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REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31, 2011  
6:00 P.M.  
VETERANS PARK RECREATION CENTER  
LEHIGH ACRES, FLORIDA

Transcribed by:  
CLARA C. ROTRUCK  
Court Reporter

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

2 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you all. You may be  
3 seated. The Joint Senate/House Redistricting  
4 Hearing is called to order. We are pleased to  
5 be joined tonight by members of the House of  
6 Representatives Redistricting Committee and the  
7 Senate Reapportionment Committee.

8 We will ask them to identify themselves so  
9 you will know with whom you are sharing your  
10 ideas. We really thank the Lee County and Lee  
11 County Parks and Recreation Department for  
12 allowing us to use this wonderful facility.

13 We are very grateful to them and grateful  
14 to you for being here, especially those who are  
15 here to share their observations, share their  
16 ideas and their comments, and especially those  
17 who have come with specific assistance for us  
18 and guidance for us on neighborhoods and  
19 communities in this area and how and where they  
20 ought to be districted.

21 My name is Don Gaetz. I serve in the  
22 Florida Senate. My Senate district stretches  
23 from Pensacola to east of Panama City. That is  
24 way up in the Florida Panhandle in the Central  
25 Time Zone, so I am an hour later -- you're an

1 hour later than I am, I am an hour earlier, so  
2 I am not nearly as tired as you are.

3 My House colleague, Representative John  
4 Legg, will be co-Chairing this evening's  
5 hearing with me, which is being broadcast  
6 tonight by The Florida Channel statewide over  
7 the Internet.

8 So if you are going to speak tonight, be  
9 sure to check your makeup, your hair,  
10 straighten your tie, because you will be on  
11 statewide TV.

12 Our sole purpose tonight is to hear from  
13 the public about how you believe the legal  
14 standards governing redistricting ought to be  
15 applied in your community so that you are  
16 represented in Washington and Tallahassee  
17 fairly, equitably and sensibly. Let me  
18 reemphasize that.

19 The question is not if our legal  
20 standards, both state and federal, are going to  
21 be applied. That is not debatable. What we  
22 have come to ask for your guidance on is how  
23 those standards, state and federal, ought to be  
24 applied in your community, and we hope to get  
25 some very substantive testimony this evening.

1           Before we go any further, I would like to  
2           ask our House and Senate members if they would  
3           identify themselves, indicate what House you  
4           serve in and also what part of the state you  
5           are from.

6           And maybe we can begin, if we can turn the  
7           mike on and it doesn't feed back, with Senator  
8           Benacquisto.

9           SENATOR BENACQUISTO: Thank you, Chairman  
10          Gaetz. Good evening, everyone. Thank you so  
11          much for coming. I am Lizbeth Benacquisto, and  
12          I have the absolute incredible privilege to  
13          represent Senate District 27, and I welcome all  
14          of my colleagues in the House and Senate to my  
15          district this evening, and I am glad to have  
16          the opportunity to share some time with you  
17          all, such a wonderful group of community  
18          leaders who have come tonight to share your  
19          opinions on how we should draw the maps and how  
20          it relates to your particular community.

21          So thank you all for coming, and we look  
22          forward to a great evening tonight.

23          SENATOR JOYNER: Good evening. My name is  
24          Arthenia Joyner. I am State Senator from  
25          District 18 encompassing portions of

1 Hillsborough, Pinellas and Manatee Counties,  
2 Tampa, St. Petersburg and Bradenton, and  
3 welcome and thank you for coming.

4 SENATOR NEGRON: Good evening. My name is  
5 Joe Negron. I represent Senate District 28,  
6 which is southeast Florida, northern Palm Beach  
7 County and parts of Okeechobee County. And if  
8 we have a little time after 9:00, we can have a  
9 little pickup basketball game if anybody is  
10 interested.

11 REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAMS: Good evening. I  
12 am Trudi Williams. I represent District 75,  
13 which is Lee and parts of Collier County, and  
14 thanks for everyone being here, it is much  
15 appreciated.

16 REPRESENTATIVE CHESTNUT: Good evening.  
17 My name is Chuck Chestnut, House District 23.  
18 That is a portion of Alachua County and Marion  
19 County.

20 REPRESENTATIVE BERNARD: Good evening. My  
21 name is State Representative Mack Bernard, and  
22 since we are moving closer to my district, I  
23 represent the cities of Belle Glade, Pahokee  
24 and South Bay.

25 REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Good evening. I am

1 State Representative Mia Jones, representing  
2 District 14 in Jacksonville, Florida.

3 REPRESENTATIVE BAXLEY: Good evening. I  
4 am Dennis Baxley, serving in the Florida House,  
5 District 24, from Ocala and Marion County,  
6 Florida.

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

10 REPRESENTATIVE CLARKE-REED: Good evening.  
11 I am State Representative Gwyndolen  
12 Clarke-Reed, serving Broward County, House  
13 District 92, serving seven cities: Deerfield  
14 Beach, Pompano Beach, Oakland Park, Wilton  
15 Manors, a little bit of north Ft. Lauderdale, a  
16 little bit of North Lauderdale and Tamarac.  
17 Glad to be here and good to see you.

18 REPRESENTATIVE ROGERS: Good evening,  
19 Hazelle Rogers representing District 94, eight  
20 cities in Broward County, one of the most  
21 diverse counties in the state of Florida,  
22 boasting 1.8 million in population. My cities  
23 for District 94: Lauderdale Lakes, Lauderhill,  
24 Margate, Tamarac, Sunrise, Oakland Park and  
25 Plantation. Thank you very much, listening --

1 here to listen to you. This is my 24th  
2 meeting, Mr. Chairman.

3 SENATOR ALTMAN: Senator Thad Altman,  
4 District 24, which encompasses Brevard,  
5 Seminole and Orange County, better known as the  
6 Space Coast, runs from the Space Center to Palm  
7 Bay over to Orlando.

8 REPRESENTATIVE BURGIN: Good evening,  
9 State Representative Rachel Burgin from  
10 District 56, which is Tampa, Riverview,  
11 Brandon, Gibsonton, eastern Hillsborough County  
12 area. It is wonderful to be here with you this  
13 evening.

14 SENATOR STORMS: Good evening. I am  
15 Senator Storms and I represent District 10,  
16 which is Hillsborough County. If you think of  
17 I-75, I am a little bit to the east of Tampa,  
18 the Tampa community. I include a little bit of  
19 Pasco County, which is Zephyrhills, and a  
20 little bit of Polk County, a little part of  
21 where Publix' headquarters is off of Wabash in  
22 Lakeland, and I am so glad to be here. You all  
23 have a high bar to set.

24 We left Naples, and those folks there,  
25 even when they disagreed with us, were so kind

1           when they -- we felt loved on after they took  
2           us to the woodshed. So I am really looking  
3           forward to hearing from you all and seeing if  
4           you can outdo in civility what Naples did for  
5           us. Thank you very much for being here.

6           REPRESENTATIVE JULIEN: Good evening. I  
7           am John Patrick Julien, representing House  
8           District 104, which is in Miami-Dade County.  
9           House District 104 encompasses the cities of  
10          North Miami Beach, North Miami, Miami Gardens,  
11          Opa-Locka, Miami and a large chunk of  
12          unincorporated Miami-Dade. It is a pleasure to  
13          be here.

14          REPRESENTATIVE ROBERSON: Good evening. I  
15          am State Representative Ken Roberson. I  
16          represent parts of Charlotte, Sarasota and Lee  
17          County. District 71 runs from the City of  
18          North Port in southern Sarasota County down to  
19          North Ft. Myers. Thank you for coming.

20          SENATOR RICHTER: Greetings, my name is  
21          Garrett Richter. I represent portions of  
22          Collier and Lee County, and I want to extend my  
23          appreciation to each and every one of you for  
24          giving up your evening gear to come and be a  
25          part of this public process. Thank you all



1 very much for being here tonight.

2 REPRESENTATIVE PASSIDOMO: I am Kathleen  
3 Passidomo, and I represent House District 76,  
4 which is Collier County, City of Naples, City  
5 of Marco Island, City of Everglades City, and I  
6 am thrilled to be here. Thank you.

7 REPRESENTATIVE CALDWELL: Good evening,  
8 representative Matt Caldwell in the Florida  
9 House, and happy that we are able to have this  
10 meeting here tonight in my hometown here in the  
11 district. Thank you very much. And I am  
12 confident that this community will prove  
13 Senator Storms correct and that we can  
14 out-civil the community of Naples here this  
15 evening. Thank you all very much for being  
16 here.

17 REPRESENTATIVE LEGG: Tough act to follow.  
18 I am Representative John Legg, I represent west  
19 Pasco County.

20 SENATOR GAETZ: And joining us tonight,  
21 and none of what we discuss tonight is his  
22 fault, unless we get into deep water and then  
23 we do plan to blame him, is someone I think  
24 many of you know very well, the former  
25 Lieutenant Governor of the State of Florida,

1 the Honorable Jeff Kottkamp. Governor, it is  
2 great to see you.

3 Folks, our procedures tonight -- I'm  
4 sorry, a late addition.

5 REPRESENTATIVE AUBUCHON: Thank you. My  
6 name is Gary Aubuchon, and I represent the  
7 western side of Lee County and parts of  
8 Charlotte County, and from 1985 to 1989 was a  
9 resident of Lehigh Acres.

10 SENATOR GAETZ: Getting the hometown  
11 advantage.

12 Ladies and gentlemen, our procedures  
13 tonight are simple, but they are important. It  
14 is important that you sign in so that we can  
15 create an accurate public record of all  
16 attendees and all speakers. And, also, if you  
17 sign in, you will be on our e-mail list so that  
18 we can keep you informed about the progress of  
19 redistricting as it goes forward.

20 If you have not signed in and you want to  
21 designate that you were here tonight, and we  
22 hope you will, please raise your hand, and  
23 somebody will get to you with one of these  
24 cards.

25 It is the same card to sign in just to be

1 here and watch your friends and neighbors as it  
2 is if you wish to speak. So if you wish to  
3 speak, and even if you told us by e-mail last  
4 week or two weeks or three weeks ago that you  
5 intended to be here, if you want to speak  
6 tonight and you haven't filled out one of these  
7 cards, it would be very helpful if you would  
8 raise your hand, and one of our professional  
9 staff will get to you, because we don't want to  
10 miss a word of your testimony or a single  
11 person who wants to testify tonight.

12 Before we begin, the Chair will recognize  
13 Representative Legg on behalf of the House  
14 Redistricting Committee to explain how today's  
15 hearing fits into the redistricting process and  
16 the schedule. Representative.

17 REPRESENTATIVE LEGG: Thank you,  
18 Mr. Chairman. Every ten years, the Legislature  
19 is required by our Constitution to redistrict  
20 the states based on increases, decreases and  
21 movements in population. Because Florida has  
22 grown more than other states in the last ten  
23 years, we will move up from 25 to 27 members of  
24 the U.S. House of Representatives. Because  
25 some parts of our states have increased or

1 decreased disproportionately in population,  
2 many Senate and House districts will change,  
3 either by adding or losing population.

4           When redistrict is completed,  
5 congressional districts must equal in  
6 population containing 696,345 people. The 40  
7 Senate districts must also be nearly equal at  
8 about 470,000 people, and our 120 House  
9 districts must also be nearly equal at about  
10 156,700 people. We have displays at the front  
11 of the room showing the current boundaries of  
12 the districts in the area of the state and the  
13 numbers of persons which must be added or  
14 subtracted from the current districts to  
15 achieve that equal population.

16           Equality of representation isn't the only  
17 legal requirement redistricting plans must  
18 meet. The law and important court cases  
19 governing redistricting are explained in detail  
20 on the House and Senate websites. Those  
21 websites are listed on the "Redistricting 2012"  
22 brochure that was available when you came in.

23           Our "Redistricting 2012" brochure  
24 summarizes federal and state laws, and outlines  
25 topics we hope you will discuss here at today's

1 meeting. If you did not get a copy when you  
2 came in, they are available on the table  
3 outside the meeting. Our staff will be happy  
4 to get you a copy of the brochure if you need  
5 it.

6 The brochure also lists House and Senate  
7 websites. The websites are packed with  
8 information about redistricting Florida,  
9 including an explanation of the laws and  
10 important court cases governing redistricting.  
11 The two websites are complementary and are  
12 updated frequently. Visit both and check back  
13 often.

14 It is a great way to stay current about  
15 how your new congressional, new State Senate  
16 and State House districts are taking shape.

17 The websites also deliver to your  
18 fingertips all the demographic information that  
19 will be used in drawing districts, and the  
20 exact same computer programs that legislators  
21 and their professional staff will use.

22 Any member of the public can participate  
23 in building plans or seeing maps submitted by  
24 legislators or other citizens. Before, during  
25 and after this hearing, Senate and House

1 professional staff are available to show anyone  
2 the simple steps to getting an outline,  
3 building districts and submitting a plan now or  
4 in the weeks to come.

5 Recommendations from citizens and groups  
6 of citizens will be made public -- will be made  
7 publicly available. In fact, as of this  
8 afternoon, 50 public submissions of partial or  
9 completed maps and many other written ideas for  
10 maps are available on the Web.

11 And during the time that we drove from our  
12 meeting in Naples this morning to this evening  
13 here, we received three more public  
14 submissions. After this week, I am sure those  
15 numbers will increase dramatically.

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

20 The redistricting schedule under which we  
21 are operating is imposed by the State  
22 Constitution. The Constitution does not permit  
23 the Legislature to act on state legislative  
24 maps before the second year after the census;  
25 in other words, before 2012. We accelerated

1           this process as much as possible by moving up  
2           the 2012 legislative session from March to  
3           January, and by beginning our statewide  
4           hearings five months in advance of the 2012  
5           session.

6           It has been suggested that the Legislature  
7           should draw the maps first and then ask for  
8           public to comment. We believe that is putting  
9           the answer ahead of the question.

10           There should be no preconceptions created  
11           by politicians, but, rather, public testimony  
12           should be free and unrestricted.

13           In fact, the principal author of the  
14           Florida's new redistricting standards and the  
15           Chairperson for the Fair District campaigns are  
16           on record and in agreement with the notion that  
17           no new maps should be -- be not drawn until  
18           after the public has an opportunity to comment.

19           Our intention is to use the recommendation  
20           made at the 26 public hearings and through our  
21           Internet sites as the basis for developing one  
22           or more options for district maps.

23           We will discuss those options in an open  
24           public meeting before any votes are taken, even  
25           in committee.

1           In other words, what we are literally  
2 saying is if you look at those maps outside  
3 this room, the ones actually submitted by the  
4 Legislature -- to the Legislature by Florida  
5 residents, we are literally starting the  
6 legislative process with those maps and other  
7 suggestions from the public.

8           So if you want to know where we will begin  
9 our deliberation, it is with those public  
10 submissions, testimonies from these meetings  
11 and other public input.

12           Throughout the process, we will solicit  
13 additional public comment so that proposed maps  
14 can mature with the public involved, all before  
15 the Legislature approves the final map.  
16 Whatever the Legislature passes then is  
17 submitted for judicial review to ensure that  
18 the final plans meet every single legal  
19 requirement.

20           Because our purpose today is to hear from  
21 you, all the time between now and 9:00 p.m.  
22 will be used to ensure that every member of the  
23 public who is here and wishes to speak will  
24 have the time to present testimony and be  
25 listened to respectfully without interruption



1 or argument.

2 If after every citizen has had his or her  
3 say there is time remaining before our  
4 scheduled adjournment, any member of the  
5 Committee may make any statement or offer any  
6 observation. Of course, any member of the  
7 Legislature may today or at any time propose a  
8 map or a plan, and we will make it available to  
9 the public.

10 Mr. Chairman, I hope this description of  
11 our schedule and process helps set the stage  
12 for a successful and productive meeting  
13 tonight.

14 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Representative,  
15 and you will notice that many of us will be  
16 making notes during the hearing tonight. There  
17 will be also a video record made of the hearing  
18 so that everything that everyone says will be  
19 on the record. We can refer back to it as we  
20 are deliberating in Tallahassee, but, also, at  
21 the end of the hearing, we are going to ask  
22 members of the Committee to answer any  
23 questions, offer any observations, make any  
24 suggestions that they might want to make or if  
25 the spirit moves them to make a statement of

1           some sort. We have done that at every single  
2           hearing.

3                   And then if there are questions of fact  
4           that come up, and that has happened at every  
5           hearing, we will try, time permitting, to  
6           answer any questions of fact, because once in a  
7           while, things get in the bloodstream that  
8           aren't quite factual, and this is an  
9           opportunity -- everybody is entitled to their  
10          own opinion, but this is an opportunity for all  
11          of us to leave here at least with the same set  
12          of facts.

13                   Now, we -- the good news is we have a  
14          large number of people who would like to  
15          testify tonight, and we want to hear every one  
16          of them. That means that in fairness and  
17          respect to your friends and neighbors who have  
18          come to testify, we are going to ask everyone  
19          to limit their verbal comments to about three  
20          minutes.

21                   Now, if you've got a longer script, we  
22          would love to have it all. If you have  
23          additional comments that you would like to make  
24          and time doesn't permit it, then just provide  
25          those comments to one of the members of our

1 professional staff.

2 All of what you would submit tonight in  
3 writing or verbally will be in the record and  
4 distributed to all the members of the House and  
5 Senate committees, whether they are here or  
6 not, and made available as a part of the public  
7 record for all members of the Florida public,  
8 all citizens.

9 What I would like to do is call three  
10 names at once, and we have -- over here on my  
11 left in the front row, we've got an on deck  
12 circle.

13 So if I call you, please come forward and  
14 get in the on deck circle. That way, you can  
15 move right up and speak and we won't waste time  
16 waiting for folks to wind their way through the  
17 audience. Instead we will be able to get to  
18 everybody, hopefully, who would like to chat  
19 this evening.

20 We are starting with Curtis Hamilton,  
21 representing the AARP, and Mr. Hamilton,  
22 following your testimony, we would like to hear  
23 from Lorenzo Tindal, and then if Kevin Shea  
24 will come. Lorenzo and Kevin Shea, if you will  
25 take your place in the on deck circle.

1           Mr. Hamilton, thanks for starting us off  
2 tonight, and the floor is yours.

3           MR. HAMILTON: Thank you. Good evening,  
4 Chairman, committee members, and visiting  
5 legislators. My name is Curtis Hamilton. I  
6 live in Cape Coral. I am pleased to speak as  
7 an AARP volunteer and as President of the Cape  
8 Coral AARP chapter.

9           AARP is a strictly nonpartisan  
10 organization that seeks to improve the quality  
11 of life for all of us as we age. It has over  
12 39 million members nationally and almost three  
13 million here in Florida.

14           Transparency and timeliness are key  
15 elements of the redistricting process and must  
16 be followed. The voters of Florida we feel  
17 have spoken clearly about redistricting by  
18 decisively passing Amendments 5 and 6 and I  
19 want to compliment you for your 26 statewide  
20 hearings, which have gone forward with full  
21 disclosure and public input.

22           The public needs not only the opportunity  
23 to comment, but to have those comments  
24 meaningfully considered and not cast aside as  
25 part of a political game. We expect our

1           Legislature to act with integrity and honor for  
2           the citizens of Florida, and not to end up with  
3           a gerrymandered mess that is left to the courts  
4           to decide.

5           The timeliness of the process is crucial.  
6           The procedural steps, both legislative and  
7           non-legislative, must be achieved in order for  
8           there to be timely qualification of the 2012  
9           election candidates with new districts and for  
10          campaigns prior to voters casting their  
11          ballots.

12          So you need, obviously, to complete this  
13          project sooner rather than later. We ask you  
14          to post your proposed maps, of course, as soon  
15          as possible, which you have indicated you are  
16          willing certainly to do.

17          In conclusion, I want to say thank you for  
18          your really excellent website. I hope that you  
19          keep your focus on my favorite comment about  
20          government, "Of the people, by the people and  
21          for the people," which makes Fair Districts not  
22          just a choice, but a necessity. Make Florida  
23          proud of you. Thank you.

24          SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very, very much.  
25          Excellent testimony.

1           And now, following Mr. Tindal and  
2           Mr. Shea, if Jim Roach would come forward and  
3           take his place in the on deck circle.

4           Mr. Tindal, thank you very much for coming  
5           here tonight. You could be other places, sir,  
6           and we appreciate your giving us some time.

7           MR. TINDAL: Thank you, Chairman Gaetz,  
8           and thank you all the Representatives from the  
9           State of Florida for attending our fair city of  
10          Lehigh Acres in southwest Florida.

11          I am sure there are many concerns here  
12          tonight about the redistricting, and many  
13          people, you know, who are not going to be able  
14          to speak, you know, have concerns. My main  
15          concern is that there may be a dilution of the  
16          minority vote due to the -- due to the  
17          redistricting.

18          And I have a question, you know, for the  
19          Chair and Senator Benacquisto and  
20          Representative Caldwell, who represent our  
21          area: Is there a map currently drawn of the  
22          proposed redistricting?

23          And in just closing, I would like for the  
24          entire body here to keep with the spirit of the  
25          state and federal standards, and I am asking

1 all of you to truly consider the framework of  
2 Section 2 and 5 of the Voting Rights Act when  
3 you are reviewing the redistricting public  
4 input. Thanks.

5 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.  
6 Appreciate your testimony.

7 Now we will hear from Kevin Shea, and when  
8 Mr. Shea is finished, Jim Roach and then Ben  
9 Nelson from the City of Bonita Springs.

10 Mr. Shea, thank you for coming tonight.  
11 We are grateful for your testimony.

12 MR. SHEA: Mr. Chairman, Vice-Chair,  
13 members, ladies and gentlemen, I am Kevin Shea  
14 from Lehigh Acres. I have been very interested  
15 in the issue of redistricting for 50 years. I  
16 started studying intensely this issue in 1960  
17 when I was in high school and subsequent  
18 college and university. I have also done two  
19 stints with the Department of Commerce, Bureau  
20 of Census.

21 I was in the 2000 census, the area group  
22 leader for Lehigh and the greater area of this  
23 county. I have -- I am a retired federal  
24 administrative hearing officer, and I have  
25 studied this issue from history, political

1 science and law.

2 When this thing was adopted, as an  
3 analyst, it appeared to me that things had  
4 gotten a little too clever by two. However,  
5 the proponents of this did not realize the  
6 legal significance of the U.S. Supreme Court  
7 case of Bartlett v. Strickland, which declared  
8 that Section 2 of the CRA was not applicable in  
9 certain ways.

10 What we need here is to think in terms of  
11 Florida as a unified state of people working  
12 together to solve our problems, not split into  
13 a variety of competing ethnic clashes and so  
14 forth. Miami-Dade has like 19 subgroups of  
15 Hispanics.

16 We do not need ethnic warfare in this  
17 state, ethnic gerrymandering, which is just as  
18 bad as incumbent self-protection racket, which  
19 has been the standard for redistricting for  
20 multiple census.

21 The structure should follow natural  
22 geographic and county lines per Section 21 of  
23 Article III. However, I have listened to  
24 numerous testimony in these meetings, and there  
25 seems to be a repetition about community



1 interest.

2           However, community interest is not the  
3 defined constitutional standard, although I  
4 realize there was an attempt to propose such a  
5 supplemental amendment during this last  
6 election.

7           What is the natural process here locally  
8 is to end the gerrymandered districts that we  
9 already have, such as Senate District 27.  
10 Also, on the east coast where Boynton Beach is,  
11 it has an infamous reputation as one of the 20  
12 most gerrymandered districts in the United  
13 States.

14           SENATOR GAETZ: Mr. Shea, I need to ask  
15 you if you could put a bow on it just because  
16 we have so many people behind you.

17           MR. SHEA: Thank you very much.

18           SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, sir.

19           MR. SHEA: The natural demarcation line is  
20 the western boundaries of Palm Beach, Broward  
21 and so forth, and to go north from that, the  
22 natural three structures.

23           I will volunteer my analytics. If you  
24 wish to, you can ask me for some analysis and  
25 write-ups, and I would be most happy to do that

1 work.

2 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.

3 We appreciate your testimony and your offer.

4 MR. SHEA: Thank you very much, sir.

5 SENATOR GAETZ: Our next speaker is Jim  
6 Roach, and following Jim is Ben Nelson and then  
7 Brian Farrar with the Bonita Springs Chamber.

8 Mr. Roach, appreciate your taking time to  
9 come tonight, and the floor is yours.

10 MR. ROACH: Good evening, Senator and  
11 Representatives. Thank you for coming to  
12 Lehigh for taking our input. My name is Jim  
13 Roach. I live in Cape Coral, but I come out to  
14 Lehigh quite often, and I think Lehigh is a  
15 good place to have this hearing. If you go  
16 back ten years and look at the lines and you  
17 look at the community of Lehigh, we have a  
18 Senate district -- State Senate district that  
19 divides Lehigh in half, north and south, and we  
20 have a House district, two districts, that  
21 divide it east and west.

22 So Lehigh being a community, as you draw  
23 the maps this next time, would be nice to leave  
24 us as a community here. I think that is  
25 important.

1           I would also like to talk a little bit  
2           about what we have heard a lot in the media  
3           about providing us maps to talk about first,  
4           and I think we have heard often enough, "Show  
5           us the maps," and walking in today, I did see  
6           the maps you have printed out from other  
7           submissions, and that is a very good start.  
8           But for the average voter, the average one of  
9           us to look at that software and draw complete  
10          state maps is a little difficult. We don't  
11          have the resources you do. I am glad to see 50  
12          people did submit maps. I think that is  
13          important.

14                 My question for our local Representatives,  
15                 Caldwell and Aubuchon, and Senator Benacquisto,  
16                 now that we have maps, and you had mentioned in  
17                 the opening that you were going to use those to  
18                 start from, do you plan on having public  
19                 meetings this fall so that we can come and talk  
20                 to you about the maps that have been submitted?  
21                 I think that would be an excellent way for us  
22                 to give you input based on something we can see  
23                 instead of something we might not see.

24                 Let's see, a couple of other things just  
25                 on the general topic of what I think about when

1 I looked at those maps. I have to go back. My  
2 father was in World War II, received a Purple  
3 Heart, I was in Vietnam, received a Bronze  
4 Star, fighting for our right to vote and  
5 fighting, not only for that, but for our right  
6 -- for our votes to count.

7 So if I can leave you with one thing as --  
8 and most of you know I am a candidate for  
9 Congress in an unnamed district in 2012, but  
10 what I would like you to think about is what I  
11 think about every day, and that is that my  
12 country is more important than my party, and  
13 the people of southwest Florida are more  
14 important than my party, and the truth is more  
15 important than my party. Please think about  
16 that when you draw the lines. Thank you very  
17 much.

18 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir,  
19 and thank you for your service to our country.

20 And now we would -- we will recognize Ben  
21 Nelson from the City of Bonita Springs, then  
22 Brian Farrar from the Chamber, and then Donald  
23 Eslick, if you would come forward and join the  
24 on deck circle.

25 Mr. Nelson, thank you for coming, and you

1 are recognized, sir.

2 MAYOR NELSON: Thank you very much. It  
3 is good to be recognized somewhere.

4 I want to thank all of you, first of all,  
5 for putting on this forum, for being here  
6 tonight, and we really appreciate that.

7 It is really easy for us to kind of  
8 critique the shape of the existing districts as  
9 they are, it is real easy, as a matter of fact,  
10 but one thing that I cannot do is discredit  
11 your service. You have all served us very  
12 well. For the City of Bonita Springs, on  
13 behalf of our City Council and the 45,000  
14 citizens, thank you so much for being  
15 assessable for us, thank you so much for being  
16 there for us and for representing us and -- the  
17 best you can. You have always been there for  
18 us.

19 We've provided your staff with a map. We  
20 -- having invited us to tell you what to do, we  
21 decided to tell you what to do. Isn't that  
22 nice?

23 SENATOR GAETZ: Good man.

24 MAYOR NELSON: No problem. It is our  
25 pleasure. And in a -- as a matter of fact, we

1 have our good neighbors here from Estero, we  
2 agree on this subject. And is their  
3 representative from Ft. Myers Beach here?  
4 Seeing none, they agree with us, too. My City  
5 Manager is going to have me for this, but --

6 SENATOR GAETZ: Are you sure you are not a  
7 candidate for Congress?

8 MAYOR NELSON: Not at all, sir, not at  
9 all.

10 But, anyway, I think that you will find  
11 that our suggestion here, I won't go through  
12 what it is there, but I think that you will  
13 find them to be geographically compact, I think  
14 you will find them to be concise, I think the  
15 numbers add up, and I think that our  
16 communities, more so over than that, we have so  
17 much in common.

18 Our good friends here in Estero, ourselves  
19 and Ft. Myers Beach, we share the Estero Bay  
20 Aquatic Preserve, we share our watershed, we  
21 share the DRGR. There are so many things we  
22 have in common. We think that we are just --  
23 all of these communities that you represent are  
24 wonderful communities, but I think that this  
25 speaks exactly to what this legislation ought

1 to reflect, and that is common need, common  
2 good, common borders and good geographical  
3 sense.

4 And I would thank you for your  
5 consideration, and if you have any questions  
6 during this process, especially -- especially  
7 when you start to try to paste all of these  
8 comments together, I have all the greatest  
9 respect for that process, I have no idea how  
10 you are going to do that, but we are there for  
11 you. If you need some additional comments from  
12 the communities and from municipalities, it is  
13 our pleasure to comment. So thank you very  
14 much, and, please, we are there for you. Thank  
15 you.

16 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, and  
17 thanks so much for the submission. That will  
18 be included in the considerations that the  
19 Committee takes under advisement. We are very  
20 grateful. This is the kind of information we  
21 could not get otherwise.

22 Brian Farrar from the Bonita Springs  
23 Chamber, then Donald Eslick, and then Marilyn  
24 Edwards, if you would come forward.

25 And, Mr. Farrar, thanks for being here

1           tonight. The floor is yours, sir.

2           MR. FARRAR: Thank you very much. Thank  
3 you, Mr. Chairman and all the committee members  
4 that are here this evening. My name is Brian  
5 Farrar. I am here on behalf of the Bonita  
6 Springs Area Chamber of Commerce.

7           We are essentially a business  
8 representative community that covers southern  
9 Lee and part of northern Collier County, and we  
10 see Mr. Richter here, thank you very much. But  
11 we want to be here tonight to speak on behalf  
12 of the City's recommendation. We support the  
13 Mayor and the maps that the City of Bonita  
14 Springs has provided to you all.

15           As a member of the Corkscrew Regional  
16 Ecosystem Watershed Land and Water Trust Board,  
17 I am a member of that as well, having that all  
18 within one district as well means something to  
19 me and the southern drainage of this whole  
20 southern Lee area.

21           Beyond that, I will be brief and allow  
22 everyone else to speak. Thank you very much.  
23 Have a good evening.

24           SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir,  
25 excellent testimony, and we look forward to



1           considering the information that you have  
2           provided to us.

3                     And Donald Eslick with the -- I think it's  
4           -- is it Estero, sir?

5                     MR. ESLICK:   Yes.

6                     SENATOR GAETZ:   Estero Council of  
7           Community Leaders.  And we very much appreciate  
8           your taking time to be with us.

9                     MR. ESLICK:   Do you want to announce the  
10          other backup here?

11                    SENATOR GAETZ:   Sure.  Marilyn Edwards.  
12          That is -- you're moving around.  And then  
13          Philip Douglas with Brooks Concerned Citizens.  
14          Mr. Eslick, thank you very much.

15                    MR. ESLICK:   Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  I  
16          am Dan Eslick.  I Chair the Estero Council of  
17          Community Leaders.  Estero is a community,  
18          unincorporated Lee County, and the Council of  
19          Community Leaders is a network of all the  
20          communities within that community.  We have  
21          about 25,000 registered voters, about 40,000  
22          people.  We tripled in size in the last decade,  
23          so we've understood a little bit about growth.

24                    Three or four major points I would like to  
25          make.  One is that the people of southwest

1 Florida deserve to have their own voice  
2 represented by people from southwest Florida.  
3 We don't need anymore cross-state districts.  
4 We've had four of them this last decade. That  
5 -- it is unfair. It is unfair to the  
6 Representatives and the Senators, and it is  
7 unfair to the citizens on the east coast, as  
8 well as it is to those on the west coast. That  
9 is especially down here in the southern part of  
10 the state where you have the Everglades in the  
11 middle. It just doesn't make a whole lot of  
12 sense. So that is a key point that I would  
13 like to make, and I hope you will carry that  
14 back.

15 Secondly, Estero, like Bonita, is in the  
16 southern end of Lee County. We are an  
17 unincorporated community in Lee County, so our  
18 government is Lee County government, so we want  
19 to be in a Lee County district. We work  
20 closely with our neighbors in Bonita Springs.  
21 I like to identify with the maps that the Mayor  
22 has just presented, both of which are all Lee  
23 County, House and Senate districts, very, very  
24 important.

25 The community of interest aspect of Estero

1 is very important. We have a community plan  
2 for the entire community adopted by the county  
3 board. Everything that we have done in  
4 managing our growth over this last decade was  
5 guided by that, so everybody in the community  
6 really identifies with what we have been doing.  
7 So it is very important for the whole thing to  
8 be together.

9 The real key to the problem in -- as it  
10 relates to the State Senate district if you  
11 have west coast and east coast districts is how  
12 you deal with the district to our south. I  
13 would recommend that the Collier County Senate  
14 district go up and include Hendry, Glades and  
15 Highlands Counties. That would make -- it is  
16 almost a perfect fit for that Senate district,  
17 and that allows Lee County then to have four  
18 House districts and an entirely -- an entire  
19 Senate district with about 150,000 people left  
20 over to move into another one.

21 So very much appreciate the opportunity to  
22 talk to you tonight. Good luck in your  
23 deliberations. We look forward to working with  
24 you.

25 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very, very much.

1           And, Ms. Edwards, you are up next, Philip  
2 Douglas and then Douglas Patterson.

3           Ms. Edwards, thank you for coming tonight,  
4 and we are looking forward to your testimony.

5           MS. EDWARDS: Thank you very much, Mr.  
6 Chairman. I am Marilyn Edwards. I am the  
7 coordinator for the Brooks Concerned Citizens,  
8 representing Spring Run and The Brooks.

9           I am here to ask you, and join the chorus,  
10 that you eliminate cross-state legislative  
11 districts; in particular, our district, State  
12 Senate District 27. By doing this, you would  
13 be meeting your redistricting objectives of  
14 contiguity and preservation of communities of  
15 interest.

16           The residents of southeast coast of  
17 Florida face issues far different from the  
18 issues facing those of us on the southwest  
19 coast. Both of us need and deserve our own  
20 Senate -- single Senator who can address our  
21 unique concerns. Our community supports the  
22 maps presented by Bonita Springs Mayor Ben  
23 Nel- -- did I say the wrong thing?

24           SENATOR GAETZ: No, ma'am. You are live,  
25 you are good, you are doing well.

1           MS. EDWARDS: We ask that Estero and  
2 Bonita Springs be included in all Lee County  
3 legislative districts, the House, the Senate,  
4 as well as the -- along congressional lines, as  
5 we all work closely together and share common  
6 goals. Thank you for listening.

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

8           After Douglas Patterson, our next  
9 presenter would be Kimmie Correll.

10           And so Mr. Douglas, Philip Douglas, we  
11 thank you for being here tonight, sir, and  
12 honored to hear your testimony.

13           MR. DOUGLAS: Thank you very much,  
14 Senator. It is a pleasure to be here. And I  
15 wanted to reaffirm what Mayor Nelson said and  
16 the two speakers following him. We do not want  
17 cross-state districts. That is emphatic. I  
18 cannot be more emphatic that that is something  
19 that is not wanted in south Lee County and in  
20 Lee County. We want to be represented by a  
21 single Senator and a single Representative.

22           I also would like to say that recently  
23 passed Constitutional Amendments 5 and 6, which  
24 were not embraced by lot of members of the  
25 Legislature, need to be followed, and if they

1 are followed, the community of interest for  
2 south Lee County will be included properly.

3 Now, nobody is questioning the process,  
4 but if we see gerrymandered cross-state  
5 districts when the Legislature convenes and  
6 puts these out for final disposition, we will  
7 know two things:

8 One, you have failed to listen to the  
9 residents here tonight; and number two, I hate  
10 to unfortunately say this could be termed a  
11 charade. I am not saying that, but the proof  
12 is in the pudding. Hopefully you will hear us.

13 Thank you very much for your hard work,  
14 and appreciate your time.

15 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much.

16 And for another dose of pudding, Douglas  
17 Patterson, and following Mr. Patterson is  
18 Kimmie Correll and then Gary Verwilt with the  
19 Realtor Association of Greater Ft. Myers.

20 Mr. Patterson, thank you for being here,  
21 sir.

22 MR. PATTERSON: Thank you, Chairman and  
23 Representatives.

24 SENATOR GAETZ: And may we ask you to hold  
25 the mike a little closer to you so we can get

1 every word.

2 MR. PATTERSON: Sure. Thank you.

3 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you.

4 MR. PATTERSON: Thank you, Chairman and  
5 Representatives. First of all, I would like to  
6 make a statement and say that it is Lehigh  
7 Acres, not Lehigh. And I want to thank you for  
8 considering the valuable input of our citizens  
9 in the redistricting plan and the procedure  
10 that is following.

11 My comments basically are set up for House  
12 District 27. I feel with 159.6 percent  
13 population increase in our area, that we need  
14 to increase House District 27 to reflect that  
15 so that we will have a fair representation in  
16 our area. That's basically all I have to say.

17 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.

18 Ms. Correll, did I get that correct?

19 MS. CORRELL: You did, thank you.

20 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you so much, and  
21 after Ms. Correll, we have Gary Verwilt and  
22 then -- this one is a little bit more  
23 challenging for me, Ita Neymotin or Neymotin --  
24 Neymotin, I'm sorry. Thank you very much.

25 Ms. Correll, you are recognized.

1           MS. CORRELL: Good evening to you all. I  
2 am appreciative of being here and having the  
3 opportunity to speak. This is the first time I  
4 have ever done something of this nature. My  
5 background is interior decorating, so this is  
6 nothing like that.

7           I am a native of Florida, born in Miami,  
8 Florida, raised there for the first two decades  
9 and went off to college in Alachua County, and  
10 then moved over here to Lee County. I spent  
11 the years raising my children in Lee County,  
12 down in Marco Island and Collier County, and  
13 now am retired in Charlotte County. Now that  
14 the -- I -- as a retired citizen of the state  
15 of Florida, I understand now how important it  
16 is that we pay attention to what is going on  
17 within the politics, and so I am thankful to  
18 have the opportunity to be a part of this.

19           It is important to me that District 16  
20 that stretches from the east coast to the west  
21 coast be modified so that it is more beneficial  
22 to the people living in the areas. I feel that  
23 Charlotte County has grown enough that it can  
24 support a district of its own, and I understand  
25 that the center of the state, though the



1 residents are very diversified and spread out,  
2 need to be either grouped with the east coast  
3 or the west coast.

4 I think for some reason it seems as though  
5 from Interstate 95 east you seem to have a lot  
6 of congestion, and, therefore, the population  
7 supports one district, whereas we on the west  
8 coast here are still in the growth of the area  
9 and possibly could blend in with the center of  
10 the state better. I believe that the  
11 agriculture areas in the middle of the state  
12 usually seem to work more with the west coast  
13 than they do with the east coast.

14 So if those comments can be of any help, I  
15 am thankful to be here and I will be watching  
16 and I will get on the maps and do what I can.

17 SENATOR GAETZ: Good. Thank you so much.

18 MS. CORRELL: Thank you all.

19 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, ma'am.

20 Following Mr. Verwilt is -- try me again  
21 on this -- Neymotin, Ita Neymotin, and then  
22 Pete Quasius, or Quasus.

23 Mr. Verwilt, you are recognized, and  
24 thanks for coming here on behalf of the  
25 realtors.

1           MR. VERWILT:  Senator -- let me try that  
2 again a little bit further back.  Thank you.  
3 Senator, thank you very much for having us, and  
4 I would like to welcome you all and thank you  
5 for all of your interest, energy and  
6 enthusiasm.  It certainly is well noted, and we  
7 appreciate you being here this evening to  
8 listen to us.

9           For those of you who do not know me,  
10 again, my name is Gary Verwilt.  I am President  
11 of the Realtor Association of Greater Ft. Myers  
12 and the Beach.  Our association is currently  
13 over 4,500 strong, and we are greatly  
14 interested and involved in the political  
15 processes that take place here locally and at  
16 the state and on the national levels.

17           We are looking forward to this  
18 redistricting process and know how difficult it  
19 is.  Right now, Lee County has three state  
20 Senate districts:  21, 27, 37.  We also have  
21 five State House districts, these being 71, 72,  
22 73, 74 and 75.  As such, our association  
23 believes that it would be a real disservice to  
24 our members to dilute this type of excellent  
25 representation.  Others have alluded to the

1 same issue in many of your other hearings.  
2 This type of representation is critical for  
3 southwest Florida.

4 We do agree with the fact that cross  
5 district -- cross-state districts must be  
6 eliminated, and we are going to take it one  
7 step farther by saying the coastal areas --  
8 first, we have diverse communities within our  
9 own region. The coastal areas of Sanibel,  
10 Captiva and Ft. Myers Beach are quite different  
11 than the more rural areas of Alva, Olga,  
12 Buckingham, parts of Lehigh Acres and over to  
13 Hendry, Glades and the western portions of Palm  
14 Beach County.

15 These locations have a rural texture with  
16 large farms, citrus groves, large equestrian  
17 lots and communities, and their needs are much  
18 removed from those coastal areas, which is why  
19 it doesn't make sense to lump these areas all  
20 together. It also doesn't make sense to  
21 aggregate these coastal communities, as well as  
22 Cape Coral, with inland communities.

23 Our realtors are community experts, and  
24 just as realtors specializing in Cape --  
25 Captiva waterfront development wouldn't be the

1 expert to selling Buckingham farmland, we  
2 shouldn't expect our elected officials to have  
3 expertise for every area, and we feel these are  
4 best left separated as they are presently  
5 configured. This would be in keeping with the  
6 preservation of community interests and the  
7 preservation of cores of prior districts.

8 We ask that you look into this regrouping  
9 in such a manner as keep -- keeping the  
10 communities in separate districts, and I thank  
11 you for the opportunity to speak to you this  
12 evening, sir.

13 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very, very much.  
14 Very useful testimony.

15 And is it Ida or Ita? Ita?

16 MS. NEYMOTIN: It is Ita, yes. Thank you,  
17 Mr. Chairman.

18 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, and you are  
19 recognized, and following Pete Quasius is  
20 Council Member Thomas Leonardo, the City of Ft.  
21 Myers.

22 Ita, you are recognized. Thanks for  
23 coming.

24 MS. NEYMOTIN: Thank you. Good evening,  
25 and thank you for taking time to listen to all

1 of us here today. My name is Ita Neymotin, and  
2 I am an attorney. I have lived here in Lee  
3 County for about 10 years. I have worked as a  
4 prosecutor in both Hendry and Glades County.

5 Having seen the problems and having met  
6 the people in all three counties, I can tell  
7 you there is a great deal of common areas of  
8 interest between Ft. Myers, LaBelle, Moore  
9 Haven, and even Alga and Olga. I know we  
10 Floridians are all hard-working people and we  
11 all care about Florida. But we all have  
12 individual concerns as well.

13 Ft. Myers Beach and other beach  
14 communities are more concerned with tourism and  
15 offshore drilling. We in the inland  
16 communities are more concerned with the job  
17 market and with the agricultural industry.

18 As it stands now, District 27 is  
19 contiguous and compact. We are currently  
20 represented by 7.5 percent in Tallahassee  
21 through our legislators, and I ask that you  
22 please not dilute our representation. I  
23 likewise ask that you keep communities of  
24 interest together.

25 Thank you for your time.

1           SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,  
2           ma'am. Very helpful.

3           Mr. Quasius, thank you for being here  
4           tonight, and we are delighted to hear your  
5           testimony, look forward it.

6           MR. QUASIUS: Thank all of you for your  
7           service. I understand that this is not an easy  
8           job. It is one that will dictate for the next  
9           decade what kind of representation we have.

10          I represent the Caloosahatchee Citizens  
11          Association, and I think I will add my refrain  
12          to the common cause you are hearing: We want  
13          our representatives to represent our community,  
14          to understand what our concerns are, to share  
15          them and hopefully to adequately represent  
16          them. We were delighted with the cross  
17          country -- or cross-state district we have,  
18          because Ms. Benacquisto decided to see the best  
19          side and move over to the west coast, so that  
20          was to our advantage. And it is a hard job, we  
21          understand that. It makes little sense to have  
22          someone representing and living on the east  
23          coast trying to understand the issues that we  
24          have here in Lee County. I think we need to  
25          have our own representation. I think we need

1 to have people who are living and working and  
2 growing up in our communities to represent us,  
3 and I look forward to seeing maps that  
4 represent that.

5 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, sir.

6 Following Council Member Thomas Leonardo  
7 from the City of Ft. Myers, we have Joseph  
8 Russo and then Bill, and I believe it is either  
9 Dakos or Dakos.

10 Mr. Leonardo, council member, first thank  
11 you for your service to your community and to  
12 the people of the State of Florida, and you are  
13 recognized.

14 COUNCILMAN LEONARDO: Thank you,  
15 Mr. Chairman. Good evening, all honorable  
16 elected officials, and welcome to beautiful Lee  
17 County. My name has been mentioned, Tom  
18 Leonardo, I am a city councilman for the City  
19 of Ft. Myers, representing Ward 6, the newest  
20 and eastern most of our city's six wards.

21 Our city has been described as the last  
22 great city in Florida. We are the county seat  
23 for Lee County and the urban center for  
24 southwest Florida. Once the recession ends,  
25 our city and Lee County will continue to grow

1 in population and prominence in the life of our  
2 state.

3 I am here tonight to speak in favor of  
4 maintaining the current boundaries of Senate  
5 District 27 so ably represented by Senator  
6 Lizbeth Benacquisto. There are many reasons  
7 for this, and let me share a few of these  
8 reasons with you.

9 Currently the City of Ft. Myers benefits  
10 from Lee County being represented by three  
11 State Senators and five State Representatives.  
12 This fact has provided us with multiple  
13 benefits, and obviously we would not like to  
14 see this changed.

15 The way Senate District 27 is now  
16 configured, we believe that we share many  
17 interests with other communities within the  
18 district, even though the district spans a  
19 cross-section from the east to the west coast.

20 We are not a coastal community, as has  
21 been previously mentioned, and thus we share  
22 more in common with inland communities than  
23 with the community -- coastal communities of  
24 Sanibel, Captiva and Ft. Myers Beach, as an  
25 example.



1           Historically, Ft. Myers has always been  
2 linked to the inland communities of southwest  
3 Florida. As in the past, as it is today, we  
4 are the commercial hub for these inland  
5 communities, and we will remain so far into the  
6 future.

7           Thank you for the process which allows for  
8 public input and complete transparency. You  
9 mentioned the law that disallows any  
10 predetermined map. We appreciate that law. It  
11 would be like -- if that was allowed, it would  
12 be like a judge making a decision without  
13 hearing the evidence.

14           I wish you continued success in your  
15 public outreaching, and thank you again for  
16 listening to us.

17           SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,  
18 Councilman.

19           Mr. Russo, nice to see you, and we  
20 understand that you have a map to show us as  
21 well, is that right, sir?

22           MR. RUSSO: Yes, I do. It is very nice to  
23 see you again, Senator Gaetz, and everyone  
24 else. My name is Joseph Russo. I am here  
25 today as a student from Florida Gulf Coast

1 University where, among other things, I study  
2 political science, and actually, my newest  
3 professor is actually Mr. -- Representative  
4 Caldwell right there where I take his course on  
5 redistricting, so --

6 SENATOR GAETZ: Now, wait a minute.

7 MR. RUSSO: -- maybe this will get me some  
8 extra credit.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: Wait a minute. At the  
10 last hearing, you were trying to suck up to a  
11 different professor.

12 MR. RUSSO: I am trying to do as much with  
13 my grades as in due time.

14 SENATOR GAETZ: Now, are you a student or  
15 are you running for office?

16 MR. RUSSO: Give me a few years and we  
17 will see.

18 Over here I wanted to talk about the  
19 congressional districts in southwest Florida.  
20 Since everyone is seemingly talking about the  
21 State House and the State Senate districts, and  
22 they are very knowledgeable, I want to bring  
23 over a perspective of the congressional  
24 districts in southwest Florida.

25 Obviously, due to the census, we have

1 grown over 20 percent in the southwest Florida  
2 area, so we pretty much need another  
3 congressional district, and this is my proposal  
4 here for how that would best be solved.

5 In the north, you have in Manatee and  
6 Sarasota Counties Congressional District 13,  
7 currently seated with Vern Buchanan. In the  
8 south, you have Congressional District 14,  
9 currently seated with Connie Mack, and that  
10 goes up with Lehigh Acres and just over in Ft.  
11 Myers, just south of Colonial is the boundary.  
12 And then you have Charlotte County, Cape Coral  
13 and all of the interior counties taking up the  
14 new district of 27 that I have numbered there.  
15 But that is my proposal of how a district would  
16 be set up in a southwest Florida area.

17 And I know there's been a lot of talk  
18 about the east-west coast districts. I think  
19 this kind of goes along with what everyone was  
20 saying with that. And with the interior  
21 counties all composed into one district, there  
22 would be a lot of like representation in that  
23 as well.

24 But, again, I would like to thank everyone  
25 here for hearing me speak once again, and I

1 wish you the best to your trip in Clewiston  
2 tomorrow on your clubhouse turn tour here, and  
3 I think you very much for representing the  
4 State of Florida and I hope to one day probably  
5 be in your seat, but --

6 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you. Thank you,  
7 Mr. Russo. I have no doubt.

8 Bill Dakos -- is it Dakos?

9 MR. DAKOS: It is. Better than any  
10 telemarketer.

11 SENATOR GAETZ: And then following  
12 Mr. Dakos, Mark Castellano with the Teachers  
13 Association of Lee County, and then Craig  
14 Briscoe, if you will be in the on deck circle.

15 Mr. Dakos, thank you for coming tonight,  
16 and you are recognized.

17 MR. DAKOS: Thank you so much for being  
18 here tonight, and thank you for serving the  
19 greatest state in the nation.

20 I would like to just re-elaborate what  
21 Mr. Russo said actually, because I do feel that  
22 we need another Representative here from  
23 Congress. Living here for 22 years, I have  
24 seen the growth, and it cannot be denied that  
25 this area has grown tremendously over the past

1 ten years. I hope that you consider that, and  
2 thanks again for being here.

3 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, sir, very, very  
4 much. Appreciate it.

5 And next, Mark -- Mark Castellano,  
6 representing the Teachers Association of Lee  
7 County. Thank you very much for being here,  
8 sir, and we are anxious to hear your testimony.

9 MR. CASTELLANO: Thank you, Senator. I  
10 appreciate the opportunity, all the legislators  
11 here today.

12 Very simple, I don't have -- I wish -- I  
13 don't have a plan or anything to offer you. I  
14 do want to share just a couple of thoughts. I  
15 think that you have heard the majority of  
16 people talking about the lack of cross-state  
17 districts. Senator Benacquisto, I want to  
18 share with you, your predecessor, Senator  
19 Aronberg, used to describe your district, which  
20 I consider the poster child for gerrymandered  
21 cross-state districts, he used to describe it  
22 beautifully, he would say, "Oh, I represent  
23 Palm Beach and I represent Lee County and I  
24 represent some of the bass swimming in Lake  
25 Okeechobee." We always loved that.

1           Basically I would say that you have heard  
2           from a number of people and you are going to  
3           hear from me that we want districts that  
4           represent us fairly, and that are not -- and  
5           the word "gerrymandered" has been used so much,  
6           but basically that is the sentiment that many  
7           of us have, and we have had for decades, and I  
8           would urge you to please consider that, making  
9           communities, local areas -- respecting the  
10          counties more so than what is currently the  
11          practice.

12           I think the last thing I want to share  
13          with you is this thought: It is very  
14          frustrating, and it has been for years, that in  
15          Florida we tend to -- we feel compelled  
16          oftentimes to legislate or to govern through  
17          the Constitution, through constitutional  
18          amendments. Amendments 5 and 6 were very  
19          heartfelt amendments, and they passed rather  
20          overwhelmingly. And we ask you to please  
21          represent that, and I would -- I am so longing  
22          for the day that we don't have to try to  
23          legislate this state through constitutional  
24          amendments, and that gives you -- that puts the  
25          onus on you. That puts the onus on you to do

1 the right thing.

2 As a teachers --representative of the  
3 teachers in this county, you know, class size  
4 amendment is near and dear to my heart. I  
5 don't mean to get off on it, but I've always  
6 felt that the class size amendment was not  
7 necessary if the Legislature had ever done what  
8 I believe would have been the right thing to  
9 do.

10 So this is another example, in my opinion,  
11 of that. The reason that those amendments were  
12 passed was because fair districting needed to  
13 have been done. Thank you very much.

14 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.

15 And next Craig Briscoe, please, and  
16 following Mr. Briscoe, Brenda Skupny and then  
17 Cristina Cook.

18 Mr. Briscoe, the floor is yours, sir.

19 MR. BRISCOE: Thank you. I do want to  
20 thank you for the opportunity of listening to  
21 us this evening. Granted, there has been  
22 critics of the process by various  
23 contingencies; however, since we are a republic  
24 and not a democracy, I have the full faith and  
25 confidence that you, elected officials, will

1 draw the districts which best serve the  
2 constituents that you serve, regardless of your  
3 party affiliation. With that said, it is my  
4 sincere hope, however, that Lee does get its  
5 own Senate seat.

6 And finally, I do want to thank you for  
7 the resources that you've made available  
8 on-line. I watched this morning in Naples and  
9 am here this evening, and you guys have done a  
10 fantastic job of making this information  
11 available, not only in the streaming, as well  
12 as the documentation of the meetings and  
13 agenda, and for that, I am very proud to have  
14 many of you as my representative.

15 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.

16 Is it Skupny? Thank you very much for  
17 being here, Ms. Skupny, and we are delighted to  
18 have your testimony.

19 MS. SKUPNY: Thank you for having me.  
20 Thank you for being here. I appreciate you  
21 taking your time to visit us. And, again, my  
22 name is Brenda Skupny. I live in Cape Coral.  
23 I recognize a lot of faces here in front of me,  
24 and thanks for being here and representing us.  
25 I think you do a great job.



1           I personally have many concerns regarding  
2           redistricting, particularly since the law under  
3           Amendments 5 and 6 appear to conflict with the  
4           Federal Voters Rights Act of 1965. I am sure  
5           that lawsuits are unavoidable. I feel that  
6           Amendment 5 and 6, that was the intent behind  
7           some of the proponents of that. But I ask that  
8           you take into careful consideration the cost to  
9           taxpayers when you draft the new districts.

10           In 2010, Ft. Myers/Cape Coral metropolitan  
11           area ranked sixth in population in the state of  
12           Florida. We have over 700,000 people. Yet we  
13           are the minority constituency in our State  
14           Senate districts. In fact, in District 21,  
15           Senator Bennett's district, we share him with  
16           five other counties. I respectfully request  
17           that in drawing Senate districts, that Lee  
18           County is given the considerations due by  
19           virtue of our population for a Senate district  
20           contained with the majority of population Lee  
21           County. Thank you again for being here, and I  
22           appreciate all you do.

23           SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much.

24           And next we will hear from Christina Cook,  
25           and then following Ms. Cook, Gary Lee and then

1 Charles Dauray.

2 Ms. Cook, thank you so much for coming  
3 this evening.

4 MS. COOK: Thank you for having me and  
5 providing all of us with this opportunity. You  
6 all have a very challenging task ahead of you,  
7 and I would like to add my voice to those you  
8 are hearing this evening and respectfully  
9 request that you give serious consideration,  
10 given the population of Lee County, of the  
11 importance of having most, if not all, of Lee  
12 County represented by one Senate district.  
13 Thank you very much.

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

16 After Gary Lee and Charles Dauray -- and I  
17 hope I have that right -- John McNamara, please  
18 come into the on deck circle.

19 Mr. Lee.

20 MR. LEE: Mr. Chairman, thank you very  
21 much for the invite, and also for being here to  
22 represent the Legislature. I am going to stick  
23 to the first rule that was adopted this morning  
24 and how you are counting brevity. I understand  
25 you get bonus points for brevity.

1           SENATOR GAETZ: We give extra credit  
2 points, bonus points, and you get a free piece  
3 of pie at Perkins.

4           MR. LEE: Thank you. I praise the effort,  
5 the transparency which you are doing on behalf  
6 of the state. The public input that you are  
7 doing is absolutely fabulous.

8           I have been a student of redistricting,  
9 reapportionment, since 1972. I played a role  
10 in '72, '82, '92, 2002 and now 2010, and a lot  
11 has happened in the evolvement of the court  
12 cases and so on that have come down by the  
13 Supreme Court of the United States, by the  
14 Voters Rights Act of 1965.

15           I am going to hand up to the Committee, if  
16 I may, and not read the full resolution which  
17 the Lee County Republican Party adopted this  
18 past Saturday unanimously. May I give you the  
19 guts of it, which says, "Now, therefore, be it  
20 resolved that Lee County Republican Committee  
21 calls upon the Florida Legislature to adopt a  
22 redistricting and reapportionment plan that  
23 protects the integrity of counties, cities and  
24 other common interest, and provides for true  
25 representation for resident citizens in

1 southwest Florida." That was adopted  
2 unanimately by our committee on behalf of  
3 160,000 Republicans in Lee County.

4 Three or four other points, if I may. We  
5 prefer north-south districts has been  
6 represented here by previous testifiers. We  
7 hope you will do away with the east-west axis  
8 for representation. For 20 years, Lee County  
9 has been bifurcated, trifurcated, and not given  
10 the representation that we should have for the  
11 population in particular that we have achieved.  
12 The Lee population has grown enormously in the  
13 last ten years. When you combine it with  
14 Charlotte and Collier County, you are looking  
15 at a million two, a million three hundred  
16 thousand people.

17 Next point that I would make is that we  
18 prefer that we have a consolidated  
19 congressional district as much in Lee County as  
20 possible. We would like at least one and a  
21 half or three quarters State Senate seats in  
22 Lee County, which our population would justify.  
23 And if you look at the House of  
24 Representatives' representation, we should be  
25 entitled to at least another seat that would

1 give us four members in the House of  
2 Representatives.

3 I think your good efforts, again, are  
4 laudable. The compliance problems you will  
5 have with 5 and 6 will be enormous. If we were  
6 betting people tonight, I am sure we would bet  
7 that this will end up in the courts, which  
8 means that a Special Master ends up drawing  
9 those districts, bringing it back to the  
10 Legislature for affirmation or ratification. I  
11 hope that doesn't happen, but when I have read  
12 carefully 5 and 6, I don't see how you can meet  
13 the criteria.

14 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you.

15 MR. LEE: And it is interesting that the  
16 advocates of that have not -- have failed not  
17 to draw seats that I think you had asked them  
18 to do.

19 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.

20 MR. LEE: Yes, sir. Thank you very much.

21 SENATOR GAETZ: Appreciate your testimony.

22 And next, Mr. Dauray, could you help me  
23 with the pronunciation?

24 MR. DAURAY: Dauray.

25 SENATOR GAETZ: Say again, sir.

1 MR. DAURAY: Dauray, Charles Dauray.

2 SENATOR GAETZ: Very good. Thank you,  
3 sir, and thank you for your testimony.

4 MR. DAURAY: Thank you, Senator. Thank  
5 you, Senators and Representatives.

6 When this meeting began tonight, you  
7 outlined and listed the communities from whence  
8 you came. And I would venture to say, with all  
9 due respect to some of the communities on the  
10 east coast, which are wonderful communities,  
11 that many of the people in the audience haven't  
12 the slightest idea where you are coming from.  
13 They haven't visited your communities. They  
14 know little or nothing about you. Conversely,  
15 some of you know little or very little about  
16 the west coast, and that is understandable, but  
17 yet we are joined. We are joined by what I  
18 like to call political contrivance, political  
19 manipulations, so that the west coast ends up  
20 being an appendix to some perceived or real  
21 power centers on the east coast, and we are  
22 kind of tired of that over here on the west  
23 coast, I want you to know that. We have  
24 matured, we have a powerful power base, we are  
25 common sense people and we are looking for home

1 rule. Thank you very much.

2 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, sir.

3 Following Mr. McNamara, Ray Rodriques,  
4 please, and then if Terry Miller will come  
5 forward and join us in the front row.

6 Mr. McNamara, delighted to have you here,  
7 and the floor is yours.

8 MR. McNAMARA: Thank you, sir. Good  
9 evening. My name is John McNamara, I am from  
10 Cape Coral.

11 SENATOR GAETZ: And could we get you to  
12 speak just a little closer into the mike?

13 MR. McNAMARA: I'm sorry.

14 I voted in my first election at the age of  
15 18 in 1986 as part of the voter uprising in  
16 Alabama that elected the first Republican  
17 Governor since reconstruction. My earliest  
18 political memories, having my father sit me  
19 down in January of 1977 to watch Jimmy Carter  
20 be sworn in as President because he was from  
21 neighboring Georgia. I've participated in our  
22 democracy for a long time. I have been an  
23 observer of politics for even longer.

24 I stand before you tonight because I fear  
25 for the future of our democracy. While

1 gerrymandering is not new, it dates back to at  
2 least 1812, we have taken it to new heights.  
3 Only four times since 1970 has the re-election  
4 rates for incumbents in Congress been less than  
5 90 percent. Most Representatives run in such  
6 safe districts they no longer have to answer to  
7 the general public. All they have to do is win  
8 their primary election. This means many  
9 elected officials have to convince primary  
10 voters, who are normally the most partisan of  
11 people, that the candidate deserves the seat.  
12 What we end up is not divided government, but  
13 divisive government.

14 While a nation itself might be slightly  
15 center right in its view of the world, the  
16 elected leaders end up being either hard left  
17 or hard right. This leaves a huge goal, which  
18 as the most recent hissy fit over the debt  
19 ceiling showed, is difficult, if not  
20 impossible, to bridge. And while the extreme  
21 left and extreme right shouts at each other,  
22 the large number of us in the middle are  
23 ignored. We don't have a voice. We aren't  
24 given a choice. We aren't stuck with  
25 dysfunctional government, we are stuck with



1 dysfunctional politics.

2 But in Florida, we have an answer to the  
3 problem. In 2010, even as electing a very  
4 large number of conservative voter candidates,  
5 more than 60 percent of Floridians backed two  
6 amendments which would outlaw gerrymandering.  
7 More people supported these amendments than  
8 supported Rick Scott or his opponent.

9 Ladies and gentlemen, the voters of  
10 Florida have clearly spoken. They want these  
11 protected districts to end. They want the  
12 freedom to choose their representatives, not  
13 have one forced on them by the minority of  
14 voters. They want to have their voices  
15 restored.

16 This redistricting process is an  
17 opportunity for everyone. It is an opportunity  
18 for Florida to take the lead and serve as an  
19 example to the rest of the country on how  
20 civility can be restored to our politics by  
21 bringing back the center, it is an opportunity  
22 to restore choice to thousands of  
23 disenfranchised Floridians, and it is an  
24 opportunity for our lawmakers to become  
25 something more than just politicians. You can

1           become leaders, you can become statesmen and  
2           stateswomen for the State. You were elected to  
3           carry out the will of the people. In 2010,  
4           they let you know what that was. Please, I am  
5           asking you to just carry out your duty to the  
6           state and its citizens. Thank you.

7                     SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.  
8           Excellent testimony.

9                     Following Ray Rodriques and Terry Miller,  
10          if Tom Martin would come forward and be ready  
11          to testify.

12                    Mr. Rodriques, thank you very much, sir,  
13          for being here, and we would love to hear what  
14          you have to share with the Committee.

15                    MR. RODRIGUES: Thank you. My name is Ray  
16          Rodriques, and I am the Vice-Chair of the Lee  
17          County Republican Party, and I want to thank  
18          you for coming to Lee County tonight. I know  
19          that the summertime is the time that you get  
20          generally your break from session and you get  
21          to come home, take care of your business and  
22          your families, and I appreciate the fact that  
23          all of you have volunteered to take on this  
24          challenging assignment of redistricting and  
25          spend your summer going all over Florida, and

1 we are happy that you are here tonight.

2 I have been a resident of Lee County for  
3 17 years. In my time here, I spent a decade  
4 working for GE corporate as a manager, and  
5 during that time, I learned project managing  
6 the GE way. And the GE way for project  
7 managing was to identify a problem, gather the  
8 data. After all the data had been gathered,  
9 analyze the data, and then when you had  
10 finished the analysis, then prepare a proposed  
11 solution. I believe by coming here tonight  
12 without maps, you are following that process.  
13 You are gathering the data from across the  
14 state in order to identify what your potential  
15 solutions will be, and I thank you for doing  
16 that and respecting the citizens of Florida  
17 enough to get our input before you make your  
18 decisions.

19 Ten years ago, Amendments 5 and 6 did not  
20 exist. Today they are part of the state's  
21 Constitution. The Fair Districts people led a  
22 statewide effort, they collected \$9 million in  
23 contributions and they ran a great campaign to  
24 get these amendments passed. But now that they  
25 have what they want, they are suddenly quiet

1 when it is time to do the real work, rolling up  
2 your sleeves and implementing 5 and 6. Now,  
3 normally silence wouldn't be a problem, except  
4 for the fact that so many of the words in  
5 Amendments 5 and 6 are ambiguous. Can someone  
6 please explain the phrase, "denying or  
7 abridging the equal opportunity of racial or  
8 language minorities to participate in the  
9 political process or diminish their ability to  
10 elect representatives of their choice" in the  
11 concept of drawing districts? How far should  
12 the Legislature go to do things that will  
13 ensure minority voters have the ability to  
14 elect representatives of their choice? Should  
15 you split up a city? Should you split up a  
16 county? Or even multiple cities or multiple  
17 counties?

18 I appreciate the fact that folks have  
19 brought maps here for you to see, and I  
20 encourage all of us to do that. What  
21 disappoints me is you are near the end of this  
22 process and no one from Fair Districts has  
23 showed up and given you a proposal on how to  
24 implement the amendments that they advocated  
25 that we support. It is time for them to step

1 up and do the right thing and give you some  
2 guidance. I think by being silent they are  
3 dropping the ball and not finishing the job  
4 when it comes to implementing 5 and 6. And  
5 here's where I am coming from: I believe in  
6 the Constitution. The Constitution is giving  
7 you, the Legislature, the authority to do  
8 redistricting. And my fear is this is nothing  
9 but a back-door attempt to get it out of your  
10 hands and put it in the courts where it does  
11 not belong.

12 You have a very difficult job ahead of  
13 you. I thank you for taking it on. Good  
14 night.

15 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.

16 Terry Miller, Tom Martin and then Governor  
17 Kottkamp. We will hear from Governor Kottkamp  
18 tonight, that is great.

19 Mr. Miller.

20 MR. MILLER: Thank you. Again, my name is  
21 Terry Miller, and I live in Cape Coral, and I  
22 want to welcome you all here this evening and  
23 thank you for giving us the time to bring our  
24 input to you and take it into consideration in  
25 that.

1           I think you all have your work cut out for  
2 you. The job ahead of you is daunting, and I  
3 do not envy you whatsoever. But my comments  
4 tonight are going to be a little different than  
5 what we have heard thus far this evening and  
6 probably what you have heard throughout the  
7 course of your travels through the state.

8           A lot of people have spoken about  
9 east-west districts, north-south districts, and  
10 while I believe we need to get rid of the  
11 east-west districts, I want to talk about  
12 following city lines as required by 5 and 6.

13           Five and 6 require that districts be  
14 compact and they use the boundaries that are  
15 naturally formed by cities. The problem with  
16 this is that many city boundaries are not  
17 compact, which means if you try to use the  
18 boundaries to draw legislative districts, you  
19 will not achieve the compactness as required by  
20 5 and 6. While many of the cities in Lee  
21 County may have compact lines, that is not the  
22 case for the rest of the state of Florida.  
23 Take a look at cities like Tampa, Orlando and  
24 some of the other large cities throughout this  
25 state, and you are going to find cities with

1 very uncompact lines, and I want you to tell me  
2 how you can produce a compact district that  
3 meets the requirements of 5 and 6. These  
4 districts will be anything but compact.

5 To me, it seems you are going to have to  
6 split many cities across the state in order to  
7 draw these compact districts. That, or you  
8 will have to follow some other sort of  
9 political boundary lines to achieve the  
10 required result.

11 I am concerned that just -- by just trying  
12 to follow those wordings of these amendments,  
13 you are going to result in your proposed maps  
14 going to the court, just like Mr. Rodriques  
15 spoke of, and it is important to point this out  
16 now especially as it relates to municipal  
17 boundaries. Thank you.

18 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.

19 Next, Tom Martin, then Governor Kottkamp,  
20 and then Victor -- I think it is -- is it  
21 Dotres, Datres?

22 Mr. Martin, thank you for being here, and  
23 the floor is yours, sir.

24 MR. MARTIN: Thank you for your time, and  
25 thank you, all of the Representatives and

1           Senators, for being here. I am a 25-year  
2           resident of the area, and I just want to harp  
3           on one point while I am here, and that is the  
4           explosion of growth that has taken place during  
5           my lifetime here in southwest Florida area. I  
6           think that as a result of that, we definitely  
7           deserve a representative district at the DC  
8           level more so than currently exists, and I will  
9           go off of the naïvety of youth and allow that  
10          to happen by way of demographics and so on, but  
11          that is all that I have to say.

12                    SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,  
13          Mr. Martin. That is not naïve at all.

14                    And, ladies and gentlemen, it is a  
15          pleasure to welcome the Honorable Jeff  
16          Kottkamp, former Lieutenant Governor of  
17          Florida. Governor.

18                    LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR KOTTKAMP: Thank you,  
19          Mr. Chairman and members. Welcome, again, to  
20          southwest Florida. Having served on the  
21          redistricting committee ten years ago, I am  
22          very mindful of the time commitment that each  
23          of you have made, the effort of your staff, you  
24          put so much time into this, and it's just  
25          begun.



1           I was asked to speak briefly about a  
2 little historical context to the conversation  
3 you are hearing here tonight about diluting the  
4 county and splitting the county.

5           Ten years ago, as you will, we debated the  
6 maps and debated the maps and debated the maps,  
7 and voted and voted and voted. When we got  
8 down to the final vote, we actually operated  
9 under a motion to limit debate, five minutes  
10 for, five minutes against. Not surprisingly,  
11 the five minutes for was debate conducted by  
12 the majority party, Republicans. But what may  
13 surprise you is that most of the time in  
14 opposition to the maps was also done by  
15 Republicans; in particular, Representative  
16 Bruce Kyle from right here in Lee County, and  
17 his argument was Lee County is in the top ten  
18 in population, but it is the only county in  
19 Florida in the top ten in population that  
20 doesn't have a Senate seat with the majority of  
21 the population comprised from that county. So  
22 that is why you are hearing this over and over.  
23 This has been a long-standing issue for this  
24 community.

25           I will say that we are enormously proud of

1 the members of our legislative delegation.  
2 They are talented and they care deeply about  
3 this region, and we are grateful for their  
4 service, but I wanted to share that historical  
5 perspective, because I think it is important to  
6 know this is not a new idea here in southwest  
7 Florida. Thank you for your service and thank  
8 you for being here.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, Governor.

10 Is it Dotres?

11 MR. DOTRES: Dotres, you had it right --

12 SENATOR GAETZ: Dotres, I had it right the  
13 first time, okay. And following Victor's  
14 testimony, Geri Gallagher with Planned  
15 Parenthood, and then Lora Greenwell with IUPAT,  
16 Local 2301, if you would please come forward.

17 Victor, the floor is yours.

18 MR. DOTRES: Thank you, sir.

19 SENATOR GAETZ: You are following the  
20 Governor.

21 MR. DOTRES: I know, that is the big time.

22 Good evening, Senator. Good evening, all  
23 the members on the panel. I want to thank you  
24 for being here. My name is Victor Dotres.

25 As I was driving here today and when I

1           came in through the door and I saw all these  
2           people in the gymnasium, I thought to myself,  
3           wow, what a great country we live in if you  
4           think about it. I mean, there's a lot of other  
5           countries that people are not able to assemble  
6           like this like we are, and I see all these  
7           people here, and any one of us can come to this  
8           microphone and we can grab the mike and we can  
9           express ourselves freely, we can give our  
10          comments, share our ideas, and, you know, we  
11          can even give our critiques, like you have  
12          heard tonight, you know. But then I think to  
13          myself, you are going to have people who are  
14          not going to be happy, you are going to have  
15          some people who are going to complain about  
16          certain things, and you have heard across the  
17          state you will have a few people who are going  
18          to file lawsuits, but, you know, in the end,  
19          when all this is done, in the end, there will  
20          not be one map, no matter who draws it up,  
21          okay, no matter who draws up the map, there  
22          will not be one map who is going to make every  
23          single person happy, no matter what. But I  
24          think the most important -- the most important  
25          part is how this process and how these maps are

1 being created. That is the most important part  
2 to me. And I believe, and I think I can speak  
3 for many people here, most people here, if this  
4 process is done openly, fairly and honestly,  
5 that is the most important part. I want to  
6 thank you all for your service to our state.  
7 God bless you.

8 SENATOR GAETZ: God bless you, sir, and  
9 thank you.

10 Now, Geri Gallagher from Planned  
11 Parenthood. Is Geri Gallagher here? If not,  
12 we will pass Geri and go to Lora Greenwell.  
13 Lora Greenwell, are you here, please?

14 I'm sorry, Richard Jones, I don't give you  
15 much of a warning, but if you are here,  
16 Mr. Jones. Are you here, sir? All right,  
17 thank you very much. I'm sorry that I didn't  
18 give you much of a chance to get down here.  
19 Then Edd Weiner with the Lehigh Acres Economic  
20 Development Board, and then Armor Persons.

21 Mr. Jones, we are very pleased to have  
22 your testimony, and you are recognized, sir.

23 MR. JONES: Thank your, sir, and thank you  
24 for this opportunity, and I will keep it short.  
25 I kind of have just a real quick question. I

1           was wondering why, after the voters -- 60  
2           percent of the voters voted for Amendments 5  
3           and 6, why the Florida House would appropriate  
4           \$30 million to overturn those amendments.  
5           Furthermore, to me, that would seem like if we  
6           are spending 30 million to overturn it, we  
7           would have to spend another 30 million to  
8           defend it. So the State is essentially  
9           defending itself, and I just don't understand  
10          that after that kind of vote. Thank you.

11                 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much. And,  
12          Mr. Jones -- Mr. Jones, I hope your time  
13          tonight -- thanks for giving your time so far.  
14          I hope you will have a chance to stay, because  
15          you have asked a question, we have had a number  
16          of other questions asked, and we are going to  
17          give members of the House and Senate an  
18          opportunity to speak to those questions when  
19          you are finished with public testimony. So  
20          thank you, Mr. Jones.

21                 Next is Edd Weiner. Is that correct, sir?

22                 MR. WEINER: Yes, sir, it is.

23                 SENATOR GAETZ: And, Mr. Weiner, you are  
24          recognized, and then after you speak is Armor  
25          Persons and then Joan A. Lewis Patterson.

1           Mr. Weiner.

2           MR. WEINER: Thank your, Senator. On  
3           behalf of the Lehigh Acres Chamber of Commerce,  
4           I want to welcome you all to Lehigh Acres. I  
5           am a member of the Board, and I am appreciative  
6           for Representative Caldwell and Senator  
7           Benacquisto to using their baseball bats to  
8           convince you that Lehigh Acres is the place to  
9           hold this meeting.

10           On behalf of -- on behalf of Lehigh Acres  
11           Community Council, I am the President of the  
12           Community Council, we welcome you to Lehigh  
13           Acres. On behalf of the Lehigh Acres Community  
14           Planning Panel, I am the President of that, and  
15           we welcome you to Lehigh Acres. And because I  
16           am bored and have absolutely nothing to do with  
17           my time, I am the CEO of Economic Development  
18           in Lehigh Acres and again welcome you to Lehigh  
19           Acres.

20           There are two things I want to get out  
21           before I talk about Lehigh Acres specifically.  
22           I was many hundreds of thousands of years ago  
23           an elected official on the east coast in  
24           Plantation. Representative Rogers, good to see  
25           you again. And we had the same discussion many

1 years ago about connecting Broward County and  
2 Collier County with dissimilarities. I would  
3 suggest to you, ladies and gentlemen, that  
4 connecting east coast and west coast is a  
5 totally dysfunctional thing. There is  
6 absolutely nothing in common since I have lived  
7 on both coasts with the east coast and the west  
8 coast, and I would suggest that you need to use  
9 your north-south districts as your planning  
10 areas.

11 I have heard several comments made on a  
12 single Senator in Lee County. That is a  
13 wonderful idea, except that the Senate district  
14 is 470,000. We have 680,000 people in Lee  
15 County. Do the math, 200,000 people fall off,  
16 and the way things have gone in previous years,  
17 Lehigh Acres is probably one of the areas that  
18 would fall off the radar when you put that  
19 Senate district together. So I would suggest  
20 to you that maybe Lee County needs two Senators  
21 equally representing the east side of the  
22 county and the west side of the county.

23 On to Lehigh Acres specifically, we are a  
24 community of 86,000 people, 86,724 people. We  
25 are identical to Cape Coral. Well, Cape Coral

1 needs to catch up a little bit, but we are  
2 identical to Cape Coral, because we are an  
3 unplotted community as Cape Coral is. The  
4 difference between Cape Coral and Lehigh Acres  
5 is they are a city and we are not. We find  
6 ourselves in the unenviable position of  
7 bringing businesses to Lehigh Acres and having  
8 to go through Lee County government.

9 I have spent the last two years trying to  
10 work with the State of Florida, with Lee County  
11 government, with other agencies, to see how we  
12 can progress in Lehigh Acres. I would urge  
13 you -- and I have produced some maps for the  
14 House district and the Senate district.  
15 Unfortunately, I am technologically challenged  
16 --

17 SENATOR GAETZ: And, Edd, we are out of  
18 time, so if you could bring it in for a  
19 landing.

20 MR. WEINER: Very well. Thank you, sir.

21 I will distribute these. I will work with  
22 Jason to get them on your computers. That is a  
23 good way to get rid of me. But I would suggest  
24 to you, sir, that Lehigh Acres needs to be  
25 represented by its own House district and by



1           its own Senate district following the  
2           interstate to the east of Interstate 75. Thank  
3           you for your time.

4           SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much.  
5           Thanks, and we would be delighted to have the  
6           maps that you have provided.

7           Next, Armor Persons and then Joan A. Lewis  
8           Patterson and then Michelle Guerin, please.

9           Mr. Persons, thank you for being here, and  
10          we are delighted to have your testimony.

11          MR. PERSONS: The -- there you go. I  
12          appreciate as just a resident, not official or  
13          anyone --

14          SENATOR GAETZ: We are going to let you  
15          start over. We want to get every single golden  
16          word.

17          MR. PERSONS: Testing.

18          SENATOR GAETZ: Hang on just a second. Is  
19          there a doctor in the house?

20          MR. PERSONS: Okay.

21          SENATOR GAETZ: You're good. Thank you.

22          MR. PERSONS: Thank you. I just want to  
23          thank each of y'all for just letting a simple  
24          resident of the Bayshore community -- I am not  
25          representing any organization or anything. We

1           are a -- I live in a rural equestrian community  
2           that is in Senate District 21 right now, and I  
3           have been hearing all this talk about the east,  
4           west. I would actually prefer being in an  
5           east-west like Senate District 27, only because  
6           so much of that area is a rural area. It to me  
7           would make a lot more sense as the  
8           Representative to have someone that is a lot of  
9           area that is the same that I could talk to  
10          rather than all of Lee County that represents  
11          the beaches and the incorporated cities, we  
12          would be lost. So I think the inner counties  
13          and the western parts of Lee and of -- I'm  
14          sorry, the eastern parts of Lee County and the  
15          western part of Palm Beach is well represented  
16          by that district, and I would like, it if it  
17          would be possible, that Bayshore -- we run  
18          right up next to District 27, Senate District,  
19          and I would love to have that included in  
20          there.

21                 For the record, Bayshore is defined as  
22                 from, on the east side, State Road 31, on the  
23                 north, the Lee County line, on the west, I-75,  
24                 and on the south, the Caloosahatchee River.

25                 Thank you.

1           SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.  
2           Very helpful.

3           Next, Ms. Patterson, are you here? Thank  
4           you so much for being here this evening, ma'am,  
5           and we are anxious to hear your testimony.

6           MR. PATTERSON: Greetings to all of you.  
7           I am going to speak in a very limited basis for  
8           Lehigh Acres. I have lived here 21 years --

9           SENATOR GAETZ: And could you speak a  
10          little closer to the mike, ma'am?

11          MR. PATTERSON: I have lived here 21  
12          years. I have lived in the county 31 years.  
13          This will be my 17th election, and I want to  
14          break down our precincts here in Lehigh.

15          We have 15 precincts, and they are sliced  
16          and diced in many ways. For instance, House 72  
17          will have nine, 73 will have six. The Senate,  
18          27 has 11, Senate 21 has four. We are  
19          fortunate, I guess, that all 15 are in U.S.  
20          House District 14.

21          We have been sliced and diced vertically  
22          to the east, vertically to the west and right  
23          down the middle in the times that I have lived  
24          in this county, and we have never been a  
25          collective unit except under Connie Mack's

1 district, which includes all Lee County  
2 basically.

3 So my plea is that when you look at areas  
4 like this, that if you are doing a better way  
5 than splitting us across the state, which I  
6 don't think works well for all of us in Lee  
7 County, I would hope you would consider that.

8 But I also have heard a lot tonight, and  
9 it's about what I intended to talk about, but I  
10 would like to mention that Ms. -- Senator  
11 Benacquisto is not the only one that has a  
12 district that runs across the state. I believe  
13 U.S. House 16 also has that problem of crossing  
14 the state, going down into Immokalee and  
15 picking up little groups of voters along the  
16 way, and it was very gerrymandered. And for  
17 you that have been a long as long as I have,  
18 you might remember how we got rid of that guy  
19 that was an incumbent. And I would like to see  
20 the east-west end as long as that it is for the  
21 good of the communities and the way you draw  
22 your lines, and I recognize that it is a hard  
23 job and I appreciate your efforts. Thank you.

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

1           Next, Michelle Guerin, and following  
2 Ms. Guerin, Arthur Wells and then Steve Sherman  
3 with the NAACP.

4           Ms. Guerin, thank you so much, and we are  
5 looking forward to what you might have to share  
6 with us.

7           MS. GUERIN: Thank you very much for  
8 having me here tonight and for listening to all  
9 of us, we really appreciate it, and I will try  
10 to remain as respectful as possible, but I am a  
11 little annoyed.

12           The people spoke back in 2009 when myself  
13 and hundreds of volunteers worked thousands of  
14 hours collecting 150,000 signatures on  
15 petition. The people spoke again in 2010 when  
16 over 60 percent, close to 63, of registered  
17 voters in Florida instructed the legislation  
18 that we wanted fair districting. We were tired  
19 of the gerrymandering that was going on.

20           Now you are asking the people to speak  
21 again. This time I hope you are listening. We  
22 want you to follow the amendments that were  
23 passed back in 2010, Amendments 5 and 6, and we  
24 want you to draw maps and present them to us  
25 for comment in a timely fashion. We want to

1 make sure that our elections in 2012 will be  
2 fair, that each voter in Florida has the right  
3 to vote. One person, one vote. Thank you.

4 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you. Very good  
5 testimony.

6 We have more good news. The good news is  
7 that we have had as we have progressed through  
8 our hearing twice as many people sign up to  
9 speak as we had at the beginning. That is the  
10 good news. In order to make sure we hear them  
11 and also give time so that we answer some of  
12 the factual questions that people want answers  
13 to tonight and questions they asked, we are  
14 going to have to be a little tighter on the  
15 time limit. Everybody's been pretty good so  
16 far, but now I apologize, just in order to show  
17 respect to all of those people now who have  
18 signed up and still want to speak, I would like  
19 to ask if you could hold your verbal comments  
20 to two minutes, and then if you have written  
21 information, we will take that beyond the two  
22 minutes.

23 And with that, Mr. Wells, we are delighted  
24 to have your testimony.

25 MR. WELLS: Senator Gaetz, I am thrilled

1           that you and the other Senators and  
2           Representatives are here. My name is Arthur  
3           Wells. I have been a resident of Lee County  
4           for 12 years. I am a Korean era veteran. And  
5           this expressive democracy is why I served my  
6           country in that particular way. God bless  
7           America.

8                     SENATOR GAETZ: God bless you, sir, for  
9           your service.

10                    MR. WELLS: I've voted in every election  
11           since 1956 when I was 21. I voted for  
12           President Eisenhower. In 2008, I appeared on a  
13           panel with Susan Eisenhower, the granddaughter  
14           of the President, on behalf of President Obama.

15                    Members of my family have been devoted to  
16           the Republican party since 1863 when my  
17           great-grandfather was freed as a slave. Again,  
18           I voted for President Eisenhower in 1956.

19                    I changed my resident -- my registration  
20           to Democrat early this year because I was so  
21           offended by the rhetoric in Tallahassee and in  
22           Washington. I, like Mr. Ramirez, was a manager  
23           at General Motors -- at General Electric. In  
24           fact, I was the first -- among the first  
25           African-American personnel managers in a

1 commercial business in General Electric.

2 Recently I -- I normally dress better than  
3 this, but recently I suffered a monstrous  
4 financial loss because of the lack of  
5 enforcement of regulations in governing by  
6 ideology and pledges --

7 SENATOR GAETZ: And, Mr. Wells, I am very  
8 respectful of your service and your family's  
9 history, but I would ask you --

10 MR. WELLS: May I have 30 seconds?

11 SENATOR GAETZ: Yes, sir.

12 MR. WELLS: May I have 30 seconds?

13 SENATOR GAETZ: Please put a bow on it.

14 MR. WELLS: Okay, rather than common  
15 sense, what I'd like to speak to is Amendments  
16 5 and 6, which the citizens of Florida have  
17 demonstrated overwhelmingly they favored. And  
18 the House of Representatives and the State of  
19 Florida is using my taxes to defeat something  
20 that over 60 percent of the citizens of the  
21 state of Florida voted in favor of, and that is  
22 unconscionably wrong.

23 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, sir. And,  
24 again, thank you for your service.

25 Steve Sherman with the NAACP, and then



1 Clara Anne Graham, President of the League of  
2 Women Voters of Lee County, then Dr. Pat Fish  
3 with the League of Women Voters and then Laura  
4 Miller with the League of Women Voters and then  
5 Lloyd Fish with the League of Women Voters. So  
6 we will get a -- we will get a good recitation  
7 from the League this evening.

8 Mr. Sherman, thank you for being here, and  
9 you are recognized.

10 MR. SHERMAN: Thank you. Thank you for  
11 your service and holding this meeting this  
12 evening.

13 My name is Steve Sherman. I am the  
14 Political Action Chairman for the NAACP Chapter  
15 5110 here in Lee County. We come to you this  
16 evening to ask you to speed up the process as  
17 much as possible by addressing redistricting at  
18 the beginning of the legislative session, and  
19 also providing as much time for public hearing  
20 after the maps are produced as there is now.  
21 This will provide a much smoother process and  
22 also be of substantial savings to the citizens  
23 of Lee County and make the jobs for our  
24 supervisors of voting much easier. Thank you.

25 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, sir.

1           And now we will hear from Clara Anne  
2           Graham, President of the League, and then  
3           Dr. Pat Fish with the League and Laura Miller  
4           with the League, please be on deck.

5           Ms. Graham, thank you for coming and thank  
6           you for your service to the League of Women  
7           Voters.

8           MS. GRAHAM: Thank you. Good evening. My  
9           name is Clara Anne Graham, President of the  
10          League of Women Voters of Lee County, a former  
11          state board treasurer for eight years,  
12          currently a member of the League of Women  
13          Voters of the United States 11-member Climate  
14          Change Task Force, and a practicing accountant.

15          As you are aware, the League of Women  
16          Voters was instrumental in the passage of the  
17          constitutional redistricting Amendments 5 and  
18          6. This effort was a culmination of 30-year  
19          commitment to bring fairness into the  
20          redistricting process, and the fifth campaign,  
21          with many roadblocks along the way. The  
22          voters, all voters, whom you are to represent,  
23          have spoken.

24          We are concerned with what we perceive as  
25          a lack of and concern for prudent and fiscal

1 responsibility by utilizing taxpayer dollars  
2 for a lawsuit to try to circumvent the voters'  
3 voice. In previous public hearings, the  
4 Committee has stated that the entire  
5 redistricting process will be 100 percent  
6 transparent. Will you please tell us the  
7 amount of taxpayer dollars that have been spent  
8 in a full written disclosure in detail,  
9 including the total lawsuit monies?

10 Also, Representative Weatherford, will you  
11 as Chair of this Committee recommend to the  
12 Speaker Cannon that the House drop its  
13 participation in the lawsuit fighting  
14 Amendments 5 and 6?

15 My League button is purple, an equal  
16 blending of Republicans, red, and Democrats,  
17 blue. We urge you to comply with Amendments 5  
18 and 6.

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

21 And next we will hear from Dr. Pat Fish  
22 with the League, then Laura Miller with the  
23 league and then Dr. Lloyd Fish with the League.

24 Dr. Fish, thank you very, very much for  
25 being here.

1 DR. P. FISH: Thank you. I am a retired  
2 chemistry professor, but after retirement, I  
3 got -- had time then to become more involved in  
4 voting, which has been through the League of  
5 Women Voters. And I have a number of  
6 questions, but the one I would like to ask now  
7 is if you think that June of 2012 is going to  
8 be soon enough for people to qualify for  
9 districts for which they don't even know where  
10 they exist, or is this really just going to be  
11 another stalling tactic? Thank you.

12 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,  
13 Doctor. And I hope, Doctor, that your schedule  
14 will permit you to stay, because I think there  
15 will be some useful and hopefully reassuring  
16 information for you about the schedule.

17 And now we would be delighted to hear from  
18 Laura Miller, then Dr. Lloyd Fish and then Rick  
19 Murphy, the Superintendent of Hendry County  
20 Schools.

21 Laura Miller representing the League.

22 MS. MILLER: Thank you for this  
23 opportunity to have input in the redistricting  
24 process. My name is Laura Miller, and I am a  
25 past President of the League of Women Voters of

1 Lee County. I have been a member of the Lee  
2 League for 25 years. Also, in my other life, I  
3 was a university professor.

4 Some of us were in Tallahassee ten years  
5 ago when redistricting was being considered the  
6 last time, and we heard comments from a number  
7 of legislators from both political parties. I  
8 heard at least three Republican legislators in  
9 a variety of venues volunteer the comment that  
10 the Democrats have done this -- have done it  
11 their way for years, and now it is our turn.  
12 Since the League is nonpartisan -- a  
13 nonpartisan organization, and our members  
14 habitually look at both sides of an issue  
15 before taking a position, we find such partisan  
16 remarks distressing.

17 My question is this: In the current  
18 redistricting process, can you assure us that  
19 legislators are thinking of what is best for  
20 the voters of Florida? Partisanship should not  
21 have a place in a matter that involves all of  
22 us, and we hope that neither party is  
23 practicing it now.

24 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,  
25 Ms. Miller.

1           And next we will hear from Dr. Lloyd Fish,  
2 then Rick Murphy, Superintendent Murphy, and  
3 then Tonda Soisson-Lawson.

4           DR. L. FISH: Good evening, gentlemen and  
5 ladies.

6           SENATOR GAETZ: Good evening, sir.

7           DR. L. FISH: I am Lloyd Fish, and I am  
8 the Secretary of the League of Women Voters of  
9 Lee County, although I am a male. And as a  
10 matter of fact, you laugh, but there are  
11 20 percent of our chapter that are males, so it  
12 is in name only. We have both genders.

13           I guess two things that I would like to  
14 say briefly. One, that I would second what Jim  
15 Roach said earlier in the evening, and two, I  
16 would disagree what Mr. Rodriques said insomuch  
17 as he stated that it was the responsibility of  
18 the fair elections committee, the people that  
19 promoted 4 and 5 -- 5 and 6, pardon me,  
20 amendments, to draw the lines. I feel that  
21 actually it is your job, that is what you were  
22 elected to do. You are the people that have to  
23 draw the lines. We are not the experts, but --  
24 and I guess the second part of that question is  
25 when are you going to come back to us and have

1 another setting where you can show us what the  
2 lines are so that we can make meaningful  
3 comments? That's all.

4 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you so much,  
5 Dr. Fish.

6 Mr. Superintendent, having once played a  
7 superintendent on television, I appreciate the  
8 good work that you do, and we thank you for  
9 your service to the people of the county and to  
10 the children and families and employees of your  
11 school district. You are recognized, sir, with  
12 our gratitude.

13 SUPERINTENDENT MURPHY: Thank you, Senator  
14 Gaetz, and it is a pleasure seeing you and some  
15 of the committee members again. I will see you  
16 in Clewiston bright and early in the morning, I  
17 take it. I think you will enjoy the trip.

18 First of all, I would like to thank you  
19 for all coming out, spending your time. Our  
20 time is very valuable. I found that out later  
21 in life, serving as a public servant.

22 Clewiston and LaBelle are two cities that  
23 we have in Hendry County. We have outlying  
24 areas, of course. Hendry County is about  
25 39,000 plus people on record. A year ago,

1 unemployment was 20.6 percent. Right now in  
2 July, we are the highest in the state, 16.2  
3 percent.

4 One thing we do have, we have plenty of  
5 land, plenty of natural resources, plenty of  
6 water, clean air, some great people, a lot of  
7 room from growth, and I welcome anything we can  
8 do to promote growth and education. We want  
9 growth in many ways.

10 Currently, the 27th District has served us  
11 well. Aronberg was a great Senator,  
12 Ms. Bullard is a great Senator. Congressional,  
13 Alcee Hastings, one of the best,  
14 congressional -- Congressman Rooney is doing a  
15 great job. Grimsley is, of course, one of the  
16 best. And so whatever we do -- whatever we do,  
17 we want to represent Hendry County the fairest  
18 way.

19 My idea, and it is only my idea speaking,  
20 27th District is not going to work in the  
21 future. I feel that since we have two cities  
22 spread apart in a vast rural area, I think that  
23 on Clewiston's side, I think the county could  
24 be better served with a east coast majority, on  
25 the LaBelle side, the west coast majority.



1           I do serve on the Southwest Educational  
2 Alliance Board, and also the Work Force Board.  
3 I deal with a lot of issues on both sides. It  
4 is always hard to get service on both sides of  
5 the county. I have fought the university  
6 system to get dual enrollment in our high  
7 schools. I think that needs to be considered  
8 also.

9           You have some great plans, I've looked at  
10 them, I've liked some of them, but I would like  
11 that to be considered, because Hendry County is  
12 a great place to have growth, and we are going  
13 to have it, we welcome that change.

14           SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,  
15 Mr. Superintendent.

16           SUPERINTENDENT MURPHY: Thank you.

17           SENATOR GAETZ: Tonda Soisson-Lawson, and  
18 then Larry Hart and then William Jennings,  
19 followed by Ruby Daniels.

20           Thank you so much for being here, and you  
21 are recognized, ma'am.

22           MS. SOISSON-LAWSON: Thank you. First of  
23 all, thank everyone for coming and listening to  
24 us, and I am here as a Lehigh Acres resident  
25 since 1997. I have seen all the growth that

1 has happened since, and am anticipating and  
2 looking forward to all the growth in our  
3 future.

4 My head is spinning after all this  
5 information, I know you all are as well, so I  
6 am just going to get to my third point. With  
7 everything that you have heard here tonight  
8 about the communities or the city lines or the  
9 populations, I am going to just remind you that  
10 we are people, and we have -- this is our  
11 community, and not even Lee County, I am just  
12 speaking to -- from Lehigh Acres. We have  
13 eighty -- almost 87,000 people. We are split  
14 in half. We are trying to grow for the future.  
15 We do not want to, as city councilman said from  
16 Ft. Myers, rely on Ft. Myers being our economic  
17 hub for the inland. We are going to be our own  
18 economic hub out here in the future, okay. And  
19 we need one Representative that is going to  
20 advocate for us and help us grow and help us be  
21 a great part of Lee County, but our own part of  
22 Lee County. Thank you.

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

24 Larry Hart. Thank you, Mr. Hart, for  
25 being here, and we recognize you.

1           MR. HART: Thank you so much. For the  
2 record, my name is Larry Hart. I had the  
3 privilege of being born and raised in the city  
4 of Ft. Myers, and let me thank each and every  
5 one of you for what you do every day. But we  
6 are at a critical point, and I believe in the  
7 five Bs: Be brief, baby, be brief, because it  
8 is going to be a long night if we are not.

9           We need to understand that this is the  
10 state of Florida first, and we need to  
11 understand that you have a responsibility to  
12 the state of Florida. I cannot draw your map  
13 for you, but I can give you input when you  
14 bring the map back to us.

15           I would ask you to consider the  
16 communities and consider our needs and not  
17 yours. I would ask you to continue to do the  
18 great job, because I do not know a Senator that  
19 represents us, or a Representative, that I am  
20 not proud of. I don't know one that I have not  
21 had the privilege of visiting in Tallahassee,  
22 did not welcome me with open arms, and believe  
23 me, I spent a lot of time up there.

24           I had the privilege of serving this  
25 community for 22 years in law enforcement and

1           six years as a police chief, I continue to  
2           serve this community in a government capacity,  
3           has made my government service over 32 years.  
4           I want you to do one thing for me, and that is  
5           very simple: Do the right thing.

6           SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very, very much.

7           Next -- next we will hear from William  
8           Jennings. Mr. Jennings, are you here, sir? In  
9           that case, Ms. Daniels, we are delighted to  
10          have you step forward. And Pat, I think, and I  
11          apologize, it is not your handwriting, it is my  
12          eyes, Pat Carnevale, with the Democratic  
13          Women's Club, and then David Lindsay with the  
14          water control district, if you will come  
15          forward.

16          Ms. Daniels, it is all yours.

17          MS. DANIELS: Thank you. Good evening.  
18          My name is Ruby Daniels. I am the President of  
19          ALVA, Inc., and our name stands for A Living  
20          Vision of Alva, Incorporated. We are a  
21          relatively new organization in a very old  
22          community in northeast Lee County. We are very  
23          rural. And our focus for organizing was  
24          community planning. We have developed a  
25          community plan that will go before the Lee

1 County Board of County Commissioners at the end  
2 of September for adoption, and we are now  
3 beginning to work on developing the land  
4 development codes to underwrite our community  
5 plan.

6 In another year or so, our community  
7 planning efforts will be pretty much finalized,  
8 and we realize that while we plan for ALVA, we  
9 are a part of the larger Lee County community.

10 Our concern is that we are a part of House  
11 District 72, which seems to always be held by  
12 someone who lives in Punta Gorda, Charlotte  
13 County. That person is naturally more attuned  
14 to representing the needs of his constituents  
15 in Charlotte County than in the small number of  
16 Lee County residents. Being so far apart  
17 geographically, there is rarely any  
18 communication between our community and our  
19 Representative. Further, we feel more closely  
20 aligned to Lee County and its issues than  
21 Charlotte County.

22 As we look to the future, we believe our  
23 interests would be better served by someone who  
24 lives in Lee County and is subject to the daily  
25 ebb and flow of what happens locally and is

1 familiar with our local issues. Also, a local  
2 Representative would be more accessible to us.  
3 We respectfully request that you pull us into a  
4 House district that will require a Lee County  
5 resident to serve as our Representative in  
6 Tallahassee.

7 We are also in Senate District 27 and face  
8 the same set of circumstances with the House  
9 district: Isolation, lack of communication,  
10 geographic distance. Senator Benacquisto and  
11 her predecessor, Senator Aronberg, have both  
12 made efforts to overcome this problem, and we  
13 are appreciative of that.

14 SENATOR GAETZ: And, ma'am, because of  
15 time and the many people lined up behind you,  
16 if you could wrap it up, I would be grateful.

17 MS. DANIELS: Thank you. We support a  
18 movement to have a senatorial district for Lee  
19 County and that we be a part of it. Thank you  
20 for giving me the opportunity to speak.

21 SENATOR GAETZ: Of course. Thank you  
22 very, very much, Ms. Daniels.

23 And I believe -- I apologize, Pat  
24 Carnevale, Carnesvale -- all right -- with the  
25 Democratic Women's Club, 213 Radcliff Avenue.

1           Okay, I'm sorry.

2                     David Lindsay with the East County Water  
3           Control District, then Michael Swords and then  
4           Cheryl Byrd.

5                     MR. LINDSAY:   Good evening, everybody.  It  
6           is good to see so many people from our Lee  
7           County delegation on this committee.  That is  
8           fantastic.  I am the district manager of the  
9           East County Water Control District that is  
10          based in Lehigh Acres.  I know you have heard  
11          tonight that Lehigh Acres boasts a population  
12          of 87,000 people, which would serve as a great  
13          population center for a House district.

14                    Lehigh Acres is not incorporated.  We  
15          receive a lot of our general services from Lee  
16          County, but we do have two -- two governments  
17          in Lehigh Acres that are based in Lehigh Acres:  
18          The East County Water Control District and the  
19          Lehigh Acres Fire District.  The East County  
20          Water Control provides the drainage, and, of  
21          course, the fire district with the fire.  And I  
22          believe, and I think a lot of people believe  
23          that the best government is the government that  
24          is the closest to the people, and I think that  
25          is very important.  So I think that if we can

1 get a House district drawn around Lehigh Acres  
2 and drawn around our fire district and our  
3 water control district and around Matt  
4 Caldwell, who is our resident here in Lehigh  
5 Acres, that would be fantastic.

6 And also we have a district -- a Senate  
7 District drawn around both of the two districts  
8 in Lehigh Acres that would also have a Lee  
9 County Senator in that district, we would  
10 greatly appreciate it. Thank you.

11 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, sir.

12 Michael -- is it Swords, is that correct,  
13 sir?

14 MR. SWORDS: Swords, yes, thank you.

15 SENATOR GAETZ: Swords. And I apologize,  
16 sir, I don't know what LAEDB means, but that is  
17 who you are representing, according to this  
18 card, and maybe you can tell us about them.

19 Then Cheryl Byrd and then Nathan, I  
20 believe it is Stovall, or Stovix, S-t-o-v --  
21 Stout, Stout, okay. You should have been a  
22 doctor, Nathan.

23 Michael, you are recognized, and thank you  
24 so much for being here.

25 MR. SWORDS: Thank you. And that acronym



1 stands for the Lehigh Acres Economic  
2 Development Board.

3 SENATOR GAETZ: Great. Thank you so much.

4 MR. SWORDS: Distinguished Senators and  
5 Representatives, thank you for coming to Lehigh  
6 Acres, Florida, our community, a community that  
7 is approximately 100 square miles with a  
8 population of 87,000, as you have heard  
9 tonight, according to the 2010 census.  
10 Delegates, please note that our community is a  
11 young community, approximately 60 years old.  
12 We are one of the fastest-growing communities  
13 in southwest Florida. Lee County, with  
14 approximately 640,000 in the county, Lehigh  
15 Acres is the second-largest community in the  
16 county by land mass and population.

17 Our community began as a bedroom community  
18 approximately 60 years ago. Approximately ten  
19 years ago, we had a population between thirty  
20 to 35,000, and in ten years, you have heard the  
21 numbers, we are almost 87,000. That is a  
22 phenomenal growth. Based upon previous growth  
23 and homes available here in our community, we  
24 anticipate that in the next ten years, our  
25 community could reach the target population of

1 a community -- a complete community that  
2 qualifies for its own Representative.

3 While we are an unincorporated community  
4 today, please recognize that Lehigh Acres is a  
5 sleeping giant in the making. We are evolving  
6 into a major city in the state of Florida, and  
7 we believe within the next ten years, we may  
8 very well be a city.

9 We ask that based upon these  
10 considerations, that you consider Mr. Weiner's  
11 request for two Senators for our community, in  
12 addition for a Representative for Lehigh Acres.  
13 We have tremendous needs, we have a tremendous  
14 land mass here and we have a tremendous  
15 population that needs representation. Thank  
16 you.

17 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.

18 Cheryl Byrd is our next testifier,  
19 followed by Nathan and then followed by Dennis  
20 Holland, and if Michael Neven would be prepared  
21 to come forward.

22 Ms. Byrd, thank you, and we are delighted  
23 to hear your testimony.

24 MS. BYRD: Good evening. I am Cheryl  
25 Byrd, a two-year resident of Cape Coral.

1 Previously I was a 19-year resident of Dare  
2 County, North Carolina, where I served as a  
3 county commissioner for eight years. While  
4 living there, I actively participated in public  
5 input processes for county redistricting in  
6 1992 and state redistricting in 2002.

7 I urge you to seek help from groups in  
8 other states such as North Carolina and  
9 Virginia, which went through the same  
10 experience after the 2000 census, and now have  
11 legislative and congressional districts which  
12 are regarded as fair by most residents of those  
13 states.

14 An essential characteristic of a good  
15 district is that residents who live in it know  
16 who represents them and have some reasonable  
17 ability to meet with their Representatives. I  
18 think our -- many of our current districts  
19 don't satisfy that criteria.

20 Districts which split up cities, small  
21 counties and even unincorporated areas that are  
22 active, identifiable communities discourage  
23 citizen participation in their state and  
24 federal government. They also create confusion  
25 when voters see campaign signs or literature

1 for a person they like, only to discover that  
2 the person's name is nowhere to be found on  
3 their ballot on election day.

4 Finally, they also create unnecessary work  
5 for county election boards, which are charged  
6 with keeping track of who resides in every  
7 district you create. Errors are almost  
8 guaranteed when you split up local voting  
9 jurisdictions.

10 Draw districts which -- first ignore the  
11 question of adequate representation of our  
12 minority populations. Then look and see if our  
13 minorities don't have a better chance of  
14 electing someone who more closely identifies  
15 with them than the current voting district  
16 plans. Zoo-shaped districts, which give a  
17 district to minority populations outright while  
18 preserving many more districts for non-minority  
19 incumbents, are no favor to anyone. That is  
20 why the voters so overwhelmingly voted for the  
21 Fair District amendments to the Florida  
22 Constitution. Other states have found that if  
23 enough districts provide a reasonable --

24 SENATOR GAETZ: And, ma'am, again, in  
25 deference to those behind you, could I ask if

1           you might summarize, please?

2           MS. BYRD:   Okay.  I will just finish this  
3           last -- this one point, and I will pass these  
4           comments on to you.

5           SENATOR GAETZ:  Thank you.

6           MS. BYRD:  Other states have found that if  
7           enough districts provide a reasonable chance  
8           for a person from a minority group to be  
9           elected, their plans have passed through  
10          federal review process successfully.  The  
11          districts do not have to be more than  
12          50 percent minority.

13          And I have a few other comments, so --

14          SENATOR GAETZ:  We will be happy to take  
15          them for the record, pass them out to our  
16          members.  Thank you very much, ma'am.

17          Next, Nathan Stout.  Mr. Stout?

18          MR. STOUT:  You got that right, thank you.

19          SENATOR GAETZ:  Absolutely.  Are you a  
20          physician?

21          MR. STOUT:  No, I -- no, I am a --

22          SENATOR GAETZ:  Are you a teacher?  That  
23          is a classroom voice.

24          MR. STOUT:  No.  I am a certified public  
25          accountant.

1           SENATOR GAETZ: Well, I am going to listen  
2 to you.

3           MR. STOUT: Yeah.

4           SENATOR GAETZ: You have the floor, sir.

5           MR. STOUT: Thank you very much, and I  
6 welcome you here and I welcome everyone here,  
7 and certainly Senator Benacquisto and Senator  
8 Richter and my good friend, Gary Aubuchon, and  
9 come back more often, Gary. And we are so  
10 proud of Representative Caldwell. And I can  
11 tell you right now, I have lived in this town  
12 for 30 years, I am a fourth-generation Lee  
13 Countian, and I have never seen this much power  
14 east of the interstate in my life. So thank  
15 you for coming.

16           I am Chairman of the East County Water  
17 Control District, I am also on the Board of the  
18 Chamber of Commerce, and you have heard  
19 everything about our community, how it is  
20 growing. We are going to grow and continue to  
21 grow. We will be 300,000 people, close to  
22 that, some day. So we need to start now with a  
23 Representative that works this area solely. I  
24 don't care who you attach us to, but put all  
25 80,000 people in Lehigh Acres in one district.

1           SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you.

2           MR. STOUT: We are going to continue to  
3 grow, and so we need that. And, again, I want  
4 to thank everyone for coming out tonight.

5           SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very, very much,  
6 sir.

7           Dennis Holland, and following Mr. Holland,  
8 I believe it is Michael Neven and then Jerry D.  
9 Carrick and then Pete Burkert.

10          Mr. Holland?

11          MR. HOLLAND: Yes.

12          SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you.

13          MR. HOLLAND: My name is Dennis Holland.  
14 I have lived in Lee County since 1980. I would  
15 like to say I am a retired design engineer, but  
16 I am an unemployed design engineer.

17                 You folks are sitting here listening to us  
18 to give testimony on a job that you are to do.  
19 You've got staff. There is a program out  
20 there. My main question, show of hands would  
21 be a simple thing, how many of you have  
22 actually used the program that is out there on  
23 the Web right now for redistricting? How many  
24 people in the audience have? They outnumber  
25 you.

1           You folks should have had maps. You  
2           should have had something laid out so that  
3           people have something to talk about other than  
4           what I saw in the lobby, which was a good first  
5           start.

6           Your deadline is a little too long. You  
7           need to shorten it up. It should be shortly  
8           after the first of this year, not in June, to  
9           get your work done. If you can't get it done,  
10          say so to the public, and then we will do what  
11          we have to do in order to get maps made up.

12          That is my comment. Have a nice week.

13          SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, sir.

14          MR. NEVEN: Hi, there. I am a little loud  
15          normally.

16          SENATOR GAETZ: You woke us up.

17          MR. NEVEN: I just want to make sure you  
18          are not sleeping, that is all.

19          SENATOR GAETZ: We are not anymore.

20          Thanks, Michael.

21          MR. NEVEN: My name is Mike Neven. First  
22          of all, I want to say thank you for being here  
23          tonight. I think it is wonderful you chose  
24          Lehigh to have this forum. This is something  
25          that is good for our image.



1           First of all, I would like to let you  
2 know, I am a small businessman, I am a realtor,  
3 and I am a chamber board member, but I am here  
4 to speak for myself and not for them. I have  
5 been living in the community of Lehigh Acres  
6 for 27 years, and you notice I said the word  
7 "community." Lehigh Acres is not, due to  
8 manufactured fear and ignorance, a city yet.  
9 We will be some day. We need to be.

10           I also am a member of what we call the  
11 dumbbell district, and it is very well named  
12 because of the fact that we have nothing in  
13 common with the other end of the dumbbell or  
14 the bar. Lehigh is part of Lee County, and  
15 Lehigh is all part of Lehigh. My -- I am here  
16 to say keep Lehigh together and keep Lehigh  
17 part of Lee County where I pay my taxes and do  
18 my entertaining. That is all I have to say.  
19 Thank you.

20           SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much.

21           Next is Jerry Carrick and then Pete  
22 Burkert, and then Ken Thompson, if you would be  
23 ready, please.

24           MR. CARRICK: Good evening, and thanks to  
25 the delegation. Welcome to Lehigh Acres, the

1 fastest-growing community in southwest Florida,  
2 saying that with a lot of excitement, I am a  
3 business guy here for the last seven years.

4 Lehigh is a great community. We need to  
5 be one district. We need to hold our community  
6 together. We are fast growing, we have a lot  
7 of challenges, and when we are split, it just  
8 polarizes all the efforts that we do when we  
9 need to come to you for help. We need a  
10 Representative who we know him so we aren't  
11 split so we have one common goal.

12 So thank you very much for coming, and  
13 thank you for bringing Jason along out there.  
14 He has helping me try to rig those maps out  
15 there, I am lost, but he is going to aid me  
16 this week and we will get an accurate map in to  
17 you. So --

18 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much.  
19 Thanks for your submission of a map.

20 Pete Burkert. Is it Burkert?

21 MR. BURKERT: Yes, it is, sir. Thank you  
22 very much.

23 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you for being here.

24 MR. BURKERT: Good evening, everyone,  
25 Senators and members of the House. My name is

1 Pete Burkert, I am a local attorney, been a Lee  
2 County resident for 34 years.

3 I think what has become relatively  
4 apparent from all the conversation is that the  
5 Fair Amendments passed in a year that was  
6 arguably very difficult for these kind of  
7 amendments, which makes its victory even that  
8 much more impressive, meaning that the  
9 63 percent that occur generally would have been  
10 perhaps higher in other years, which means that  
11 the public meant it when they passed it and  
12 they really wanted these amendments. And I  
13 think as those of you who are going to be  
14 responsible for the outcome of this, you ignore  
15 the amendments, you work around the amendments  
16 at your peril, and you should be cautious of  
17 whatever you do and whatever comes out, that it  
18 clearly meets the test of these amendments.

19 I believe that looking at the wording of  
20 the amendments, there are two things that are  
21 really clear, that when you start this from  
22 your computer, that the drawing of these  
23 district lines must be totally blind and  
24 totally neutral in these two areas: One, the  
25 voter registration by party of the people

1           involved. You cannot know when you start this  
2           process off how many Democrats, how many  
3           Republicans, are in each district. That  
4           violates the Fair Amendment -- Fair Amendments.

5           Secondly, you can't put in the address of  
6           incumbent members. That violates it. If it is  
7           determined later on that your computer program  
8           has those two components as part of the initial  
9           setting of the districts, I believe you will  
10          have violated the Fair Amendments. This --  
11          those two elements need to be completely  
12          excluded of it.

13          Going beyond that, I believe the most  
14          important sub-unit for use in setting these  
15          districts is the county. The county is used by  
16          Florida in a variety of ways, whether it is  
17          water management districts, judicial circuits.  
18          The county needs to be the focus.

19          In order to try to make an effort, a  
20          strong effort, to preserve minority districts,  
21          I think you should work from the core of urban  
22          areas and outwards. In other words, there's  
23          got to be a place to start when you build a  
24          district, isn't it? You could start in  
25          Pensacola and work down, you can start in Key

1 West and work up, you can pick a county and  
2 start there, but I believe the starting point  
3 ought to be the core areas, the core urban  
4 areas, and work out from there somehow, paying  
5 attention to these county lines, first of all,  
6 and in counties that are big enough that have  
7 more than one district, you go down to city  
8 lines.

9 SENATOR GAETZ: And, sir, you've made some  
10 very good points, but in deference to those  
11 behind you, I did let you run a little over --

12 MR. BURKERT: Thanks.

13 SENATOR GAETZ: -- and if you could  
14 summarize, I would be grateful.

15 MR. BURKERT: Fifteen seconds.

16 As a recent candidate for State Senate, as  
17 Senator Benacquisto knows, and who ran for  
18 District 27, it is my view as well that  
19 District 27 ought to fall apart completely. It  
20 does not meet the test of compactness. Pure  
21 and simple, it should fall, and Lee County  
22 deserves its own seat. I said that in my  
23 campaign, and I stick with that tonight.

24 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you, sir. Thank you  
25 very much.

1           Ken Thompson? Ken Thompson is next and  
2 then we have -- this individual already  
3 spoke -- Cathy Michiels, and then Dena  
4 G-e-r-a-g-h-t-y with the drug courts.

5           So, Ken Thompson, do we have Ken Thompson  
6 here? We will pass him.

7           Cathy Michiels? Is it Michiels?  
8 Ms. Michiels, we really -- I'm sorry I didn't  
9 give you more notice, but thanks -- no, you are  
10 doing fine. Thanks so much for being here, and  
11 you are recognized, ma'am.

12           MS. MICHIELS: Thank you, and thank you  
13 all for coming here and giving me this  
14 opportunity to speak.

15           Pretty much everybody has said, you know,  
16 a lot of what I had written and wanted to say,  
17 so I am just going to reiterate a couple things  
18 and point out something that hasn't been said.  
19 And, again, 63 percent of Lee County voted for  
20 this 5 and 6 amendments, 60 percent of Florida  
21 voters. It is not 50, 51 percent, it is over  
22 60. It is a great majority.

23           You need to not make this a charade that  
24 it is purported to be, and the millions of  
25 dollars of our taxpayer money that you are

1 spending regardless of, again, the semantics of  
2 how you are going to defend it, it is our  
3 taxpayer money, you are fighting for what we  
4 wanted. In the meantime, you are firing  
5 people, policemen, teachers, firemen, to spend  
6 the money on this. Are you kidding me? No,  
7 that -- it is beyond ridiculous.

8 And the other thing I would like to point  
9 out is we are spending trillions, trillions of  
10 dollars and our civilian population to give the  
11 right to vote in Iraq and Afghanistan, and you  
12 are going to sit here and go back to  
13 Tallahassee and take our rights away.

14 SENATOR GAETZ: Ma'am, we are -- could we  
15 keep it to Florida redistricting?

16 MS. MICHIELS: I get that, but my point  
17 is --

18 SENATOR GAETZ: Because we don't control  
19 Afghanistan --

20 MS. MICHIELS: I understand.

21 SENATOR GAETZ: -- so bring it back down  
22 to us.

23 MS. MICHIELS: Okay. But you get the  
24 point. We are fighting for our rights, for our  
25 right to have fair districts here, and our

1 taxpayer money should not be used to  
2 disingenuously take away our rights. And we  
3 are onto you, we smell what you are cooking,  
4 and we will be back with more petitions if you  
5 try and take our rights away.

6 SENATOR GAETZ: And, ma'am --

7 MS. MICHIELS: Mark my word.

8 SENATOR GAETZ: Time. Thank you so much.

9 MS. MICHIELS: Thank you.

10 SENATOR GAETZ: Appreciate your being  
11 here. The louder you talk, the more applause  
12 you get, now you keep that in mind.

13 And, ma'am, could you please let us know  
14 -- sh, sh, sh, hey, in the back, be nice now to  
15 this lady. Tell us how to pronounce your name,  
16 ma'am.

17 MS. GERAGHTY: Geraghty.

18 SENATOR GAETZ: Geraghty. And,  
19 Ms. Geraghty, would you pull the microphone  
20 close to you so we can get every word?

21 MS. GERAGHTY: Yes, sir. Yes, sir. Thank  
22 you very much.

23 Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to  
24 the legislative delegation that is present. We  
25 appreciate your work, and we know the time and



1 effort that you have put in.

2 I am a native Floridian, I am rather proud  
3 of that, and I have lived in Lee County in the  
4 city of Ft. Myers for 42 years. We have  
5 enjoyed a great deal of growth in this area,  
6 and while there has been a great deal of talk  
7 about the cross-state districts not being  
8 totally representative of the people, I believe  
9 it is through the efforts of this cross  
10 districts and the other representation that we  
11 have had from our wonderful delegation that has  
12 taken us from a sleepy little Florida community  
13 into contiguous, diverse, productive  
14 communities that can hold hands and go forward  
15 in progress. Thank you.

16 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you so much,  
17 Ms. Geraghty.

18 And I apologize, Damon -- I believe it is  
19 Sheldon or Shellon -- Shelor. And is there --  
20 there is. And following his testimony, we will  
21 hear from Lucille -- and now, Lucille lives at  
22 104, I think, Ortona Street in Lehigh Acres,  
23 but, Lucille, I apologize, I am sure it is my  
24 eyes, but if it is Moffatt or something like  
25 that. And then following Lucille, Kenneth

1 Taylor.

2 Thank you very much, sir, and you are  
3 recognized and we're delighted to have your  
4 testimony.

5 MR. SHELOR: Thank you very much. A lot  
6 of people slaughter my name, so that is okay, I  
7 am used to it.

8 But, once again, thank all of you all for  
9 coming out here to our community. This is -- a  
10 comment was made, this is probably the most  
11 power we have seen out east of I-75, and I  
12 believe that is true. I am a 36, 37-year  
13 resident of Lehigh Acres, seen a lot of  
14 changes. When I moved here, there was less  
15 than 10,000 people and no traffic lights and no  
16 McDonald's or fast food places. So we have  
17 seen lots of change. Southwest Florida has  
18 seen a lot of change. We have seen a lot of  
19 growth.

20 The point I want to make, and I am not  
21 going to reiterate a lot of things that were  
22 made here tonight, points that were made here  
23 tonight, but essentially you can look at Lee  
24 County, look at a lot of the unincorporated  
25 areas of Lee County, which we have a lot in

1 common east of I-75, and it creates a very  
2 nice, compact, contiguous House district. I  
3 think you need to seriously consider that. And  
4 I think that is the main thing that you are  
5 hearing tonight is to not have -- and I won't  
6 use the word "gerrymandering," but I just did,  
7 but stretched out, odd-shaped, snake, curly Qs  
8 for districts. We need to have good contact  
9 with our Representatives. This is a  
10 representative community, and it is important  
11 not only for the people, but also their  
12 Representatives to be in an area, know the area  
13 and have contact with the people they  
14 represent.

15 And so, again, I thank you. I will be  
16 brief, hopefully I will get that piece of pie  
17 for being brief, and thank you for coming out  
18 tonight.

19 SENATOR GAETZ: Just sign Representative  
20 Legg's name to the slip, you'll have a piece of  
21 pie. Thank you very much.

22 And now my deep apologies, Lucille.  
23 What's your last name, ma'am?

24 MS. MOFFATT: Moffatt.

25 SENATOR GAETZ: Moffatt, I got it right.

1 MS. MOFFATT: Moffatt, yes, M-o-f-f-a-t-t.

2 SENATOR GAETZ: Okay. Well, you are  
3 recognized, and we are delighted to have you  
4 here tonight.

5 MS. MOFFATT: Yes. Well, good evening,  
6 everyone. We are happy in Lehigh Acres to have  
7 you here. It is a long time that we need to  
8 see something like this happening in Lehigh. I  
9 am an old Wall Street girl, and after I  
10 retired, I came to Lehigh, such a beautiful  
11 place, and we try our very best to have it as a  
12 very nice community.

13 We listen every year to all the  
14 legislators coming in and speaking to vote for  
15 them, which we all get together, because we  
16 need improvement in Lehigh Acres, but the  
17 moment we do so, first, some of them, when we  
18 vote, we don't know them, and it is worse when  
19 they get through, we are left in the dark.

20 Right now in Lehigh Acres, although we are  
21 under one umbrella, we have a lot of Carribean  
22 folks living here. We have the Spanish people  
23 living here. And what I want to know, when we  
24 regroup, who does it benefit? Does it benefit  
25 Lehigh Acres? Does it benefit the legislators?

1 Many of us are laypeople. We do not understand  
2 about this sharing up of the county -- or of  
3 the districts, but we want to know -- one thing  
4 we want to know, that Lehigh Acres -- sometimes  
5 we can't even see it on the map, even when the  
6 weather report is going out, our name is not  
7 there, and that is the truth. So we want to be  
8 on the map. And we understand the reason why  
9 we are not getting things is because we have no  
10 power. But, believe me, we are going to get  
11 power now, because when the Representatives  
12 come, they promise us Jesus. Only Jesus they  
13 don't promise us. Everything in the world.  
14 But, believe me, if we don't get what we want,  
15 we are going to give them Father, Son and holy  
16 ghost. So --

17 SENATOR GAETZ: Well, before you take up a  
18 collection, if you could wrap up, your time is  
19 limited.

20 MS. MOFFATT: We will have to go to the  
21 legislators for the collection, because we are  
22 all broke.

23 SENATOR GAETZ: At every -- Ms. Moffatt,  
24 at every single hearing, somebody has the best  
25 line, and tonight, by acclamation, you get the

1 prize, and that -- that, Ms. Moffatt, is pie a  
2 la Mode on Representative Legg at Perkins.  
3 Thank you for your testimony.

4 And now Kenneth Taylor, Mr. Taylor, and  
5 following Mr. Taylor, Woody Hanson and then  
6 Joseph Whalen.

7 MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, sir. I speak for  
8 two constituents tonight, first for the armed  
9 forces veterans of southwest Florida. I am a  
10 retired Navy officer with 23 years service to  
11 my country, and I would like to state very  
12 emphatically that the veterans of southwest  
13 Florida, of which there are thousands, one of  
14 the most populous areas in the state for  
15 retired veterans, we are very keen on  
16 Amendments 5 and 6 and protecting our rights.  
17 As you know, thousands -- hundreds of thousands  
18 of Americans have died to protect those rights,  
19 and I ask you to consider the fact that we are  
20 talking about basic democracy here. We are  
21 talking grass roots level ability of the public  
22 to influence our legislation to be fairly  
23 represented, which we certainly have not been.  
24 The barbell thing, everybody has talked  
25 about it enough, when I retired down here, I

1 was appalled to see that that was actual fact,  
2 and I cannot in any conscience figure how the  
3 State could have let that happen. That is  
4 absolutely outrageous and unconscionable and  
5 does not represent Lee County at all.

6 Lee County has over 680,000 people. We  
7 are growing rapidly. You have heard that. We  
8 have a lot to be thankful for. We deserve a  
9 U.S. Congressman in Lee County. We deserve to  
10 have better representation in the House. It is  
11 ludicrous to have five Representatives dividing  
12 up this county. That means no Representative  
13 has a majority part of the county that he is  
14 concerned about. We need better  
15 representation. It is absolutely insane to  
16 have five House members in -- that touch on Lee  
17 County, some of them just barely.

18 I also want to speak quickly, I am  
19 Vice-Chairman of the Democratic Party of Lee  
20 County. My counterpart spoke, so I thought I  
21 should say the same. Over 70 percent of the  
22 Democrats in -- the 106,000 Democrats in Lee  
23 County voted for Amendments 5 and 6. We are  
24 passionate about it, as one of the other  
25 Democrats said. We worked very, very hard,

1 thousands and thousands of hours for these  
2 amendments. We expect the Legislature to do  
3 the right thing, to follow the will of the  
4 people, to not play games with us, because as  
5 many speakers have said, we are certainly  
6 watching.

7 And, finally, I want to say one thing: I  
8 learned something tonight that I didn't know  
9 and I should have known being Vice-Chairman.  
10 That \$30 million of our public funds have been  
11 appropriated by the State Legislature to defeat  
12 the will of the people. That is an outrage,  
13 okay. It is our money. Thank you.

14 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you. And,  
15 Mr. Taylor, first of all, thank you for your  
16 service to our country. Everybody here  
17 appreciates that. And, secondly, I hope you  
18 can stay until the end, because every once in a  
19 while, something gets in the bloodstream that  
20 is not quite true, and I think we will have a  
21 chance to at least provide some factual  
22 information, and then that way, everyone can  
23 make judgments about those facts. Thank you,  
24 sir, and thanks again for your service.

25 Woody Hanson. Mr. Hanson, followed by



1 Joseph Whalen, followed by Linda Carter.

2 MR. HANSON: Good evening, my name is  
3 Woody Hanson, for the record, and thank you for  
4 being here, and I think most importantly, I  
5 thank everybody for being here and making us  
6 feel part of a community that cares.

7 My family got here quite a while ago. My  
8 mama's side got here in 1866 and my dad's side  
9 got here in 1884. I used to think that was  
10 important, but what really is important is that  
11 we are here tonight.

12 And what I really want to speak to is an  
13 issue that I believe that is near and dear to  
14 each and every one of us, and that is water. I  
15 grew up on the Caloosahatchee River, and I've  
16 watched that river just go to hell. And  
17 there's a lot of straws in the ground in Lehigh  
18 Acres, and there's a lot of straws in the  
19 ground in Cape Coral that are going to be real  
20 concerned about the quality of their water.

21 SENATOR GAETZ: And, sir, I would love to  
22 chat with you after the hearing about water  
23 quality, but if we could keep it to  
24 redistricting or bring it back to  
25 redistricting.

1           MR. HANSON: I cannot thank you enough,  
2 because that takes me right there.

3           SENATOR GAETZ: Great.

4           MR. HANSON: The river, if you did not  
5 know, runs east and west, and that is why I am  
6 here for a cross-state representation, because  
7 of that geometry, and I cannot thank you,  
8 Senator, for bringing that point more clear --

9           SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you.

10          MR. HANSON: -- than what you just did.

11          SENATOR GAETZ: Great. Thank you very  
12 much, Mr. Hanson.

13           Joseph Whalen, followed by Linda Carter,  
14 and followed by Thomas -- I think it is  
15 Bruzzesi, and I apologize, sir, if I have your  
16 name wrong.

17           Mr. Whalen, you are recognized. We are  
18 delighted to have you here tonight.

19          MR. WHALEN: Thank you, Senator Gaetz.  
20 Also, thank you, Senator Benacquisto,  
21 Representative Caldwell, my partner, Lehigh  
22 Acres resident. I am the current President/CEO  
23 of the Lehigh Acres Chamber of Commerce. That  
24 having been said, I am not speaking to you  
25 tonight as the President/CEO of Lehigh Acres

1 Chamber of Commerce, most notably because that  
2 will no longer be my title in about 30 days and  
3 four hours and -- not that I am counting,  
4 because I am moving on to bigger and better  
5 things.

6 But, anyway, I am here to speak for my  
7 family. And I know all of you -- I would  
8 assume all have family. I try as much as  
9 possible to, whenever I speak with you  
10 personally one-on-one or to you as a group, to  
11 do your best. I know it is very, very  
12 difficult in Tallahassee to do what you have to  
13 do, what you have been elected to do. This  
14 obviously is one of those instances. I  
15 sincerely appreciate the fact that you are  
16 bringing this to the people, the redistricting,  
17 and I think it is a very admirable effort, and  
18 I certainly hope that it is going to shine the  
19 light upon the people that it is intended to  
20 do. In fact, I have heard Representative  
21 Caldwell speak on redistricting two times now,  
22 and he is an aficionado on redistricting and  
23 the history of it, and I am not just giving him  
24 props and love, I am just saying it really is  
25 amazing what he does.

1           But getting back to my original point, I  
2           am the current executive for the Lehigh Acres  
3           Chamber of Commerce, but more importantly than  
4           that, I am a husband to Jennifer. Jennifer  
5           teaches fifth grade at Lehigh Elementary. My  
6           daughter just started kindergarten at Lehigh  
7           Elementary. My son is going to be three on  
8           September 17th, which I just found out is  
9           actually Constitution Day. Did you guys know  
10          that? That is actually when they signed the --  
11          yeah. So my son was born on Constitution Day,  
12          okay, enough about that. I will get to the  
13          point about my family.

14                I strongly believe that this community,  
15                this county, needs our own representation. I  
16                am a strong believer in the closer you have  
17                your representation to home, the better you are  
18                represented. Obviously, we have heard about  
19                Senate District 27, and I am a firm believer  
20                that we need to bring it all over here on the  
21                west coast.

22                SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you.

23                MR. WHALEN: Thank you.

24                SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.

25                MR. WHALEN: Appreciate your time. Thank

1           you.

2           SENATOR GAETZ:   And next, Linda Carter.

3           Ms. Carter, thank you for coming tonight.  You  
4           could have been anywhere else, but you came to  
5           hang out with us, and we are grateful for your  
6           testimony.

7           MS. CARTER:  Yes, I am Linda Carter, and  
8           one of the things that I want to bring to you  
9           that is a national problem, as we looked at  
10          disaster preparedness, we have -- this county  
11          has five Representatives.  Lehigh Acres is 143  
12          square miles, the size of Orlando.  With five  
13          different people representing Lee County, if we  
14          get hit with a natural disaster like they got  
15          hit up north with Irene and the rest of them,  
16          are we going to get all five of them to agree  
17          on what we need in Lehigh?  We need a unified,  
18          consolidated disaster preparedness plan and all  
19          of you working together to protect this  
20          community of 143 square miles in case we have a  
21          natural disaster.  If we don't do it now, we  
22          cannot wait until Katrina and -- or Andrew and  
23          everything in the past.  We need to prepare now  
24          and look to the future for our children, their  
25          children and do it now.  Thank you.

1           SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very, very much.

2           And our final speaker this evening, and I  
3 apologize that I don't -- I am not able to  
4 divine his name. I am sure it is my eyesight.  
5 Thomas J. -- is it Bruzzesi?

6           MR. BRUZZESI: Very good pronunciation, by  
7 the way.

8           SENATOR GAETZ: All right. You are  
9 recognized, sir, for two minutes.

10          MR. BRUZZESI: How are you doing, folks?  
11 I appreciate having the opportunity to speak in  
12 front of you. I've listened to everybody  
13 tonight, and before I wanted to get up here and  
14 speak, I wanted to listen to everybody.

15          This what you all are doing here is a very  
16 good thing tonight. A government is supposed  
17 to be of listeners, not lecturers, okay, of  
18 citizens, not elitists, and of change and not  
19 stand still. By you giving everybody the  
20 opportunity to get up here and speak like  
21 myself tonight, this is a great display of  
22 that, and I really appreciate that.

23          But I want to say that when we talk about  
24 redistricting here, in each and every one of  
25 these districts, folks, we have a huge, huge

1           problem, okay, we have a huge problem of  
2           unemployment. You are all elected officials.  
3           As you know, I have put on there, I am a 2012  
4           Republican candidate. I am stepping up for the  
5           American people to put people back to work.  
6           You have an entire federal government can't  
7           create one job.

8                     SENATOR GAETZ: Well, sir, we need to  
9           bring it back to redistricting in Florida.

10                    MR. BRUZZESI: I will. Inside these  
11           districts, folks, we have a lot of people  
12           unemployed, and every one of you officials need  
13           to step up, bring this message to Washington  
14           and say, "Hey, we got to get people back to  
15           work," and that is what needs to happen. Okay.  
16           So I'm am asking you all tonight, each and  
17           every one of you in your district, okay, to get  
18           out there, go back to Washington and say, "Hey,  
19           we got a big problem here, we need to change  
20           it." If you can't -- if you can't do it, ask  
21           me and I will tell you how.

22                    SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much, sir.

23                    MR. BRUZZESI: Thank you very much.

24                    SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you for your  
25           testimony.

1           Ladies and gentlemen, we have had 64  
2 individuals come forward and provide their  
3 input tonight, and I don't know about other  
4 members, but I have made nine pages of notes,  
5 and we are also going to have a written  
6 transcript and a video transcript of everything  
7 that all of you said. But we have reached the  
8 part of our hearing tonight where you have  
9 asked a number of specific questions, we are  
10 going to give members an opportunity to make  
11 any comments they wish to make, and I will turn  
12 to Representative Legg on behalf of the House  
13 for any comments he might wish to make, and  
14 then I have made a few notes on questions that  
15 I will try to make sure we get covered.

16           So let me start first with members of the  
17 House of Representatives who are here who would  
18 like to offer any comments or answer any  
19 questions. Members of the House? Wow, enjoy  
20 the moment. It is not going to last.

21           Representative Caldwell.

22           REPRESENTATIVE CALDWELL: Just quickly, I  
23 wanted to give all my colleagues a chance if  
24 they wanted to, but thank you all very much for  
25 coming out here this evening and sharing your



1 thoughts and your concerns, for keeping this a  
2 very civil evening, and I know that the body  
3 here will leave very impressed with the civic  
4 engagement that we have here in this community  
5 and appreciate everything that you have brought  
6 here this evening. Thank you very much.

7 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,  
8 Representative. Any other members of the House  
9 wish to offer any comments?

10 If not, members of the Senate who are on  
11 the Senate Reapportionment Committee, any  
12 comments from members of the Senate?

13 Senator Storms.

14 SENATOR STORMS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I  
15 appreciate your leadership, and I appreciate  
16 folks being as kind as you -- we've only had  
17 one little incident of veins popping out of  
18 people's necks and foreheads, and so that was  
19 really good, I appreciate that.

20 I did want to address this sort of  
21 overarching message sometimes that I have  
22 heard, and that is that this is a charade and  
23 that we are all, I don't know, engaging in  
24 something. And I just have to say that I  
25 have -- I am a registered Republican for those

1 of you who don't know, so -- and I was  
2 appointed to this committee. I've done my due  
3 diligence. I thought that I worked very hard  
4 in trying to listen and trying to go back to my  
5 district. I had staff come down and train me  
6 how to do District Builder, and I am training  
7 my own office and I got my own office staff on  
8 how to do that, but for people -- you know, I  
9 just want to say to you that for this Senator,  
10 and I think that everybody on the Committee  
11 agrees that we're spending our own time to come  
12 and do this. For instance, yesterday I was in  
13 the pediatrician's office with my two kids at  
14 three o'clock, we had an appointment. At 5:09,  
15 I was still in my pediatrician's office and I  
16 hadn't been seen yet. So I had to call my  
17 husband and say, "Come relieve me in the  
18 pediatrician's office," so I could get down to  
19 the next meeting in Sarasota that I needed to  
20 get to. When I finished that meeting at nine  
21 o'clock at night, I had to drive back to  
22 Ellington to get my clothes, because I didn't  
23 take them to the pediatrician's office. My  
24 aide met me there. And so then I drove to  
25 Naples. And I don't tell you this so that you

1 can feel sorry or bad about it, but that is a  
2 lot to go through for a charade that nobody  
3 knows much about, you know. I mean, usually if  
4 you are engaging in a charade, you do it in  
5 front of an audience, but I was by myself  
6 driving down I-75 to get to Naples in the  
7 morning and then to drive over here to Lehigh  
8 Acres.

9 So I am saying to you, I don't know about  
10 any massive part of a charade or a conspiracy,  
11 but as far as the members of this committee are  
12 concerned, we are taking this seriously. We  
13 appreciate the right to vote. Some of us went  
14 to jail for civil rights on this committee, and  
15 they have a long history in battling for  
16 people's right to vote. So everybody here is  
17 taking that seriously, myself included, and I  
18 just thought that that was appropriate to say  
19 that for the record.

20 So thank you for your service here tonight  
21 in holding us accountable, and thank you for  
22 those of you who disagree with the districts,  
23 saying that in a civil manner, too. I, for  
24 one, sincerely appreciate that.

25 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,

1 Senator Storms.

2 Other members of the Senate? Senator  
3 Benacquisto.

4 SENATOR BENACQUISTO: I just want to say  
5 in closing for us as members of this  
6 delegation, thank you so much for coming out  
7 this evening and for sharing your heartfelt  
8 concerns about your community and what you want  
9 to see happen in the future. The pride in  
10 Lehigh Acres is entirely evident in your  
11 comments, and for those commenting on Lee  
12 County as a whole, we hear that pride as well  
13 and we take it to heart. So thank you for your  
14 participation.

15 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much.

16 I would like to turn to Representative  
17 Legg, our Speaker Designate of the Florida  
18 House. Representative Weatherford typically is  
19 here and co-Chairs meetings. He has done  
20 yeoman's service and been at hearing after  
21 hearing, and tonight he had to go home for a  
22 family issue, to be with his young family, so  
23 Representative Legg is representing the House  
24 of Representatives tonight.

25 REPRESENTATIVE LEGG: Thank very much,

1           Senator Gaetz. I just want to say on a  
2           personal note, thank you very much. This was a  
3           very informative meeting. As someone that  
4           comes from north Tampa, Pasco County, I know  
5           very little about this part of the state, and I  
6           know the Senator has nine pages of notes, he  
7           must have took a little -- few more notes than  
8           me, I have about seven pages of notes. But it  
9           is something that we just don't get in  
10          Tallahassee. We don't get the details and we  
11          don't get the logistics and the nuances of the  
12          districts of what you put here today, and I  
13          know it helps me as we go into and we start to  
14          put these maps together in a couple of weeks  
15          when we go to committee weeks. Without a  
16          doubt, it was instrumental to inform me, and I  
17          know many of our House colleagues absolutely  
18          who are not from this part of the state needed  
19          this information.

20                 You know, as the Senator said earlier, and  
21          he is probably going to go over a couple of  
22          questions, I just wanted to highlight a couple  
23          of issues or a couple of topics that were  
24          stated that may have been off the mark just a  
25          little bit and provide a little bit of clarity

1 and a little bit of information as sometimes  
2 our friends in the press may not get everything  
3 exactly right and it kind of snowballs from  
4 that point.

5 There was a couple of statements about a  
6 20 to 30 million dollar slush fund that is used  
7 to -- for lawsuits to fights amendments. That  
8 is simply not accurate. The Florida House --  
9 and Senator Gaetz would know this better than  
10 anyone else. The Florida House has  
11 \$30 million, but it is set aside for reserves  
12 for building maintenance, for computers, for  
13 all sorts of House infrastructure. If there  
14 was \$30 million set aside, I am confident that  
15 the Senate would have taken it from us and put  
16 it in other categories during the budgeting  
17 process. So there is no \$30 million dedicated  
18 to some sort of lawsuit out there.

19 Now, what -- you don't have to take my  
20 word for it. I heard some individuals out  
21 there say, "Well, give us a list, give us a  
22 breakdown." Well, I will give you the  
23 breakdown. If you would like, you can pull it  
24 up for yourself so you can look and verify and  
25 pull all the facts up. If you go to

1           www.transparencyflorida.gov, all of Florida  
2           House's expenses are on that website. So you  
3           can pull it up for yourself, you can look at  
4           it, you can see it, you can double-check it,  
5           you can see where the money is being spent and  
6           how it is being appropriated.

7                     And I just want to say something for  
8           myself, and I am sure some of my fellow  
9           colleagues would agree with this, is that  
10          regardless of what happens in the court system,  
11          regardless of what happens, when I was elected,  
12          I put my hand on the Bible and I was sworn to  
13          uphold the Constitution of the United States  
14          and the Constitution of the State of Florida  
15          and whatever is in that. That is Amendment 5  
16          and Amendment 6, and that is what I am going to  
17          do and that is what we are going to do in this  
18          process. We are going to do it to the best of  
19          our ability.

20                    Now, there's folks in here that I am sure  
21          got a little upset and get angry saying you've  
22          got to do it exactly. If you look at that, it  
23          is a complex issue. We are going to do a good  
24          faith effort and try our darnedest to do  
25          everything possible to uphold 5 and 6, because

1 I believe in this country, I believe in the  
2 Constitution, the voters passed that, we swore  
3 we would uphold it, and that is exactly what  
4 the House and I am sure that the Senate is  
5 going to do when we go into session.

6 So with that, Mr. Speaker, Mr. President,  
7 you did an amazing job, especially on this  
8 tour, and I am sure you have other things to  
9 kind of highlight.

10 SENATOR GAETZ: Thank you very much,  
11 Representative Legg.

12 I made a list of specific questions or  
13 data points that came up so that as that great  
14 Democratic Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan  
15 said, "Everyone is entitled to their opinion,  
16 but not everyone is entitled to their own set  
17 of facts." So in that spirit, the gentleman  
18 from AARP who started our evening off, and did  
19 so well, talked about a timeline. Let me  
20 mention a couple of facts that relate to the  
21 timeline that might give you some more  
22 information.

23 First, the census information upon which  
24 we are legally obliged to base redistricting  
25 comes from the U.S. Bureau of the Census.



1 Florida was not the last state to get our  
2 census data from the federal government, but we  
3 were one of the last states. Other states get  
4 their census bureau data before Florida. Now,  
5 why is that? Because there are a number of  
6 states that have their elections on  
7 odd-numbered years. Louisiana was mentioned  
8 tonight. Louisiana has its elections on  
9 odd-numbered years, so they get their census  
10 data first. The census data doesn't come all  
11 at once to every state. It comes in groupings.

12 Secondly having to do with the timeline,  
13 the state of Illinois was mentioned. Well, we  
14 could have done it like Illinois did it. They  
15 are done. The way they did it -- they are a  
16 one-party state. The way they did it was they  
17 had a committee of legislators who literally  
18 went in a back room, who developed a set of  
19 maps, who came to the floor of the Legislature  
20 without any public hearings, and the maps were  
21 voted on, the Legislature left town. We could  
22 have done that, and there are those who might  
23 have wanted to do it that way. It used to be  
24 done that way in Florida. But our Senate  
25 President and our House Speaker said that we

1 would do it the hard way, which was to cut  
2 after we had measured, and that meant going  
3 first to the people of Florida and asking for  
4 criticism, for input, for suggestions, and we  
5 have received all kinds of comments about  
6 process, but we have also received hundreds of  
7 specific suggestions of the kind we got  
8 tonight. Representative Legg is right. We  
9 couldn't have heard the information that was so  
10 local and so specific to Lee County and Lehigh  
11 Acres and this area sitting in an echo chamber  
12 in Tallahassee only listening to politicians.  
13 We had to get that information from you,  
14 because you live here, you work here, your  
15 economic units are here, your schools are here,  
16 and you made it very clear what you wanted.

17 We have accelerated the process as much as  
18 constitutionally we are able to do so.  
19 However, any legislator at any time can present  
20 a map for discussion, any citizen can, any  
21 special interest group can. We have now over  
22 -- I think we have 51 maps now. Many of them  
23 are outside for you to look at. All of them  
24 are on the Internet for you to look at. And at  
25 every single meeting, we invite Democrats or

1           Republicans to provide us with any additional  
2           information they have.

3           I Chair the Senate Reapportionment  
4           Committee. Here is what we are going to do at  
5           our first meeting, which is on September 22nd.  
6           We are going to call to order, we are going to  
7           take roll, do a little housekeeping details,  
8           and then we are going to try to right a wrong  
9           that was done ten years ago. The Democratic  
10          Leader of the Senate, Senator Nan Rich, was in  
11          the Legislature as a House member ten years  
12          ago, and ten years ago she was told as a  
13          Democrat, "We don't even want to look at your  
14          maps. We don't need to look at your maps."  
15          She wasn't allowed to present one. Nobody  
16          apparently cared about her proposals as a  
17          member of the minority. We can't unwind  
18          history, but we can make sure that we don't  
19          make the same mistake. So the very first thing  
20          we will do in our meeting on the 22nd of  
21          September is to turn to the minority party and  
22          give them the first chance to provide any maps  
23          or any input, and then we will go to options  
24          that come out of our hearings and come out of  
25          the input that we have received from all of

1           you, options that may be articulated by  
2           Democrats or Republicans. But the first turn  
3           at bat will come for those who were turned away  
4           and told they would not be welcome ten years  
5           ago, and that is the members of the minority  
6           party in this state.

7           Now, let me mention a couple of other  
8           things, and that is there was an individual who  
9           said that his major concern was a dilution of  
10          minority seats, and is there a map, he said,  
11          that has been developed that would prove that  
12          there is no dilution of minority seats. He  
13          puts his finger on a key issue here that seem  
14          -- Amendments 5 and 6 aren't a bumper sticker  
15          issue. It is, as Representative Legg said, an  
16          issue where there is some values that some  
17          people might think have tension between them or  
18          competition between them.

19          The notion of ensuring that there is no  
20          regression of minority districts, no reduction  
21          in minority districts, as is required by the  
22          Federal Voting Rights Act may in some people's  
23          minds, in some people's minds, be at some odds  
24          with having compact districts. So there is a  
25          tension there.

1           The district -- the congressional district  
2           in this state that is used as the poster child  
3           for gerrymandering is the Third Congressional  
4           District. It is the salamander district. It  
5           was ordered by the federal courts in order to  
6           preserve minority rights. Wasn't developed by  
7           the Legislature, it was ordered by the federal  
8           courts. So there is going to be tension there  
9           that we are going to have to resolve. And that  
10          individual who testified and asked about  
11          that -- about that tension and asking for  
12          assurance that minority districts would be  
13          protected has put his finger on probably one of  
14          the biggest issues we are going to have to  
15          resolve.

16          Then there were seven different references  
17          tonight from seven different testifiers using  
18          the term "community of interest," a community  
19          that is together economically, together  
20          culturally, together geographically. It could  
21          be a coastal district, in some cases there was  
22          a reference to that, or an inland district.  
23          Well, Representative Weatherford and I and  
24          others tried to get the term "communities of  
25          interest" included in the Constitution when

1 Amendments 5 and 6 were being debated. The  
2 Supreme Court wouldn't let us do it. And so  
3 what we have to tell you tonight as a factual  
4 matter, not to argue, but as a factual matter  
5 is the term "communities of interest" is not in  
6 Amendments 5 and 6. So, again, there is  
7 tremendous value in the testimony we heard  
8 about communities of interest, but that in some  
9 people's minds may be at some odds with some of  
10 the requirements for compact districts or  
11 districts that may not necessarily be a  
12 community of interest. If you develop lines  
13 for districts along county lines or city  
14 borders, that could divide communities of  
15 interest, we have heard that testimony. So I  
16 just ask you to appreciate that tension and ask  
17 you to give us the kind of guidance you gave us  
18 tonight, because those will be serious debates.  
19 Not everybody will be happy as that gets  
20 resolved. But communities of interest is  
21 important, it is valid, but we lost the fight  
22 to get it into the constitutional language.

23 And then time after time after time  
24 tonight, we heard the importance of Lehigh as a  
25 community, and believe me, that -- we got that

1 one loud and clear, loud and clear. But we  
2 couldn't have gotten it just sitting in  
3 Tallahassee. All of you wouldn't have come to  
4 Tallahassee. All of you wouldn't have had the  
5 time, you might not have been able to put gas  
6 in the car to get there. So the fact that we  
7 got this information so many ways from people  
8 who live and work here is something that is  
9 special, that made this well worth my time  
10 coming all the way from northwest Florida.

11 Then there was an individual who said,  
12 "Well, the average voter can't draw complete  
13 state maps." Well, factually, that is not  
14 true. There is a 13-year-old, he and his  
15 sister drew 120 House districts and they  
16 presented them, and they look pretty good.  
17 Now, he was a precocious 13-year-old, but he  
18 was 13. And there are people from all over the  
19 state, from different races, different  
20 backgrounds, different groups, who have made  
21 proposals. But it is not a requirement that  
22 you draw a statewide map. What we are  
23 interested in is what you gave us tonight, and  
24 that is tell us about your community, show us  
25 where you think the lines ought to be drawn

1 here.

2 Now, if you want to draw a map that goes  
3 all the way to Pensacola, have at it, but you  
4 don't need to. You only need to give us your  
5 advice and guidance about the area in which you  
6 live. And lots of people have done that. So  
7 it is just not true that the average voter  
8 can't draw maps.

9 Question: Will there be other  
10 opportunities for input later as more maps are  
11 drawn? Yes, there will be. First,  
12 Representative Weatherford, Speaker Designate,  
13 and I intend to ask members of our committees,  
14 and we intend to ask the Speaker and the  
15 President of the Senate to ask all legislators  
16 to hold town hall meetings or tele-town halls  
17 once we get a little further into the process  
18 and either we have more maps or less maps or we  
19 boil it down to some options so that we can  
20 have another round of input from you.

21 Now, obviously, we couldn't take both  
22 committees around for 26 more hearings, or we  
23 would then really violate what our friends of  
24 the League of Women Voters don't want us to  
25 violate, and that is the timeline. But I think



1           what we can do is provide other ways for input  
2           by town hall meetings, tele-town hall meetings,  
3           and we are considering videoconferencing and  
4           other ways that we can make sure that there is  
5           input opportunities further into the process.

6           Another question that was raised, we don't  
7           want cross-state districts, and we had people  
8           who clapped for that, and we had people who  
9           told us the reasons why that is a bad idea.  
10          Then the very next person stood up and said on  
11          behalf of at least one part of the business  
12          community, we want a cross-state district.  
13          Now, obviously we are not going to be able to  
14          make both parties happy there. One way or the  
15          other, there's going to have to be lines drawn,  
16          and at that point, there may be somebody who is  
17          slightly dissatisfied. But I will tell you  
18          this: There is nobody on this panel who drew  
19          the districts that they are in. I am in a  
20          Senate district that was drawn by people who  
21          are long gone from public office, and any work  
22          that I do, term limits are going to bounce me  
23          out, I will be long gone before the next  
24          redistricting. So there is no pride of  
25          authorship here, and we are as interested in

1 resolving some of these geometric anomalies as  
2 you are, maybe more so. But we won't be able  
3 to make both sides happy in keeping a  
4 cross-state district and not keeping one. That  
5 will be hard to win that argument and get  
6 everybody happy.

7 There were several people who said, and  
8 with great eloquence and great passion, 5 and 6  
9 got 63 percent of the vote and they need to be  
10 followed. Representative Legg spoke on behalf  
11 of the House. Let me speak on behalf of the  
12 Senate.

13 I take the same oath that House members  
14 take, and all of the Senators take that oath,  
15 too. Personally, I voted against Amendments 5  
16 and 6 because they should have included the  
17 term "communities of interest" or "commonality"  
18 so that we could have taken into account some  
19 of the values that were expressed tonight. I  
20 thought it was deficient in not including  
21 communities of interest. So I went in the  
22 voting booth and I cast a secret ballot, which  
23 is now not so secret, against Amendments 5 and  
24 6. But the minute that they became law and I  
25 was appointed to this committee, then my oath

1 to preserve, protect and defend the  
2 Constitution of the United States and of the  
3 State of Florida trumps any political opinion I  
4 might have. The Senate will fully and  
5 completely implement Amendments 5 and 6. The  
6 question is not if. The question, as we have  
7 talked about some of these issues where there  
8 is tension between people of good will taking  
9 different sides, both believing that they  
10 support Amendments 5 and 6, the question is not  
11 if, the question is how we do this in the most  
12 just and equitable fashion possible.

13 The representative for the realtors said  
14 that more representatives provide more  
15 strength. Other people said no, no, no, no,  
16 no, fewer representatives who have more focus  
17 provide more strength. Again, both arguments  
18 are valid arguments and sincere. We are not  
19 going to be able to make both sides happy. So  
20 bear that in mind. That is going to be  
21 something we are going to be debating about,  
22 and we need your further input.

23 Then from the City of Ft. Myers, there was  
24 a representative who said keep Senate District  
25 27 as it is now configured, because it provides

1 a community of common interest. As I have  
2 mentioned, communities of common interest are  
3 not in the Constitution. We are going to have  
4 to -- we are going to have to balance those  
5 values.

6 Ms. Skupny pointed out that there were  
7 conflicts inherent in Amendments 5 and 6 with  
8 the Federal Voting Rights Act. Now, we hope  
9 that is not true. We presented Amendments 5  
10 and 6 for a pre-clearance, the House and Senate  
11 did, not the Governor, the House and Senate  
12 presented 5 and 6 for pre-clearance to the  
13 Federal Justice Department, and we made the  
14 argument that we believe that there is a  
15 balance that can be struck between the Voting  
16 Rights Act and Amendments 5 and 6. There are  
17 some people who think there is an inherent  
18 conflict, but this is going to be a serious  
19 issue, but we believe that there is a balance.  
20 It won't make everybody happy, but we believe  
21 there is a balance and we can fulfill 5 and 6  
22 without violating the Voting Rights Act.

23 There were a couple of folks who said, oh,  
24 well, this is going to end up at the courts  
25 anyway. And it will, because the law says

1 after we do our work, we have to take our work  
2 product to the Florida Supreme Court, and then  
3 there will be all sorts of people who will  
4 intervene and they will say, "yes, but," or  
5 "no, doggone it," in their intervening in the  
6 Florida Supreme Court. Then it has to go to  
7 the federal level, either to the federal  
8 judiciary or the Federal Justice Department.  
9 So it will -- it will by law wind up in court.

10 But I have to tell you this, again, as a  
11 fact, it is not a good fact, I don't like this  
12 fact: Representatives of special interest  
13 groups, members of special interest groups,  
14 have already testified in these hearings,  
15 before the first vote is taken, before the  
16 first district is decided upon, they have  
17 already told us they are taking all of this to  
18 court. And you as the taxpayers, I am a  
19 taxpayer, sadly, we are going to wind up paying  
20 for it. So I think going to court is  
21 inevitable, but we are going to try to work  
22 very hard to make sure that as we go to the  
23 Supreme Court of Florida and to the federal  
24 level, that we can say, "Look, we went across  
25 the state of Florida. The districts we

1 developed were not developed based on  
2 Tallahassee talk, but based upon specific  
3 testimony that came from hearings like this."  
4 We are going to quote you, you are going to see  
5 your own words, because that is the best way to  
6 armor ourselves up and say that whatever we  
7 take would have less of a chance of being  
8 challenged, although the court challenges, I  
9 think, are inherent.

10 Then another individual asked -- from the  
11 League asked is June of 2012 soon enough for  
12 qualification for the 2012 election cycle.  
13 Well, June better be, because for the last  
14 seven election cycles, qualification has  
15 occurred in either June or July. So  
16 qualification date is probably not going to  
17 change. There is nothing in the law, there is  
18 nothing in any plan I have seen to change the  
19 qualification date.

20 Then a representative of the League,  
21 Dr. Fish, Mr. Dr. Fish, said, quote, "It is not  
22 the League's job to draw lines." That is true.  
23 It is the Legislature's job to draw lines and  
24 propose those lines to the courts. The  
25 question is, what comes before the Legislature

1 proposes to the courts? Well, in 2002, it was  
2 the League of Women Voters who devised the  
3 first set of maps. And interestingly, in  
4 Georgia, there the League of Women Voters this  
5 week not only prepared and publicized their own  
6 redistricting maps, but the League of Women  
7 Voters of Georgia this week organized a map  
8 fair at the Georgia State Capitol to encourage  
9 members of the public to present alternative  
10 maps. Quote, "Our goal throughout the whole  
11 process is to ensure that citizens have a  
12 voice," said the President of the League of  
13 Women Voters of Georgia, quote, "and what  
14 better way to do this than bringing people and  
15 people's maps down to the Capitol." So even  
16 within the League of Women Voters, there's not  
17 entire agreement on this. In Georgia, the best  
18 thing in the world was for League members to  
19 encourage others to draw maps and engage in the  
20 process. In Florida, not so much this time,  
21 but it was exactly the right thing to do the  
22 last time. So you can see that even people of  
23 good will have sometimes some difficulty in  
24 agreeing with themselves even within the same  
25 organization.

1           Then there was another comment from  
2           somebody who said you ought to seek help from  
3           groups in other states, and they mentioned  
4           Virginia, the Carolinas, Texas and I think  
5           another one. We want to let you know first  
6           that we have met with representatives from  
7           those other states and others to share ideas  
8           about the redistricting process and how to move  
9           it forward. In fact, the State of Florida is  
10          providing assistance to other states now in the  
11          development of the kind of websites that we are  
12          using in Florida, websites which are at the  
13          cutting edge and are unprecedented anywhere in  
14          the United States. So we are sharing  
15          information back and forth, and that was an  
16          excellent suggestion.

17          There was another comment made by a League  
18          representative who said, "Shorten the deadline  
19          so that you are not voting in June." As far as  
20          I know, there is -- there is no requirement  
21          that the Legislature vote in June. Instead, we  
22          have moved the legislative session up two  
23          months, we have moved committee weeks up two  
24          months, we began to have these hearings five  
25          months before the session would start, and



1 Representative Weatherford and I plan to do  
2 everything we can not to cut off debate, not to  
3 tell people they can't have another idea, but  
4 to try to move the process as responsibly as we  
5 can. There is no effort or intention to drag  
6 it out to the last day. If everybody uses --  
7 everybody in this process, the Legislature, the  
8 Attorney General, the Florida Supreme Court and  
9 the Federal Justice Department, if everybody  
10 uses all the time that they legally can, we  
11 could be in a two-minute drill at the end. The  
12 point is we should use only that time that we  
13 necessarily have to use. So thanks for making  
14 that point to us. Join us in making that point  
15 to the Attorney General of Florida, the Florida  
16 Supreme Court and the Justice Department, not  
17 to hurry it up, but to only use the time they  
18 need for review so that we can get these maps  
19 out.

20 And then an individual who had been a  
21 Senate candidate made an excellent point. He  
22 said, "If you use Republican and Democrat  
23 registration data, and if you use incumbents'  
24 addresses in preparing these maps, you will  
25 have lost faith with the people." Let me tell

1           you, in the Senate software, we are not using  
2           any political registration data. We are using  
3           all kinds of descriptors provided by the Bureau  
4           of the Census. But we made the decision that  
5           we will not show ourselves or anybody else how  
6           many Republicans or Democrats are in a proposed  
7           district. Instead, we want to use the criteria  
8           that are in Amendments 5 and 6 and are in the  
9           Federal Voting Rights Act and in the federal  
10          court cases, not how many Democrats or  
11          Republicans are there. That ought to be beside  
12          the point.

13                   And both Chairman Weatherford, Speaker  
14          Weatherford, and I have given instructions to  
15          our professional staff. We don't want to see a  
16          single map that shows the address of a single  
17          incumbent. I don't know and don't want to know  
18          where the members of the Florida Senate,  
19          Democrat or Republican, live. It won't show up  
20          on the map. And I would suspect before it is  
21          over you are going to have members of Congress  
22          and members of the Senate and members of the  
23          House of Representatives who will wake up and  
24          discover that districts have been drawn to be  
25          equitable and sensible and lawful, and they are

1 not in them. But we are not here to protect  
2 incumbents' addresses. We are here to have  
3 lawful, equitable, sensible districts.

4 Then -- two more comments. I don't want  
5 this to become a hostage situation. Two more  
6 comments. Someone talked about strangely  
7 shaped districts. That is an extremely  
8 generous term for what some of these districts  
9 look like. Let me reassure you again that we  
10 didn't draw the districts we are in. It was  
11 drawn by other people, and in some cases, drawn  
12 by the courts. More than one person tonight  
13 stated his concern or her concern about  
14 districts that cross several counties,  
15 including those that run nearly coast to coast.  
16 We appreciate the input, but here is a fact for  
17 you: Let's take House District 112, for  
18 example. For the last ten years, House  
19 District 112 has gone from Collier County all  
20 the way across the state to Miami-Dade and  
21 Broward Counties. Here is the dirty little  
22 secret. The Legislature didn't draw that  
23 district. The Legislature drew a different  
24 district that did not go coast to coast. A  
25 federal court ordered that District 112 include

1 Hispanic communities in Collier County, because  
2 Collier County is subject to review of Section  
3 5 of the Federal Voting Rights Act, and a  
4 federal court drew that district.

5 So the point is simply that sometimes the  
6 strangely shaped districts come from, if you  
7 will pardon the expression, court-ordered  
8 gerrymandering. And so we have to be very  
9 careful as we draw these districts that we  
10 don't run afoul of court orders or obvious  
11 court decisions, but we've also got to cut the  
12 rattails off some of these districts, I will  
13 tell you. I live in Congressional District 2,  
14 my wife, Vicki, sitting over there and I, and  
15 we are in a little tiny rattail. Four or five  
16 blocks of our community are in a congressional  
17 district where until recently the congressman  
18 lived a couple, three hundred miles away. And  
19 it was done solely, in my view, for political  
20 purposes back in 2002. So I understand it, I  
21 am -- I am insulted by it myself in my own  
22 congressional district, and many of us feel  
23 this way and we are going to do everything we  
24 can to fix it.

25 Last comment. I was so pleased, I was

1 personally pleased to discover that someone  
2 said that a community 60 years old is young. I  
3 am personally delighted to have 60 described as  
4 young.

5 Thank you very much and thanks for your  
6 attention tonight. And with that,  
7 Representative Legg moves we rise.

8 (Whereupon, the proceedings were  
9 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 165 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