott Duval and then
21 Peter Simmons.

22 MR. WILSON: Good morning. It is a
23 pleasure to be here.

24 I would like to say at the outset that I
25 listened carefully to Senator Gaetz' opening

1 remarks, and I was very gratified by what I
2 heard. Others have expressed and you all have
3 received a letter from several leading
4 organizations of the Fair District coalition
5 which expressed concern about the timeline.
6 Senator Gaetz said in considerable detail that
7 it was his commitment to ensure that the
8 timeline would be moved as far back towards the
9 present as possible in order to respond to
10 those concerns. And, Senator, if you are able
11 to deliver on that, you will have earned our
12 gratitude and our respect, and I thank you for
13 that.

14 The -- of course, Amendments 5 and 6 were
15 about gerrymandering, and Steve Hemping has
16 spoken eloquently and with statistics about the
17 evils of that. And what he didn't say was that
18 the way that it works is that gerrymandering
19 seeks to spread out the votes of the majority
20 over a lot of districts and concentrate the
21 minority in a few districts, and that is how,
22 in a state with a five to four preponderance of
23 one party over the other, it is the minority in
24 registration which has two-thirds of the
25 electoral districts. Well, there is the Tea

1 Party influence in the last election, yeah, the
2 majority did a great job of selling in some
3 districts that they might not otherwise have
4 won. But this is an evil that is against our
5 democracy. It is an evil that has been
6 practiced by both parties, this is not a
7 partisan thing. And it is something that will
8 be remedied by observing and following in good
9 faith Amendments 5 and 6.

10 In that regard, I want to mention
11 something else. These amendments are not new
12 and strange and radical. I was at the Collier
13 County redistricting hearing just Monday night
14 on our own local county redistricting process.
15 Amendments 5 and 6 don't cover county
16 redistricting, but the criteria the County
17 staff displayed were almost verbatim with
18 Amendments 5 and 6. And what they explained
19 was that these concepts are common in every
20 jurisdiction in the country -- almost every --
21 that has seemed to eliminate gerrymandering.
22 These are not something radical that you are
23 going to have to really cope with. There is a
24 large body of experience in the country in how
25 to implement that, and all we ask is that you

1 proceed to do that in good faith, and in
2 that -- in so doing, you will fulfill the
3 promise that democracy gives us all, and that
4 is that the majority does rule and that the
5 public has fair input into that process.

6 Now, as an ACLU person, we will be
7 watching, and the districts -- the maps that
8 you draw will be -- and I want to say this to
9 you, I completely support the idea of multiple
10 maps. Our County staff had five of them, they
11 were discussed at length, they presented
12 various options, and the fact that you present
13 multiple maps will indicate a good faith
14 attempt to look at different solutions in
15 applying these criteria. That itself will be
16 evidence of your good faith. And the --

17 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Help me --
18 help me wrap it up, sir. I don't want to
19 interrupt you, but --

20 MR. WILSON: All right. I have delivered
21 my message the best I can, and I thank you for
22 your attention.

23 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
24 very much.

25 Okay. Next we have Mr. Doug Fee. Is Doug

1 here? Thank you, sir, thank you, and you are
2 just trying to steal those bonus points, right,
3 to be the quickest. We know what you are
4 doing, great job. No, thank you very much for
5 being here, Mr. Fee, we appreciate it.

6 And after Mr. Fee, we've got Scott Duval.
7 Mr. Duval, thanks for being here. Peter
8 Simmons is after Scott, and then Roger Brown
9 and Ms. Sandra Brown, and we will let them
10 figure out which order they want to come in.

11 MR. DUVAL: Good morning. My name is
12 Scott Duval. I am a resident of Collier
13 County, but I am also here as a member of the
14 Bonita Springs Area Chamber of Commerce
15 Government Affairs Committee, and I can't make
16 the meeting tonight in Lehigh Acres, so I am
17 here to offer my preemptive approval of the
18 maps that are going to be submitted this
19 evening by the City of Bonita Springs.

20 One of our main issues is the bifurcation
21 of the city of Bonita Springs. This happens
22 with just the odd boundaries that are present
23 in Collier County as well, the very odd
24 boundary of House District 112, House District
25 75, and then the Florida Senate District 27 and

1 37 are the districts that bifurcate the city of
2 Bonita Springs. So we just ask for you to use
3 wisdom in coming up with fair and logical
4 boundaries, using political subdivisions or
5 geographic boundaries, not man-made boundaries
6 like I-75.

7 So thank you very much for your time.
8 Really appreciate all of your efforts, and God
9 bless your efforts.

10 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
11 very much, Mr. Duval.

12 Next we have Mr. Peter Simmons with the
13 Simmons Group, and then Roger Brown, Ms. Sandra
14 Brown, and then we've got former
15 Representative, Mr. Dudley Goodlette.

16 MR. SIMMONS: Good morning. My comments
17 are brief as well. Peter Simmons from Bonita
18 Springs, and I would concur with the last
19 comments just made here to keep Bonita Springs
20 intact, and also, what a nice problem that
21 Florida has, we are actually gaining
22 representation in the United States Congress.
23 Many of the communities up north and states up
24 north and other places don't have that luxury.
25 They are trying to figure out how to draw

1 districts with less representation, so I
2 applaud all of your efforts.

3 We -- what won't change are the state
4 districts, that number will not change, but in
5 the congressional representation, I also urge
6 expanded representation for southwest Florida.
7 Applaud your efforts, I know you have been
8 around the state, and I would applaud everybody
9 that is here and involved to realize this is
10 not the end of the process, this is the
11 beginning of the process, it will continue in
12 Tallahassee and please keep up the good fight.
13 Thank you very much.

14 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.
15 We have Mr. Roger Brown.

16 MR. BROWN: (Inaudible) support it.

17 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.
18 He said supports Ms. Edwards' presentation in
19 the beginning. You are another proud member of
20 the Jennifer Edwards fan club, which I am
21 noticing is quite large here in Collier County,
22 so -- great job.

23 Now, Ms. Sandra Brown, are you also a card
24 carrying member of the club? Would you like to
25 speak? Great, her comments has been covered,

1 very nice. Thank you very much.

2 Now we would like to turn it over to
3 former Representative Dudley Goodlette. Mr.
4 Goodlette is, in my opinion -- and this is just
5 my opinion, I won't speak for the whole
6 Committee, but when I think of former statesmen
7 in the Legislature, I think of Dudley
8 Goodlette. He was a great leader for the State
9 of Florida, so thank you.

10 MR. GOODLETTE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
11 Thank you for reducing the size of the mike
12 here too. I will be short.

13 First of all, let me say welcome to many
14 of you -- many of you I have had the pleasure
15 of working with or working for when I was in
16 the Speaker's office, and I applaud you for
17 your public service. I also want to just sort
18 of focus for a couple of minutes on what -- on
19 the important constitutional issues that you
20 are about in this redistricting and
21 reapportionment process.

22 Obviously, reapportionment springs from
23 our founding fathers. I would urge you to read
24 Federalist Paper No. 58, written by James
25 Madison in February of 1788, 223 years ago, and

1 he spoke and underscored the importance of the
2 census and the periodic review and
3 reapportioning districts to ensure
4 representation in this representative democracy
5 that we are so proud of.

6 I would also in that vein like to
7 congratulate your staffs. I think that the
8 letter that you -- that was sent to the
9 Department of Justice on March the 29th of this
10 year outlining some of the issues that need to
11 be dealt with, particularly for counties like
12 Collier that are in pre-clearance counties,
13 that has been alluded to before and I won't
14 take anymore of my time to dwell on those
15 issues, but it was -- the letter from your
16 staff was very well stated, the issues were
17 very thorough, and particularly as it relates
18 to the subject of retrogression. And I know
19 Congressman Diaz-Balart addressed this group
20 and spoke about that, and I applaud his
21 thoughts, and I know that you are going to be
22 deliberate in that process.

23 And, finally, I would like to say that I
24 do applaud and I think that they're the
25 laudable goals in the passage of Amendments 5

1 and 6, and I do think that it does make the
2 challenge that you face a little bit more
3 difficult than the challenge we faced ten years
4 ago when I was sitting in -- privileged to sit
5 in one of the seats that you are occupying now.
6 But I would urge that the proponents,
7 successful as they were, 63 percent of the
8 people in Florida voted for those amendments,
9 and I think that was a strong message, I would
10 suggest that -- and hope that the proponents of
11 that -- and my good friend, Dan Gelber, their
12 counsel, would offer up to you some guidelines
13 for clarification as to what the intent of the
14 drafters of that language might have been, and
15 I think -- I think that they can do that and I
16 am confident that they will do that.

17 And, finally, I would just want to wish
18 all of you well. I know that, as just
19 indicated, this process is evolving. It will
20 conclude -- it will begin to conclude when you
21 are in the committee meetings beginning next
22 month and the legislative session that begins
23 on January the 10th. We are very fortunate to
24 have a quality representation from southwest
25 Florida, and I know because of my years in

1 Tallahassee that the representation from around
2 this state is outstanding.

3 Thanks to each one of you. Thank you very
4 much, Mr. Chairman.

5 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
6 very much, Representative. Always good to see
7 you, and please give Mrs. Goodlette our best.

8 Next up we have -- I'm sorry, I kind of
9 blew through that because we had some folks who
10 didn't speak, I did not give you enough time
11 here, but Gregory Gargan. Gregory, are you
12 here, sir? Thank you very much for being here,
13 you are next. And following that, we have
14 Ms. Marlene Gargan. So we have Gregory and
15 Marlene, and we will let y'all decide who wants
16 to go first, and then following the Gargans, we
17 have Colleen MacAlister and then Jasper Medici.

18 Mr. Gargan.

19 MR. GARGAN: Thank you all. Thanks for
20 being here. Welcome to Collier County and
21 Naples. My name is Greg Gargan. I am a
22 resident of Naples and a six-year resident of
23 Florida.

24 I would like to start by saying I am both
25 discouraged and encouraged when I come here. I

1 was originally discouraged because I saw the
2 original or the current Florida legislative
3 district map, and after seeing that, I know why
4 the Fair Districts amendment passed by nearly a
5 two-thirds approval vote.

6 However, I am encouraged also and a little
7 spoiled -- first of all, I am encouraged by
8 your presence here. I didn't realize I would
9 be addressing the whole group. This is like a
10 joint member of -- you know, a joint session of
11 Congress I am talking to here, and I appreciate
12 that and the openness of this exchange. But I
13 am also encouraged and spoiled because of the
14 fine job done by the Collier County
15 redistricting team who drew and presented
16 options for the Collier County Commissioners'
17 districts and school board districts this past
18 week, and I only hope that those drawing the
19 state districts are as unbiased and talented.

20 Now, I realize you are here to listen, and
21 in some respects you are just the messengers.
22 So please be aware that none of my remarks are
23 directed toward any of you personally. If they
24 are perceived as negative, it is not my
25 intention. They are meant to be constructive

1 and to illustrate a point. And I apologize,
2 because I have some redundancy in my
3 presentation, but I have to go that route even
4 though some of my remarks might have been said
5 before.

6 Now, I am fairly -- I have a fairly strong
7 sense that you have a fair idea of the meaning
8 of "fair districts" in the Fair District
9 amendments, but I would like to go over a
10 couple of the elements intrinsic to those
11 amendments just on to make sure that we are on
12 the same page. As a help in communication, I
13 have also prepared some visual aides to assist
14 in overall understanding. These are
15 technically old.

16 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: May we get
17 somebody to help out Mr. Gargan there? We've
18 got about 23 speakers to go after you, so I
19 don't want to rush you, but we have to kind of
20 stay on the timeline, so --

21 MR. GARGAN: Okay. I can just hold -- I
22 can just hold these up.

23 "Contiguous," it is a big word that in
24 this context refers to how two or more parts of
25 a district are joined together. I don't think

1 we should have a problem with that, but bear
2 with me.

3 Joining sections A and B of this district
4 makes them contiguous if they are joined like
5 this, with a fairly long common boundary. Next
6 slide. Joining sections A and B in this
7 district makes them non-contiguous, or not
8 contiguous. Fair Districts requires contiguous
9 boundaries, and the current map is why I am a
10 little upset about it and why I bring this
11 point up. We should stay with contiguous.

12 Now, I know that there are many
13 constraints, the boundaries -- besides
14 boundaries being contiguous, things like
15 boundaries must contain the exact correct
16 population count, boundaries should be natural
17 boundaries when appropriate, et cetera, et
18 cetera.

19 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Mr. Gargan,
20 we are -- I don't want to rush you. We are
21 familiar with a lot of these terms, and I don't
22 want to interrupt you, but everybody's got to
23 get a chance to speak, and we are going to be
24 very tight to getting to the very end, so
25 please kind of get to it.

1 MR. GARGAN: Okay. Once you have drawn
2 the boundaries, I want you to step back and
3 take a look at the silhouettes of those
4 boundaries, okay, like you did when you were a
5 kid and laid in the grass, looked up at the sky
6 and saw the cloud formations, okay, you see the
7 silhouettes, that looks like George
8 Washington's profile, whatever. Well, if what
9 you have drawn, if the silhouettes look
10 anything like these, okay, a kitchen utensil --

11 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Mr. Gargan, I
12 think we get your point, and I hear it loud and
13 clear, I think everybody does, and what we will
14 do is we will find a way to put those out so
15 that as everyone is leaving today, they can
16 look at each and every one, but I want to give
17 your wife an opportunity to speak and the other
18 23 people behind you.

19 MR. GARGAN: Okay.

20 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: But your
21 point is well taken, sir, I can assure you.

22 MR. GARGAN: I would recommend sticking
23 with some basics.

24 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: With that.

25 MR. GARGAN: Yeah, where at all possible.

1 I know that is not possible.

2 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: We get it.

3 Thank you very much.

4 MR. GARGAN: These -- these -- things like
5 these --

6 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Mr. Gargan, I
7 got to keep moving, sir, I'm sorry.

8 MR. GARGAN: I am coming to a close.

9 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: You are way
10 over. You are way over by two minutes, I'm
11 sorry.

12 MR. GARGAN: Really?

13 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Yes, you had
14 a great presentation, it was very entertaining
15 and I didn't want to interrupt it because of
16 the slides, but we've got to move forward out
17 of respect to the 23 people who have not had a
18 chance to speak yet. We've got to keep going.

19 Ms. Gargan, you are recognized. If you
20 want to finish his presentation for him, you
21 are welcome to do so.

22 MS. GARGAN: I had thought of that, but I
23 have to speak -- I am Marlene Gargan. Most
24 everybody calls me Mickey. I do have to speak
25 as a representative, the Chairperson of the

1 Collier County Democratic Party.

2 I reiterate everything Jennifer Edwards
3 said. She has got to be the -- among the top,
4 fairest, most transparent Supervisor of
5 Elections ever. She is just really helpful to
6 everybody.

7 It is important to move that timeline up.
8 It is unfair to have the maps drawn after the
9 date that the people have to declare candidacy.

10 The east-west boundary districts just do
11 not give proper representation. Again, Miami
12 and Dade County do not have the same economic
13 values, population statistics, everything, as
14 just -- it is too diverse. It needs to be --
15 we need to have a Collier County district.

16 There is also a need to -- for you to
17 encourage the state party leaders, the state
18 leaders, to not spend anymore money fighting
19 Fair Districts Florida. If trends need to be
20 more logical or more spelled out, then do that,
21 but stop spending the taxpayers' money for
22 that. And, again, do use districts 5 and 6 in
23 good faith requirements.

24 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.

25 Okay. Yes, ma'am, thank you, we are honored to

1 be here.

2 Next up we have Colleen MacAlister
3 Ms. MacAlister, who is on her way down. Next
4 after Ms. MacAlister, we have Jasper Medici,
5 John McCullough, and Francis Schwerin.

6 You are recognized.

7 MS. MacALISTER: I had waived, but since
8 you called me, I will just reiterate what has
9 been said by so many people about the timeline,
10 I think it is a concern. I consider open and
11 transparent to be open and transparent with
12 respect to the maps as well, and I would hope
13 that this Committee would figure out a way --
14 and the League seemed to indicate that on-line
15 was okay. On-line is not okay for everybody.
16 I would hope that you would invite this kind of
17 comment after you have the maps, I would hope
18 that you would have some alternatives for us to
19 look at, and even if you have to combine some
20 of these hearings so that we travel 30 minutes,
21 that is okay. I would just like your timeline
22 to include the open and transparent review and
23 discussion of the maps. Thank you.

24 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.

25 Jasper Medici. Mr. Medici, thank you for

1 being here, sir. I hope I said that name
2 right, and then John McCullough, Francis
3 Schwerin, or Schwinn, and then John Sorey, I
4 think is what it is, from the City of Naples.
5 I hope -- I am not sure I got that right. But
6 you are recognized, Mr. Medici.

7 MR. MEDICI: Okay. The name is Jasper
8 Medici.

9 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Medici.

10 MR. MEDICI: Medici.

11 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Yes, sir.

12 MR. MEDICI: Like the Medicis over in
13 Italy.

14 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Yes.

15 MR. MEDICI: Okay. Thank you for coming
16 to Naples. I appreciate the opportunity to
17 talk to you. I am a resident in Collier
18 County, I have been here two years. I have
19 been coming down here for about 15 or 16 years,
20 visiting a friend of mine who I have known
21 since the third grade, about 76 years now, so
22 we are pretty good friends, and I know Collier
23 County and Naples since then.

24 I know you have heard a lot about the Fair
25 Districts amendments on your listening tour.

1 You have heard from many people who want you to
2 follow city boundaries so that communities
3 won't be split up, so that districts will be
4 compact. However, I wanted to point something
5 out to you. Have you taken a look at many of
6 the city boundaries across the state? If you
7 look at these municipal lines, you will see
8 what the problem is. They are not compact.
9 Sometimes they are barely contiguous. How will
10 you follow Amendments 5 and 6, which tell you
11 to make compact districts, that use things like
12 municipal boundaries when these boundaries
13 themselves aren't compact? Districts will look
14 bizarre if you do that, and many times will be
15 neither contiguous nor compact. I am not sure
16 you will be able to follow the Fair Districts
17 amendments under circumstances like this. This
18 is just one of the problems with the
19 amendments.

20 The amendments say you can follow existing
21 political boundaries, but doesn't specify what
22 those are. I don't know if these -- those
23 refer to a line such as census-designated
24 places or current state legislative district
25 lines, or if there are some other form of lines

1 you could choose to follow, because the
2 amendments just don't clarify what you are
3 referring to. I hope you will be able to draw
4 these maps that will benefit the state for the
5 next decade. Thank you.

6 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
7 sir. Mr. Medici, thank you very much. We
8 appreciate that.

9 Next up we have John McCullough,
10 Mr. McCullough here. After Mr. McCullough, we
11 have Francis Schwinn, Schwerin -- Schwerin, I'm
12 sorry about that, and then John Sorey, the
13 Councilman from City of Naples, and you are
14 recognized, sir, thank you.

15 MR. McCULLOUGH: John McCullough, citizen,
16 Florida native, Ocala, West Palm Beach, Collier
17 County. I have also lived across America. I
18 came through Florida's segregated schools, and
19 you have no idea how proud I am to see so many
20 people of our minorities join us up here. It
21 is a wonderful growth to see.

22 The Constitution does not mention
23 political parties or special interest. The
24 republic charges you to be responsible to the
25 people, not to the parties. I think those are

1 very important.

2 I have come through the gerrymandering of
3 the state of Florida, and it has been a total
4 insult to the intelligence of mankind to see
5 what our legislators have done to us. So
6 finally we have these amendments that have been
7 passed. Now is the time for you to prove
8 yourselves. I look at the maps that we have in
9 the back, and I still see in the major
10 population areas some very, very strange
11 configurations. Now, I think the people of the
12 state of Florida have matured enough so that we
13 can take care of our whites, our blacks, our
14 Latinos.

15 So please keep that in mind. We do not
16 need this gerrymandering. We need the shapes
17 that the people of Florida voted for. Thank
18 you.

19 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
20 very much.

21 We have Francis -- there we go --

22 MR. SCHWERIN: Frank.

23 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Frank, okay,
24 that's true, sorry about that. I'm sorry I was
25 butchering your last name there, too, I

1 apologize.

2 MR. SCHWERIN: That is --

3 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Good to see
4 you, and after Frank, we've got John Sorey and
5 Tom Menaker and then Ray Lenardson. Good to
6 see you, Frank.

7 MR. SCHWERIN: I just want to thank you
8 for coming, Mr. Chairman and Senator, and also
9 Garrett and our own Representatives and
10 Representative Nuñez. I would just like to say
11 that this is an open, transparent process. I
12 want to commend you for your strong advocacy of
13 Amendments 5 and 6, and that you are going to
14 be -- not advocacy, but your pledge to adhere
15 to that -- those two amendments that were
16 overwhelmingly passed by the population.

17 I just want to give us a brief history
18 lesson. I sort of feel like this is student
19 government. And the reason I say that is we
20 can all talk like this, we have all our input,
21 but really what happens is that there is
22 judicial review and there is review by the
23 Florida Supreme Court and that then they get
24 reviewed by the Justice Department. So
25 whatever we decide in all the hours and months

1 of testimony will be compressed in very short
2 weeks. And so the Amendment 5 and 6 have had
3 the paradoxical effect of reducing public
4 input, because the judges could just -- could
5 just outline their own district, and how much
6 time are we going to have to testify or how
7 many people will testify.

8 Now a history lesson. We are one of five
9 counties. Why is that? Why in 2011 do we
10 still adhere to a 1964 Voting Rights Act? And
11 I just want to remind everyone that back then,
12 Collier County had 20,000 residents, it was
13 100 percent Democrat, we were a Confederate
14 state, we had segregated schools. We are now
15 living the -- we are now living a remedy for a
16 problem that existed under Democrat rule, under
17 the Confederacy, now 50 years later. We need
18 to change that. But since we have to adhere to
19 that, I am calling it student government.

20 So please do your best, but I understand
21 whatever you do may just be totally torn up and
22 shredded by the five or six judges that are
23 going to look at it. So thank you very much.

24 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.

25 Councilman Sorey, thank you for being

1 here, sir, and thank you for your patience.
2 After the councilman, we will have Tom Menaker,
3 Roy Lenardson and Charles Van Meter.

4 COUNCILMAN SOREY: Thank you,
5 Mr. Chairman, and thank you for being here and
6 thank you for taking your time out of your
7 schedule to go around the state and listen to
8 our citizens.

9 I am here today to speaking on myself, not
10 as a member of city council, because we haven't
11 taken a position on that yet, and one of the
12 things, Mr. Chairman, that I learned from the
13 private side is to be brief and not repeat
14 what's already been said, but just three or
15 four quick things.

16 Number one, I think it is very clear, the
17 citizens here, how they feel about certain
18 things. Amendment 5 and 6, you are going to
19 have to have the wisdom of Solomon to decide
20 how to take those nine variables and make
21 districts. I am a big fan of Jennifer Edwards
22 and what she has done as far as our voting. I
23 have served on the canvassing board, and I know
24 how dedicated we are to be sure all our
25 citizens are properly represented. A number of

1 items that we have talked about as far as the
2 way we redistrict, I support the chamber
3 process as far as trying to get all of Collier
4 County properly drawn.

5 So I thank you for being here and thank
6 you for all of our citizens and for this
7 process.

8 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Councilman,
9 thank you, sir, and thank you for the service
10 to this community and our state.

11 Next we have Tom Menaker. Is Tom here?

12 MR. MENAKER: My concerns have been well
13 expressed, and I pass.

14 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
15 very much. We appreciate that.

16 Next we have Roy Lenardson, Mr. Lenardson,
17 and after Mr. Lenardson, we have Charles Van
18 Meter, followed by Vi Steffan.

19 MR. LENARDSON: Thank you very much.

20 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Vi, I'm
21 sorry. You should have told me that two hours
22 ago. I would have got it right then.

23 MR. LENARDSON: My name is Roy Lenardson,
24 and I live in eastern Collier County, actually
25 in Florida's newest community, in Ava Maria.

1 I think you have been handed a tremendous
2 problem. I agree with many of the things that
3 I heard. However, words like "compact,"
4 "feasible" and "practical" are being presented
5 as the Holy Grail. I really think they are a
6 meal ticket for lawyers and partisan
7 fundraisers, and so I am very concerned about
8 where that is going to go. I hope that -- or I
9 would defer to the folks like Jennifer Edwards
10 more than those people I just mentioned, so I
11 would encourage you to do that.

12 I had the opportunity to work on two
13 different redistricting commissions in my home
14 state where I am originally from, 1990 and
15 2000. We have all of these rules, we have a
16 bipartisan commission that votes, we have
17 all --

18 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Would you
19 tell us what state that is, by the way?

20 MR. LENARDSON: Maine.

21 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Maine.

22 MR. LENARDSON: And we have a tremendous
23 problem where we have two congressional
24 districts. I would just like to give you a
25 very brief history here. We have all of the

1 words that they are presenting, we have a
2 bipartisan commission, it is a two-thirds
3 majority required, and then it gets the
4 signature of the voter and then it goes to the
5 Governor. It goes to the courts every single
6 ten years, and that is to divide up two
7 congressional districts of 100 percent white
8 people. So I would encourage you to really
9 listen to what the folks have said here today
10 and not expect to be handed a Holy Grail.
11 Thank you very much.

12 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.
13 And what I wouldn't pay to have the geography
14 of Maine and make things a lot easier, right?
15 But I am glad I don't have their weather,
16 right? So, anyway, thank you very much for
17 being here, sir. We appreciate that.

18 Next we have -- let's see here. Make sure
19 I get this right. That was Mr. Lenardson,
20 right? Yes, sorry. Charles Van Meter.
21 Charles, thank you for being here, and then we
22 have Vi Steffan, and then following Ms.
23 Steffan, we have Luis Bernal and then Laurel
24 Paster.

25 MR. VAN METER: Good morning, I am Zac Van

1 Meter. I have been a resident of Collier
2 County for five, going on six years. I live
3 here with my wife and my baby, and I plan to
4 live here as long as the good Lord lets me.

5 Thank you for being here today to gather
6 input. You have heard a lot of criticism today
7 from various interest groups about not having
8 maps for us to comment on. I want you to know
9 that I disagree with these groups. I think
10 being a good legislator means listening to your
11 constituents, then taking the appropriate --

12 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Charles, let
13 me ask you to step a little closer to the mike,
14 too.

15 MR. VAN METER: Okay. I think being a
16 good legislator means listening to your
17 constituents and then taking the appropriate
18 course of action.

19 The supporters of Fair Districts did a
20 really great job gathering petitions, raising
21 \$9 million, getting Amendments 5 and 6 passed
22 with I think it was a 63 percent vote, if I am
23 correct there. However, I think that they have
24 only done half of the work. Now that these
25 amendments are part of our Constitution, the

1 supporters of Fair Districts should explain
2 what the language of the amendments actually
3 means by providing you with at least, and I
4 mean at least, a legal brief. They should
5 offer maps to show what a fair district
6 actually looks like, the shape of and -- or
7 whatever they are talking about. I really
8 would like to see an example of that.

9 The amendments also contain this vague,
10 fuzzy, very misconstrued language like
11 "compact," "feasible," I think one was
12 "practicable," I didn't even know that was a
13 word, which Fair Districts knew, and they knew
14 this, that they would make this basically
15 impossible to implement. Since these
16 amendments will be so difficult to implement, I
17 mean very difficult, the courts are going to
18 wind up drawing these new districts, which is
19 going to do one thing, it is going to weaken
20 the power of the Legislature, and the entire
21 purpose of Fair Districts, it is going to
22 weaken that as well.

23 Please know that many of us here in
24 Collier County appreciate your efforts and
25 don't want the courts to draw the new maps. I

1 hope this outcome doesn't come to pass, but my
2 -- and I hope you will be able to draw good
3 maps for our state. Thank you for your
4 service. I appreciate your time this morning.

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

7 Vi, thank you very much for your patience,
8 and we got to you and we've got some folks
9 after you, so thank you very much.

10 MS. STEFFAN: Yes, you did, yes,
11 congratulations. Thank you for the opportunity
12 to speak before this group on this very
13 important issue, and I also want to thank every
14 single one of you for being here today.
15 Everyone here in Collier County and the state
16 of Florida appreciates your attendance here
17 before us today.

18 My name is Vi Steffan, and now sometimes I
19 will be known as V. I am from -- I am a member
20 of the League of Women Voters.

21 In 2010, 63 percent of the electorate
22 voted in favor of the Fair Districts Amendments
23 5 and 6 to our State Constitution. That is an
24 essential part and requirement of this whole
25 redistricting process. The State Legislature

1 attacked the language of Amendments 5 and 6 and
2 lost at the Supreme Court level. Having now to
3 face the mandate of the electorate to follow
4 the rational, non-political method of shaping
5 the state and federal districts, the State
6 Legislature is spending taxpayer money in suing
7 to invalidate Amendment 6 and declare it
8 unconstitutional, putting the citizens of
9 Florida in a very unique position of actually
10 suing themselves over an issue in which
11 63 percent of us approve. The citizens want
12 the Legislature to implement the Fair Districts
13 standards required by the constitutional
14 provisions passed by two-thirds of the
15 electorate last year.

16 I was pleased to hear Senator Gaetz'
17 description of the process that will be
18 undertaken, and I urge the Legislature to
19 seriously consider the recommendations offered
20 by the public. Sadly, that hasn't always been
21 the case, specifically in 2002 redistricting
22 process in which we've ended up with the
23 gerrymandered maps that we now have. But I
24 also want to urge the Legislature on behalf of
25 the Florida citizens to immediately withdraw

1 the expensive Amendment 6 lawsuit and respect
2 the will of Florida voters who want the new
3 Fair Districting standards in that amendment to
4 be applied. Thank you for your time.

5 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
6 very much. We appreciate that, Vi. And
7 although you may have a short-term nickname
8 that is new, I can assure you, Senator Gaetz,
9 people have been much more creative in
10 nicknames for the two of us over the last six
11 weeks, so we appreciate you allowing me to mess
12 up your name.

13 Next up we have Laurel Paster. Ms.
14 Paster, thank you very much for being here --
15 actually, I'm sorry, Ms. Paster, I think I may
16 have skipped someone. Luis Bernal? I had Mr.
17 Bernal first and then Ms. Paster. Mr. Bernal
18 is with the Council for Hispanic Business
19 Professionals, then Ms. Paster, followed by
20 Alexander, I believe, Grantt and Steve Hart.

21 MR. BERNAL: Good morning, Senators and
22 Representatives. Good morning, everybody. My
23 name is Luis Bernal. I am a board member of
24 the Council for Hispanic Business
25 Professionals, an organization created by the

1 Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce. I am a
2 resident of north Naples for six years now. I
3 was born in Columbia and become a citizen of
4 the United States in 2005.

5 I want to thank you -- to thank all of you
6 on the Committee for being here and for
7 listening to us citizens before drawing your
8 district maps.

9 I am here today to remind you a little bit
10 about minority representation. Collier County
11 is one of the only five counties in Florida
12 whose entire electoral system is monitored by
13 the United States Department of Justice under
14 Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act because of
15 past discrimination against Hispanics. We
16 demand change to ensure that southwest Florida
17 Hispanics have the ability to elect their
18 Representative of our choice today and for
19 years to come.

20 You may be aware that in the past ten
21 years, the Hispanic population in Collier
22 County has increased by 69 percent. Whether we
23 like that or not, that is a trend that is being
24 like that for years to come, it is being across
25 the country. And Hispanics today are

1 26 percent of the county population, the
2 largest minority in Collier. Hispanics are
3 here, not only in Miami. I used to live in
4 Broward County, my son was born there, so I
5 know Hispanics in both parts of the swamp, but
6 we are here.

7 Currently, portions of Collier County are
8 part of the -- of a district based in
9 Miami-Dade County, which evidently raises
10 strong questions to common southwest
11 Floridians. I live, as I said, for five years
12 in Broward, and moved to Naples for a number of
13 reasons that are shared today by many Hispanics
14 living now in southwest Florida.

15 Southwest Florida got its name for a
16 reason. It is not just south Florida. This
17 vertical boundary between Collier and Broward
18 Counties is like that for some reason. We are
19 living in a distant part of our state which
20 should not be regarded as an appendix of any
21 other region. The five-county area of
22 southwest Florida includes counties other than
23 Miami-Dade or Broward. It just makes sense.
24 Nonetheless, a principal position of the maps,
25 the district -- the different districts, the

1 maps show different shades that reflect very
2 little the daily concerns of southwest
3 Floridians, especially those residents like
4 myself who live here year-round.

5 With all my respect, I urge you to make
6 sure Hispanic representation is commensurate
7 with a current demographic trend across the
8 state and the country. Most importantly, I
9 invite you and all elected officials to
10 overcome prejudice and be aware of the rise
11 in -- raise in economic, cultural and political
12 influence of Hispanics in Florida and elsewhere
13 in the United States, and adjust your political
14 strategies accordingly.

15 Thank you for visiting Naples, and please
16 come more often. Thank you.

17 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you.

18 Next up, Ms. Paster, thank you for your
19 patience, ma'am, and we look forward to hearing
20 from you, and then following you will be
21 Alexander Grantt, Steve Hart and Matthew
22 Coppers.

23 MS. PASTER: Yeah, thank you so much for
24 coming. If I were you, I would be completely
25 zoned out by now, I think, after hearing so

1 many speakers and the repetition.

2 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: We are
3 building up an endurance with all these
4 meetings around the state, so --

5 MS. PASTER: Good for you.

6 I am interested, as many of the speakers
7 have been, to see redistricting in Florida that
8 will represent all constituencies. I am also
9 concerned about the timeline that legislators
10 are planning to follow to complete the
11 redistricting. I am not going to repeat the
12 Amendments 5 and 6 and the gerrymandering
13 parts, because you've heard it all.

14 If the legislators follows their present
15 plan, though, districts will not be finalized
16 before said deadline, which will make it more
17 difficult or impossible for any challenger to
18 mount an effective campaign. I am hoping that
19 you will make the final plans by Friday,
20 January 13th, 2012, so that people who want to
21 run for office will know which district they
22 will be running in and the boundaries of that
23 district before the qualifying deadline. If
24 fair elections are to exist, the time necessary
25 for the various segments of the process, which

1 Jennifer Edwards outlined so carefully, they
2 must be acknowledged and respected. For
3 Florida to become respected as a responsible
4 and fair state once again, after our history,
5 we need to have this occur. Thank you.

6 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
7 very much.

8 Next we have Alexander Grantt, followed by
9 Steve Hart, Matthew Coppers and Douglas Rankin.

10 MR. GRANTT: Yes, good morning, Alexander
11 Grantt. A little background: I was on the
12 original incorporation committee for the City
13 of Bonita Springs, so I did do six districts
14 for city council when I was on there. I always
15 -- I was on the local planning agency for the
16 City the first time for four years, and I was
17 on the city council for four years. From my
18 educational background, I have a Master's
19 degree from North Carolina State University,
20 that's 40 years ago, but I minored in
21 statistics in that -- for that Master's degree,
22 and even though it was for pigs and horses, et
23 cetera, but people, it is the same situation,
24 okay, just put people instead of pigs.

25 Okay. Now, we have -- in Lee County, we

1 have 635,000 permanent residents. We have
2 325,000 permanent residents in Collier County.
3 That is 960,000 people. State Senate, you have
4 480,000, roughly, in each State Senate
5 district. Take the 960,000 people in Lee and
6 Collier County, the southern portion of Collier
7 -- of all of Lee -- Collier County, southern
8 portion of Lee County, one State Senate
9 district, one State Senate district for the
10 rest of Lee County, and that takes care of two
11 State Senate districts.

12 For the House District 75 -- I am from
13 Bonita Springs. We want to have all of Bonita
14 Springs in one State House district. Simplest
15 thing to do, to put all of the city of Bonita
16 Springs, all of town of Ft. Myers Beach, all of
17 Estero Fire District, all of the San Carlos
18 Park Fire District and the South Trail Fire
19 district in one State House district. That
20 takes care of your 160,000 people for that
21 House district.

22 On the U.S. Senate -- U.S. Senate -- U.S.
23 Congress, sorry. U.S. Congress, you have -- in
24 order to have two U.S. Congressmen representing
25 southwest Florida, you need 1,400,000 people.

1 Okay. So that is 700,000 people per U.S. House
2 district. You have to have -- what I would
3 recommend is to have Collier, Lee -- all of
4 Collier County, all of Lee County, all of
5 Charlotte County, that would give you 160,000
6 people -- 1,160,000 people in those three
7 counties for two congressional seats. If you
8 include DeSoto, Glades, Hendry and Highlands
9 County, you could probably wind up with another
10 200,000 people.

11 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Mr. Grantt,
12 this is great information, but I am going to
13 have to ask you to wrap it up.

14 MR. GRANTT: Okay. But that is how I
15 would separate this into two U.S. House
16 districts.

17 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you for
18 that counsel. That is very good -- very good
19 advice. Thank you.

20 Next up we have Steve Hart, followed by
21 Matthew Coppers and then Douglas Rankin. Hart
22 waiving? Okay. Thank you very much, sir,
23 thanks for being here. Both physically waving
24 and figuratively waiving, thank you, that is
25 good.

1 Next we have Matthew Coppers.

2 Mr. Coppers, you are here, and then finally we
3 have Douglas Rankin. After Mr. Rankin goes, we
4 are going to give members of the Committee an
5 opportunity to ask -- to offer any insight or
6 ask any -- or offer some solutions or answer
7 some questions, and then finally, Senator Gaetz
8 was on 15 pages of notes an hour ago, I don't
9 know how many he has now, but he's got a lot of
10 answers for questions that have been asked. I
11 want to give him time to address the audience
12 as well, let you hear from him.

13 So, Mr. Coppers, you are recognized to
14 speak, sir.

15 MR. COPPENS: First off, I want to
16 apologize for my horrible handwriting. It is
17 actually Matthew Coppens.

18 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: No, it is
19 probably my eyes, don't worry.

20 MR. COPPENS: I have a lot of doctors and
21 lawyers in my family, so I get their
22 handwriting.

23 I am actually a former member of student
24 government, and I could say what is happening
25 here today is not student government. This is

1 actually Florida democracy in action, and what
2 happens here today does actually represent all
3 Floridians and for the next ten years. So the
4 person that said that before me really was
5 wrong.

6 A lot of what has been said before is what
7 I really do want to echo. I am a member of
8 the -- pardon me -- of the Greg Gargan fan
9 club. I love on how easily drawn out it was.
10 Please try to implement something similar to
11 that. I have seen it done before. Alabama
12 already has theirs drawn out. We would love to
13 see something like that here.

14 Floridians did want fair, compact and
15 contiguous districts throughout the state, and
16 the passage of Amendments 5 and 6 sent a
17 message that we no longer care for
18 gerrymandering, pretty simple. Three point one
19 million Floridians supported this -- these two
20 amendments, and that is something that I do
21 want to impress on you guys. This is something
22 that the Floridians do want, and we just ask
23 that you do implement it in a fair and timely
24 manner. Thank you.

25 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you

1 very much, Mr. Coppens. I'm sorry I misspoke
2 on your name.

3 Last, but certainly not least, sir we have
4 Mr. Douglas Rankin.

5 MR. RANKIN: Right, and while I am a
6 Republican party official, since we have
7 approved nothing, I am here as an individual.

8 I have lived in Florida my entire life,
9 except for a few months. My family has been on
10 the lower west coast of Florida since 1925.
11 And I will tell you from a number of situations
12 that the west coast is not the east coast, and
13 please keep it that way. All you have to do is
14 go look at the true color Landsat photograph up
15 in St. Petersburg Aquarium, you will see our
16 coast is green, and theirs is asphalt and
17 concrete. No offense, but that is what the
18 photograph shows.

19 Historically, I-95, or before that, U.S. 1
20 migrated to the east coast and before it became
21 full and like that, and then I-75, or U.S. 41
22 before that, migrated to the west coast. They
23 are entirely different situations. I have been
24 here in Naples for 28 years. This is not the
25 east coast. We have been very lucky with some

1 good east coast representation, but I don't
2 want to rely on luck. I want to have a
3 continuous matter.

4 As far as some of the comments I heard
5 earlier, it is not your fault that the ultra
6 liberal Democratic party left so many of its
7 constituents, resulting in the voting that you
8 heard before. I grew up in Florida most of my
9 life under Democratic rule, and I will tell you
10 that you are doing a yeoman's fair, honest job
11 compared -- far and above what they did, that
12 is for sure. They invented the word
13 "gerrymandering," and I won't even discuss
14 their record on --

15 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Just try to
16 keep the comments focused on the redistricting.
17 I don't want to get too partisan here, all
18 right.

19 MR. RANKIN: -- how they treated
20 minorities. But I am very proud that the
21 Republican party is doing the right thing
22 and --

23 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Well, I will
24 just say this: I hear you and I appreciate
25 those comments, but I will tell you, we work

1 very closely with our Democratic colleagues
2 that are on this committee and we are all
3 working together in this.

4 MR. RANKIN: And I don't mean to be that,
5 but --

6 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: I understand,
7 I understand.

8 MR. RANKIN: -- I had to put something on
9 the record. Historically it is called a boll
10 weevil Democrat, it is a conservative Democrat,
11 their party left them and that is probably why
12 you are seeing the voting, it is not because of
13 anything you did. And -- but please keep the
14 west coast, the west coast, and I thank you
15 very much for your time.

16 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
17 Mr. Rankin. Thank you, sir. Oh, good, we have
18 another -- we have another speaker, and it is a
19 public official, Commissioner, Commissioner Tom
20 Hanny. Commissioner, thank you very much for
21 being here, sir. Look, you are just the man
22 with impeccable timing, right, you just swoop
23 right in here at the end. And we are happy to
24 have you, and we are grateful for your service
25 to Collier County. You are recognized.

1 COMMISSIONER HANNY: Mr. Chairman, thank
2 you very much. Actually, I did fill out a
3 speaker slip long ago, along with a friend of
4 mine that wasn't recognized, but, anyway, I
5 want to welcome you to our great community.
6 Thank you for your time. I know these are a
7 lot of extra efforts that you have made to
8 serve the public, and for that, maybe we can
9 find a banker to buy you lunch or something
10 like that.

11 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Maybe we can
12 get him to give me a loan.

13 COMMISSIONER HANNY: This process and the
14 comments that you are hearing today is no
15 different than the last redistricting that we
16 had here in southwest Florida about having
17 district lines drawn up against the east coast
18 and the west coast. From what I recall in
19 working with former State Representative Mike
20 Davis, those were actually decided by the
21 courts. It wasn't decided by the legislators.
22 We do want to have representation of southwest
23 Florida. We are more like Lee County than the
24 east coast of the state of Florida, but I can
25 tell you, I have worked very close and enjoyed

1 the working relationship I have had with
2 Representative David Rivera, now Congressman
3 David Rivera, and Representative Nuñez has done
4 an outstanding job and will always represent
5 our community.

6 I do want to read something from a speaker
7 who signed up, Cheryl Couture, who is a
8 founding member of Southwest Florida 9/12.
9 Cheryl had to work this morning, and she would
10 like to take this -- to thank the legislators
11 for the hearing. She also would like to
12 express her concern for the open
13 interpretations of the Amendments 5 and 6 that,
14 like the words "practical" and "feasible," the
15 citizens have an interest in decisions
16 regarding representation that is made by --
17 decisions made by the courts, and want to thank
18 you again for giving the citizens the
19 opportunity -- for sharing their concerns. The
20 amendments were ambiguous, in my opinion, and I
21 think former Senator -- former Representative
22 Dudley Goodlette said it well is the
23 legislators can clarify that in the Florida
24 Statutes. And, again, I want to -- I want to
25 thank you for your time in our great community.

1 I do speak on -- by myself and not the Board of
2 Commissioners. Thank you.

3 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you
4 very much, Commissioner. We appreciate that,
5 and we apologize for missing you early on, but
6 it was good to have you here.

7 Ladies and gentlemen, that is all for the
8 speakers who signed up to speak. What we would
9 like to do at this moment, we've got a few
10 minutes left, is to ask for members of the
11 Committee, if they have any suggestions or
12 comments, and we will start off with House
13 members and then Senators and then we will turn
14 it over to Senator Gaetz.

15 Yes, Representative Williams for a
16 comment. If we could get the microphone to
17 her.

18 REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAMS: Having been to a
19 dozen of these or so over the past couple of
20 months, I have to say that this has been the
21 most enjoyable group we have had the pleasure
22 to listen to.

23 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Yes.

24 REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAMS: Thank you so
25 very much for your grace and civilness. You

1 would not believe what we have endured over the
2 past several weeks, and God bless
3 Representative Weatherford and Senator Gaetz,
4 because they have been to just about every one
5 of these. So thank you, and it's been a
6 pleasure to be here and listen to you folks.

7 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
8 Representative Williams.

9 Any other comments from members from the
10 house? We've got a quiet bunch today. How
11 about members of the Senate? Any Senators who
12 would like to speak? Give them your speech
13 last night, maybe you could --

14 SENATOR DETERT: Yes, I had to yell at my
15 own community last night, and I am from
16 Sarasota, and they are generally a lot more
17 polite and classy than they were last night.
18 So we were kind of loaded for bear this
19 morning, and everybody -- when you said
20 welcome, you acted like we are at your home.
21 We are sitting here, my Democratic and
22 Republican friends here, and just very
23 impressed with really the civility in your
24 community. So thank you for being
25 participants, because the way to make your

1 government work the way you want it to work is
2 to participate, and you did that in such a
3 lovely civil way, and I thank you.

4 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Any other
5 members from the higher chamber that would wish
6 to speak? We have to say that as House
7 members, we have to call them the higher
8 chamber. Yes, Senator Richter, former House
9 member, I would like to point out.

10 SENATOR RICHTER: Yes, I would like to
11 echo my comments and tell each and every one of
12 you in this room how very, very proud I am to
13 represent you in Tallahassee. Thank you for
14 your input. Thank you for your good ideas. It
15 is clear to me in this meeting that there's
16 significant concern over the timeline and the
17 fair districts, and that message came through
18 rather loud and clear, and I thank you for the
19 repetitive message and the different variance
20 on that message, but thank you all very much.
21 I am very proud to represent each and every one
22 of you. Thank you.

23 REPRESENTATIVE WEATHERFORD: Thank you,
24 Senator.

25 Okay. Now is the time we are going to

1 turn it over to my esteemed colleague, Senator
2 Gaetz, and allow him to speak on some of the
3 questions that were asked, maybe provide some
4 clarity on some things that have kind of gotten
5 into the bloodstream. And, again, I just want
6 to thank everyone for being here, for providing
7 a hearing that I think was both civil,
8 informative and very helpful to us as members
9 of this committee. So thank you all very much,
10 and I will turn it over to Senator Gaetz.

11 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,
12 Mr. Speaker, and as is my want, because I am a
13 former reporter, even though we -- we make
14 electronic recordings of every word that is
15 said and there is a record that all of us can
16 go back to, I still tend to trust my own notes,
17 and I make them at every hearing, and what I
18 did today was also try to write down some of
19 the questions that were asked and some of the
20 factual points that we could just provide, not
21 get into any disagreement with anybody who
22 testified, one side or the other, but, rather,
23 when there were factual matters, try to make
24 sure we all leave here with the same data.

25 First of all, the timeline, which I think

1 was the -- a theme that many people echoed,
2 starting with Supervisor Edwards. Let me give
3 you just a couple of facts that might help you
4 understand where we are and why we are in the
5 circumstance we are.

6 First of all, we're not able to do
7 anything until we get census data from the
8 Bureau of the Census. Now, Florida was not the
9 last state to get census data, but we were one
10 of the last. The census -- Bureau of the
11 Census does not disgorge all population data to
12 all states at once. Instead, it is in tranches
13 or groups. And as I said, we weren't the last,
14 but we were one of the last, and as soon as we
15 got the data, we immediately put it on-line,
16 and then as soon as the session was over, we
17 immediately began having these hearings. But I
18 wanted you to know that the data that some of
19 the states that you have heard about, the data
20 that they received was months ahead of ours.

21 Secondly, there were a couple of folks in
22 hearings yesterday and today who mentioned
23 states that have concluded their redistricting
24 process already, and that is true. But, for
25 example, Louisiana, which was mentioned,

1 Louisiana is a state which holds its elections
2 not on even years, but on odd years, and so the
3 Bureau of the Census then responds to that by
4 giving them their census data before they give
5 their census data to those of us who do our
6 elections on even years. So that is why you
7 will see some states already finished, not
8 because there is a nefarious plot somewhere,
9 but because the Census Bureau stages its data
10 release and because some states have elections
11 earlier than others.

12 And then there are other states who do
13 things a little differently than Florida.
14 Illinois, for example, is a one-party state,
15 and they got their redistricting done in record
16 time. I think they may -- they may have set
17 the record for redistricting in this cycle. It
18 is a one-party state. They had a group of
19 legislators who literally went into a back
20 room, drew maps, came out, said, "Take it or
21 leave it," went to the floor, did a vote, they
22 were in, they were out, they were gone. There
23 were no public hearings. That is one way to do
24 it, and it has been done that way in Florida,
25 you know, years and years and years ago.

1 Speaker Weatherford and I and our
2 presiding officers chose to do something
3 different. We took a risk, and as the Speaker
4 has said from time to time, it is a
5 chicken-and-egg argument, but we took the risk
6 of listening first, and drawing after we
7 listened, but I wanted you to understand part
8 of the reason why we have the schedule we do.

9 But the schedule we have is an accelerated
10 schedule, and Supervisor Edwards' excellent
11 testimony, I would want to point out one thing,
12 and that is that, perhaps it was our fault, but
13 the timeline that she was referencing was a
14 timeline that was published, but a timeline
15 that now pertains is the one that is functional
16 after the passage of the elections legislation
17 that we passed in this session of the
18 Legislature, which does provide a more
19 accelerated timeline. And she made three
20 suggestions, and I can only speak for myself,
21 but I can tell you that the VTDs have been on
22 our minds from the very beginning in terms of a
23 building block for districts. Our committee in
24 the Senate has been observant of the VTD
25 process from the very first time that our

1 committee got together in an organizational
2 meeting.

3 She said avoid irregular boundaries where
4 possible. We sure agree with that. As I will
5 point out in a moment, there are some
6 circumstances in which the courts are deciding
7 on the irregular boundaries, not us, but to the
8 extent that we can, we will take her advice.

9 And then third, she said do everything you
10 can to move the process without delay, and that
11 is absolutely true, and that is why Speaker
12 Weatherford and I are committed to making sure
13 that we go forward with committee meetings, not
14 in December, which is the usual schedule, but
15 in September, and I have committed that at the
16 very first meeting in September, which is the
17 week of September 19th, that is the first time
18 that we can meet based on the call of our
19 presiding officers, we will immediately turn to
20 the Democratic Leader because, as I mentioned
21 in my opening comments, ten years ago she was
22 told, "No, thanks, we don't want to hear your
23 maps, don't want to even see your maps." Well,
24 I think -- you can't go back and redo what was
25 done ten years ago, but I think you can start

1 on the right foot by saying that the minority
2 has rights, and we are going to start with the
3 Democratic Leader, and then we are going to go
4 to all of the other maps that have already been
5 presented and maps that will be presented, and
6 those will all be available for discussion and
7 debate beginning with our first meeting, which
8 will be on September -- the week of
9 September 19.

10 The second thing I wanted to mention,
11 Mr. Speaker, was in response to the fine
12 testimony from the Chamber of Commerce
13 representative, who talked about the need to
14 have maps based on communities of interest.
15 Well, there was a reference made to the fact
16 that the Legislature tried to get some language
17 in the constitutional amendments and we failed.
18 That is true. Representative Weatherford and I
19 and others tried to get the term "communities
20 of interest" into the constitutional language
21 dealing with Fair Districts. The Supreme Court
22 said no. So although "communities of interest"
23 was mentioned many times today, many times in
24 all of our hearings, it is not included in the
25 constitutional language, I wish it were, and

1 so, therefore, we are going to have to try to
2 balance that very legitimate value with the
3 fact that it is just not included in the
4 constitutional language that the Fair Districts
5 folks brought to the voters and did a great job
6 in getting passed.

7 Then third, there was a comment made that
8 more representatives in Tallahassee is better.
9 Well, that is a debate and a tension we have
10 heard in this meeting and in all the other
11 meetings. Is it better to -- I happen to live
12 in Okaloosa County, which is way up in
13 northwest Florida, and we have -- we have two
14 Senate districts that bisect Okaloosa County.
15 I have parts of five counties, and my
16 counterpart, Senator Evers, has parts of those
17 same five counties. He's got the northern
18 tier, I've got the southern tier. They are
19 divided by a military reservation. And is that
20 a good idea or a bad idea for Okaloosa to have
21 two Senators? Some say, well, if you've got
22 two Senators, you've got two chances, you know.
23 You know, if Gaetz drops the ball, and he is
24 subject to doing that, at least we got Evers.
25 But on the other hand, there are people who

1 have testified today and said, "We want
2 somebody who is dedicated solely to our
3 community. We don't want them to have divided
4 interests." So I only mention that to say
5 that, well, while it is easy to say implement
6 Amendments 5 and 6, you also have to balance
7 these two very legitimate points of view that
8 we have gotten in today's hearing, and that is,
9 is it better for Collier County to have more
10 voices in Tallahassee, or is it better for
11 Collier County, for example, to have fewer
12 voices, but have those voices dedicated more
13 directly to Collier County. We are delighted
14 to have heard your input on that issue.

15 Then there was an individual who asked a
16 very good question: Why have an 8:00 a.m.
17 meeting? Well, frankly, we ended last night at
18 9:00 p.m. in Sarasota, and we will be having a
19 meeting beginning at 6:00 p.m. today in Lehigh
20 Acres. Tomorrow morning, we will be at I think
21 8:00 a.m. in Clewiston. So we have had
22 meetings in the morning, in the afternoon and
23 in the evening, and that is the only way we
24 could do it. We didn't decide to single out
25 Naples for torment and make you get up early.

1 It just worked out that way. So if anybody is
2 to blame, Senator Richter.

3 A very good question, a very good
4 question: When is the first time that maps
5 will be presented in the legislative process?
6 The answer is, the week of September 19th.

7 The next question -- now, I will say this:
8 That is not the last time. That is -- the
9 question was, when is the first time? We have
10 160 members of the Legislature representing a
11 wide spectrum of political beliefs, and,
12 obviously, as you can see, all over Florida.
13 Now, if we were to say that here is the drop
14 dead date beyond which you cannot speak, you
15 cannot offer an additional thought, you cannot
16 try to improve on what somebody has already
17 proposed, there would be Democrats and
18 Republicans standing on their desks, screaming
19 their lungs out that it would be an unfair
20 process. So what I can tell you is in the
21 Senate, we will begin in the week of
22 September 19th looking at any and all maps that
23 are presented at that time. However, I cannot
24 guarantee you that some of my Senate colleagues
25 won't come in later and say, "You know, looking

1 at what is presented and then going back and
2 reflecting on what we heard at 26 hearings,
3 I've got an improvement on that," or "I've got
4 a better idea." I can't stop that, and
5 candidly, in a representative assembly, you
6 shouldn't stop that. Representative
7 Weatherford and I don't have that kind of
8 authority, and we shouldn't have that kind of
9 authority.

10 Then we heard some very useful comments
11 from spokespersons from the League of Women
12 Voters, and they made two comments that I would
13 like to just make sure we have some facts on.
14 First, they -- the representative said the
15 Legislature should draw the maps first. Again,
16 it is a chicken-and-egg argument. Should we
17 listen first and should we then try to collate
18 the information we have gotten from people
19 around the state and say what seems to make
20 sense, or should we come in and say, "Here are
21 the maps," and then as somebody said today, we
22 would be accused of already making up our minds
23 and just trying to shove something down
24 people's throats.

25 I would only say that the League itself

1 can't decide, because in Georgia, the League of
2 Women Voters says maps should be drawn by the
3 public first. Ellen Freidin, the person who
4 led the Fair Districts campaign, testified
5 before the Senate and House and said wouldn't
6 dream of drawing maps until first there was
7 public hearing and public comment. So even
8 within the League of Women Voters, an
9 outstanding organization, there's not really a
10 unanimity of feeling about that.

11 Then there was a very useful comment made
12 by the President -- I believe this individual
13 was the President of the Democratic Club, and
14 talked about the local maps, county commission,
15 school board maps, and said that in that case
16 here, five different options were presented for
17 discussion. And Speaker Weatherford and I have
18 talked about that, and I think that is an
19 excellent suggestion. There's not going to be
20 a map that is going to be presented in the
21 Senate. I can guarantee you that with the
22 divergence of opinion that Senators have on
23 these topics, there will be several different
24 options presented so that there will be an
25 opportunity maybe to take parts of different

1 options and try to meld them together. So
2 there won't be a map, and I think it was an
3 excellent suggestion to have five options,
4 somebody else said six options, that could be
5 presented and debated.

6 Then I am really glad to learn about the
7 Lely Resort community. You see, this is the
8 kind of information we could never get in an
9 echo chamber in Tallahassee, just listening to
10 each other. If you hadn't presented that
11 testimony today, I think it came from three
12 different people who live in that community, we
13 wouldn't have that information, and the Lely --
14 the first person who spoke from Lely said
15 divide the Everglades because one person, one
16 Representative, is not enough. The very next
17 speaker took the opposite view. The only
18 reason I make that point is that there is a
19 legitimate tension between those who say that
20 an area ought to have one Representative, and
21 those who say, no, we would like to have more
22 than one voice, and we have to work on
23 balancing that. That is why your testimony was
24 so important.

25 A comment was made about irregular

1 boundaries. I think that is the politest
2 description of some of those boundaries that I
3 have heard, irregular. Two comments. First,
4 we didn't develop them. The Senate seat that I
5 ran for was drawn by other people, and so I
6 have no pride of authorship in the Senate seat
7 that I have and in the boundaries that I have
8 now. Neither does anybody else here. We want
9 to improve on them. And let me just say this:
10 Some of us are among the insulted. I happen --
11 I happen to live in a rattail of a
12 congressional district. My -- the
13 congressional district I am in, which is
14 Congressional District 2, starts way over near
15 Tallahassee and then comes over all the way to
16 my little community of Niceville, which is on
17 the Gulf Coast, and I am in a little -- a
18 little rattail of that district. So, believe
19 me, there are those of us who want to solve
20 those problems as much as we can possibly.

21 There was a very useful comment made by
22 someone who said there are more Democrats than
23 Republicans in population, yet Republicans have
24 more Representatives in the Legislature, and
25 unless you fix that, it won't be Fair

1 Districts, it will be proof of gerrymandering,
2 that testifier said. Well, here's our problem:
3 Our problem is -- I will just take the Senate
4 districts, for example. There are 40 Senate
5 districts. Twenty-eight are currently held by
6 Republicans. But eight of the districts held
7 by Republicans voted for Barack Obama
8 overwhelmingly. So now we are left with the
9 riddle. Do we have a circumstance in which
10 you've got Republican Senate districts that
11 were persuaded that President Obama had a
12 better message, a better campaign, would be a
13 better President, or do we have a whole bunch
14 of people who were inclined to vote for Barack
15 Obama, but then who looked down ballot and
16 said, "You know, doggone it, the Republican
17 candidate for State Senator seems to have a
18 better message or a better campaign or
19 resonates more with my values"? See, the fact
20 is that it may not be proof of gerrymandering.
21 It may be proof of the independence of our
22 voters. We can't force Republicans to vote for
23 Republicans, or Democrats to vote for
24 Democrats, and the fastest-growing group of
25 voters in this state are Independents and

1 non-affiliated voters, and we sure as the
2 dickens can't predict who they are going to
3 vote for.

4 So it probably won't turn out to be
5 something perfect where the exact percentage of
6 Republicans or Democrats is what is reflected
7 in the Legislature, because we have Democrats
8 voting for Republicans, and Republicans voting
9 for Democrats. So I would just ask you to keep
10 that in mind, getting a perfect arithmetic
11 balance may not be possible. This isn't the
12 old Soviet Union. You know, people have an
13 independent view of how they are going to vote.

14 And then there was someone who made a good
15 comment and said, you know, we ought to pay
16 impartial IT professionals to draw the maps.
17 Well, I am looking for the first impartial
18 person I can find in this process. I think
19 even IT professionals have opinions. But I
20 will say this: Both the House and the Senate
21 have employed IT professionals, and I don't
22 know what their party affiliations are, and I
23 don't intend to inquire, but they are
24 professionals, they are geeks, they are nerds,
25 they have green eyeshades, we keep them in

1 offices where there are literally no windows,
2 and they are the ones -- they are the ones who
3 will work the technical side of this. But the
4 Constitution says that elected representatives,
5 people that you -- that you can reach out and
6 elect or un-elect, our Constitution says we are
7 the ones who have to -- who have to actually
8 draw the lines at the end of the day and
9 propose them to the judicial branch of
10 government. So we can't -- we can't offload
11 the constitutional responsibility unless we
12 amend the Constitution.

13 Then we had a person who said that she
14 worked on the New York State redistricting
15 process, and I made a note here, she is hired
16 here. So see me later. And she said, you
17 know, we ought to vote on final plans on
18 January 13th, which is three days after the
19 Legislature goes into session. What I want to
20 know is, in New York, did you vote on your
21 reapportionment and redistricting plans three
22 days after you went into session? See, we may
23 be able to, because we have been in all these
24 hearings, really come in with your voices
25 ringing in our ears. But the vast majority of

1 the Senate and the House have not been at these
2 hearings. So when we come in and make our
3 report and offer our recommendations, those
4 individuals who you may have also spoken to in
5 town hall meetings or in their offices or run
6 into them at church or at the grocery store and
7 talked to them about your views, they are going
8 to want to have something to say, they are
9 going to want to engage in debate, and believe
10 me, in the Senate, and I know in the House,
11 too, they are going to want to ask a lot of
12 questions about -- to us about what we have
13 heard. So it would be nice to vote on
14 January 13th, but it would be, I think,
15 unlikely to be able to shut down debate three
16 days after the legislative session starts. But
17 we sure will want to vote as soon as we
18 reasonably can.

19 Then there was -- there were several
20 people who said, you know, gosh, there was a
21 mandate for Amendments 5 and 6, and they ought
22 to be adopted and they ought to be implemented,
23 and they will be, believe me. Everybody up
24 here has taken an oath to preserve and protect
25 the Constitution of the United States and of

1 the State of Florida. Those two provisions are
2 in the Constitution, whether some people like
3 them or not, and we are going to implement
4 them. But the question is not whether we are
5 going to implement them, but how they should be
6 implemented, and we have seen today some
7 tension between the definitions of
8 "compactness" or making sure that minority
9 districts don't regress. Are we going to use
10 city boundaries when city boundaries in some
11 cases look like a Rorschach blot? So there are
12 tensions as to how, but there is no debate that
13 we will implement them. But that is why these
14 hearings have been so valuable.

15 And then, Mr. Speaker, a question, is
16 there one standard for compactness? Life would
17 be simpler if there were. It is a fact that
18 Florida is the first state, maybe we won't be
19 the last, but we are the first state to have
20 all of the features included in Amendments 5
21 and 6 placed into a State Constitution. We are
22 the first state. So in a lot of ways, we are
23 going to be charting new ground, and when you
24 chart new ground in this world, you wind up,
25 sadly, sadly, charting that ground, in many

1 cases, in court. So I would predict to you, it
2 is not my hope, but it is my prediction that
3 the definitions of "compactness" will arise out
4 of case law in this state and in other states.

5 Now, we did have some mathematicians
6 testify before us, and they said the most
7 compact geometric figure is a circle, the next
8 most compact is a square, the third most
9 compact is a rectangle. Have you looked at the
10 map of Florida? We are not a square or a
11 circle or a rectangle, and so the definitions
12 of "compactness" will probably be sort of built
13 in flight and then reviewed by the courts.
14 That is probably what is going to happen.

15 Then there were three testifiers who said,
16 "How do we prevent lawsuits? How do we prevent
17 this dragging on and on and on into the courts?
18 Is there some template that we could use that
19 would give us armor against lawsuits?" No. I
20 wish there were. First, remember, we are the
21 first state to have all of these requirements
22 at one time placed on our Constitution.
23 Secondly, members of special interest groups,
24 who have every right to do so, have already
25 testified before the first vote has been taken

1 that there will be lawsuits and they intend to
2 file them. So I think that it may be the case
3 that some people intended from the beginning
4 that this matter would have to go to the
5 courts. That is their right, but -- but it
6 doesn't give us an easy answer to how to
7 prevent lawsuits.

8 But while there is -- while there is no
9 sure protection against lawsuits, I think a
10 good approach is to do what Speaker Weatherford
11 and I and our members have been doing, and that
12 is to listen first, develop a record based on
13 what people are saying. It is fine to talk
14 about the process, we have heard a lot of
15 process discussion, but it is even more
16 valuable to hear the very specific direction
17 and guidance we have gotten from so many people
18 today and around the state about neighborhoods
19 and communities, how they ought to be bounded,
20 how they ought not to be divided. That is
21 probably the best armor, if there is any armor,
22 knowing that ultimately we are probably going
23 to wind up in court, no matter what plan is
24 devised.

25 The other thing I think that you can do to

1 try to avoid unnecessary lawsuits is to make
2 sure that the minority is represented and
3 respected, and that this -- certainly we do
4 have a Republican majority in the Legislature,
5 but there are minority members, Democratic
6 members, on this Committee, and as several
7 people have mentioned, Senator Detert, we work
8 closely with our minority members, even though
9 I happen to be a Republican, and a sign, I
10 think, of good faith will be turning first to
11 our minority members and our Democratic Leader
12 at our first meeting and saying, "Ten years
13 ago, you didn't get a chance to offer your
14 maps. By golly, you are going to get your
15 chance first, along with everybody else. You
16 are not going to be discriminated against."

17 Then another member of the League raised
18 an excellent question about is the timeline
19 unrealistic. It could be. The timeline could
20 be unrealistic if everyone in the process takes
21 all the time they legally can instead of taking
22 only the time that they need. So Speaker
23 Weatherford and I and our members, our
24 presiding officers, are committed, as we have
25 shown, to moving up the session, moving up

1 committee weeks, moving up hearings, proceeding
2 as quickly as we legally can and practically
3 can. However, we would urge you to talk with
4 and communicate with the other players in the
5 process and urge them to take only the time
6 they need, the Attorney General, the Supreme
7 Court of Florida, the federal justice
8 department, let's get this job done, you know,
9 not too fast, let's measure twice and cut once,
10 this is important for the next ten years in our
11 state. But let's not let the other players in
12 the process elongate the process anymore than
13 is absolutely necessary as well. And that is
14 why we would again urge our good friends in the
15 League of Women Voters to do what they did in
16 2002, to do what their brothers and sisters are
17 doing in Georgia, and that is move from being a
18 critical but useful observer to being a
19 participant and providing direct guidance to
20 assist us in how to go forward.

21 And then the League representative said,
22 "Could this all result in a circumstance in
23 which our votes don't count in the 2012
24 precedential election?" Well, here's the good
25 news. The boundaries of Florida are not going

1 to change as a result of the redistricting
2 process. We are not going to be able to invade
3 Alabama. We are not going to lose any
4 territory to Florida. And so -- well, we might
5 invade Alabama, but -- but -- so the
6 presidential election is not going to be
7 affected, and everybody ought to be sanguine
8 about that.

9 There was a -- several comments made about
10 the east-west boundary districts and how
11 unfortunate it is that they exist and the fact
12 that they make little sense, and a number of
13 you referenced your thoughts about aligning
14 Collier County districts with communities in
15 Miami-Dade and Broward. But here it is
16 important to reiterate what others have
17 mentioned, and that is that districts in
18 Collier County, because they are a Section 5
19 county, have to be pre-cleared by federal
20 authority for compliance with the Federal
21 Voting Rights Act.

22 Now, here is how this process can go.
23 House District 112 was actually drawn based on
24 a court order in federal court ten years ago.
25 The Legislature drew the district one way, but

1 it was a federal court that ordered that
2 District 112 be drawn the way that it has been
3 drawn. So I only mention this so that you will
4 understand factually, we don't get the last
5 word. The salamander district, which is
6 Congressional District 3, the one that is the
7 poster child for gerrymandering, was not drawn
8 by the Legislature, it was drawn by the federal
9 courts. So we just need to keep that in mind.

10 Then the question was made, will we invite
11 comments after all maps have been presented?

12 Well, it could probably be difficult and cause
13 concern for those who want to move the process
14 along to go back out and have two and a half
15 months of additional hearings after the
16 Legislature has gone into session, but we are
17 considering videoconferencing, we are
18 considering other methods of making sure that
19 people who would like to have an opportunity to
20 comment on additional maps, including the 50
21 maps we already have, that they get that
22 opportunity without having to go to the expense
23 of coming to Tallahassee. Not everybody can
24 come to Tallahassee. Usually we see too many
25 lobbyists, too many people with \$1,000 suits

1 and \$300 shoes, and not as many people of the
2 kind that we are seeing in today's meeting.

3 And then the comment that was made by Vi,
4 or as we now call her, V. She asked about the
5 lawsuit against Amendment 6, and here is where
6 Vi has done us a real service. She made it
7 clear she was talking about the lawsuit against
8 Amendment 6. Here is where the bloodstream has
9 gotten -- has gotten really poisonous. There
10 is no lawsuit having to do with Amendment 5.
11 There is no lawsuit that's yet been filed by
12 anybody having to do with legislative
13 redistricting. The only lawsuit, as Vi
14 indicated, that has been filed was filed by a
15 Democratic Congresswoman and a Republican
16 Congressman having to do with the congressional
17 redistricting process.

18 Now, it is true that there is a lawsuit,
19 it is true that there's all kinds of discussion
20 about it and people are involved in it.
21 Doesn't have anything to do with any of our
22 districts. But here is what Speaker
23 Weatherford has said at every single hearing.
24 He said we are not going to be distracted by
25 that lawsuit. Our job is to implement 5 and 6.

1 Our job is to be consistent with the federal
2 court cases and the other legal requirements
3 that we have, and unless a court tells us
4 differently, we are going to go forward and
5 implement Amendments 5 and 6 and the other
6 legal requirements that we have. The question
7 is not whether, but as I pointed out before,
8 the question is how. And you have given us --
9 you have given us testimony that in some cases
10 disagrees with other testimony as to how, but
11 you have given us very thoughtful insights that
12 we can use to try to balance those competing
13 and very legitimate values.

14 This has been the most valuable public
15 hearing we have held anywhere in the state of
16 Florida, and it has been because of you. Thank
17 you very much.

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

22 (Whereupon, the proceedings were
23 concluded.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF FLORIDA)

COUNTY OF LEON)

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

That the foregoing pages 2 through 163 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 5th day of December, 2011.

CLARA C. ROTRUCK

Notary Public

State of Florida at Large

Commission Expires:

November 13, 2014